

Western Lakes Fire Board
Monthly Board Meeting
April 24, 2023

Call to Order

- George Morris called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Board members present were George Morris, Kent Lorenz, Mike Tompkins, Bill Riemenschneider, Dan DeBehnke, and Scott Carter. Jeff Roemer was excused.

Proof of Notice

- Chief Bowen announced that the notice was posted April 21st at 3:49 p.m. in accordance with open meeting laws.

Announcement

- George Morris announced, The Fire Board will convene into closed session pursuant to section 19.85(1)(c), Wisconsin State Statutes, "To consider employment, promotion, compensation, or performance evaluation of the District's part time and full-time employees, over which the Fire Board exercises responsibility;" *Executive Management Plan; Specific compensation and benefits related to specific employees.*" The Fire Board will not reconvene into open session at the conclusion of the closed session.

Pledge of Allegiance

- President Clark from Village of Lac LaBelle led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

- President Morris opened the meeting up to public comment. There was no public comment

Consent Agenda

- Items listed under the Consent Agenda are considered in one motion unless a Fire Board Member requests that an item be removed from the Consent Agenda
 - Minutes of March 27, 2023 regular Fire Board Meeting
 - Payment of bills February in the amount of \$434,033.94
- A motion was made by Bill Riemenschneider and seconded by Mike Tompkins to accept the Consent Agenda items including meeting minutes with correction from March 27, 2023 Fire Board meeting and payment of bills in the amount of \$434,033.94. Motion carried.

Fire Chief's Report

- Chief Bowen provided an update on the District's phased staffing plan for 2023. Interviews were completed for both firefighter/paramedic and lieutenant positions. Between the two processes a total of 61 applications were received with 32 of the applicants receiving interviews. Background checks are current in process and the Fire Commission will be meeting this week to approve an eligibility pool. Conditional job offers will go out by May 1st, and candidates will begin the academy between June 7th and June 12th. Once completed with academy the new employees will begin shift July 2nd.
- Chief also reviewed with the board the secondary chief schedule which will go into effect next week when the battalion chiefs begin running the 10 car alone. Administrative Chiefs will rotate covering the secondary chief position for a week at a time. This will ensure ongoing support to the battalion chiefs, but also provide two chiefs on duty for the District.

- The District is hosting in person anti-harassment training in May and Just Culture Training in June. The training will include the recently revised policies as they pertain to anti-harassment, code of conduct, and station rules.
- We are beginning to pull data from ESO Software, and will begin comparing quarterly reports with the additional daily staffing between 2023 and 2022 in June. The first report will provide a three-month comparison with the improved daily staffing at some of the stations, based on the phased staffing implementation plan.

Assistant Chief

- Reports from the Assistant Chief and Bureau Chiefs were included in the packet.

Discussion – Staffing and Funding Plan Update

- An update was provided with the status of the phased staffing implementation in the 2023 budget. To date the positions that were to be added have been filled and the second phase of 2023 staffing has been interviewed with background checks being completed before conditional offers of employment.
- A total of 18 applications were received for the firefighter/paramedic positions that were hired in February.
- A total of 31 applications were received for the firefighter/paramedic positions to be hired in May, and a total of 30 applications were received for Lieutenant. Of the 61 applicants 32 were assessed based on qualifications for the position. Conditional offers will be made by May 1st.

Discussion – Budget Priorities

- Budget priorities for 2023 include the following items which were discussed with the board.
 - **Continued Implementation of Sustainable Staffing Plan:** the District is working through the 2023 budget and initial phase of the proposed three year staffing plan for the District. The initial phase adjusted wages for all classifications of employees in the District to competitive/market rates, as well as the addition of battalion chiefs, a fire inspector, administrative assistant, and 15 firefighter/paramedics. During the 2023 budget discussions the strategic staffing plan was spread out over three years (2023 through 2025). Over the three-year period the staffing included in the staffing plan would be implemented which once fully implemented will have an effective response force for both Fire and EMS incidents from each of the Stations. Upon full implementation, the District's effective response force would meet national standards of NFPA 1710 and 1710 for urban and rural responses.
 - **Lexipol Policy and Procedures:** The District's insurance provider brought forward that they assist with the cost of Lexipol Policy Management to their clients. The District's insurance provides this assistance as they recognize the importance of ongoing policy review, updates, and training. Lexipol is a nationwide provider of policies and training and is regularly updating the policies its users utilize. Several neighboring departments utilize the program and have found it beneficial with maintaining policies and training. The District's legal counsel also supports the system for policy development and training. Staff has received a proposal from Lexipol and recommends proceeding with policy implementation and management. The cost to transfer to Lexipol and complete the initial policy implementation in 2023 is projected to be \$23,187.00 with an ongoing annual cost for policy maintenance and training to be \$14,772.60. The District's insurance will cover \$2,500 annually towards this program.
 - **Office and Dormitory Locations:** currently the District's management team is spread out across five locations throughout the District. This is very inefficient and causes delays with communication, meetings, and operations. With the increase in daily staffing over the next three years office and dorm space at the stations will become a challenge with the apprentices

living at the stations. The District is looking into public private partnerships and evaluating current space for consideration.

Discussion/Action – 2023 Capital Projects

- At this time staff is working on quotes for the Station 1 maintenance included in the CIP. The Turnout gear in the budget will be purchased as new employees are hired to ensure the District as the appropriate sized turnout gear.
- The apparatus included in the 2023 budget will be brought to the board as vehicles and chassis become available. Due to limited availability of apparatus it is difficult to ensure when a vehicle becomes available it can be obtained between board meetings. Due to the sporadic availability of apparatus that is included in the budget the Chief has requested to revised the District purchasing policy much like several municipalities to allow the purchase of approved budget items that are within or below budget.
- The board supported reviewing and making amendments to the policy.

Discussion/Action – Powerload Systems in 2023 CIP

- The 2023 budget included the purchase of three powerload systems and cots to be installed in the new ambulances included in the budget. At this time the replacement ambulances are at least 1 year out, but the powerload systems and cots are available. Currently only the frontline ambulances have the powerload and cots systems and the secondary ambulances do not, but are being utilized more regularly due to call volume, repairs of frontline apparatus, and special events. The use of the powerload and cot systems help reduce workmans compensation injuries.
- Due to the delay in replacement ambulances staff is requesting to purchase the powerload systems and cots now and install them in current ambulances. The powerloads and cots would then be transferred to the new ambulances when the time comes. The cost to make the move from the current units to the new units will be approximately \$4,000.
- A motion to purchase three powerload systems and cots with installation from Foster Coach Sales Inc in the amount of \$194,125.21 was made by Dan DeBehnke and seconded by Bill Riemenschneider. Motion carried.

Proclamation – National EMS Week

- George Morris read the National EMS Week Proclamation and signed it recognizing the commitment of the District’s Emergency Medical Providers to the Communities the District serves.

Future Agenda Items and Meetings

- The next regular meeting of the board will be Monday, May 22, 2023 at 4pm. The meeting will be held at Station #2.

Closed Session

- George Morris announced, The Fire Board will convene into closed session pursuant to section 19.85(1)(c), Wisconsin State Statutes, “To consider employment, promotion, compensation, or performance evaluation of the District’s part time and full-time employees, over which the Fire Board exercises responsibility;”: *Executive Management Plan; Specific compensation and benefits related to specific employees.*” The Fire Board will not reconvene into open session at the conclusion of the closed session.
- At 5:25 p.m. a motion was made by Dan DeBehnke seconded by Scott Carter to move to closed session by roll call vote. Affirmative roll call vote by all board members.
- At 6:03 p.m. the closed session ended and the meeting was adjourned.