

Western Lakes Fire Board
Monthly Board Meeting
August 26, 2024

Call to Order

- George Morris called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. Board members present were George Morris, Jeff Roemer, Kent Lorenz, Mike Tompkins, Bill Riemenschneider, and Scott Carter. Dan DeBehnke was excused.

Proof of Notice

- Chief Bowen announced that the notice was posted Wednesday, August 21, 2024, at 4:05 p.m. in accordance with open meeting laws.

Pledge of Allegiance

- George Morris led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

- George Morris opened the meeting up to 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 July 29, 2024 regular Fire Board Meeting
 - Minutes of August 13, 2024 special budget workshop
 - Payment of bills in the amount of \$1,936,40.61.
- Chief Bowen noted that the payment of bills this month include the change to include all payroll and benefit expenses. Also included in this months report two replacement ambulances which are part of the 2023 carryover budget, and vehicle exhaust system grant.
- A motion was made by Kent Lorenz and seconded by Mike Tompkins to approve the Consent Agenda items including meeting minutes from July 29, 2024 Fire Board meeting, August 13, 2024 special budget workshop, and payment of bills in the amount of \$1,936,440.61. Motion carried unanimously.

Fire Chief's Report

- Chief Bowen reviewed the District's current call volume for the year is running 13% higher than the previous year. During the summer months, calls for service tend to increase compared to other times of the year. This is generally due to the nicer weather and the communities having more going on. The District continues to have simultaneous calls for service. With the new records management software staff is now able to run additional reports and track data. This is being used to finalize the Standards of Cover for the District by the end of the year. The first five months of the year the Community Risk Assessment was completed and presented to the Fire Board and Municipalities. Some of the information being pulled includes deployment times (out the door after being dispatched), response time (dispatch time to arrival time), and also simultaneous calls for service. This is very telling and impacts the availability of resources when multiple calls for service are occurring at the same time. This year 70.56% of the time there are at least two incidents occurring at the same time. Further more 33.05% of the time there are at least four incidents occurring at the same time, and 14.47% of the time there are at least six incidents occurring at the same time. Overall response times for the first fire apparatus to arrive on the scene for fire related incidents and an ambulance to arrive on scene for medical calls continue to improve with the staffing changes being made. Compared to 2022 when on average a fire apparatus arrived in over 12 minutes, that had decreased to under 8 minutes on average.

- The last weekend of July is one of the biggest and most taxing times of the year for the District. Thanks to all of the staff that assisted with daily staffing, as well as the additional staffing needs from July 25th through the 28th. During that time within the District boundaries the Wisconsin Harley Homecoming event occurred, Dousman Derby Days, the Okauchee Lake Tie Up, Silver Circle Sports Triathlon in the City of Oconomowoc, and the Trying for Children Triathlon at the Ottawa State Forest occurred simultaneously. During the 72 hours of Friday, Saturday, and Sunday the District responded to 72 calls for service. This included a total of 5 motorcycle accidents, with one of which being a fatal accident on I-94. On Saturday crews responded for a kayaker that had a medical emergency on Fowler Lake resulting in them being in the water. Rescue swimmers were able to get out to the individual and bring them to shore.
- Dispatching and Response Plans – working with County Fire Protocols Committee and Waukesha County Communications Center on updates to incident determinants and response plans. Meeting the end of this month with AC Gscheidmeier, DC Meyer, and Battalion Chiefs to update the District’s response plans and assign response plans to updated determinants by County.
- Chief Bowen shared with the Board how the staff has been completing *After Action Reviews* following multi unit incidents. These reviews are meant to improve the operations of the District by identifying successful operations and processes along with areas for improvement. The intent is that these are honest and constructive reviews to ensure the whole incident is realized and reviewed.

Chief Officer Reports

- George Morris asked the board if they had any questions for the Chief Officers on their reports or if any of the Chiefs had anything to add.

Presentation – Incident Command System and Training

- Assistant Chief Gscheidmeier presented to the Fire Board the various roles and responsibilities of an Incident Commander. As part of the presentation, he discussed the WLFD vision and guidelines for incident command, including initial and ongoing training.

Discussion/Action – Merton FD Budget

- Chief Bowen shared with the Fire Board the draft budget received from the Village of Merton Fire Department in accordance with the agreement between WLFD and Village of Merton to provide services to the Town of Merton. The WLFD budget includes the portion of the Village of Merton Budget for services provided in the Town of Merton.
- A motion was made by Kent Lorenz and seconded by Jeff Roemer to approve the draft as presented as a placeholder in the WLFD budget with final approval once the District receives the final budget from Village of Merton and Village of Hartland. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion/Action – Powerload System

- Chief Bowen reviewed with the Fire Board a quote from Stryker for the purchase of a powerload system to be installed in one of the District’s new ambulances. This unit will be installed in one of the new units, and when the District sells a current unit to the Village of Merton an ambulance and powerload will be sold to them. The cost of the powerload is included in the Village of Merton Capital Budget. The final cost of the ambulance sold to Village of Merton will be mutually agreed upon following a review of value.
- Mike Tompkins asked how the value of the ambulance will be determined as it seems to vary based on his research. Chief Bowen explained this will be determined after the first unit is sold through the WI Surplus open bidding auction.
- A motion was made by Jeff Roemer and seconded by Mike Tompkins to approve quote 10938215 referencing Stryker Powerload System utilizing the 2024 capital budget for ambulance purchase and agreed upon reimbursement by the Village of Merton. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion/Action – 5-Year Capital Improvement Budget and 2025 Operating Budget

- Chief Bowen presented the amendments to the 5-Year Capital Budget with the Fire Board. These amendments are presented following an indepth review of the proposed capital projects and cost. The amended plan maintains the original funding, and in some instances a reduction in cost. It does include updates to a joint Emergency Operations Center in 2028.
- Chief Bowen reviewed the final draft 2025 Operating Budget. Since the budget workshop Chief Bowen and staff worked to reduce the inflationary increase in the budget from a 4% to a 4%. This resulted in a reduction in expenses of \$140,000 for 2025. The original projection for 2025 was a 3% inflationary increase which is why the Chief was asked to attempt to bring this down without significant service level reductions. With labor costs being the largest part of the District and also having service level impacts this was a challenge. To limit the reduction in services the proposed budget reduces the spending by \$140,000 by not backfilling vacancies during the evening hours for one position. When staff are on vacation/sick/FMLA the District strives to backfill these positions and maintain minimum staffing. The 2025 budget includes additional daily staffing of two positions 24/7. With this change the budget includes two additional positions the first 12 hours of the day, and an increase of one position the second 12 hours of the day. The remaining 12 hour of backfilling will be included in the 2026 budget. distributed the draft working 5 year capital improvement budget. The Fire Board discussed this plan and understands why this is being presented. They do not want to see services decline after working to make improvements. With the proposed budget as presented services continue to increase in 2025, with full implementation of the plan occurring in 2026.
- A motion was made by Kent Lorenz and seconded by Jeff Roemer to approve the amended 5-Year Capital Improvement Budget and 2025 Operating Budget for the District as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Future Agenda Items and Meetings

- Special Joint Owners Budget Meeting – Wednesday, August 11, 6:00 pm at City of Oconomowoc Police Department
- Monthly Fire Board Meeting – Monday, September 23, 4:00 pm at Station 1.

Adjournment

- At 5:28 p.m. a motion was made by Mike Tompkins and seconded by Jeff Roemer to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.