

Western Lakes Fire Board

Monthly Board Meeting

August 28, 2023

Call to Order

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

Proof of Notice

- Chief Bowen announced that the notice was posted August 25th, at 2:00 p.m. in accordance with open meeting laws.

Pledge of Allegiance

- Village of Summit Trustee Justin Philips led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

- George 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 July 24, 2023 regular Fire Board Meeting
 - Payment of bills August in the amount of \$589,752.09
- A motion was made by Jeff Roemer and seconded by Dan DeBehnke to accept the Consent Agenda items including meeting minutes with correction from July 24, 2023 Fire Board meeting and payment of bills in the amount of \$589,752.09. Motion carried.

Fire Chief's Report

- Chief Bowen started off by recognizing the team members of WLFD. Over the last month there have been several instances where a resident, business owner, patient, or family member has reached out and commended WLFD on their professionalism and customer service. The Chief also reviewed various meetings with municipal officials on the fire service fees, budget, and operations of the District. In addition an upcoming meeting with WCC regarding their staffing crisis. The 2023 budget is on track for a balanced budget with a surplus due to the vacant Assistant Chief position. Interviews and background checks are underway for the Assistant Chief and Fire Inspector Position. The District will be interviewing for firefighter/paramedic the beginning of September.

Assistant Chief

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

Discussion and Possible Action – Attendance and Participation Policy

- Chief Bowen reviewed with the board the draft attendance and participation policy for part-time and paid-on-call employees. Deputy Chief Ingersoll has completed the updates and the policy has been shared with the District's command staff for input. This was also reviewed during a recent officers meeting and has strong support due to its transparency and accountability.
- The purpose of the policy is to ensure employees of the District have clear expectations with regards to training attendance, response to incident expectations, and schedule hours of work.

Combination Fire Departments have been challenged with at times personnel that do not respond to incidents or have regular attendance. This poses safety concerns for employees that are meeting expectations, as well as financial concerns due to the cost of personal protective equipment that is provided to employees. The policy will ensure the municipalities served by the District have a return on these investments.

- A motion to approve the Attendance and Participation Policy as presented was made by Jeff Roemer and Seconded by Mike Tompkins. Motion Carried.

Discussion/Action – 2024 Operating Budget

- Chief Bowen provided the board with the initial draft operating budget for 2024. The draft budget has three priorities including staffing plan implantation to phase 2. The second phase of the plan includes maintaining the positions added in 2023 with them being fully funded in 2024. It also includes the addition of (3) full-time lieutenants and (3) full-time firefighter/paramedics. The added staffing in 2024 will bring two additional stations up to a daily staffing of five personnel, allowing for an effective Fire and EMS response force. The other budget priorities discussed include implementation of Lexipol for policy development, training, and maintenance. The last priority is consolidation of the District’s management and administrative staff under one roof to improve operations. The levy increase is drafted to be twenty percent of the total referendum ask, plus 2% of the total to account for wage adjustments and the phased implementation of costs. There are several budget numbers that are still being finalized including health insurance rates, general insurance costs, workman’s compensation costs, and various contracted services.
- Following the budget workshop adjustments requested by the board have been made. Administrative staff will be presenting at a future board meeting further information on the administrative office consolidation specifically what positions would be moved to this location. The board also felt the preliminary amount for financial software was low and should be adjusted. Jeff Roemer asked that software that is currently in Dues and Subscriptions be moved to information and technology. This will include ESO, Lexipol, Iamresponding, and finance software. Also target solutions which is currently in training would be moved to information technology. Jeff Roemer asked why the overtime budget is projected to increase in 2024. Chief Bowen explained that with full-time personnel working a 56-hour work week there is built in overtime for these positions. Also with the District relying on more full-time personnel they will be needed for special events and call backs which will increase the overtime costs. The projected budget for overtime is an increase from 2023, but the actual 2023 will be higher which is being reduced with the addition of personnel.
- A motion was made Kent Lorenz and seconded by Dan DeBehnke to approve the 2024 District Operating Budget as presented. Motion Carried

Discussion/Action – 5 Year Capital Improvement Plan

- Chief Bowen provided the board with the draft 5-year capital improvement plan. The plan has been updated to reflect cost estimates based on the current costs of apparatus, equipment, and facility costs. The management team, committees, and staff have evaluated the CIP to attempt to minimize the impacts of recent inflation on the budget. This includes further consolidation or elimination of apparatus/equipment. Some projects have been pushed out following an evaluation of the apparatus/equipment usage, condition, and operational benefits to the District.
- Jeff Roemer feels that the District does not need two ladder trucks and that this should be removed from the 5 Year CIP. There needs to be more information to justify the need of two ladder trucks through a community risk assessment and standards of cover. Chief Bowen and DC Ingersoll shared that these are underway and will be presented to the board.

- A motion was made by Jeff Roemer and seconded by Dan DeBehnke to approve the 5 Year CIP with the removal of the ladder. The board discussed this motion, and feels that with the ladder being in the 2027 budget that there is time to analyze this further. At this time maintaining the funding as a place holder is better as it is easier to remove in the future than it will be to add. Jeff Roemer rescinded his motion, and Dan DeBehnke rescinded his second.
- A motion was made by Dan DeBehnke and seconded by Kent Lorenz to approve the 5 Year CIP as presented, with the Chief being required to present the community risk assessment and standards of cover and the board will discuss the second ladder approval at that time. Motion carried.

Future Agenda Items and Meetings

- A Joint Owners Meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 12, 2023 at 6pm at the City of Oconomowoc Police Department.
- The next regular meeting of the board will be Monday, September 25, 2023 at 4pm. The meeting will be held at Station #1.

Closed Session

1. George Morris announced, The Fire Board will convene into closed session pursuant to section 19.85(1)(c)(e), 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;” and “deliberating or negotiating the purchase of public property, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session” for the following purposes: *“Contract Service Agreements with Municipalities; 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 5:20 p.m. a motion was made by Jeff Roemer seconded by Dan DeBehnke to move to closed session by roll call vote. Affirmative roll call vote by all board members.
- At 5:59 p.m. the closed session ended and the meeting was adjourned.