

Western Lakes Fire Board
Monthly Board Meeting
December 18, 2024

Call to Order

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

Proof of Notice

- Chief Bowen announced that the notice was posted Monday, December 16, 2024, at 3:56 p.m. in accordance with open meeting laws.

Pledge of Allegiance

- Kathy Bleeker-Piirto, Village of Dousman Trustee led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

- George Morris opened the meeting up to public comment of which there was none.

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 November 25, 2024 regular Fire Board Meeting
 - Payment of bills in the amount of \$1,145,898.16.
- A motion was made by Jeff Roemer and seconded by Scott Carter to approve the Consent Agenda items including meeting minutes from November 4, 2024 Fire Board meeting and payment of bills in the amount of \$1,145,898.16. Motion carried unanimously.

Fire Chief's Report

- Chief Bowen reviewed with the board the monthly incident and data reports. Call volume for the year is up 8% from last year and been consistent each month. Chief reflected on the recent hiring processes and shared with the board that final job offers have been sent out for the new full-time employees. In addition to the full-time process 14 new part-time employees are in the process of finishing up training and filling shifts. The District hosted the Station 5 (Okauchee) Open House with Santa this month, which is a great way to invite the community to the Station and collaborate. The employee recognition and years of service ceremony was held on December 12th. Several incredible team members were recognized for several incidents, years of service, and overall performance this past year.
- Jeff Roemer asked about gathering additional information for the board regarding mutual aid to other agencies and the District's use of mutual aid from others. He would like to have an understanding of the number of times the District is sending resources out of the District.

Presentation – Professional Development Program

- Assistant Chief Gscheidmeier presented the District's Professional Development Program to the board. This program has been a collaborative effort between Chief Bowen, Deputy Chief Konen, Deputy Chief Ingersoll, and Assistant Chief Gscheidmeier following feedback and consideration from personnel on professional development needs. The program is being offered to full-time employees that are looking to advance to the position of Acting Lieutenant and be eligible for promotional opportunities. In addition to the eleven members that have been selected for the program any officer of the District regardless of classification is able to attend these monthly trainings.

Discussion/Action – 2025 CIP Purchase – Radios

- Chief Bowen presented the 2025 Capital Improvement Plan includes \$425,000 for replacing inoperable VHF radios in the District's apparatus. Upgrades to P25-capable VHF systems in Jefferson County have rendered many of the District's current radios inoperable, leading to interoperability challenges and safety concerns. Additionally, many 800 MHz mobile radios at the Okauchee and Stone Bank Stations, which are over 15 years old, are the discontinued XTL model and lack support for upgrades. The budget aims to upgrade these radios and ensure interoperability during emergency operations.
- This fall, a complete audit of the District's mobile and portable radios was conducted as part of a replacement plan for 2028, coinciding with the County's upgrade to Phase II of the OASIS Radio System. Staff assessed current radio usage and needs. The replacement of VHF mobile radios was included in the 2025 CIP, addressing the obsolescence of 800 MHz mobile radios. Initial quotes for the new radios came in under budget, and a new 40% discount has been offered for purchases made before year-end, on top of existing state bids. These replacements will enhance communication capabilities across Waukesha, Jefferson, and Dodge Counties.
- The 2025 CIP includes \$425,000 for the radio replacement project. The bids provided come to a total of \$211,134.21 for the replacement radios. In addition to the physical radio costs there potentially be additional costs for wiring, accessories, and installation costs. At this time, a 10% contingency is being allocated for the additional costs of \$21,000.00. This brings the total proposed project to \$232,134.21. This is under budget due to the additional discounts received at year-end. The remaining funds will be allocated as a carryover to help offset the 2028 radio project costs.
- A motion was made by Jeff Roemer and seconded by Mike Tompkins to approve VHF and 800mhz radio quotes from Baycomm in the amount of \$211,134.21 plus a 10% contingency for accessories and installation for a total project cost of \$232,134.21. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion/Action – 2025 Fee Schedule

- Chief Bowen reviewed the fee schedules with the board for various services offered by the District, including Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Special Event Standby services, Fire & Highway services, and Fire Prevention services. These fees are associated with special services provided to specific individuals or businesses. Each year, we evaluate these fees based on the cost of delivering these services.
- In addition to assessing the District's costs, we also consider the fees charged by other agencies for similar services. For 2025, a three percent (3%) inflationary adjustment is proposed for the EMS and Fire & Highway fees due to increased budgetary demands in providing these services. However, during discussions regarding the 2025 budget, municipal officials decided not to increase the other fees for 2025.
- A motion was made by Mike Tompkins and seconded by Jeff Roemer to approve 2025 fee increases for EMS, fire, and Highway. All other fees to remain the same as 2024 for Standby, Special Event, and Fire Prevention. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion/Action – Full-time Compensation Steps

- Chief Bowen provided the board with an update on the process of full-time employee's eligibility for compensation steps on an annual basis based on performance. Employees are eligible for a step increase based on performance annually at their anniversary date. This process is managed by Human Resource Manager Mundt and is based on the employee's annual evaluation. This process has been working well in accordance with District policy. Those eligible for beginning of the year steps will begin on January 5, 2025, along with wage adjustments previously approved by the board.
- President Morris shared the board's evaluation and meetings with Chief Bowen regarding his annual review and performance. The board is very happy with the accomplishments of the District this past year and the significant efforts of Chief Bowen. Many goals were accomplished this past

year, and Chief Bowen has outlined goals for 2025 which the board supports. Based on this performance Chief Bowen is eligible for a full compensation step effective January 5, 2025.

- A motion was made by Scott Carter and seconded by Bill Riemenschneider to approve Chief Bowen's performance compensation step and goals for 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

Future Agenda Items and Meetings

- Monthly Fire Board Meeting – Monday, January 27, 2025, at 4:00 pm at Station 1.

Adjournment

- At 4:37 p.m. a motion was made by Mike Tompkins and seconded by Jeff Roemer to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.