

Western Lakes Fire Board

Monthly Board Meeting

December 19, 2022

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, Bill Riemenschneider, Dan DeBehnke, and Scott Carter. Mike Tompkins was excused.

Proof of Notice

- Chief Bowen announced that the notice was posted December 16th at 7:11 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 reconvene into open session at the conclusion of the closed session.

Pledge of Allegiance

- Alderman Lou Lowieski led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Discussion/Action – Public Comment Rules

- The Fire Board requested the Chief to work with the District's Legal Counsel on draft public comment rules. Chief Bowen presented recommendations from legal and comparisons from local municipalities. It was recommended and many local municipalities have those making public comment write their name, address, and topic of discussion. Many have a time limit for public comment, with the recommendation being two (2) minutes, unless speaking on behalf of a group which are allowed three (3) minutes. Other considerations include whether the public comment is at the beginning or end of the meeting, if public comment can be on anything or only items on the agenda, and if they can be regarding specific employees. A final consideration was if there is a time limit on public comment as a whole.
- The Fire Board discussed these standard practices and considerations. The board identified the following rules for public comment during WLFD Board Meetings: 1) Those wishing to provide public comment to the board, fill out a form with their name, address, and topic of discussion. 2) Public comment is limited to two (2) minutes. If speaking on behalf of a group will be allowed three (3) minutes. 3) Complaints about specific employees will not be heard during public comment. 4) Public comment as a whole is limited to fifteen (15) minutes as a whole. Also a note that the board cannot have discussion during public comment, and the board cannot discuss items not on the agenda.
- A motion to adopt the WLFD Board Public Comment Rules as presented was made by Jeff Roemer and seconded by Dan DeBehnke. Motion carried.

Public Comment

- George Morris opened the meeting to public comment.
 - Lou Kowieski had public comment regarding his support to the first responders and employees of WLFD. He recognizes the personal sacrifices made by employees to serve

the District and municipalities. He wanted them to be aware that they are supported and appreciated.

- Jennifer Aultman Kloth had public comment regarding her observations of the commitment that WLFD staff make to the District and communities. She recognized the public relations and community outreach that is done and her personal experiences working at various events including the professionalism, passion, and overall dedication.
- Christy Reuter had public comment regarding the negative public comments made the month prior. She wanted to make it clear that the comments are not reflective of hers, and that she feels WLFD is a positive place to work. All places of employment have issues and items to work on, and she recognized that WLFD management and the board is working on these.

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 28th, 2022 regular Fire Board Meeting
- A motion was made by Jeff Roemer and seconded by Dan DeBehnke to accept the Consent Agenda items including meeting minutes from November 28th, 2022 Fire Board meeting. Motion carried.

Fire Chief's Report

- Chief Bowen reviewed with the board activities over the past month. Chief recognized the dedication of the team over the past several weeks as the District has responded to a number of structure fires. At times two fires in the same day. These require significant personnel and can be prolonged incidents. Thanks to those that responded to these while on shift, and those that dropped what they were doing to come in and assist with these incidents.
- Chief provided an update on upcoming staff enrichment trainings and team building trainings scheduled in January.
- Chief provided an update on recruitment and retention efforts of the management team and all employees of the District.
- The hiring process for firefighter/paramedic, battalion chief, and assistant chief are underway. Background checks are beginning for these processes. The first priority is the firefighter/paramedic process. The next priority is the battalion chief process, which will be followed by the assistant chief process.
- The Chief Officers are actively working on a number of objectives including reorganization of the District's committees and workgroups. The involvement of WLFD employees in these is important to have diverse representation in programs and tasks in the District. In addition to these the District is completing a policy and training update of its harassment policy. Staff is also working to redistribute roles and responsibilities among staff at WLFD to balance the workload and involve the additional staff in tasks.

Discussion/Action – Okauchee REO Engine Lease

- Chief Bowen reviewed with the board the draft lease agreement between Okauchee Fire Department Incorporated and the Western Lakes Fire District for the restored REO Engine previously housed in Okauchee. The Okauchee Fire Department Inc. would like to lease the restored engine to WLFD to house at Station #5 and utilize for community events.
- A motion to approved the lease agreement for display truck between Okauchee Fire Department Inc. and the Western Lakes Fire District was made by Jeff Roemer and seconded by Scott Carter. Motion carried.

Discussion/Action – 2023 Fee Schedules

- The draft 2023 fee schedules for WLFD were presented and discussed with the board. For specialty services provided by the District including fire inspection, standby events, hazardous material cleanup, and emergency medical services there are associated fees. These fees are currently in place for the District, and were reviewed for 2023 with the increased cost of providing services due to inflation and staffing costs.
- Jeff Roemer feels that the Emergency Medical Service Fees could be higher, and once the medicare and Medicaid reimbursement studies are completed we may adjust.
- A motion to approve the 2023 Emergency Medical Service Fee Schedule was made by Jeff Roemer and seconded by Dan DeBehnke. Motion Carried.
- A motion to approve the 2023 Highway, Special Event, and Fire Prevention fee schedules with further research on the highway billing in 2023 was made by Dan DeBehnke and seconded by Kent Lorenz. Motion carried.

Discussion – 2023 Capital Improvements

- Chief Bowen provided the board with updates on the District's 2023 capital improvement plan. Currently Ford is allocating agencies for 2023 on the number of super duty chassis they are able to purchase. This is a very fluid process and will provide updates as they become available. Staff will be providing updates on this process the first quarter of the year as more information becomes available.

Future Agenda Items and Meetings

- The next regular meeting of the board will be Monday, January 23rd, 2023 at 4pm. The meeting will be held at Station #1.

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 reconvene into open session at the conclusion of the closed session.
- At 5:05 p.m. a motion was made by Jeff Roemer seconded by Bill Riemenschneider to move to closed session by roll call vote. Affirmative roll call vote by all board members.
- At 6:30 p.m. the board returned to open session with a motion by Jeff Roemer and seconded by Dan DeBehnke. Motion Carried.

Discussion/Action – Employee Benefits Policy

- The draft 2023 employee benefits policy was reviewed with the board. Changes to the policy reflect changes to the shift schedule of the 56-hour employees with a trial period of the 48/96 shift. Changes to the administrative hours of the salaried employees with the reorganization to battalion chiefs. Also, adjustments to personal time of the District's employees and uniform allowance as approved in the budget.
- A motion to approve the employee benefits policy as presented was made by Jeff Roemer and seconded by Bill Riemenschneider. Motion carried.

Discussion/Action – Full-time Compensation Steps

- District employees are eligible for a step increase annually. These increases are based on performance and employees are eligible for a full step, half step, or COLA.
- A motion was made to approve step increases for 2023 as presented by the Chief and Human Resources was made by Jeff Roemer and seconded by Dan DeBehnke.

Adjournment

- A motion to adjourn was made at 6:38 p.m. by Jeff Roemer and seconded by Dan DeBehnke. Motion Carried.