

Western Lakes Fire Board
Monthly Board Meeting
February 26, 2024

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, and Scott Carter. Jeff Roemer and Dan DeBehnke were excused.

Proof of Notice

- Chief Bowen announced that the notice was posted Friday, February 23, 2024, at 10:04 a.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.
- Administrator Frye thanked the Board and District for doing a good job serving the communities.

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 January 22, 2024 regular Fire Board Meeting
 - Payment of bills in the amount of \$1,085,092.31.
- A motion was made by Scott Carter and seconded by Bill Riemenschneider to accept the Consent Agenda items including meeting minutes from January 22, 2024 Fire Board meeting and payment of bills in the amount of \$1,085,092.31. Motion carried unanimously.

Fire Chief's Report

- Chief Bowen introduced Pat Cornett to the Fire Board as the District's new Finance Manager. Pat Started on February 13th with the District and will be handling much of the third party accounting work. She comes to the District from a private charter school as the Chief Financial Officer. Pat Cornett (Finance), Karen (Human Resources), and the Chief have started meeting with accounting and payroll software providers to bring these services in house as planned with the new position.
- The team is preparing for the 2023 Financial Audit with Clifton Larson Allen. The auditors will be onsite in March to complete field work, currently staff is closing out the previous year and pulling records and reports requested by the auditors.
- Chief requested a moment of silence to be observed in honor of Sterling, VA Firefighter Trevor Brown who unfortunately died in the line of duty during a home explosion. FF Brown was our very own FF/Med Dan Mann's mentor and encouraged him to come to WLFD for the internship/apprenticeship.
- The year kicked off with some costly repairs to an engine and the rehab unit. These repairs had to be completed to have apparatus in-service. These are due to regular wear and tear of the apparatus as the units requiring the maintenance are older apparatus. Through the year the overall budget will be monitored. Mike Tompkins inquired about these repairs as he did not see them in the check register. Chief stated that the bills will be in the next months check run.
- Chief highlighted the work of the WLFD team this past month. In a week period, they responded to multiple cardiac arrests, with two of them being resuscitated. These are very positive outcomes, and

a demonstration of improved response times, high levels of training, and the commitment the District and staff have to high levels of service.

- The chief shared with the board an article regarding hospital systems in the country and the need to transport patients to tertiary hospitals for higher levels of care. The revenue from interfacility transports accounts for about 16% of the overall revenue, which helps to offset the overall costs of EMS services.

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.
- Deputy Chief Meyer provided the board with a sample report from the District's new records management system. This improved data is a significant part of the Community Risk Assessment and Standards of Cover Projects currently being completed by the District. The data is being validated and monthly reports are being built to provide additional insight of the District's operations and performance.

Discussion/Action – 2024 District Insurance Renewal

- Chief Bowen and Pat Cornett reviewed with the Board the proposal which includes changes to the District's apparatus and assets which resulted in an increased premium due to the increased value of these items. This also includes insuring the current platform ladder which we will tentatively sell in June and the new ladder which is being delivered next week. In 2022 the District and communities had an unprecedented year of claims due to a hail storm that hit the area in June. This resulted in damages to apparatus and buildings resulting in a number of claims. Also included is the District's Workers Compensation Insurance. The workers compensation quote is based on the last 3 years of claims. There were some significant injuries in the District in 2020 and 2021, which increased the modification factor from 1.43 to 1.74. Per R&R, 2020 claim costs will be replaced by a significant claim decline for 2023 (see table below) with a projected reduction to the modification factor of approximately 35 points. Staff continue to focus on injury prevention. Unfortunately, Fire/EMS Services have one of the higher injury rates in municipal employees, and the nature of this work has increased risks.
- The 2024 budget included projected increases for the various insurance coverages. In September, staff worked on preliminary cost projections for 2024 based on a preliminary modification factor received from the State and knowledge of inflationary increases of insured items. The insurance budget for 2024 is \$524,015. The proposed renewal for general, cyber, and workers' compensation for 2024 came in at \$502,442, which is \$21,573 under budget. This is a total increase of 7.7% compared to the previous year. Causes of this increase include an increase in the number of full-time personnel working for the District as one of the factors in the worker's compensation cost is the total payroll for the year. The largest factor in the District's insurance costs is worker's compensation which accounts for \$354,251 of the total premium.
- Bill Lincoln asked why some apparatus is insured at full replacement value, while other apparatus is insured at actual cost. Chief Bowen explained that this is determined by the insurance carrier and based on the apparatus's age and service life. For the first 10 years, vehicles are insured at full replacement value; however, after 10 years, due to the cost and length of service, insurance does not cover the full replacement cost.
- A motion was made by Mike Tompkins and seconded by Kent Lorenz to approve the insurance proposal from R&R Insurance effective March 2, 2024 as presented for \$502,442.00. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion/Action – 2023 Capital Improvement Purchases (Ambulances)

- Chief Bowen reviewed with the board the current proposals for the ambulances included in the 2023 Capital Improvement Plan. Staff has reviewed the specifications and needs of the District's ambulances and provided updates based on State and Federal safety requirements. Working with

Sourcewell to obtain quotes and competitive bidding according to the District's purchasing policy, the recommendation is to proceed with the bids and quotes provided. Due to supply chain delays the cost of these units has increased from what was budgeted in 2023. The Board did act in 2023 due to these known delays to purchase and install the Stryker Powerload Systems and Cots in three of the current ambulances. This was a known expense that we would have to overcome when the time came to purchase the ambulance to have this equipment installed in the new units. The amount for install of this is \$2,232.00 per unit for a total of \$6,696.00. This decision was made due to the delays in getting the replacement units, and having powerloads with cots has proven to help avoid costly worker's compensation injuries. Today the District has one unit without the powerload system. The District also purchased the chassis independently through the WI State bid program. This decision saved about \$3,000 per unit and also allowed the District to receive the units faster. We would be looking at delivery in late 2025 and now we could receive the units by summer of this year. Unfortunately, despite some of the proactive steps to save money, the costs of these units overall continued to climb over the past 18 months. As a result, the increase per unit due to inflation and supply chain delays is just shy of \$10,000. The total shortage is \$29,688 compared to what was budgeted for these units. Of the shortage, \$6,696 was known due to installing the power loads in current ambulances and having to pay to have them reinstalled in the new ambulances. Staff has reviewed the 2023 budget and propose the following use of funds to cover the shortage of funds compared to budget. First, approving these purchases locks the pricing in for the units. The quarterly increases are anticipated in March of this year, which could further increase the deficit. Since the District has had the funds accruing interest since March of 2023 we have shown the interest earned on that allocated funding to be \$26,280 in FY 2023. Payment for the units is not due until the District takes delivery, so allocating 3.5 months of earned interest in FY 2024 in the amount of \$9,008 is shown. The combined interest earned for these units is \$35,288 against the deficit of \$29,688. If this is used a surplus towards the District's fund balance of \$5,600 would still be realized.

- A motion was made by Mike Tompkins and seconded by Bill Riemenschneider to approve quote SF00757 reference 2023 Horton 623 for purchase of three ambulance as allocated in the 2023 capital budget and use earned interest for ambulances to offset expenses. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion/Action – 2024 & 2026 Capital Improvement Purchases (Ambulances)

- Chief Bowen and the team has reviewed the specifications and needs of the District's ambulances and provided updates based on State and Federal safety requirements. There have been significant Federal NHTSA requirements for these units which are not optional. These safety changes are required and result in a significant increase in cost. Ambulances are now required to have additional airbag systems within the patient compartment of the ambulance which are included in this quote. Working with Sourcewell to obtain quotes and competitive bidding according to the District's purchasing policy the recommendation is to proceed with the bids and quotes provided. The district will purchase the chassis for these units again on its own WI State bid. These units will be ordered in FY25 as model year 2026 Ford F-550 chassis. The goal is to take delivery of these chassis the beginning of 2026 just before the units begin assembly. Staff and Finance have reviewed the budget and propose the following use of funds to cover the shortage of funds compared to the budget. First, approving these purchases locks the pricing in for the units. The quarterly increases are anticipated in March of this year, which could further increase the deficit. Move the allocated funds for the FY24 ambulance into a high-interest earning account such as a CD. The Finance Manager will explore options to achieve the highest interest-earning option. This may be annual CD's or a longer term as the rates vary. The interest earned on the FY funds could range from \$35,535 to \$44,747 over the 30-month period it would be invested. This interest reduces the deficit from \$74,416 to approximately \$29,670. Between now and FY26 the budget and expenses of the District will be evaluated to cover the remaining balance. Staffs goal is to ensure the funds necessary to cover these expenses do not require additional funding from the municipalities and tax payers.

- A motion was made by Kent Lorenz and seconded by Scott Carter to approve quote SF00835 reference 26 Horton 623 for purchase of two ambulances as allocated in the 2024 and 2026 capital budgets and use earned interest for ambulances to offset costs. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion – Training and Conference Attendance Guideline

- Chief Bowen reviewed a guideline for the District’s Training and Conference Attendance of Employees. Deputy Chief Konen, Assistant Chief Gscheidmeier, Karen Mundt, and Chief have been developing this guideline to provide clearly defined paths for employees to attend certification training, outside trainings, and conferences. The team is working with legal to ensure requirements are met or exceeded as they pertain to FLSA. Further education of team members is a joint partnership between the District and employees. Scott Carter and Mike Tompkins clarified that this concept is common in the private sector and feel this is a positive step for the District. The board feels due to the dynamics of this topic, it is best to remain as a guideline so staff can make necessary changes as needed.

Future Agenda Items and Meetings

- The next regular meeting of the board will be Monday, March 25, 2024 at 4p. The meeting will be held at Station 1 (Pabst Farms).

Closed Session

1. George Morris announced, The Fire Board will convene into closed session pursuant to section 19.85(1)(e), Wisconsin State Statutes, “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: *“Intermunicipal Agreement and Contract Service Agreements with Municipalities.”* The Fire Board will not reconvene into open session at the conclusion of the closed session.
- At 5:27 p.m. a motion was made by Mike Tompkins and seconded by Bill Riemenschneider to move to closed session by roll call vote. Affirmative roll call vote by all board members.

Adjournment

- At 6:09 p.m. a motion was made by Kent Lorenz and seconded by Mike Tompkins to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.