

**Western Lakes Fire Board**  
**Monthly Board Meeting**  
**January 23, 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, Bill Riemenschneider, Mike Tompkins, Dan DeBehnke, and Scott Carter.

**Proof of Notice**

- Chief Bowen announced that the notice was posted January 20<sup>th</sup> at 2:27 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 not reconvene into open session at the conclusion of the closed session.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

- President Morris led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Comment**

- President Morris opened the meeting up to public comment. Morris reviewed the rules for public comment during WLFM 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.
- 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 December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022 regular Fire Board Meeting
  - Payment of bills for December and January in the amount of 624,949.90
- A correction to the spelling of Lou Kowieski's name was made to the minutes.
- Scott Carter asked for more information if possible regarding income and balance sheets in the future.
- A motion was made by Jeff Roemer and seconded by Dan DeBehnke to accept the Consent Agenda items including meeting minutes with correction from December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Fire Board meeting and payment of bills in the amount of \$624,949.90. Motion carried.

## **Fire Chief's Report**

- Chief Bowen reviewed with the board activities over the past month. Chief recognized the number of significant incidents the District responded to in December and January. This included a number of structure fires includes two days that had multiple structure fires on the same day. The team has endured these significant incidents during extremely cold temperatures. The members of WLFD are critical important to the success of the organization and its ability to provide services to those in need.
- Chief reviewed the recently hosted Working Together as a Team programs the District hosted. These were led by retired Assistant Chief from City of Madison and a retired Human Resources Director from University of Wisconsin.
- Recruitment efforts are ongoing to fill current paid-on-call, intern/apprentice, part-time, and full-time positions. It is a group effort to attract and hire these positions as well as completion off onboarding and orientation.
- The Chief Officers and HR continue to actively work 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. Staff is also working to redistribute roles and responsibilities among staff at WLFD to balance the workload and involve the additional staff in tasks. This is included in the Executive Management Plan that will be presented later this evening.
- Chief discussed with the board a recent resolution approved by the City of Oconomowoc and article regarding shared revenue and funding assistance from the State.

## **Assistant and Bureau Chief Reports**

- Reports from the Assistant Chief and Bureau Chiefs were included in the packet.
- Jeff Roemer made comment about all of the positive work that has been completed by the executive management team. A lot has been done in the last month, and he wanted it recognized.

## **Discussion/Action – Residency Requirements of sworn full-time employees**

- Chief Bowen reviewed with the board the current residency requirements for sworn full-time employees of the District. These were discussed and approved in September of 2022 and maintained at 15 miles from the District's jurisdictional boundaries. At that time, consideration of expanding these requirements was done. It was determined that maintaining the currently requirements at the time was appropriate, but they would be evaluated if the requirements provided a hardship in recruitment and retention of employees.
- In November the District completed a recruitment process for full-time firefighter/paramedics, battalion chiefs, and assistant chief. During the recruitment process staff at WLFD heard comments from potential applicants regarding the current residency requirements. During the assessment process and conditional offer process the Chief and HR had some candidates express a hardship meeting the current residency requirements.
- DC Ingersoll, HR Manager Mundt, and Chief Bowen evaluated the residency requirements of other fire departments as well as our local municipalities for law enforcement officers and other essential staff. Several do not have any residency requirements, while others had a variety of requirements ranging from the 15 miles to 45 miles. Based on this information the recommendation from management is to adjust the WLFD residency requirement for all sworn full-time positions to be 35 miles from District Headquarters Station #1 located at 1400 Oconomowoc Parkway, Oconomowoc, WI.
- A motion to adjust residency requirement for WLFD sworn full-time employees within the employee benefits policy and respective job descriptions from 15 miles to 35 miles from

District Headquarters Station 1 located at 1400 Oconomowoc Parkway, Oconomowoc, WI 53066 was made by Mike Tompkins and seconded by Kent Lorenz. Motion carried.

### **Presentation – 2023 Training Plan**

- Division Chief Konen of the Training Bureau presented and reviewed the 2023 Training Plan for the District. Significant time and effort has gone into the plan with input from the various disciplines of the District to ensure staff are receiving appropriate training in Fire, Rescue, EMS, and specialties such as dive, UAS, hazardous operations, and RTF.

### **Presentation – Executive Management Plan**

- Chief Bowen and the Chief Officers of the District jointly presented the executive management plan to the board. The Chief Officers and Human Resources Manager have been working on the executive management plan since September, along with the Fire Board. The plan's foundation are the core values and mission of the District. As a management team all members of executive management have worked collaboratively on various components of the plan. The plan includes the District's mission and values, development of a vision statement, 2023 Chief Officer goals, teamwork and team building programs, board/municipal/community communications, Kelly Leadership suggestions, reorganization of District structure, delegation of duties and unity of command, professional public presentation, and recruitment/retention efforts. Throughout the year various components of the plan will be implemented, and this is a living program. The executive management team will work with the membership and board on the components of the plan with implementation completed throughout the year.

### **Future Agenda Items and Meetings**

- The next regular meeting of the board will be Monday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 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 not reconvene into open session at the conclusion of the closed session.
- At 5:29 p.m. a motion was made by Jeff Roemer seconded by Kent Lorenz to move to closed session by roll call vote. Affirmative roll call vote by all board members.
- At 6:28 p.m. the closed session ended and the meeting was adjourned.