

Western Lakes Fire Board

Monthly Board Meeting

July 24, 2023

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, Dan DeBehnke, and Scott Carter. Kent Lorenz was excused.

Proof of Notice

- Chief Bowen announced that the notice was posted July 21st, at 3:37 p.m. in accordance with open meeting laws.

Pledge of Allegiance

- Deputy Chief May 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 June 26, 2023 regular Fire Board Meeting
 - Payment of bills July in the amount of \$720,667.33
- A motion was made by Jeff Roemer and seconded by Mike Dan DeBehnke to accept the Consent Agenda items including meeting minutes with correction from June 26, 2023 Fire Board meeting and payment of bills in the amount of \$720,667.33. Motion carried.

Fire Chief's Report

- Chief Bowen provided an overview of the month of July calls for service and community outreach. The week of July 4th was exceptionally busy with multiple community outreach events including parades and fireworks standbys. During the fireworks the District's boats were staffed for immediate deployment in addition to daily staffing. Due to the large number of boats on Okauchee Lake Marine 5 was deployed during the fireworks. The District responded to multiple structure fires in July as well. The District also had resources deployed for the Harley Davidson Homecoming, Dousman Derby Days, Okauchee Tie Up, and two Triathlons.
- The Open House at Station #1 was on July 8th.
- A grant was submitted for a forceable entry door prop and training equipment.
- Chief Bowen provided an update of staffing and response times. Overall the District's 90th percentile response time for an Engine or Ladder to arrive on scene has dropped 25% compared to 2022. Station's #1 and #3 which are at full staffing are now meeting NFPA turnout times for Fire and EMS responses.

Assistant Chief

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

Discussion – Waukesha County Communications Center Updates

- Chief Bowen provided the board with an update on staffing and operations at Waukesha County Communications Center. The Fire and Police Protocols groups are working with WCC

to adjust operations due to the center's staffing crisis. The District has communicated these items with all District staff with command staffing implementing contingencies during high risk incidents and high call volume periods. Chief Bowen is working with local police chiefs and municipal leaders to gather more information from WCC and provide updates on the situation.

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Discussion and Possible Action – Finance Manager Job Description

- Chief Bowen reviewed with the Fire Board the updated Finance Manager Job Description. This is a new position for the District. The position will take on the responsibilities of the current third-party accounting and payroll company which announced their upcoming retirement in 2024. The position will be responsible for the District's finances including accounts payable and receivable. Once the position is filled a software program will be selected with input from the finance manager, human resources manager, and chief. The position will be posted once the application periods for Fire Inspector and Firefighter/Paramedic are completed.
- A motion to approve the District's Finance Manager job description as presented was made by Dan DeBehnke and seconded by Mike Tompkins. Motion carried.

Discussion and Possible Action – Attendance and Participation Policy

- Chief Bowen provided the Fire Board with the draft attendance and participation policy for part-time and paid-on-call employees. Deputy Chief Ingersoll has completed the initial updates and the policy has been shared with the District's command staff for input. The management team will be meeting to discuss this policy and making amendments prior to sending to legal for review. Once completed the policy will return to the Fire Board for discussion and action.
- 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.

Discussion – 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.
- The board requested 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 special budget workshop will be hosted on August 9th to further review the budget.

Discussion – 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.

Future Agenda Items and Meetings

- Special Fire Board Budget Workshop will be held on Wednesday, August 9, 2023 at 4pm at the City of Oconomowoc Police Department.
- A Joint Owners Meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 9, 2023 at 6pm at the City of Oconomowoc Police Department.
- The next regular meeting of the board will be Monday, August 28, 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 5:40 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 6:29 p.m. the closed session ended and the meeting was adjourned.