

Western Lakes Fire Board
Monthly Board Meeting
June 24, 2024

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, and Scott Carter. Dan DeBehnke was excused.

Proof of Notice

- Chief Bowen announced that the notice was posted Friday, June 21, 2024, at 3:03 p.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.
- Jo Goralski resident of the Town of Oconomowoc addressed the Fire Board. She shared her observations and feelings since WLFD began serving the entire Town of Oconomowoc. She shared that she was upset with the decision and felt that the consolidation was the end of having local services. After being upset for two years and listening to others complain she got involved and started attending Fire Board Meeting, Owners Meetings, and paying attention to the District. She has been very impressed with the oversight and level of involvement the Fire Board has with the District. The management team provides significant information regarding services and finances of the District. She thanked the Fire Board and WLFD team for there services and feels this was a great decision to join WLFD after attending several meetings and taking the time to truly understand what all goes into providing Fire & EMS services.

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 May 22, 2024 regular Fire Board Meeting
 - Payment of bills in the amount of \$331,515.48.
- A motion was made by Dan DeBehnke and seconded by Kent Lorenz to accept the Consent Agenda items including meeting minutes from May 22, 2024 Fire Board meeting and payment of bills in the amount of \$331,515.48. Motion carried unanimously.
- With regards to payment of bills it was requested that in the future can the Finance Manager also include the wages and benefits that are paid during the same period. Chief Bowen stated this was a change made by the new Finance Manager when we brought these operations in house. The Fire Board gets the bi-weekly payroll report which is why this was removed from approval of bills. Chief Bowen will work with Finance to further enhance the reports. Once the new accounting software is implemented the end of this year, these reports and information will be much easier to provide.

Fire Chief's Report

- Chief Bowen reminded the Fire Board of the upcoming swearing-in ceremony occurring on Friday, June 28th at 4pm at the Stone Bank Station. The new full-time employees are just finishing up the three week 120 hour academy before they are sworn in. They will begin shift work on June 30th.
- Since the implementation of the sustainable staffing plan and improved staffing out the door times (deployment) for both fire and EMS incidents has reduced. This has resulted in overall reductions

in response times across the District. In addition, the District has not had to mandate full-time employees to work since the staffing plan was implemented in 2023.

- Chief Bowen provided the Board with an update and the staff's progress on the 2025 budget process and that a draft budget will be presented during the July meeting.
- Staff is working with Waukesha County Communications Center on dispatching and mapping challenges. A significant improvement was made to the County mapping system to include speed limits, one way roads, elevations, and bridges. These are huge improvements to assist with sending the closest most appropriate units to calls for service, and has been a priority project for nearly 10 years. It finally was completed, but has come with challenges. As a result there are issues with the new map roll and at times the system is saying no units can respond. This is requiring the Battalion Chief, district staff, and dispatchers to manually catch these problems when they occur and make decisions. Critical thinking is a significant part of public safety, and when software doesn't work properly it can result in delays and challenges. Waukesha County has been extremely responsive to these issues, and is working vigorously to correct them. They have resulted in a number of incidents that did not route the correct apparatus resulting to WLF D staff having to make decisions and manual toning.
- Working with Waukesha County on reducing the workload and margin of error when manually entering response plans to over 2,000 different incident types the District can be sent to. With this many responses requiring a response plan it causes room for error at many steps in the process. A committee is working to reduce this by 80% and overall improve the deployment of Fire/EMS resources throughout the County. This should be completed by the end of the year.
- Significant evaluation has gone into the District's facilities, apparatus, and equipment. Held joint meeting with AC Schuetz, AC Gscheidmeier, and DC Igl to look at the District current and future needs.

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.
- FF/Med Sam Humbracht shared with the board his involvement with the upcoming Fire/EMS Explorer Faceoff at WCTC. Sam shared his experiences entering Fire/EMS and joining WLF D's apprentice program before being hired full-time. He now oversees the District's Explorer's Post.

Discussion/Action – 2023 Financial Audit by Clifton Larsen Allen

- Chief Bowen reviewed with the Board the District's 3rd party audit of the 2023 financials completed by Clifton Larsen Allen. This audit was presented to the Board and Municipal Elected Officials by CLA during the June Joint Municipal Meeting. The only changes that have been made since the audit was presented were to the notes. The auditors updated the audit to reflect the fund balance policy as well as the separation of duties within the District's staff in accordance with GASB. Due to the District's size it is difficult to completely meet all requirements of separation of duties which is consistent with other similar or smaller entities. With the addition of the Finance Manager Position and new accounting software additional separation of duties will be achieved.
- Treasurer Lorenz shared his experiences with the District's financials, auditors, finance manager, and chief. He is very pleased with how the audit went and the work completed by everyone. As the audit demonstrates the writedowns due to Medicare and Medicaid continue to increase which Chief Bowen has continued to highlight during the budget process. As a board we need to recognize that we are seeing more and more of these write downs due to Medicare and Medicaid which impacts our bottom line.
- A motion was made by Kent Lorenz and seconded by Jeff Roemer to accept the draft 2023 Financial Audit by Clifton Larsen Allen as presented and signify the audit as completed. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion – Intermunicipal Agreement Changes

- Chief Bowen opened up the discussion following the Joint Municipal Meeting in June regarding draft changes to the IMA. Specific to the Fire Board, Chief Bowen has asked for them to provide any changes they feel need to be made from the Boards perspective.
- Scott Carter shared that he feels the section pertaining to the Fire Board needs to be rewritten to reflect the modern day operations of the District. Since the IMA was originally written the District has evolved and the IMA should reflect the Fire Boards roles and responsibilities accordingly. He suggests that Board Members make their notes and comments regarding changes and bring to the July meeting to consider changes.
- Kent Lorenz agrees with Scott Carter and feels due to technology and operational changes it is the right time to address these changes.
- Mike Tompkins also feels that with the District having staff that complete much of the administrative work the role of board members have changed.

Discussion/Action – Okauchee Display Truck Lease Agreement

- Chief Bowen provided the board with an update to the lease agreement for the Okauchee Display Truck. This agreement is for the REO Speedwagon Engine that was refurbished by the Okauchee Fire Association and would like to return it to the Okauchee Station and be on display as well as community events. The agreement has gone through legal review and been approved by the Okauchee Fire Board. Changes to the agreement since the Fire Board last reviewed include updating the insurance coverage, value of the truck, and agreeing on a maintenance budget as needed for the truck.
- A motion was made by Jeff Roemer and seconded by Bill Riemenschneider to approve the Okauchee Display Truck Lease Agreement as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion – 2025 Budget Process

- Chief Bowen shared with the the Board that budget numbers for 2025 are beginning to come in including WRS, insurance, and health insurance projections. Staff has actively been working on the operating budget for 2025 and will present a draft budget in July. As part of the budget process a budget workshop has been tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, August 13th at 4pm. Based on last year's budget process staff is taking these requests into account including transitioning sale of assets to capital revenue from the operating budget, considering transitioning PPE purchased from capital to operating, and overall evaluating the District's revenues and expenses. The Fire Board must act on the budget by the end of August as the budget is due to the municipalities by September 1st. The Joint Municipal Budget meeting is scheduled for September 11th.

Future Agenda Items and Meetings

- Monthly Fire Board Meeting – Monday, July 29, 4:00 pm at Station 1. Chief requested the meeting change to this date due to the RNC the week prior. The Board support this change.
- Special Budget Workshop – Tuesday, August 13, 4:00 pm at Station 1

Adjournment

- At 4:58 p.m. a motion was made by Jeff Roemer and seconded by Kent Lorenz to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.