

**Western Lakes Fire Board**  
**Monthly Board Meeting**  
**March 27, 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, Mike Tompkins, Bill Riemenschneider, Dan DeBehnke, and Scott Carter.

**Proof of Notice**

- Chief Bowen announced that the notice was posted March 24<sup>th</sup> at 12:43 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**

- Karen Mundt led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Following the Pledge of Allegiance, a moment of silence was held in honor of Chief Yandre.

**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 February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023 regular Fire Board Meeting
  - Payment of bills February in the amount of \$277,960.35
- A motion was made by Jeff Roemer and seconded by Dan DeBehnke to accept the Consent Agenda items including meeting minutes with correction from February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Fire Board meeting and payment of bills in the amount of \$277,960.35. Motion carried.

**Fire Chief's Report**

- Chief Bowen reviewed with the board activities over the past month. Chief reminded the board of the upcoming Open House at Station 6 on Sunday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> with the Easter Bunny and Easter Egg Hunt.

- An update was provided on the Wisconsin Office of Rural Health's report which was recently released regarding the status of EMS systems throughout the State of Wisconsin.
- Chief discussed the positive recruitment and retention efforts by the team the past six months. The number of open positions has been cut in half since the beginning of the year. For the full-time positions the District continues to see increased number of applicants. This has been a group effort with DC Ingersoll and HR Manager Mundt orchestrating the efforts. The team has been involved with Highschool and Cadet/Explorer Post recruitment, Dual Enrollment Academy at WCTC, Recruitment Fairs at Waukesha, Madison, and Milwaukee Colleges, Apprentice Program recruitment, the full-time FF/Med recruitment resulted in 30 applications recently, and the full-time Lieutenant Process closes on April 5<sup>th</sup>. The improved and competitive wages have been a significant part of this, however the improved staffing has helped with bandwidth and burnout prevention. The staffing plan over the next three years brings the District to an effective response force which candidates consider when applying.
- The District is evolving which means as staffing levels are adjusted operational guidelines are adjusted. With some stations having daily staffing of 5 personnel it is allowing for both a Fire & EMS response force. This is not consistent at each of the stations, until the additional staff is hired over the next three years.
- The swearing in for Battalion Chiefs Carriveau, Giannini, and Straus will be held on Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup> at 4pm. They will begin orientation on Monday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> and then will be on field training with a target date of May 7<sup>th</sup> them running the Duty Chief position.
- Staff is currently in the process of scheduling in person HR trainings, Just Culture Training, and Team Building exercises in addition to the regularly scheduled Fire and EMS Trainings.

#### **Assistant Chief**

- Reports from the Assistant Chief and Bureau Chiefs were included in the packet.
- Mike Tompkins asked how the trial period of the 48/96 shift is going. Members present indicated that so far they have heard positive comments.

#### **Discussion/Action – Lexipol Policy Development**

- Chief Bowen reviewed with the board a proposal to switch to Lexipol Policy Development. The District's policies are drafted internally by staff along with review by legal counsel prior to approval by the board. The review and drafting of policies to ensure they meet local, state, and national rules and regulations is a time-consuming process and requires frequent review. As a result, staff invest significant time on the development of policy along with legal costs reviewing policies. Recently the District's insurance provider brought forward that they assist with the cost of Lexipol Policy Management to their clients. The District's insurance provides this assistance as they recognize the importance of ongoing policy review, updates, and training. Lexipol is a nationwide provider of policies and training and is regularly updating the policies its users utilize.
- Several neighboring departments utilize the program and have found it beneficial with maintaining policies and training. The District's legal counsel also supports the system for policy development and training. Staff has received a proposal from Lexipol and recommends proceeding with policy implementation and management. The initial implementation cost would be covered in 2023 and the annual cost would be included in future budgets. The cost of the program will be covered using funds not spent the first quarter of 2023 with the vacant assistant chief position. Currently the savings of this vacancy is \$50,000, and would be used for this training and the Lexipol Policy Implementation.

- The cost to transfer to Lexipol and complete the initial policy implementation in 2023 is projected to be \$23,187.00 with an ongoing annual cost for policy maintenance and training to be \$14,772.60. The District's insurance will cover \$2,500 annually towards this program. Staff recommends proceeds with transferring the District's policies to Lexipol in 2023. The transition would begin in June with staff working on the conversation through the remainder of the year.
- Members of the Board support the concept of Lexipol. Due to it being the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the year the consensus is to include this as part of the 2024 budget, and to have further discussion as part of the budget development in July. Jeff Roemer feels this is the standard for policy development and a great resource the District should adopt. Scott Carter also feels this is important, and recognizes the risk if not implemented now that currently some policies do not exist.
- The board would like staff to further investigate the terms of a contract with Lexipol, including the annual fee compared to the development fee. Also, once implemented, who owns the policies.
- A motion was made by Jeff Roemer seconded by Scott Carter for staff to bring forward a plan and budget for Lexipol and present as part of the 2024 budget. Motion carried.

#### **Discussion/Action – Affirmative Action/Harassment/Diversity/Inclusion Training**

- The District's Affirmative Action/Harassment Policy was recently updated in February of 2023. In addition of releasing the updated Policy Human Resources and the Chief feel in person training on affirmative action, harassment, diversity, and inclusion is important for the membership of WLF. Human Resources has evaluated multiple training options and is recommending Trinity HR Business Partners to complete the in-person trainings. The District completes annual training on its policies along with online affirmative action training through Target Solutions. Human Resources has completed phone interviews and reviewed educational materials from Trinity and recommends them to complete the trainings. The initial proposal is for three District wide session and two management/supervisor sessions. Due to the shift schedule and to ensure all staff are able to attend one of these sessions the training will be spread over a two-week period and two additional sessions are being requested. With the increased sessions the price is projected to increase. The cost of the program will be covered using funds not spent the first quarter of 2023 with the vacant assistant chief position. Currently the savings of this vacancy is \$50,000, and would be used for this training and the Lexipol Policy Implementation.
- A motion was made by Mike Tompkins and seconded by Dan DeBehnke to approve Human Resources to proceed with Sexual Harassment, Anti-Discrimination and Diversity and Inclusion Training with Trinity HR Business Partners in an amount not to exceed \$5,000. Motion carried

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

- The next regular meeting of the board will be Monday, April 24<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 5:05 p.m. a motion was made by Kent Lorenz seconded by Mike Tompkins to move to closed session by roll call vote. Affirmative roll call vote by all board members.
- At 5:46 p.m. the closed session ended and the meeting was adjourned.