

Western Lakes Fire Board

Monthly Board Meeting

November 27, 2023

Call to Order

- George Morris called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. Board members present were George Morris, Jeff Roemer, Kent Lorenz, Dan DeBehnke, and Scott Carter. Mike Tompkins and Bill Riemenschneider were excused.

Proof of Notice

- Chief Bowen announced that the notice was posted November 22nd, 2023, at 4:08 p.m. in accordance with open meeting laws.

Pledge of Allegiance

- Assistant Chief Ross Gscheidmeier led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

- George Morris opened the meeting up to public comment, of which there was none.

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 October 23, 2023 regular Fire Board Meeting
 - Payment of bills August in the amount of \$402,317.97.
- A motion was made by Jeff Roemer and seconded by Dan DeBehnke to accept the Consent Agenda items including meeting minutes from October 23, 2023 Fire Board meeting and payment of bills in the amount of \$402,317.97. Motion carried unanimously.

Fire Chief's Report

- Chief Bowen updated the board on various meetings since the September meeting, specifically many municipalities that had meetings regarding Fire Protection Services Fees. The Chief also met with other Chiefs and representatives of Waukesha County Communications Center regarding their staffing and operations. The Chief attended a Leadership Development Program in Maryland along with Lt. DuCharme. The next full-time academy to fill vacant positions starts on November 1st and Assistant Chief Gscheidmeier starts on November 13th. The swearing in ceremony for these positions will be Wednesday, November 15th at 4pm at Station 1. The District is hosting a large scale regional active shooter exercise later this week. In November the District has assisted with a venue for Chief Officer Development.

Assistant Chief

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

Discussion/Action – Employee Benefits Policy

- Chief Bowen provided the board with an update regarding the District full-time employee benefits policy following the October meeting and final legal review. The policy was reviewed with legal with a recommended change to the probationary time for sworn full-time employees changing from 12 months to 18 months. The policy became effective on November 9, 2023.

- A motion was made by Dan Debhenke and seconded by Jeff Roemer to approve the revised District Employee Benefits Policy as presented effective 11/9/2023. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion/Action – 2024 Capital Improvement Project (Engine)

- The Chief provided an update on the specification and bidding process for the replacement engine included in the 2024 capital budget. The build time is between 24 and 36 months. To meet the District’s Purchasing Policy and Public Bidding the Sourcewell Public Bidding Program was utilized. The District has been a member of the program and used it in the past. Treasurer Lorenz and Chief Bowen completed an analysis of the prepayment discount against the potential interest earned by the District. The recommendation is to prepay and receive the prepayment discount. The bid and price includes the newer EAP model motor which is an increase of nearly \$100,000. If the District can get a motor prior to the cutover that will be reduced. Though the build time is 24 to 36 months, this contract locks the price in for the engine.
- Scott Carter asked for confirmation that the District will be receiving a bid bond as part of this purchase. This is included in the bid due to prepayment and the build time for the engine.
- A motion was made by Jeff Roemer and seconded by Kent Lorenz to approve the 2024 capital project replacement engine as bid by Sourcewell for a Pierce Custom Rescue Engine at a cost not to exceed \$990,000.00 following prepayment discount. Motion Carried.

Discussion/Action – Village of Merton, Town of Merton, Western Lakes Fire District Lease Agreement Concerning Apparatus and Equipment.

- Chief Bowen walked the board through the partnership and spirit of cooperation between the Village of Merton, Town of Merton, and Western Lakes Fire District. In 2019 the Town of Merton reviewed its Fire and EMS Services Agreements including service levels, consistency, and budgets. The decision was made to contract with the Western Lakes Fire District in 2020 for areas previously covered by the Stone Bank Fire Department. At that time the Town expressed the desire to become part owner of WLFD through intermunicipal agreement in the future and work with a single agency. The Town is currently served by Western Lakes Fire District, Hartland Fire Department, and the Merton Community Fire Department. Over the past year the Fire Departments and Municipalities have been working on a cooperative agreement to maintain or improve services and work together. These efforts have brought the Fire Departments and Municipalities to this point with the following agreements being presented to the board. Effective January 1, 2024 the Merton Community Fire Department which is a private non-municipal fire company will be dissolved and the Village of Merton Fire Department will be established. The Town of Merton will continue to be served by the Western Lakes Fire District, Hartland Fire Department, and Village of Merton Fire Department.
- Village of Merton President Ron Reinowski was present, and spoke in favor of these agreements and his support of the cooperative agreement and approach to serve the communities and for the Fire Departments to work together.
- The lease agreement allows the Village of Merton Fire Department to continue utilizing equipment and apparatus it currently uses to serve the eastern parts of the Town of Merton. This agreement has been reviewed by the three organizations legal counsel’s as part of the process.
- A motion was made by Dan DeBehnke and seconded by Jeff Roemer to approve Agreement between the Village of Merton, Town of Merton, and Western Lakes Fire District Concerning Apparatus and Equipment conditional that any subsequent non-substantive changes are approved by the District’s Attorney. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion/Action – Village of Merton and Western Lakes Fire District Agreement for Fire and Rescue Protective Services

- This agreement is between the Village of Merton and the Western Lakes Fire District to have the Village of Merton Fire Department serve the eastern portions of the Town of Merton as they currently do. The cost of this was included in the 2024 WLFD budget and the amount paid by the Town of Merton into the District budget includes this amount due to the Village of Merton. The partnership between the municipalities and WLFD maintains current service areas between the Village of Merton Fire Department, Hartland Fire Department, and Western Lakes Fire District. The agreement is for five years, which allows stability to the three Departments and also to the Town of Merton.
- Scott Carter and Bill Lincoln asked if the cost of these services are included in the current and future WLFD budgets. The 2024 budget and future budgets have a line item for both the operational and capital costs which are paid by the Town of Merton.
- A motion was made by Kent Lorenz and seconded by Dan DeBehnke to approve Agreement between the Village of Merton and Western Lakes Fire District for Fire and Emergency Medical Services conditional that any subsequent non-substantive changes are approved by the District's Attorney. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion/Action – Town of Merton and Western Lakes Fire District Agreement for Fire & EMS Protective Services

- This agreement is between the Town of Merton and the Western Lakes Fire District to amend the current agreement and incorporate the additional service area in the Town of Merton and allow WLFD to subcontract portions to the Village of Merton. The agreement is for five years to coincide with the Village of Merton and Western Lakes Agreement. Currently the Town of Merton, Town of Oconomowoc, and Owners of Western Lakes Fire District are reviewing and amending the current WLFD Intermunicipal Agreement to expand ownership of WLFD to include the Town of Merton and Town of Oconomowoc.
- A motion was made by Jeff Roemer and seconded by Dan DeBehnke to approve Amended and Restated Contract between the Town of Merton and Western Lakes Fire District for Fire & EMS Protection conditional that any subsequent non-substantive changes are approved by the District's Attorney. Motion carried unanimously.

Future Agenda Items and Meetings

- Due to Christmas the December Fire Board meeting will be moved to Monday, December 18th, 2023 at 4pm and held at Station #1.

Adjournment

- At 5:01 p.m. a motion was made by Jeff Roemer and seconded by Dan DeBehnke to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.