

Western Lakes Fire Board
Monthly Board Meeting
October 27, 2025

Call to Order

- Jeff Roemer called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Board members present were Jeff Roemer, Kent Lorenz, Dan DeBehnke, and Scott Carter. Excused were George Morris, Mike Tompkins, and Kevin Laabs.

Proof of Notice

- Chief Bowen announced that the notice was posted Friday, October 24, 2025, at 2:59 p.m. in accordance with open meeting laws.

Pledge of Allegiance

- Jeff Roemer, led the Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

- Jeff Roemer 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 September 22, 2025 regular Fire Board Meeting
 - Payment of bills in the amount of \$1,025,271.36.
- A motion was made by Dan DeBehnke and seconded by Kent Lorenz to approve the Consent Agenda items including meeting minutes from September 12, 2025, and payment of bills in the amount of \$1,025,271.36. Motion carried unanimously.

Fire Chief's Report

- Chief Bowen provided updates for the fire board's monthly report on District and Administrative Operations. These updates included the completion of the Facilities Needs Assessment and Impact Fee Study which will be presented in November, a projection on the current year to date financials and year end fund balance contribution with capital carryover funds due to apparatus delivery dates. Chief Bowen recognized the recent swearing inn ceremony and record attendance for the Assistant Chiefs and Firefighter/Paramedics joining the District.
- Chief Bowen shared a thank you letter submitted by Lt. Meka showing his appreciation in attending the Leadership Under Fire Program, and knowledge he gained from the program.

Chief Officer Reports

- Jeff Roemer asked if any of the Chief's had anything to add to their reports, and if the board had any questions.

Discussion/Action – Village of Merton FD Operating & Capital Budget Contributions

- Chief Bowen opened the agenda item highlighting materials included in the packet from Chief Paral. A revised budget has been submitted which increases the projected EMS revenues based on a through review and supporting materials from EMSMC. This has resulted in a decrease in the requested levy amount. Chief Bowen turned the floor over to Chief Paral to present the revised budget and supporting materials included in the packet.
- Chief Paral, reviewed with the board an analysis conducted regarding additional staffing at the Merton Fire Department. This analysis includes call volume the past four years including in-house

and paid-on-call staffing levels. Chief Paral, reviewed with the board changes in the draft budget including a reduction in requested funding for health insurance costs, an increase in EMS revenues following detailed analysis and projections from the billing vendor, and an increase to the 2% fire dues revenue. The revenue projections and expense reduction result in a decrease in levy funding from the District and Village of Merton. Originally a proposed 11.91% increase was requested, and the revised budget includes a 8.3% increase.

- Donna Hann, Town of Merton Clerk asked the board if she could ask a few questions. Jeff Roemer asked the board if they had any objections to allowing her to ask questions as public comment is over. Members of the board support her asking questions as a municipal representative.
- Donna, asked questions about the proposed budget and through what date the year-to-date revenue and expense values are through. As if they are through the month, these values are coming in under budget, which she wonders why additional compensation is necessary if the case. She also asked Chief Paral for details on Fire Inspection invoices sent in 2024 and 2025, asking for the amounts invoiced and actual amounts collected. She congratulated Chief Paral on receiving a grant, but asked where grant revenues and expenses are shown in his budget materials, as she was not able to locate them. Lastly, she asked how the EMS revenues can be so far off from what was in the budget, and the discrepancy in the 2024 budget.
- Chief Paral could not provide information on the year-to-date budget figures and would need to get information from the Village Treasurer, which he indicated the same for the grant revenues and expenses. Regarding the inspection invoices he shared that the full amount invoiced in 2024 could not be collected and they revised their fee schedule for 2025 to reflect actual costs. The EMS revenues was a problem with the audit and supporting materials have been submitted to the District and Town regarding this matter.
- A motion was made by Kent Lorenz and seconded by Dan DeBehnke to table this item until the next meeting as there are more questions than answers at this time. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion/Action – Blood Services Agreement, Dr. Schultz & Dr. Cady

- Chief Bowen introduced Dr. Schultz to the board and the vision for pre-hospital blood administration in the field. Materials were included in the packet regarding research on the use of pre-hospital and benefits to patient outcomes.
- Dr. Schultz reviewed with the board his vision for strategically placed pre-hospital blood across Waukesha County. He has been working with Versiti, Inc. on the agreement and program the past several years to ensure an effective program that is sustainable and beneficial to patient outcomes in the region. Highlighting why the Western Lakes Fire District is an ideal agency to get the program off the ground based on call volume, location, response times, and the innovative and proactive culture of WLFD. Additionally, with WLFD having several paramedic trained to the critical care level many have already been trained on blood administration.
- Chief Bowen reviewed the fiscal impacts to the District including the storage and administration equipment and initial blood product costs. These initial costs are included in the EMS budget. The ongoing costs should be limited to under \$1,000 annually should there not be waste or damage of blood products.
- Dr. DeBehnke, shared that he fully supports this and based on his time as a physician at a trauma center indicates the research supports pre-hospital blood administration and would improve the quality of life in the region and patient outcomes.
- A motion was made by Dan DeBehnke and seconded by Kent Lorenz to approve the Blood Services Agreement with Versiti, Inc. as presented and proceed with the next steps in the program. Prior to implementation to bring the operational guideline, implementation plan, and tracking plan to the board for approval. Motion carried unanimously.

Presentation – Fleet & Facilities Bureau, Deputy Chief Chris Igl

- DC Igl provided the board with an overview of his daily, monthly, and yearly obligations managing the District's Fleet & Facilities. He reviewed with the board mandatory testing and compliance

which is required for the District and the time spent on these programs. To provide the board with more in depth knowledge and understanding he shared detailed information on the annual fire apparatus pump testing process.

Discussion/Action – Town of Ashippun EMS Contract Extension

- Chief Bowen presented the revised services agreement and cost to the Town of Ashippun for Emergency Medical Services. Chief Bowen shared that while meeting with the Town of Ashippun they asked about a counteroffer to the services and cost agreement in 2026 and 2027. Their proposal allows for an increased contribution in 2026, but a smoother step increase in 2027 and 2028. This revised proposal is recommended by the Chief.
- Kent Lorenz shared his analysis of the proposed agreement and appreciated the negotiation the Chief did with the Town of Ashippun and their willingness to negotiate in good faith.
- A motion was made by Kent Lorenz and seconded by Dan DeBehnke to approve the revised contract for EMS services with the Town of Ashippun.

Discussion/Action – Fireground Physical Ability Test Equipment and Validation

- Chief Bowen reviewed the proposal of the Districts plan to implement a standardized annual Fireground Physical Ability Test (FPAT) to strengthen employee health and safety and ensure operational readiness. This initiative addresses the current gap in NFPA-compliant physical assessments for incumbent personnel and replaces reliance on outsourced pre-employment testing with an integrated, cost-effective solution. FPAT offers significant advantages over CPAT, including lower long-term costs, greater scheduling flexibility, and District-owned equipment. Legal counsel has confirmed compliance requirements, and a third-party partner (IOS) will assist with policy development and validation. The Health and Safety Committee will review FPAT in November, with implementation targeted for January 2026. Employees will receive three months' notice for training. Initial implementation costs total \$84,180, funded through budget savings and contingency allocations, with annual ongoing costs of \$10,075. Despite an unplanned engine repair, the District remains under budget. ROI is projected within 4–5 years, and collaboration with other agencies may further reduce expenses. Management recommends approval of FPAT funding to enhance safety, reduce risk, and achieve long-term cost savings.
- A motion was made by Dan DeBehnke and seconded by Scott Carter to authorize the Chief to proceed with the next steps of the Fireground Physical Ability Test implementation plan and work with the Administrative Division of the District, including Assistant Chief Meyer, Deputy Chief Ingersoll, and the District's Health and Safety Committee on this process. The board approves the allocation and use of \$84,180 of funds in 2025 for the purchase of the FPAT equipment, and IO Solutions validation, and associated legal expenses.

Future Agenda Items and Meetings

- Joint Municipal Meeting – Wednesday, November 12, 2025, at 7:00 pm at City of Oconomowoc Police Department.
- Monthly Fire Board Meeting – Monday, November 24, 2025, at 4:00 pm at Station #1.

Closed Session

- Jeff Roemer 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, benefits, and performance evaluations related to specific employees.*” The Fire Board will not reconvene into open session at the conclusion of the closed session.

- Chief Bowen asked that Assistant Chiefs Hoffman and Meyer be invited to the closed session.
- A motion was made at 5:27 pm to enter into closed session by Scott Carter and seconded by Dan DeBehnke. Roll call vote was performed with all in favor.
- A motion was made at 6:52 pm to end closed session by Kent Lorenz and seconded by Dan DeBehnke. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

- At 6:52 p.m. the meeting was adjourned upon the conclusion of the closed session.