

# Western Lakes Fire Board

## Monthly Board Meeting

### September 25, 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 September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, at 1:20 p.m. in accordance with open meeting laws.

#### **Pledge of Allegiance**

- Bill Lincoln 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 August 28, 2023 regular Fire Board Meeting
  - Payment of bills August in the amount of \$374,627.49.
- A motion was made by Mike Tompkins and seconded by Jeff Roemer to accept the Consent Agenda items including meeting minutes with correction from August 28, 2023 Fire Board meeting and payment of bills in the amount of \$374,627.49. Motion carried.

#### **Fire Chief's Report**

- Chief Bowen updated the board on various meetings since the August meeting. These included working with municipalities on the Fire Service Fees, adoption of the 2024 operating budget and 2024 – 2026 capital improvement budget, and working with the Town of Merton, Village of Merton, and Merton Community Fire Department on collaboration of services to the Town of Merton. A conditional offer of employment for the Assistant Chief has been made and the candidate is currently going through the conditions of employment. Working on updating a series of policies through the end of the year.

#### **Assistant Chief**

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

#### **Discussion/Action – 2024 Health Insurance Contribution Percentage**

- The Chief and Human Resources have evaluated the current health plan being offered by the District and provided the attached analysis and recommendation to the board. Currently the District covers 88% of the lowest cost provider in the PO4 plan which is the low deductible with dental coverage plan. The District also provides a health reimbursement account for the employees to assist with the deductible costs.
- In 2023 the District eliminated the use of the health reimbursement program for the District's full-time employees. The employees are responsible for the deductible portion of the plan.
- The recommendation is for the District to remain in the PO4 plan and for the District to cover 87% of the lowest cost plan. Health Insurance costs for 2024 increased dramatically for next

year. Originally, we anticipated an increase of 6% and then increased it to 14% based on information received from the State. After receiving the final costs from the State the increase was actually an overall 17.8% increase to the plan. After evaluating the approved budget and the increases to the District and Employees for Health Insurance the above recommendation was determined. This does create an increase to both the District and Employees for Health Insurance. The State is making changes to the Health Insurance Program moving forward to lock in price increases for the next two years and to release the premium costs sooner.

- Motion to approve health insurance as presented for 2024 with the District covering 87% of the lowest cost provider for eligible full-time employees, and 50% or 25% for eligible part-time employees according to policy was made by Jeff Roemer and seconded by Dan Debehne. Motion Carried.

### **Discussion/Action – Dodge County Joint Powers Agreement**

- Chief Bowen reviewed with the board the annual joint powers agreement for Dodge County 911. This agreement is for services provided to the Town of Ashippun in Dodge County and required per State Statute 256.35(9).
- A motion to approve the 2024 Joint Powers Agreement between Dodge County Sheriff's Department and Western Lakes Fire District was made Mike Tompkins and seconded by Dan DeBehnke. Motion Carried

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

- The next regular meeting of the board will be Monday, October 23, 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 5:09 p.m. a motion was made by Mike Tompkins seconded by Bill Riemenschneider to move to closed session by roll call vote. Affirmative roll call vote by all board members.
- At \_\_\_\_ p.m. the closed session ended and the meeting was adjourned.