

# Western Lakes Fire Board

## Monthly Board Meeting

### January 24, 2022

#### Call to Order

- George Morris called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m. Board members present were George Morris, Jeff Roemer, Kent Lorenz, Bill Riemenschneider, Mike Tompkins, and Charlie Shaw. Eric Jensen was excused.

#### Proof of Notice

- Chief Bowen announced that the notice was posted January 21<sup>st</sup> at 2:51p.m. to the district web site, newspapers and at stations 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6.

#### Pledge of Allegiance

- City of Oconomowoc Administrator Mark Frye led the pledge of allegiance.

#### Announcement of Closed Session

- George Morris announced that the District Fire Board will convene into closed session pursuant to section 19.85(1)(e), Wisconsin State Statutes, “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: Contract Service Agreements with other Municipalities.” The Fire Board will not reconvene into open session at the conclusion of the closed session.

#### Public Comment

- George Morris opened the meeting to comments from the public, 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 December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 regular Fire Board Meeting
  - Payment of Bills - \$661,058.23
  - Ambulance and Highway refunds
- A motion was made by Jeff Roemer and seconded by Kent Lorenz to accept the Consent Agenda items including meeting minutes from December 15, 2021 Fire Board meeting, and payment of bills in the amount of \$661,058.23. Motion carried.

#### Fire Chief's Report

- Chief Bowen reviewed with the board the 2021 year end calls for service. The District responded to 6,591 calls in 2021 which is a 16% increase in call volume. The District has been busy with the increased COVID cases, along with general calls for service the last several months.
- Chief Bowen also invited the Fire Board to attend an upcoming fund raiser on February 26<sup>th</sup> at Cornerstone Eatery in Oconomowoc. The owner offered to host the fundraiser, and assist the District with raising funds for new video laryngoscopes to assist the paramedics with intubation of critical patients requiring advanced airway management.
- The Chief also reviewed with the board a number of FEMA grants that the District is submitting for this year. The grants include vehicle exhaust systems for many of the Stations. Currently, Station 6 does not have any system in place to remove the exhaust which has been

linked to significant health problems including cancer. Stations 1, 2, and 3 have original systems that are beginning to require significant maintenance. The grant would cover 90% of the replacement cost. In addition, the District is submitting a SAFER grant which is for sustainable staffing. The grant submission will be for a total of (9) full-time firefighter/paramedics. If awarded the funding would assist with the wages and benefits for these positions over a three-year period. If awarded the either or both grants, the board and municipalities will have to vote to accept the grants and terms of implementation.

#### **Assistant Chief and Bureau Chief Reports**

- The Fire Board reviewed the reports from each of the Assistant Chiefs and Bureau Chiefs for the previously month.
- DC Igl, thanked Captain Laue for all of his efforts and leadership with the two new ambulances from the time of bidding them out, ordering, and getting them in-service.
- Jeff Roemer asked for more information regarding the partnership between Western Lakes Fire District and McHenry Township Fire Protection District. He thinks this a great networking idea, and would like the board to be invited to meet with them and their board members the next time a visit occurs.

#### **Presentation – WLFD Explorer/Cadet (FF/Med Voigt)**

- Firefighter/Paramedic Chandler Voigt presented to the board the District's revised explorer/cadet program. He reviewed the past success of the program prior to COVID and how many of the High School Explorers continued beyond the program entering into the District's internship, and eventually obtaining full-time employment. He reviewed the plan to work with High Schools that have students of the District interested in Fire/EMS and how the revised program is being kicked off.

#### **Discussion/Action – Sustainable Staffing/Funding Update**

- Chief Bowen provided the Fire Board with an update on the Districts sustainable staffing and funding project. Over the last 20 years there has been a significant decline in residents serving as paid-on-call/"volunteer" firefighters and EMT's. This has increased the District's and agencies locally, the State, and the Country to rely more heavily on full-time employees to maintain services. The Chief reviewed the gap assessment that has been completed to identify the deficiencies currently and, in the future, if changes are not made. The assessment includes response times, staffing levels, comparisons, and costs for these services. National Standards are the matrix for the data being assessed, to ensure a consistent approach and review of this information. The District and Municipalities continue to work with Mueller Communications on an Options Assessment which will be presented to the board and elected officials later this winter. Simultaneous a community survey is being created and will be released this spring to determine the community's awareness of Fire/EMS and the model currently in place and determine the service levels expected from the District's residents.

#### **Discussion/Action – Sustainable Staffing/Funding Update**

- Chief Bowen reviewed with the board the 2022 insurance renewal materials with the board. The biggest increase for 2022 is for Workman's Compensation Insurance. The mod factor for the District increased from a 1.06 to a 1.43 this year, unfortunately due to significant injuries that occurred the previous year. Chief thanked AC Schuetz for his efforts getting the renewal together and completed much earlier this year.
- A motion was made by Tompkins seconded by Roemer to approve insurance proposal from R&R Insurance effective March, 2, 2022. Motion carried.

**Recess**

- The board had went into recess at 5:08 pm to tour the newly remodeled Station #5. The Fire Board and attendees were provided a tour of the Station by staff.
- The board returned from recess at 5:35 pm

**Closed Session**

- At 5:38 pm the Fire Board convened into closed session by roll-call vote. Motion by Morris, seconded by Lorenz, roll call vote unanimously approved.

**Adjournment**

- At 6:39 pm, the meeting adjourned.

The next regular board meeting will be February 28<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 pm at the Western Lakes Station #2.