

WEST METRO FIRE-RESCUE DISTRICT

Work Session Notes

May 9, 2017

Approved July 11, 2018

A. Call to order

President Gary Laurant called the work session of the West Metro Fire-Rescue District Board of Directors to order at 6:30 p.m. on May 9, 2018, at Station 3, 4251 Xylon Avenue N., New Hope, MN.

B. Roll Call – The following Directors were present:

Gary Laurant	Representative at Large, President
Anne Norris	City Manager, City of Crystal, Secretary
Kirk McDonald	City Manager, City of New Hope, Vice President
Jeff Kolb	Council, City of Crystal
Mary Serie	Citizen Representative, City of Crystal

The following staff members were present:

Fire Chief Sarah Larson
Assistant Fire Chief Adam Wodtke
Assistant Fire Chief Joel Nelson
District Counsel Roger Knutson
Recording Secretary Amy Juntunen, JASS

C. 2019 Budget

Chief Larson has worked on the 2019 budget with the City Managers. The budget has been pared down as much as possible but does require an increase over the 2018 member assessments of \$126,450, or about 5.5%. This includes a \$20,000 increase to the capital contribution over 2018. It was determined that a \$20,000 increase each year through 2022 is required to fully fund the Capital Plan. The Capital Plan does not include apparatus such as fire engines. The driving force of the remaining increase is in salaries, insurance, the lease payment for the tower, and fuel.

Chief Larson completed a line-by-line review of the proposed 2019 budget. Regular salaries increased by \$32,000, including a proposed 3% COLA that one member city is planning for 2019. The District usually adopts the COLA of the member cities. The Battalion Chief position is being reorganized this year and Sean Watson will be promoted to Assistant Chief, resulting in an increased salary. The District will also be hiring new firefighters in 2019 to go through the Fire Academy as attrition occurs. There is an expected increase of \$13,000, or 20%, for health insurance coverage in 2019. There was an increase of 18.4% in 2018 and this amount is a “best guess.” Workers Compensation insurance was increased by \$12,000 based on an expected change to the modifier due to an accident. Worker’s Comp insurance is purchased through LMCIT and the risk rating is pooled between all fire departments, but when a large incident occurs, they add to the risk rating. The District could choose a \$5,000 deductible per occurrence which is not budgeted for. This amount will likely decrease again over future accident-free years.

The fund balance has been diminished over past years so there is no longer room to overcome overages in the budget. This would mean sacrificing equipment to overcome overages. The City Managers agree that there is no wiggle room for cutting additional costs unless overall staffing or types of calls responded to is reduced. Staff feels that overall staffing levels are where they should be. The District only has seven full-time staff that run 90% of calls for service during daytime hours,

perform all inspections in two cities, run administration for 50-60 paid-on-call staff, create and perform training programs, run the District's IT, and complete nearly all logistical repairs. There are several Assistant Chiefs, but each has a large stake in the District and performs a large service with the programs each manages. Reductions would also mean a reduction in the delivery of service. The Board requested staff to be prepared for that potential discussion at the City level. An organizational chart to detail each position may be good preparation, as well as the reminder that, in other cities, a city staff person manages the IT, HR, logistics, and other areas of the Fire Department.

The Board will discuss the budget at the regular July meeting. If the Board approves the budget at that time, it will be sent to the member cities for approval. Both City Councils will have until August 31 to approve the budget. The Chief will present the budget to each city in person.

D. Other Matters and Announcements

The next regular meeting is scheduled for July 11, 2018.

The Joint Session with both City Councils is scheduled for August 8, 2018. In 2017 it was decided that if a joint session was unnecessary it would be canceled. In 2017, the cities decided to forego the joint session. The City Managers don't feel a joint session is necessary. It was the consensus of the Board to cancel the joint session.

E. Adjournment

There being no further business, motion by McDonald, second by Elder to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Juntunen
Recording Secretary