

# WEST METRO FIRE-RESCUE DISTRICT

## Work Session Notes

May 11, 2017

Approved

### 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 11, 2017, 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
John Elder	Council, City of New Hope
Eric Lammle	Citizen Representative (Council), City of New Hope

The following staff members were present:

Fire Chief Sarah Larson  
Assistant Fire Chief Adam Wodtke  
Assistant Fire Chief Joel Nelson  
Assistant Fire Chief Josh Kunde  
Battalion Chief Sean Watson  
Deputy Fire Marshal Shelby Wolf  
District Counsel Roger Knutson  
Recording Secretary Beverly Love, JASS

### C. Agenda

An additional item was added to the end of the agenda– a closed session to discuss an issue under attorney-client privilege, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, 13D.05, Subd. 3b.

### D. Strategic Planning – Station Closing Study

In August 2016, the District began working on strategic planning. Part of that planning process included the Board directing Chief Larson to commission a study on the impacts to the District if Station 2 were to be closed. That study was presented at the March Work Session. The Board and District staff understand the emotional and financial impacts of closing Station 2, which would be career-ending for some firefighters and impact the morale of remaining firefighters. After review of the study, Chief Larson recommends keeping Station 2 operational due to the impact the closing would have on firefighters at all three stations. The intangible costs outweigh the savings. Chief Larson recommends the Board accept the findings of the study and take no action with the understanding that this item could be revisited in the future.

The Board appreciated the unbiased presentation of facts and agreed with the Chief's recommendation. A number of firefighters reached out to Board members regarding this issue. The Board concurred with the Chief's recommendation.

**E. Governance**

Continuing the Governance discussion from March, the New Hope City Council discussed the District's governance in mid-April and their consensus is to remain with the current Board and governance structure. The Crystal City Council also discussed and supported revising the governance structure to remove the City Managers as voting members of the Board and instead assign them as Executive Managers of the Fire Chief. The Chief would report to the City Managers, and the Managers would report to the Board. The City Managers would then also be responsible for the hiring/firing process of the Fire Chief, much in the same way as the Police Department is managed by each city. The City Managers would still attend every meeting so there would be no loss of expertise. There are potential open meeting law issues with the current dual role of Staff as Board members, i.e., when Norris Emails the entire Board as Secretary, while also a voting member, is she in violation of open meeting law. This model would give more authority to the City Managers and, if the two managers didn't agree, the neutral Board member would be the deciding vote.

New Hope may have believed that a drawback to changing the governance model is that the current model has worked, even during tumultuous times because each Board member did their job. The JPA would need to be ratified by both member cities, so the cities must be in agreement before any change can be made.

**F. 2018 Budget**

A new budget, free of errors, was provided at the meeting. The budget is approximately \$4,000 less than the budget originally proposed at the April regular meeting. The total increase in city contribution is about 3.9%. This budget also takes into consideration a Capital Plan contribution of \$150,000, which would still leave the fund negative in 2021. If the Capital Plan contribution were to be increased by \$20,000 per year, the Capital Plan would be fully funded. The additional contribution would adjust the increase to the city contribution to 4.8%

The main reasons for the increase to the general operating budget are increased costs for legal, workers comp, PERA, Communications (new records management system), and financial services. The City Managers worked on each line item of the budget and feel comfortable with the proposed budget. The budget would need to be approved at the Board's July meeting.

There were no questions or comments from the Board regarding the budget.

**G. Joint Council Session**

The Joint Council session in 2016 had a poor turnout. Both City Councils agreed that the Joint session may not be necessary, but requested the joint session be scheduled with the ability to cancel if there are no significant issues for the City Councils to take part in. There are currently no issues with the District and Board consensus was to cancel the joint council session normally scheduled in August.

**H. Special Meeting for Aerial**

A bid of \$337,500 to purchase the current aerial after delivery of the new apparatus was received from Brindlee Mountain. This is a fire department equipment supplier that would likely cover the refurbishment of the aerial and resell it at a higher cost. The offer is lower than the \$350,000 price anticipated, but would reduce the District's liability for the vehicle. Chief Larson recommends acceptance of this bid. Motion by McDonald, second by Lammler to approve the Resolution #2017-3

Resolution Selling and Designating Funds from the Sale of a 2004 Pierce Aerial Apparatus to the Capital Fund.

**I. Other Matters and Announcements**

The Work Session moved into a closed meeting to discuss an issue under attorney-client privilege, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, 13D.05, Subd. 3b at 7:20 p.m.

President Laurant reopened the meeting at 7:31 p.m.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for July 12, 2017.

**J. Adjournment**

1. There being no further business, motion by McDonald, second by Elder to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Juntunen  
Recording Secretary