

WEST METRO FIRE-RESCUE DISTRICT

Work Session Notes

March 22, 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 6:37 p.m. on March 22, 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 Lamle	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
Captain Sean Watson
Deputy Fire Marshal Shelby Wolf
District Counsel Roger Knutson
Recording Secretary Beverly Love, JASS

C. Strategic Planning – Station Closing Study

Independent consultant Chief Nyle Zikmund of Fire Service Consulting, Inc., presented findings from the company's study regarding the impact of the possible consolidation of operations from three stations to two, with the closing of Station 2. The evaluation identified two primary concerns – response time and staffing impacts; and four secondary concerns – fiscal impacts, ISO rating, and staffing impacts on Stations 1 and 3. Chief Zikmund discussed seven specific questions:

1. What impact does closing Station 2 have on the work load of the Station 1 and 3 POC and EMS crew personnel? There would be negligible impact in a technical sense – response, training, HR logistical issues. Closing and reassigning personnel will be specific to individual circumstances.

2. What impact does closing Station 2 have on full-time personnel? The short-term impact (1-3 years) would deal with transition-specific personnel issues. Long-term impact would include a reduction of a theoretical 30% of time spent specific to building maintenance for the Logistics Chief due to a 33% reduction of duties. The current staff are sufficient and capable of managing the transition issues.

3. What is the fiscal impact of closing Station 2? Estimated savings per category were presented, with the largest impact from the sale of equipment, estimated at \$375,000 to \$555,000.

The total first year savings/revenue is estimated at \$578,800 to \$758,000, and subsequent year annual savings is estimated at \$87,800 to \$127,800.

4. What is the impact on the District ISO rating if Station 2 is closed? It is possible that the ISO rating could increase from a 3 to 4. There would be no impact to homeowners/residential properties due to a combination of the ISO rating below a 6 and market forces in the insurance industry. There would be negligible and nearly impossible to measure impact on business property. Market forces and automatic suppression systems are a greater force than ISO rating numbers. Closure will not impact ISO score by more than one grade.

5. What are the service impacts (response time) of closing Station 2? Response times to specific areas will increase but the increase will not result in greater response time than already occurs in other areas of the District. The net difference in terms of measurable negative impact is negligible.

6. What is the recommended staffing for Stations 1 and 3 if Station 2 is closed? Current staffing is 19-22 for each station, and future staffing could be similar (through attrition). Factors include workload (if call volume stays flat or slight increase), NFPA and ISO (both look to 15-20 personnel on scene), and other duties or services provided requiring an increase in staff.

7. Are there alternatives to keeping Station 2 operational while simultaneously reducing costs? There are none identifiable that provide the same or better service.

After Chief Zikmund concluded his presentation it was pointed out that this is the beginning of the discussion and much will depend on the communities' desire to have the station and the impact of keeping it or closing it.

Motion by Elder to accept the report, second by Norris. Motion was accepted with further discussion to take place at the May work session. Any questions should be sent to Fire Chief Sarah Larson in advance of the meeting so that necessary research can be done to have responses ready. Copies of the study are available from Chief Larson.

Lammle acknowledged that many firefighters want to be heard on the subject, and that the District will welcome input as in the aerial lease process. Kolb reminded all that there will not be a vote in May and that this is the beginning of the process.

D. Chief's Evaluation Process/Instrument

Based on January work session discussion, Norris presented a revised evaluation that reflects the five areas related to the Board's experience with the Chief, and includes the Chief's current annual goals corresponding with each area. For each category, a rating from "Outstanding" to "Does not Meet Expectation" is to be assigned. Instead of the rating scale of outstanding, etc., Lammle prefers categories with specific standards/goals listed. If standards are met, no rating is needed. If standards are exceeded or not met, explanation would be included. A sample of this more simple evaluation form was available. The evaluation form will be discussed further at the next meeting.

E. Strategic Planning – Governance

Norris presented the Board structure options formulated by Knutson and District Staff. Serie pointed out that Option 3, which would eliminate the current Board and create a 3-person Board

including the two City Managers and the Fire Chief, would present problems regarding the open meeting law. Kolb suggested taking Option 3 off the table and all agreed.

Option 1 would best mirror a regular city department operation. Changing the frequency of meetings to quarterly or semimonthly would be desirable but not recommended at this time given the strategic planning currently in process. The change could be considered at a later date.

The main point to be considered is whether City Managers should be voting members. Voting for what is best for the District when that decision may not be favorable for the City may be difficult. There have been some unpleasant votes but that does not mean that the current model is broken. The options will be taken to the City Councils for review and put on the agenda for the next work session.

F. Other Matters and Announcements

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

G. Adjournment

There being no further business, motion by McDonald, second by Elder to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly Love
Recording Secretary