

WEST METRO FIRE-RESCUE DISTRICT

Work Session Notes

January 11, 2017

Approved

A. Call to order

Vice Chair Kirk McDonald called the work session of the West Metro Fire-Rescue District Board of Directors to order at 6:30 p.m. on January 11, 2017, at Station 3, 4251 Xylon Avenue N., New Hope, MN.

B. Roll Call – The following Directors were present:

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
District Counsel Roger Knutson
Recording Secretary Amy Juntunen, JASS

C. Chief's Evaluation Process/Instrument.

The current evaluation instrument is operational rather than based on Board priorities. The current instrument evaluates areas such as the Chief's command of a fire scene. The Board is unable to evaluate the Chief in those areas since they do not participate in active operations. Kolb noted that Crystal brought in consultants to redo the evaluation process for the City Manager to enable evaluation in a more objective, quantifiable process in 18 specific competencies identified by the consultant. The ratings create a graph for each annual evaluation, which can then be layered to manage year-over-year improvement. Perhaps the operational and day-to-day issues could be evaluated by the City Managers.

Consensus is to overhaul the evaluation form to something similar to the way Councils evaluate City Managers. The International Association of Fire Chiefs may have a list of competencies for evaluation. The Board directed City Managers to work with the Chief to create a new evaluation tool. The Board will work on smart goals for the evaluation process.

D. Strategic Planning – Governance.

The original JPA in 1998 called for a nine-member Board, two Council members and one citizen representative from each city, along with the City Managers and a neutral At-Large member. It was revised to the current seven-member Board when it was decided that two Council members weren't required.

Staff provided examples of other Fire District JPA models for Board size/makeup. Makeup of the current seven-member Board was discussed. Concern about City Manager votes being influenced

by the Council representative, and Council representatives being influenced by city politics was discussed. Past actions of Council member representatives have nearly resulted in the dissolution of the District due to the politicized nature and high-level of scrutiny of the District's budget. The At-Large Board member is a positive, since that person is not involved in the politics of either city. A lesser role is not recommended for City Managers since they work closely and are more aware of the operations of the District.

An additional concern included that the frequency and high level of the Board meetings may contribute to a perception that the Board is more involved with operations and oversight than it truly is.

The District should be operated as closely to a regular city department as possible instead of something extraordinary. Council members aren't involved in the operations of the city police or public works departments; the City Managers take that role and report to the Council.

Ideas put forth include:

- Council members being removed as voting members, or being removed entirely, leaving the citizen representatives, City Managers, and neutral member as the voting members of the Board.
- City Managers being named as Executive Directors, along with the neutral party, as a 3 member Executive Committee with the Board meeting quarterly, semi-annually, or annually to review and approve the budget, elect officers, etc.
- Transferring ownership of facilities from the Cities to the District.

Any change would require a dispute resolution system for occasions when the Board isn't working effectively.

Models for different Board make-ups and potential transition plans, including a scalable model to include additional cities, will be created for review at the next work session by Knutson and District Staff.

E. 2017 March Work Session Date Change to March 22, 2017.

The meeting was moved from the regular date of March 8 to March 22. An independent consultant will review the findings of the station study.

F. Other Matters and Announcements

G. Adjournment

There being no further business, motion by Elder, second by Serie to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Juntunen
Recording Secretary