

WEST METRO FIRE-RESCUE DISTRICT

Board of Directors Work Session Minutes

May 10, 2023

Approved June 12, 2023

A. Call to order

President Gary Laurant called a work session of the West Metro Fire-Rescue District Board of Directors to order at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 10, 2023 at Station 3, 4251 Xylon Avenue N., New Hope, MN.

B. Roll Call – The following Directors were present:

Gary Laurant	President
Adam Bell	City Manager, City of Crystal, Secretary
Tim Hoyt	Acting City Manager, City of New Hope
John Budziszewski	Council, City of Crystal
Jeff Kolb	Citizen Representative, City of Crystal
Marc Berris	Citizen Representative, City of New Hope

The following staff members were present:

Fire Chief Sarah Larson
Assistant Fire Chief Joel Nelson
Assistant Fire Chief Josh Kunde
Recording Secretary, Amy Juntunen

Chief Larson requested to add item **D.2. Juneteenth holiday** to the agenda.

C. Preliminary 2024 Budget

The budget has not been changed since originally presented at the April Board meeting. The 2024 budget is \$3,364,500. This is an increase of \$333,310 or 11% over the 2023 budget contributions of \$3,031,190. The 2024 member contributions total \$1,634,617 from Crystal and \$1,729,883 from New Hope. This is an increase of \$155,244 or 10.5% and \$178,066 or 11.5%, respectively. The 2023 budget included an offset of \$50,000 to lower the cities' contributions so, excluding that offset, the actual increase to the budget is \$283,310 or 9.2%.

The general operating budget increased by \$183,310, (+7.5%), due to the addition of a full-time staff person, increases to salaries, approved incentive pay for POC firefighters, increased energy and fuel costs, PERA, Workers' Comp insurance, financial services and communications. The 2024 budget includes a \$20,000 increase to the special revenue pension fund contributions and lease payments of \$103,000 for the tower and \$150,000 for the new engines. Chief Larson has reviewed the proposed budget several times and there are no lines to trim.

Peer comparisons regarding budget include Golden Valley at \$2,200,000, Plymouth at \$6,650,000, and Robbinsdale at \$952,000. The latter is fully Paid-On-Call with no full-time staff, a much smaller population, and a much lower number of calls for service.

Budgets for 2025-2028 will include continuing increases to the budget due to the lease schedule. In 2025 the annual engine lease will increase from \$150,111 to \$212,325, and in 2026 the engine lease will increase to \$252,325. The lease plan has the largest increases in 2024 and 2025, with a gradual flattening through the end of the lease. Leasing the new engines has allowed the vehicle maintenance budget to dropped by \$10,000 and avoided the up-front cost of purchasing the engines. At the end of the lease the District has the option to buy the engines at a cost of \$129,000 each, which allows for the consignment sale of the engines to offset new lease costs. District staff are evaluating the leasing programs to determine whether leasing or purchasing is the best option for future replacements. Discussions regarding replacement of the aerial will begin in July. The lead times for new aerial construction is currently two-to-four years. The price for new equipment has increased exponentially considering the existing aerial cost was \$1.2 million and current costs are \$2 million.

D. Other Matters and Announcements

1. A **regular meeting** of the West Metro Board of Directors is scheduled for July 12, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.
2. Minnesota passed the **Juneteenth law** making Juneteenth an official holiday where “no public business shall be done unless necessary” beginning in August 2023. The state legislature may move the date to make the holiday effective for June 2023. The District schedules duty crews for the seven national holidays like Memorial Day, Independence Day, etc., however, as many companies will not offer Juneteenth as an official holiday, it will be impossible to schedule duty crews as most POC firefighters will still need to work that day, so full-time staff will need to work the holiday. This would require either assigning one of the floating holidays to Juneteenth, or adding it as a sixth floating holiday which would require FT staff to have another paid day off. New Hope is adding the holiday. Crystal will be closed, hasn’t determined the pay method yet, but will likely also add Juneteenth as a holiday. This item will be discussed further in July.
3. A **new engine** is on the apparatus floor for the Board to view.

E. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Juntunen
Recording Secretary