

WEST METRO FIRE-RESCUE DISTRICT
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
February 8, 2023
Approved April 12, 2023

A. Call to order

President Gary Laurant called the regular meeting of the West Metro Fire-Rescue District Board of Directors to order at 6:31 p.m. on Wednesday, February 8, 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 Elder	Council, City of New Hope
Nancy LaRoche	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
Deputy Fire Marshal Shelby Wolf
Counsel Joel Jamnik, Campbell Knutson

C. Minutes

1. Approve the December 14, 2022 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes. Motion by Berris, second by Elder to approve the minutes with the following corrections: The meeting was called to order by Vice President Hoyt, Laurant was not present. **Motion carried, Bell abstaining.**
2. Approve the December 14, 2022 Executive Session Minutes. Motion by LaRoche, second by Elder to approve the minutes as presented. **Motion carried, Bell abstaining.**

D. Open Forum None.

E. Elect Board Secretary

Motion by Elder, second by Kolb to appoint Adam Bell as Secretary. **Motion carried.**

F. Consent Agenda

1. Approve November Expenditures totaling \$208,904.26
2. Approve December Expenditures totaling \$410,773.05
3. Approve 2022 Pension Contribution of \$170,333.27

4. Approve LMCIT Property/Casualty Premium of \$12,919 and Workers Compensation Premium of \$153,571
5. Approve Resolution 2023-1 engaging MMKR to complete the 2022 audit
6. Approve Resolution 2023-2 Accepting Donations

Motion by Berris, second by Kolb to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. **Motion carried.**

G. Chief's Report

1. The report can be found in the meeting packet. Preliminary financial reporting puts the District 6.01%, or \$132,793.63, over budget. Overage is due to addition of one full-time employee, worker's compensation came in \$30,000 over budget, inflation to natural gas, electricity and fuel costs, and an unplanned recruitment process. The overage will be partially offset by \$42,376 of unbudgeted revenue. The District restricted \$100,000 in the general operating budget for one additional of full-time employee so that will be used to cover the overage in salaries. The remainder will be covered by fund balance.

The 25-year anniversary of the District's founding is on July 6, 2023. Staff are considering a community celebration with an open house and food. The Board expressed support for hosting an anniversary celebration. Jamnik confirmed that funding commemorative celebrations is allowed. Staff asked the Board to forward any ideas for the celebration to Nelson.

The new engine was inspected post-paint and looks good. Delivery is expected in March. The City of Lanesboro Council approved the purchase of the third engine the District consigned.

The District issued \$25 Target gift cards to one Adopt-a-Hydrant volunteer in each city.

H. Old Business

I. New Business

1. Approve 2023 Chief's Goals. Motion by Elder, second by Bell to approve the 2023 Chief's goals as presented. **Motion carried.**

2. Compensation Study. At the December Board meeting, Director Kolb requested staff to investigate employee retention methods that do not include merit pay. A compensation study would allow staff to understand current compensation rates compared to peers. Included in the proposal is a comprehensive job description review and pay equity review. The cost to complete the study is \$13,900 including the reviews listed and final recommendations. The last compensation study was conducted in 2013. The job description review would be very helpful for succession planning.

Director Elder noted that public salaries are public information and that staff could complete a compensation analysis in-house. Because the structure of the District is different from most other Fire Departments, it wouldn't be a direct comparison. And the analysis would be very time-consuming for staff. Also, as we look at replacing key employees in the District due to upcoming retirement, a better analysis and review of job descriptions would be very helpful and something

staff can't do internally. Having an external analysis also removes bias from the process and provides transparency for the findings.

Motion by Laurant, second by Elder to approve entering into a contract with Abdo to complete the compensation study as proposed at a cost of \$13,900. **Motion carried.**

J. Recognition of Nancy LaRoche for her service to the Board and WMFRD

A certificate of appreciation was awarded to Nancy LaRoche for her service to the WMFRD Board of Directors from January 18, 2022 to February 26, 2023.

K. Other Matters and Announcements

1. A **regular meeting** of the West Metro Board of Directors is scheduled for April 12, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.
2. Jamnik announced that he will be retiring on Memorial Day. James Monge will be taking over as District Counsel as of June 1.

L. Adjournment

There being no further business, motion by Elder, second by LaRoche to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Juntunen
Recording Secretary