

WEST METRO FIRE-RESCUE DISTRICT

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

December 8, 2021

Approved February 9, 2022

A. Call to order

President Gary Laurant called the regular meeting of the West Metro Fire-Rescue District Board of Directors to order at 6:51 p.m. on December 8, 2021 at Station 3, 4251 Xylon Avenue N., New Hope, MN.

B. Roll Call – The following Directors were present:

Gary Laurant	President
Anne Norris	City Manager, City of Crystal, Secretary-Treasurer
Kirk McDonald	City Manager, City of New Hope, Vice President
John Elder	Council, City of New Hope
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
Deputy Fire Marshal Shelby Wolf
Counsel Joel Jamnik
Recording Secretary Amy Juntunen

Item #9 under New Business will be moved to the first item to accommodate the sales representative present.

C. Promotion of Apprentice Firefighters to the Rank of Firefighter

Brandon Clark
Lucas Kubista
Jen Murphy
Krista Nielsen
Dedric Payne
Jesus Soto
Elisha Wolfman

D. Minutes

1. Approve the October 13, 2021 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
2. Approve the October 27, 2021 Joint Council and Board Work Session Minutes

Motion by Elder, second by Norris to approve the minutes as presented. **Motion carried.**

E. **Open Forum** None.

F. **Consent Agenda**

1. Approve September Expenditures totaling \$245,626.05
2. Approve October Expenditures totaling \$195,573.25
3. Approve Resolution 2021-6 Accepting Donations
4. Approve Resolution 2021-7 Credit Card Purchases
5. Approve Resolution 2021-8 Fire Chief as 2022 Purchasing Agent
6. Approve LMCIT Liability Coverage-Waiver Form

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

G. **Chief's Report**

From January 1-November 30, 2021 there were 1,929 calls for service, 794 in Crystal, 1,073 in New Hope and 62 Mutual Aid calls, with an estimated fire loss of \$1,081,164. The average is 175 calls per month which will result in over 2,000 calls for 2021. There were 1,828 calls in 2020 and an additional 178 calls that were not responded to due to COVID, for a total of \$2,006 calls in 2020

Chief Larson Attended Council work sessions for both cities to answer questions regarding the District's request to apply for a SAFER grant.

The new chief's report format for meetings only covers highlights. Additional details can be found in the written report in the meeting packet.

Worker's Compensation insurance is set to increase by 18% next year, which will be a big hit to the budget since this increase is unexpected. This is for all Minnesota employers, not just the District.

There were no questions about the **3rd Quarter financial report**. The report can be found in the meeting packet.

G. **Old Business**

1. Chief's Evaluation – The Board met in executive session prior to the regular meeting to review the evaluation. The Board recommends a three percent merit increase and three percent COLA increase for the Chief. Motion by Kolb second by Elder to approve the recommended increase as proposed. **Motion carried.**

2. SAFER Grant – At the September 8 Board work session, Chief Larson made a presentation about and requested approval to apply for a SAFER grant to hire three additional firefighters. Due to the increased cost that will be incurred after the grant period, a joint Council/Board work session was held on October 27. After the presentation and discussion at that meeting, each Council planned to discuss further at City work sessions since not all Councilmembers were present on October 27. New Hope discussed the grant on November 15 with the majority of the Council in favor of applying for the grant. Crystal discussed the grant at both their November 16 and December 2 work sessions and the majority of their council is not in favor of pursuing the grant.

Motion by Berris, second by Elder to authorize staff to pursue the SAFER grant. **Motion carried, Norris opposed.**

H. **New Business**

1. Approve Purchase of Ballistic Vests – This purchase is proposed to be funded by the Special Funds donated by the Relief Association. These ballistic vests are bright red and one-size fits most with a unique sizing system and panels in the front, back and sides that can hold either soft or rifle plates. The soft plates will stop small arms, pistol and rifle rounds and the hard plates will stop larger rifle rounds and add an extra five lbs to the soft plated vests. The plates have a five-year lifespan, the vest doesn't have a lifespan and can be cleaned in a regular washing machine.

Motion by Elder, second by Berris to authorize the purchase of 67 vests and 134 ID placards for the front and back of each vest, along with 40 rifle plates from Aspen Mills at a cost of \$65,863.80, funded from the capital plan. **Motion carried.**

2. Approve 2022 Meeting Schedule – The regular Board meeting schedule is the second Wednesday of February, April, July (Annual Meeting), October and December, with a Work Session to discuss the budget on May 11.

Motion by Berris, second by Elder to approve the meeting schedule with an additional work session in August. **Motion carried.**

3. Resolution 2021-9 Carry over and Commitment of Capital Funds – Motion by McDonald, second by Norris to approve Resolution 2021-9 with a change in the Computers line from \$20,000 to \$11,856 due to receiving some of the equipment that was backordered. **Motion carried.**

4. Board's Representatives on the West Metro Fire Relief Association Board – Two inquiries have been received about the position. Applications have been sent out. No action.

5. Approve 2022 Health Insurance Rates – The health insurance premium increase is 4.45%, less than the average of both cities. Motion by McDonald, second by Berris to approve the rates. **Motion carried.**

6. Approve 2022 COLA – A three percent COLA was included in the 2022 budget. Historically, the District has given the same COLA as the member cities. New Hope's 2022 COLA is 3% and Crystal's is 2%. Motion by McDonald, second by Norris to approve a three percent COLA for 2022. **Motion carried.**

7. Approve 2022 Paid, on-call Pension – Staff recommend a three percent increase to the paid, on-call firefighters' pension to \$9,094.81 in 2022. Motion by McDonald, second by Berris to approve as presented. **Motion carried.**

8. Approve Employee Handbook Revisions – Motion by Berris, second by Norris to approve the revisions as presented. **Motion carried.**

9. Accept Public Assistance Grant – Motion by McDonald, second by Elder to accept the public assistance grant as presented. **Motion carried.**

10. Capital Purchases.

- a. 2022 Turnout Gear – Request to purchase 14 sets of turnout gear. The capital plan has \$40,000 included for turnout gear. Staff will also apply for a grant that reimburses the District \$3,000 for each set of turnout gear per new recruit. Motion by Elder, second by Berris to approve the purchase of 14 sets of turnout gear as presented. **Motion carried.**
- b. 2022 Exterior Cameras at Door Access Control – This request is to purchase and install five security cameras at stations 1 and 2, and six cameras at station 3. The cameras would cover every entry area to the building with 24/7 video. The video has 30 days of storage for review. Chief Wodtke will monitor/review the video as needed. There are currently no cameras at any station. Motion by Kolb, second by Elder to approve. **Motion carried.**

I. Other Matters and Announcements

1. The **next regular** meeting of the West Metro Board of Directors will be held February 9, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

J. Adjournment

There being no further business, motion by McDonald, second by Berris to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Juntunen
Recording Secretary