

WEST METRO FIRE-RESCUE DISTRICT
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

October 13, 2021

Approved December 8, 2021

A. Call to order

President Gary Laurant called the regular meeting of the West Metro Fire-Rescue District Board of Directors to order at 6:30 p.m. on October 13, 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 Josh Kunde
Assistant Fire Chief Joel Nelson
Counsel Joel Jamnik
Recording Secretary Amy Juntunen

C. Minutes

1. Approve the July 14, 2021 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
2. Approve the September 8, 2021 Board of Directors Work Session Notes

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

D. Open Forum

E. Chief's Commendations.

1. Isaac Sandberg was nominated by a firefighter for his service on the Relief Association Board in writing the RFP and consolidating the proposals received for the pension account with no compensation.
2. Mark Devening was nominated for containing a garage fire with a garden hose until firefighters arrived on scene. Devening is a retired WMFRD firefighter.

The Board congratulated and thanked Sandberg and Devening.

Laurant noted that he attended the awards banquet held downtown last month. Congratulations to all the staff who received awards and recognition, including Chief Larson who received the Doug Smith Award for Excellence.

F. Consent Agenda

1. Approve June expenditures totaling \$290,152.29
2. Approve July expenditures totaling \$161,348.84
3. Approve August expenditures totaling \$134,342.29
4. Approve Resolution 2021-5 Accepting Donations

Motion by McDonald, second by Elder to approve the consent agenda as presented. **Motion carried.**

F. Chief's Report

From January 1-September 30, 2021 there were 1,547 calls for service, 639 in Crystal, 854 in New Hope and 54 Mutual Aid calls, with an estimated fire loss of \$777,809.

Chief Larson has continued to attend monthly meetings with the City Managers, Chiefs and Officers. The October and November Chiefs and Officers meetings are scheduled as leadership training sessions. Full-time staff meet twice per month. Currently staff are preparing for the onboarding of recruit firefighters, coordinating with area schools on education, flooring at Station 3, and consignment of the old fire engines. Staff are also meeting with staff from other municipalities to draft a plan for procuring fencing if the need arises.

An EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) deployment occurred September 7-September 22 to Louisiana for hurricane Ida recovery. The deployment consisted of two firefighters from WMFRD, along with 20 more from Eden Prairie, Plymouth, Centennial Fire District, SBM Fire District, Redwing, Chaska, Brainerd and Crosslake Fire Departments. The EMAC assisted with debris cleanup, water distribution, tarping homes and manning fire stations to allow local firefighters to care for their families. It was a lifechanging experience for all involved and there is a link to a video where firefighters shared their stories of this deployment in the meeting packet.

On September 18, the Can Do Canines held a fundraiser event to celebrate the partnership between assistance dogs and the people who own them. Manager McDonald, Police Chief Hoyt and Chief Larson judged the dog costume contest. The event raised more than \$121,000 to provide more assistance dogs to people who need them.

The 2021 pension state aid amounts have been released. WMFRD Relief Association will receive \$276,004.29, an increase of \$12,842.14 over 2020.

Through August the District is 3.57%, or approximately \$75,700, under budget. However, the District has also received \$497,411.94 in unbudgeted revenue which, when included, makes the District 27.03% under budget, or \$573,111.94. Vehicle repairs are 25% over budget due to an ambulance backing into a truck. That damage has been reimbursed and is included in the unbudgeted revenue.

Four public events were held August-September, along with station tours. The public and firefighters are enjoying the events. The District still does 1-2 Birthday Brigades each month and Explorers train on the first and third Thursdays of each month. The Honor Guard participated in four events in September.

The blood drive collected 39 units.

One resignation was received in September due to a move. Since the last recruitment drive, 11 firefighters have been lost to retirements and resignations.

Recruitment this year resulted in 48 applicants. This will be narrowed down to a final 15 candidates.

In the fourth quarter, firefighters and officers will train in several areas including hose line advancement, specialty apparatus, RIT skills, water rescue, and the annual SCBA recertification. New recruits will go through a seven-week orientation program. The 2022 West Suburban Fire Academy will begin on January 22 with up to 40 students.

WMFRD will host a regional Fire Inspector 1 course starting October 4 and ending with the state exam on December 20.

Fourteen officers will attend the Chief's conference in Duluth. Three firefighters will attend the Rail Response training course in Colorado. In September four firefighters attended the advanced vehicle extrication training in Dayton, OH and each will provide that training to the other firefighters here. In August two firefighters attended the National Fire Academy in Maryland, funded by FEMA, to provide skills to work in command staff roles at fire emergencies.

The recent capital purchase of computers has been delayed due to backorders. Chief Wodtke continues to work with local municipalities on a plan for fencing.

Six FEMA Public Assistance Grants were applied for totaling \$563,649.14. To date, five grants have been paid for a total of \$454,503.23

Emergency Management Training for city staff will be held in December focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic and how it affected member cities.

Carpet will be replaced in all office areas at Station 3, along with epoxy coating the concrete in the formerly tiled areas of the Station. Work is scheduled to begin October 19 and will take 4-6 weeks to complete as the offices will be done in stages to minimize work interruption.

Construction of the new engines is expected to begin in March 2022 with expected delivery in December 2022. The District will take delivery of the first engine and leave the others at the factory to make any corrections needed. The first of the current engines will be listed for sale in November 2021.

Annual testing of Tower 1 is complete.

To date, 721 inspections and 372 re-inspections have been completed. The current inspection focus is on Winnetka and 36th Avenue N. Twenty-five home surveys have been completed.

Deputy Marshal Wolf attended a code conference last week and continues to provide education both virtually and in-person for K-2nd grade classes.

The preliminary second quarter financial report was included in the meeting packet.

G. Old Business

H. New Business

1. Capital Purchases – Station 3 Flooring. The Executive Committee approved the purchase to keep the project on a timeline.

Motion by Elder, second by Norris to approve the purchase for Station 3 flooring as presented.

Motion carried.

2. Special Fund Purchases – Ventilation Fans. Currently WMFRD has one gas-powered and one electric ventilation fan to clear toxic smoke after fires are extinguished. Both fans are 10 years old. Staff proposes purchasing two Supervac fans to replace the current fans at a cost of \$4,300 each. These fans are 20 pounds lighter and 50% more compact than the current fans and will have a 40-minute run time on Milwaukee 18V cordless batteries, which WMDRD already owns. The funds to purchase this equipment are provided by the Relief Association.

Motion by McDonald, second by Berris to approve the purchase of fans as presented. **Motion carried.**

I. Other Matters and Announcements

1. A **Joint Council/Board work session** has been scheduled for Wednesday, October 27, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. to discuss the SAFER Grant.

2. The **next regular** meeting of the West Metro Board of Directors will be held December 8, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

J. Adjournment

There being no further business, motion by Elder, second by McDonald to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Juntunen
Recording Secretary