

# WEST METRO FIRE-RESCUE DISTRICT

## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

December 14, 2022

Approved February 8, 2023

### A. Call to order

Vice President Tim Hoyt called the regular meeting of the West Metro Fire-Rescue District Board of Directors to order at 6:31 p.m. on Wednesday, December 14, 2022 at Station 3, 4251 Xylon Avenue N., New Hope, MN.

### B. Roll Call – The following Directors were present:

Kim Therres	Interim City Manager, City of Crystal, Secretary
Tim Hoyt	Acting City Manager, City of New Hope, Vice President
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  
Battalion Chief Jon Tate  
Counsel Joel Jamnik, Campbell Knutson  
Recording Secretary Amy Juntunen, JASS

### C. Appointment of Board Member to the Position of Secretary

Motion by Elder, second by Berris to appoint Therres Secretary for the December 14, 2022 meeting

### D. Minutes

1. Approve the October 12, 2022 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes. Motion by Berris, second by Elder to approve the minutes as presented. **Motion carried.**

### E. Open Forum None.

### F. Consent Agenda

1. Approve September Expenditures totaling \$269,504.33
2. Approve October Expenditures totaling \$164,386.27
3. Approve Resolution 2022-13 Accepting Donations
4. Approve Resolution 2022-14 Fire Chief as 2023 Purchasing Agent
5. Approve Resolution 2022-15 Credit Card Purchases
6. Approve Resolution 2022-16 Electronic Fund Transfer

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

**G. Chief's Report**

1. The report can be found in the meeting packet. The District was not awarded the SAFER grant. The District will reapply when the next round of SAFER grants opens.

The District is approximately 2.78%, or \$61,396, over budget through October 31. However, almost \$41,000 in unbudgeted revenue has also been received. It is expected that the year will end over budget due to a hire that wasn't budgeted, increases in costs for fuel and natural gas, and workers compensation expenses higher than expected. The 2022 recruitment resulted in 15 new firefighters starting in November. At the Department awards banquet two 30 Years of Service Awards and three 20 Years of Service Awards were recognized. Jon Tate won the 2022 Douglas C. Smith Award for Excellence, Phil Maki was awarded 2022 Fire Officer of the Year, Brandon Clark was awarded 2022 Firefighter of the Year and Olivia Brown was awarded 2022 Rookie of the Year. Several other awards and Chief's Commendations were also recognized.

The Santa parade was a big hit with residents. The Be a Santa to a Senior program will deliver gifts to residents at The Terrace of Crystal and two other senior living facilities tomorrow. Board members asked if there would be media coverage for the event since it is a great community program.

2. 2022 Third Quarter Financial Report.

Motion by Elder, second by Therres to approve the Chief's Report. **Motion carried.**

**H. Old Business**

1. Chief's Evaluation. The Executive Committee met prior to this meeting to perform the Chief's Evaluation. The Board recommends a 3% COLA plus a 2% merit increase in salary. Motion by Berris, second by Elder to approve the evaluation and salary increase as recommended. **Motion carried.**

**I. New Business**

1. Approve 2023 Meeting Schedule. Motion by Berris, second by Kolb to approve the 2023 meeting schedule as presented. **Motion carried.**

2. Approve Resolution 2022-17 Carryover and Commitment of Capital Funds. Every year funds are carried over and committed to specific line items in the capital plan as outlined in the Resolution. The 2022 total carryover is \$1,011,490, including \$323,490 for the engine lease. Motion by Berris, second by LaRoche to approve Resolution 2022-17 as presented. **Motion carried.**

3. Board's Representative on the West Metro Fire Relief Association Board. The two existing representatives have been contacted and both wish to continue on the Board. Motion by Kolb, second by Berris to approve Resolution 2022-18 reappointing Isaac Sandberg and Alyssa Bell to serve as WMFRD Board representatives to the West Metro Firefighter's Relief Association Board of Trustees for 2023. **Motion carried.**

4. Approve 2023 Health Insurance Rates. Insurance premiums increased by 5.62%. Monthly contributions are listed in the meeting packet. Motion by Therres, second by LaRoche to approve the 2023 health insurance premiums as presented. **Motion carried.**
5. Approve 2023 COLA. Historically WMFRD has set an annual COLA at the same rate as the member cities. For 2023 the Crystal COLA is 3.25% and the New Hope COLA is 3%. Staff recommends a WMFRD 2023 COLA at 3%. Motion by Elder, second by Therres to approve the 2023 COLA at 3%. **Motion carried.**
6. Approve 2023 Paid, on-call Pension. Staff recommends approval of 3% to the paid, on-call firefighters' pension to \$9,367.65 in 2023. Motion by LaRoche, second by Elder to approve the 2023 paid, on-call pension as presented. **Motion carried.**
7. Approve Changes to the Compensation Plan of the Employee Handbook. To maintain the current model of paid, on-call (POC) model of service, WMFRD incentivizes firefighters to go above the minimum requirements.

Adding holiday pay at 1.5 times makes holiday duty crew shifts more desirable to work. While fires go to everyone, only a duty crew answers alarm, medical, and other non-fire calls. Holiday pay will not apply to calls for service only to the duty crew or EMS shift hours worked. It's been difficult to get duty crews filled for holidays as it requires the sacrifice of family time with no major incentive.

The POC incentive program provides a framework for bonus pay. Firefighters making 60-69% of calls will receive a 4% bonus, at 70-79% of calls a 6% bonus, 80-89% an 8% bonus and 90-99% a 10% bonus. We rarely have any firefighters at or above 90% currently. The incentive program will help by driving participation, which should lower costs for hiring, training and equipment. The minimum percentage of calls attended to be in good standing as a firefighter is 40% and to be an officer or eligible for outside training is 60%. Bonuses were given last year based on total salary and everyone really appreciated it. However, criteria need to be established so all firefighters and officers would understand what they needed to do to get the incentive pay. This model is intended to increase participation at calls. The current budget should cover this program.

Exceptional service pay details the criteria for how employees earn merit pay. This has been the current process, but it hasn't been in the handbook. This will insulate WMFRD from legal challenge as unauthorized bonuses.

Kolb expressed concern that incentivizing programs and merit pay caps may backfire and would like to evaluate these again in the future.

Motion by Berris, second by Elder to approve the compensation plan as proposed. **Motion carried.**

8. Approve Employee Handbook Revisions. The handbook is reviewed annually and changes are made to ensure clarity and effectiveness, and include any process changes adopted. Motion by Elder, second by LaRoche to approve the handbook revisions as presented. **Motion carried.**

9. Capital Purchase of Thermal Cameras. \$50,000 has been allocated in capital funds for the purchase of new thermal imaging cameras. The last cameras were purchased in 2011 and are at end of life. At a cost of \$50,847 cameras will be purchased for every major piece of apparatus. New cameras are linked to find each other so a downed firefighter can be found using a second camera. This purchase will increase the total number of cameras from 11 to 20. They will be provided for duty chief and officer vehicles as well.

Motion by Berris, second by LaRoche to approve the purchase of thermal cameras as presented. **Motion carried.**

10. Special Fund Purchases.

a. LUCAS Devices. These units provide perfect automatic chest compressions for CPR. WMFRD last purchased LUCAS devices in 2009. The new units are third-generation, battery operated, much quieter, and easier to implement. The cost is \$15,000 per device with the intent to replace three devices. The manufacturer is offering a \$2,500 trade-in on the two first-generation devices WMFRD currently has. Life of the machine is 10 years. Staff believes it is in the community's best interest to have these devices as the hospital is struggling to keep up with service and WMFRD is answering more EMS calls. Funding for this purchase would come from donations from the Lions and the Relief Association.

Motion by Kolb, second by LaRoche to approve purchase of the LUCAS devices as presented. **Motion carried.**

b. Turnout Gear. With 15 new firefighters, turnout gear is needed for them to participate in the Fire Academy, live burns, and regular service. The joint purchasing agreement on a pre-bid contract is for 15 sets of gear at \$4,666.35 each, \$69,995.25 total. This purchase would be funded by Relief Association donations because it is an off-year for hiring. Funds in the capital plan are for replacement of existing gear.

Motion by Elder, second by Berris to approve the purchase of turnout gear as presented. **Motion carried.**

11. Approve the Contract for Sale of Engine. Olivia Fire Department has offered \$225,000 for an engine. This contract will be held until WMFRD's new engines are in service. WMFRD will also include training on the equipment. The revenue will go into the capital account for lease payments on the new engines.

Motion by Elder, second by LaRoche to approve the sale of one engine to Oliva Fire as presented. **Motion carried.**

**J. Other Matters and Announcements**

1. A **regular meeting** of the West Metro Board of Directors is scheduled for February 8, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

**K. Adjournment**

There being no further business, motion by Berris, second by Elder to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Juntunen  
Recording Secretary