

WEST METRO FIRE-RESCUE DISTRICT

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

April 13, 2016

Approved

A. Call to order

President Gary Laurant called the regular meeting of the West Metro Fire-Rescue District Board of Directors to order at 6:32 p.m. on April 13, 2016, at Station 3, 4251 Xylon Avenue N., New Hope, MN.

B. Roll Call – The following Directors were present:

Gary Laurant	Representative at Large, President
Anne Norris	City Manager, City of Crystal, Secretary
Kirk McDonald	City Manager, City of New Hope, Vice President
Mary Serie	Citizen Representative, City of Crystal
John Elder	Council, City of New Hope
Jeff Kolb	Council, City of Crystal
Eric Lammle	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
Captain Sean Watson
District Counsel Roger Knutson
Recording Secretary Amy Juntunen, JASS

The **agenda** was changed to move old business under new business due to firefighters wishing to be present to discuss the aerial, but a fire call has delayed their arrival.

C. Approval of minutes

Motion by Norris, second by Serie to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2016 Board of Directors meeting. **Motion carried.**

D. Open Forum – None.

E. Consent Agenda

1. Approve December Financial Statement and Expenditures totaling \$68,615.47.
2. Approve January Financial Statement and Expenditures totaling \$97,124.67.
3. Approve February Financial Statement and Expenditures totaling \$510,597.30.

Motion by Elder, second by McDonald to approve the Consent Agenda. **Motion carried.** The new financial reports will be provided quarterly.

F. Chief's Report

Chief Larson detailed the number of calls and call volume. There have been 27 fires. Approximately 50% of calls are now EMS calls. WMFRD, instead of police, responds to EMS calls on Friday and

Saturday nights. The Chief has been meeting with the city manager to discuss strategic planning, the 2017 budget, and the aerial replacement. Efforts have been concentrated on new officer training and succession planning. Officer meetings for training are held monthly. The new radios were put into service in March. Carpet will be removed in Station 3 except in the meeting room. Chief Larson testified at both the House and Senate for a Special District Tax Exemption bill. The League of Minnesota Cities commended Chief Larson for her testimony.

The blood drive in March collected 11 pints. Staff is working with Memorial Blood Center to make the drive more effective in the future. The March food drive was the most successful yet, raising \$10,949.48 and 2,386 lbs. of food. The donation goes to Food Group, a warehouse for smaller food shelves in the communities. A car seat clinic was held at Station 3 in conjunction with the NHPD. The second Honor Guard clinic was held March 11-13 with 35 members.

The 2014 firefighter recruit class is now training on emergency driving and pumping operations. Graduation from the program with state certification occurs in August. The West Suburban Fire Academy is at the halfway point with 13 students expected to graduate in June. The CERT team will continue traffic control training in May with the Crystal PD and are intended to be used for Crystal Frolics crowd and traffic control.

West Metro firefighters were able to attend a UL fire test to observe different kinds of fires and how scientific equipment is used to create reports.

[Lammle arrived 6:42 p.m.]

West Metro Fire Rescue District was awarded a grant with a 25% match to attend the International Association of Fire Chiefs Fire Rescue International training conference in 2016. Training for the Department will continue next weekend all day Saturday and half-day Sunday. New IT switches were installed at Station 1.

Kunde is meeting with vendors to address repairs and maintenance at all stations, including removal of carpet and exterior lighting at Station 3, and garage doors at station 1. The aerial developed significant power steering problems and a coolant issue with an estimated repair cost of \$5,000-\$6,000.

The District has performed 152 inspections and 45 reinspections with a focus on apartments, commercial properties, and liquor licenses. The inspector training program continues to go well. Awards have been issued for the Adopt a Hydrant program – two \$20 gift cards, one each to a New Hope and Crystal resident.

G. New Business

As part of the Chief's annual evaluation, it was agreed that Chief Larson would create a list of annual goals to present to the Board. Motion by Serie, second by McDonald to accept the 2016 goals.

Motion carried.

H. Old Business

1. **2017 Budget and 2017-2021 Capital Plan.** With the proposed budget, the member city contribution would increase \$131,500-\$148,500 over the 2016 contribution, depending on the

type of aerial leased. The general operating budget has a 5.4% increase, including the three-year periodic physicals required for all firefighters and three-year renewal of the Minnesota Firefighter License. The Chief and City Managers have reviewed the budget carefully and there are no places to reduce costs. The sale of the aerial will leave the capital plan contribution at \$150,000. It is possible that the medical insurance cost may be reduced, but that is unknown at this point. Motion by Elder, second by McDonald to approve the 2017 budget upon the vote of the aerial lease. **Motion carried.**

I. Strategic Planning.

Three areas of discussion include governance, the need for the current three stations, and staffing/sustainability of financials. After Staff review and reporting, Station 2 may not be necessary. There are two firefighters who would be an additional three minutes away from another station and closing would significantly impact those two firefighters. Only officers go directly to the scene, all firefighters report at the station first. Those firefighters who are further out may only be able to get on the second truck out on any given call. Response time to one small area goes from four minutes to five or six minutes. National average for first engine on scene is nine minutes. With firefighters enjoying the EMS shifts and being on site, the response time may not be affected.

Closing a station would result in \$40,000-\$50,000 per year savings though, through attrition, there would be fewer firefighters, so also less salary. Currently there are 53 active firefighters with room for a total of 66. If Station 2 closes, the total would be 55. But call volume for each station will be higher, so savings on salaries can't be confirmed. The main area of savings in closing a station will be in capital, as less equipment and repairs are needed. When New Hope and Crystal merged Fire Departments, it would have made sense to close Station 2.

Station 2 takes pride in being the fastest out of the station. There are many firefighters from the station that may want to speak on the issue. Closing a station is likely to affect morale. The District provides great training. In the past eight years, 17 firefighters have been recruited away from the district.

The Board directed Staff to research standby costs, future facility costs, how current firefighters feel about moving to duty crews and closing a station.

Motion by Elder, second by Serie to take a break at 7:48. **Motion carried.**

The meeting resumed at 7:55 p.m.

J. Aerial Apparatus. Several firefighters spoke regarding the pros and cons of a stick vs. a platform-style aerial. All firefighters are in favor of the platform aerial, stating dangers of injury to firefighters and civilians on stick aerials. The stick is noted to be lighter and more maneuverable, but cannot carry as much equipment as the platform. All firefighters are currently trained and comfortable with the platform model and it is much easier to operate tools from the platform. The stick aerial will require new training for all firefighters. The opinion of the firefighters present is to stay with the platform aerial.

The Board has already decided to lease new equipment rather than refurbish the current equipment due to future maintenance costs and the ability to sell the current equipment.

Motion by Elder, second by McDonald to lease the platform aerial on a 10-year lease. **Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.**

Motion by Elder, second by Serie to adopt Resolution _____. **Motion carried.**

I. Other Matters and Announcements.

The next meeting work session is scheduled for May 11 and the next board meeting is scheduled for June 8, 2016.

J. Adjournment

There being no further business, motion by Elder, second by Laurant to adjourn. **Motion carried.**
The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Juntunen
Recording Secretary