

WEST METRO FIRE-RESCUE DISTRICT

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

April 22, 2020

Approved July 8, 2020

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 April 22, 2020, via WebEx virtual meeting.

B. Roll Call – The following Directors were present:

Gary Laurant	President
Anne Norris	City Manager, City of Crystal, Secretary
Kirk McDonald	City Manager, City of New Hope, Vice President
Brendan Banks	Council, City of Crystal
John Elder	Council, City of New Hope
Jeff Kolb	Citizen Representative, City of Crystal
Daniel Gates	Citizen Representative, City of New Hope

The following staff members were present:

Fire Chief Sarah Larson
Assistant Fire Chief Joel Nelson
Assistant Fire Chief Adam Wodke
District Counsel Roger Knutson
District Auditor Bill Lauer

C. 2019 Audit Presentation.

District Auditor Bill Lauer, Malloy, Montague, Karnowski, Radosevich & Co., P.A., provided an overview of the 2019 audit. The auditors were able to provide an unmodified opinion on the District's financial statements. No interim control deficiencies or non-compliance issues were identified. Deposits at year-end in excess of FDIC limits were covered by collateral at 100%. However, coverage at 110% is required by statute. There was no related finding as the issue was self-identified and corrected quickly. Fund balances and annual financial activity were reviewed in detail. Motion by Elder, second by Gates to accept the 2019 audit report. **Motion carried unanimously.**

D. Minutes

Motion by Gates, second by Elder to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2020 Board of Directors meeting as presented. **Motion carried unanimously.**

E. Open Forum – None.

F. Consent Agenda

1. Approve January Expenditures totaling \$197,726.79
2. Approve February Expenditures totaling \$758,268.79
3. Approve March Expenditures totaling \$211,342.59
4. Approve Resolution 2020-3 Accepting Donations

Motion by Elder, second by Banks to approve the Consent Agenda. **Motion carried unanimously.**

G. Chief's Report

1. Chief's Report. There were a total of 465 calls for service from January 1 to March 31, 2020, with an estimated fire loss of \$368,828.

In response to care facilities, pertaining to Director Kolb's question at the February board meeting, over a two-year period we were called to care facilities for 112 lift assists, and 243 residential calls (including senior apartments, not just nursing homes). Overall, the amount of calls is not enough to address with the facilities directly. Another graph shows the number of calls by nursing home.

The Chiefs have been meeting weekly via internet due to COVID. The officers have not met as a group since February 25. Full-time staff are working from home. Four full-time staff are working at separate stations to ensure operations of the district continue and make it less likely that all full-time staff would fall ill simultaneously.

There are four firefighters on duty in 12-hour day and night shifts to reply to calls for service to avoid all firefighters being called to the station. Firefighters are only called in for a resource-driven call, such as a fire.

The 2020 budget is slightly under as of February 29, 2020. This is not expected to continue due to expenditures related to PPE and the duty crew staffing that has been put into effect. Staffing is costing approximately \$14,000 per week for the duty crew. The District will be seeking reimbursement for those expenses through a Federal Public Assistance grant.

An open house in coordination with the Crystal PD has been scheduled for May 28. Staff are unsure whether or not that event will move forward at this time. The Honor Guard clinic at Camp Ripley has been canceled due to COVID. Specialized training has also been canceled. The food drive will be rescheduled. The District is participating in birthday parades with the police and public works departments to celebrate young children's birthdays. The parades have been very popular with 45 completed and 34 still scheduled.

Staff are pre-planning care facilities by confirming that their current protocols are in place and identifying number of residents and the level of care needed at nursing homes. This is just to ensure they have their plans in place.

As of March 16, all regularly scheduled trainings were suspended. Duty-crews have been completing training while on-shift with the training captains. Duty crew shifts have been trained on fire alarm panels, first five minute decision-making, vehicle extrication, radio communications and a little bit of rescue training.

The West Metro Fire Academy has been suspended until further notice. The emergency management training scheduled for April has been canceled.

Situation reports are submitted daily to City Managers who share with City Staff and department heads. Situation reports are also shared with Hennepin County EOC.

Staff have been coordinating logistics to ensure an adequate supply of masks and hand sanitizer.

The compressor approved for purchase at the February meeting has been installed.

Engine 11 spent over 12 hours pumping on the February fire at the recycling plant in Becker, estimated at over 11 million gallons of water, with no issues other than freezing due to temperatures. Photos are included in the meeting packet.

Would it be feasible to promote videos on the District's website for family viewing while many are staying home due to COVID? Perhaps videos about developing escape routes in your home? Residents are likely using city websites now more than ever, since City Staff are also unavailable due to the stay-at-home order. Chief Larson noted that Deputy Marshal Shelby Wolf is working on building a promotion for home safety surveys and could include more information.

Is there a way to connect with the school district to promote watching the home safety videos? Elder encouraged Staff to cancel the open house scheduled for May 28. It seems irresponsible to host an event that could promote the spread of the virus.

2. Quarter 1 Financial Report.

H. Old Business

I. New Business

1. Contract with Abdo, Eick & Meyer (AEM) for financial services for years 2021-2023. Motion by McDonald, second by Elder to approve the contract as presented. **Motion carried.**

2. Capital Purchases. Use of capital funds for the purchase of one new life pack. Quoted price \$2,180. Motion by Kolb, second by Norris to approve the purchase as proposed. **Motion carried.**

3. Preliminary 2021 Budget. Chief Larson met with the City Managers on March 12, 2020. On May 13 the preliminary budget will be presented at a work session. The budget will need to be approved at the July 8, 2020 meeting, then sent to the City Councils. Chief Larson reviewed the proposed 2021 budget totaling \$2,674,050. Proposed increases and decreases were detailed by line item and the overall increase of \$99,800, or just under 4%, included the percentage and dollar amount contribution from each city. It is possible to lower the increase by removing the planned increase to the Capital Fund. Board members agreed that they do not want to reduce the Capital Fund contribution if avoidable. The Board doesn't need to approve the budget until July, so the budget can be re-evaluated at that time. COVID may seriously impact the budget with duty crew staffing and other considerations.

The Board reviewed the budget and provided feedback to staff

The Board decided to move the currently scheduled work session from May 13 to June 10 to allow more time to review COVID developments prior to finalizing the budget.

J. Other Matters and Announcements

1. A **work session** of the West Metro Board of Directors will be held June 10, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.
2. The next **regular board meeting** is also the District's annual meeting and will be held July 8, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. via WebEx.

K. Adjournment

There being no further business, motion by McDonald, second by Gates to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Juntunen
Recording Secretary