

Western Lakes Fire Board

Monthly Board Meeting

June 27, 2022

Call to Order

- George Morris called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Board members present were George Morris, Jeff Roemer, Kent Lorenz, Bill Riemenschneider, Mike Tompkins, Charlie Shaw, and Dan DeBehnke.

Proof of Notice

- Chief Bowen announced that the notice was posted June 24th at 1:24 p.m. in accordance with open meeting laws.

Pledge of Allegiance

- George Morris led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

- George Morris opened the meeting to comments from the public of which there were none.

Consent Agenda

- Items listed under the Consent Agenda are considered in one motion unless a Fire Board Member requests that an item be removed from the Consent Agenda
 - Minutes of May 23rd, 2022 regular Fire Board Meeting
 - Payment of Bills - \$385,543.48
 - Ambulance and Highway refunds
- A motion was made by Michael Tompkins and seconded by Jeff Roemer to accept the Consent Agenda items including meeting minutes from June 23rd, 2022 Fire Board meeting, and payment of bills in the amount of \$385,543.48. Motion carried.

Fire Chief's Report

- Chief Bowen reviewed the District's call volume in May and June, currently calls for service have remained steady and back to normal trends following two years of COVID. Chief discussed with the board high profile incidents such as gas leaks, significant storm and hail incidents, a drowning on June 18ths, and a significant number of cardiac arrests.
- Chief thanked and recognized the significant efforts of the WLFD so far this year.
- The District has been faced with limited staffing who are combating inflation of their own, and a significant number of critical incidents.
- The Chief reviewed with the board the 2021 insurance dividend payments received through LWMMI.
- Chief Bowen provided an update regarding the District's sustainable staffing plan and August 9th referendum. Chief reviewed the first public information mailer with the board, and upcoming public information sessions. Starting mid-June through mid-July there will be a total of eight informational sessions.

Assistant Chief and Bureau Chief Reports

- The Fire Board reviewed the reports from each of the Assistant Chiefs and Bureau Chiefs for the previously month.

Presentation – Andres Medical Billing

- Sarah Wroblewski and Noreen Catino reviewed with the board the District's 2021 Emergency Medical Revenues. The review included the District's average collection rate for incidents, and break downs of the payer mix. This included a comparison of other WI clients payer mix's and revenues. The District has a 10% higher payer mix of medicare insurance than the State average. Overall, the District has seen a consistent increase in average collection rates, and since adding a part-time billing specialist position has increased revenues and brought the client hold incidents to less than 5 per month. Prior to this position there were between 50 and 75 incidents in client hold waiting for additional information for billing. These have been significant improvements.

Presentation – Operations Bureau, Deputy Chief Tim Meyer

- DC Meyer presented to the board the various duties of the operation bureau. DC Meyer recognized the staff that assist with various operational duties, tasks, and projects to help maintain services. Included in the operations bureau is personal protective equipment, uniforms, communications equipment (pagers/radios), public relations events, fire equipment, information/technology, dive/water rescue, safety committee, fitness committee, records management systems, and MABAS.

Discussion – 5 Year Capital Improvement Plan

- Chief Bowen provided the board with the current draft of the five-year capital improvement plan. Like other agencies, municipalities, and the community as a whole the District is combating record high inflation and supply chain delays.
- Chief Bowen walked the board through a comparison of the five-year capital improvement plan that was discussed in 2021. Due to inflation in 2021 and 2022 the increase for identical equipment and apparatus increased over 20%. To aid in balancing this increase staff is working to rearrange some items in the capital improvement plan to decrease the annual increase. During the initial years of the WLFD consolidation the CIP was developed to eliminate significant peaks and valleys in the CIP. Between 2021 and 2022 there have been significant inflationary increases, which cause the projected CIP to substantially increase from what was presented a year prior. The current projected inflationary increase for apparatus for 2023 is between 15% and 20%. This is on top of increases that occurred the last six months of 2021. As a result, the CIP development is a challenge as many vendors are not able to provide firm budget numbers.
- The final CIP will be discussed at the next meeting.

Discussion – WI EMS Grant

- Chief Bowen, discussed with the board the current EMS Flex Grant through the State of Wisconsin which is due the beginning of July. The Chief and DC Warren discussed various options that the District could apply for based on items in the current five-year capital improvement plan. The grant has various limits in place with regards to the amount an agency is able to apply for based on the type of equipment, training, etc. The maximum allowable is \$200,000, but is broken into various sub sections. The grant also has areas of the state that are eligible or ineligible based on financial demographics. The District will pursue a grant to assist with the partial payment of an upcoming replacement ambulance, as well as mechanical cardiac pulmonary resuscitation devices.

Discussion – August 9, 2022 Referendum Updates

- Chief Bowen provided the board with an update on municipalities that have approved resolutions for an August 9, 2022 referendum to address staffing and wage gaps at the District. The Chief provided the board with an educational update which will be presented at upcoming

public information sessions along with the first direct mailer that will be sent out in the next week. Chief also presented to the board updates that have been done on the District website.

Discussion – 2023 Budget Process

- Chief Bowen discussed the upcoming operational budget process with the board and will have further discussion in July and August as the 2023 budget is developed.

Future Agenda Items and Meetings

- July Fire Board meeting will be held on Monday, June 25, 2022 at 4pm at a Station #2.

Adjournment

- A motion to adjourn at 5:08 p.m. was made by Michael Tompkins and seconded by Jeff Roemer. Motion carried.