

WEST METRO FIRE-RESCUE DISTRICT

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

July 12, 2023

Approved October 11, 2023

A. Call to order

Secretary Adam Bell called a regular meeting of the West Metro Fire-Rescue District Board of Directors to order at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 12, 2023 at Station 3, 4251 Xylon Avenue N., New Hope, MN.

B. Roll Call – The following Directors were present:

Adam Bell	City Manager, City of Crystal, Secretary
Reece Bertholf	City Manager, City of New Hope
John Budziszewski	Council, City of Crystal
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 Joel Nelson
Assistant Fire Chief Josh Kunde
Assistant Chief Sean Watson
Deputy Fire Marshal Shelby Wolf
Counsel James Monge, Campbell Knutson
Auditor Bill Lauer, Malloy, Montague, Karnowski, Radosevich & Co., P.A.
Recording Secretary, Amy Juntunen

C. Welcome

The Board welcomed new member, Manager for the City of New Hope, Reece Bertholf.

D. Minutes

1. Approve the April 12, 2023 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes.
2. Approve the May 10, 2023 Work Session Notes.

Motion by Elder, second by Berris to approve the minutes and notes as presented. *Motion carried.*

E. Open Forum

Last Saturday evening there was a horrific car crash in Robbinsdale. WMFRD responded to this mutual aid call and were helpful in removing occupants from the vehicle. It was remarkable to see WMFRD work seamlessly with the Robbinsdale Fire Department and seeing the new “jaws of life” in use. The District also graciously offered to stay in the area to provide coverage while the Robbinsdale Fire Department was busy with cleanup operations. Big thank you to the District.
John Elder

F. Consent Agenda

1. Approve March Expenditures totaling \$328,074.07.
2. Approve April Expenditures totaling \$225,864.42.
3. Approve May Expenditures totaling \$251,889.07.
4. Approve Resolution 2023-4 Accepting Donations.

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

G. Chief's Report

From January 1 through June 30, 2023 there have been 983 calls for service: 393 in Crystal, 553 in New Hope and 37 mutual aid with an estimated fire loss of \$1,505,700. The Chief met with City Managers in April and May and discussed the 2024 budget, new engines, tower lease, and Public Safety Aid for Cities SF2416 which will provide state funding to Crystal and New Hope in 2023 and could be used for community violence prevention programs, equipment related to fire & rescue, etc. Both cities are considering sharing a portion of these funds with the District. This is a one-time payment from the state from the tax surplus. Funds will likely be available in September and must be distributed by December 26, 2023. The cities are considering giving the District 20% of each city's portion and the District will use the funds for compensated absences, incentive pay for firefighters, and funding the capital plan. The District also received a CenterPoint Energy Community Safety Grant of \$2,500 for the home safety survey program. Those funds will be used to purchase fire and CO detectors, fire extinguishers and other equipment for completing home safety surveys. The 2023 budget is slightly under at just over 43%.

The District's anniversary celebration was well attended and included six food trucks and all the District equipment on display. There was an obstacle course for kids, a DJ, live fire demonstrations and public education. By all accounts the event was a big success.

Out of the 14 2022 recruits, three have left and one is on leave for military service, bringing this cohort to 10 active recruits. Kolb requested that a current count of active firefighters be included in future reports.

In partnership with the City of New Hope, the District will be using a home on Winnetka Avenue for training along with the New Hope and Crystal police departments. A live burn at the home has been scheduled for October 7. The last live burn on a house by the District occurred in 2020. This is a great training opportunity.

Eight thousand dollars in capital funds were used to purchase ten new tires for the tower. The second engine sold has been delivered to the Olivia Fire department. Lanesboro will be picking up the third engine soon and the last engine has been sold to Daisy Mountain and will be picked up in September/October. All four engines sold in the range of \$200,000-\$225,000. The Daisy Mountain Fire District must wait four years for their new trucks to be delivered, so these engines will tide them over until their new trucks are completed and delivered.

The District is actively looking at other software companies for new records management software since First Due software is unable to provide payroll and other reports needed to calculate pensions, etc. Elder suggested looking at Oracle software.

Wolf noted that she has been providing a lot of fire prevention education. Recent fire investigations have concluded many events to be smoking-related. The District recently made a garage safety video with CCX that will be on social media next week.

1. First Quarter Financial Report. The report was included in the packet. There were no questions.

H. Old Business

1. 2024 Budget. There are no changes from the budget previously presented in April and May. This budget has been presented to both member city councils with no major concerns expressed. Motion by Kolb, second by Elder to approve the budget as presented. *Motion carried.*

I. New Business

1. Election of Officers. Article 5 of the Joint Powers Agreement requires an annual meeting of the District in July of each year. Article 6 requires officers to be elected for a one-year term that expires at this annual meeting. The current officers are Gary Laurant, President; Tim Hoyt, Vice President; and Adam Bell, Secretary. Motion by Elder, second by Kolb to re-elect the current slate, replacing Hoyt with Bertholf. *Motion carried.*

2. Approve Capital Purchase. In 2018 new overhead glass garage doors were installed at Station 2. The paint on the doors has faded from red to pink. A quote has been received to repaint the doors at a cost of \$4,475. This project has been budgeted at \$5,000. Motion by Elder, second by Kolb to approve the painting project as presented. *Motion carried.*

3. Tower Replacement. Due to long lead times for manufacturing, now is the time to begin preparing for replacement of the tower. The District entered into the lease for the current tower in May 2016 and it ends May 13, 2026. Because of the lead times, there are two options for consideration: 1) Make a balloon payment in July 2026 of \$241,995.50, refurbish the tower at an estimated cost of \$400,000-\$500,000 and keep it in service until 2036, then replace at an estimated cost of \$3.5-4.5 million and sell it for \$50,000-\$100,000; or 2) Enter into a new lease agreement in 2026 and sell the tower after delivery of its replacement. The cost to enter into a new lease is approximately \$3 million, including the balloon payment and the estimated sale price of the current tower of \$500,000.

In scenario one, the District would lose the tower for four to eight months during the refurbishment. A new lease would cost approximately \$177,000 more per year than the current lease. The annual cost to own with refurbishment is estimated at \$315,380 while the annual cost to own with a new lease is estimated at \$373,966.

Another option available would be to look into moving from leasing back to direct purchasing. The tower was the District's first lease because the members had not saved for replacement of the

equipment. If the District enters into an agreement with Pierce now, it locks the purchase or lease cost now, even though the truck will not be built immediately.

Staff recommends entering into a no-cost contract with Pierce to create specifications and costs for a replacement tower. This contract can be terminated at any time prior to build with no cost but puts the District in the manufacturing line, which would be beneficial due to the long manufacturing time.

Motion by Berris, second by Elder to approve entering into a contract with Pierce to spec a new tower at this time as long as there is no risk or cost associated with this contract. *Motion carried.*

J. Other Matters and Announcements

1. Bertholf noted that there was a near drowning in the New Hope pool last month. Lifeguards pulled the victim from the pool and gave resuscitation. The New Hope Police Chief is working on something to recognize the lifeguards who did a great job and saved a life.

2. Regular Meeting of the West Metro Board of Directors October 11, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

K. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Juntunen
Recording Secretary