



WEST METRO FIRE-RESCUE

Board of Directors Meeting

Notice of Special Meeting

6:30 PM Special Board Meeting to Consider Acceptance of a SAFER Grant September 20, 2023 at 6:30 PM

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Board of Directors of the West Metro Fire-Rescue District will hold a special meeting to consider acceptance of a SAFER grant on Wednesday, September 20, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. at West Metro Fire Station 3, 4251 Xylon Avenue North, New Hope, MN 55428 or by WebEx.

In accordance with the requirements of Minnesota Statutes, Section 13D.021 some members of the Board of Directors may be participating via telephone or other electronic means. A member may participate from the Washington County Law Enforcement Center, 15015 62nd St N, Stillwater, MN 55082.

Members of the public may monitor the meeting by a scheduled Webex meeting.

Topic: West Metro Fire-Rescue District – 9/20 Special Board Meeting to consider Acceptance of a SAFER grant

Time: September 20, 2023 06:30 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Webex Meeting

<https://logis.webex.com/logis/j.php?MTID=m86e03a64d5cc4edd2a85145694170335>

Join by meeting number

Meeting number (access code): 2630 031 9222

Meeting password: HxnNM5Fev23

Tap to join from a mobile device (attendees only)

[+1-312-535-8110](tel:+1-312-535-8110),,[26300319222###](tel:+1-312-535-8110) United States Toll (Chicago)

[+1-415-655-0001](tel:+1-415-655-0001),,[26300319222###](tel:+1-415-655-0001) US Toll

Join by phone

+1-312-535-8110 United States Toll (Chicago)

+1-415-655-0001 US Toll

[Global call-in numbers](#)

Join from a video system or application

Dial [26300319222@logis.webex.com](tel:+1-312-535-8110)

You can also dial 173.243.2.68 and enter your meeting number.



WEST METRO FIRE-RESCUE DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING AGENDA

September 20, 2023

6:30 PM Special Meeting to Consider Acceptance of a
SAFER Grant

- A. Call to order by Board President.
- B. Roll Call
- C. New Business
 - 1. Consider Acceptance of a SAFER Grant
- D. Other Matters and Announcements
 - 1. Regular Meeting of the Board October 11, 2023
- E. Adjournment



MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Directors
From: Sarah Larson, Fire Chief
Date: September 5, 2023
Subject: SAFER Grant

BACKGROUND

In 2021 the Board approved the District apply for a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant (SAFER).

SAFER was created to provide funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations to help them increase or maintain the number of trained, "front line" firefighters available in their communities.

The goal of SAFER is to enhance the local fire departments' abilities to comply with staffing, response and operational standards established by the NFPA (NFPA 1710: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments and/or NFPA 1720: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments).

According to NFPA 1720 the West Metro Fire-Recue District (WMRFD) protects an urban area which is an area with a population greater than 1000 per square mile. An urban area requires a minimum of 15 staff to respond within 9 minutes 90% of the time to structure fires.

At this time, a SAFER grant covers 100% of the salary and benefits of each full-time employee for three years.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

WMRFD requested assistance to hire 3 firefighters at a cost per firefighter of \$121,457. While we used to rely on a paid, on-call staffing model with a "come from home response," turnout has become critically low in the day time. Many factors beyond our control make it impossible for the paid, on-call firefighters to respond to day time weekday calls. These factors include changing demographics, increasing work requirements, more dual-income families, travelling further to work, rising property costs displacing blue collar families, and more intensive training requirements, to name a few. With dwindling daytime paid, on-call responses, our full-time staff (i.e., the command staff who work 10-hour staggered shifts from 0600 to 1800) are often the only firefighters available to respond to daytime calls in a reasonable timeframe. However, due to staggered shifts, days off, sick days, training, etc., the actual number of full-time firefighters available for a response is always below 8, and typically ranges between 3 and 6. This is insufficient to protect a district of 45,316 residents, significant critical infrastructure hazards, more than 2,000 calls per year and is an unsustainable continued response model.

A recent staffing analysis confirmed just how woefully inadequate our current staffing levels truly are. This report noted that we were unable to meet NFPA 1720 compliance at all between 0800 to 1600. The report also noted that at several working fires, the first-arriving apparatus had just two or three firefighters, below minimum staffing per NFPA. Additionally, since our only aerial is housed at Station 1 which is not staffed by career personnel, there is no guarantee that the ladder truck will hit the road during the daytime for a working

fire. Even with supplemental staffing from automatic aid, we are consistently unable to amass 15 firefighters within 9 minutes. After-action reports have shown that the lack of firefighters prevents our crews from performing all of the critical functions required for safe and effective fire attacks. Continuing to operate understaffed elevates the risk of injury to firefighters and civilians and increases the amount of property damage. With no hope of increasing paid-on-call staffing during the work week, the only solution is to hire more full-time career firefighters.

The three positions requested in this grant will be used to staff a crew of four firefighters at Station 1 (located in the northeast part of our district) during daytime hours, Mon-Fri. The new positions will achieve four objectives: #1 – increase daytime staffing levels; #2 – reduce response times caused by distance and a major railroad bisecting the two cities; #3 – guarantee that the ladder truck responds on structure fires; and #4 – allow full-time staff to remain focused on projects by splitting the calls for service between stations 1 and 3. Increasing our total staffing level during weekday hours – when our call volume is highest, but paid, on-call staffing levels are lowest – will greatly improve operational capabilities.

With a total of 11 career staff, we will be able to rebalance the shift schedule and bring our minimum staffing up from three to six, with actual staffing levels fluctuating between seven and nine. In combination with another seven to nine paid, on-call firefighters (avg weekday turnout for a working fire) and two automatic aid units with another three firefighters each, we will achieve compliance with NFPA 1720.

Currently, all of our career staff are concentrated in Station 3, which is the headquarters station on the District’s western side. With help from SAFER, the additional firefighters will enable us to put a daytime crew in Station 1. Not only will this provide better geographic coverage and reduce response times of the first-arriving unit across our service territory, but it will also enable us to staff our ladder truck during weekday hours and guarantee a response for this critical piece of apparatus.

The three new positions would be hired as lieutenants and in addition to responding to calls for service they will also assist with IT, logistics, training, community outreach and inspections.

SAFER Grant Award

Benefits include the following:

- \$18,000 for Health Insurance
- \$1,000 for HSA
- \$102 for Life Insurance
- \$13,275 for Pension
- \$12,500 for Workers Comp Insurance
- \$480 for Long Term Disability
- \$1,100 for Employment Taxes

Year	Annual Salary	Annual Benefits	Total per Firefighter
1	\$75,000	\$46,457	\$121,457
2	\$78,000	\$48,315.28	\$126,315.28
3	\$81,120	\$50,247.89	\$131,367.89
3 Year Total	\$1,137,420.51		

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Board accept the SAFER grant.