

**Excelsior Fire District Board  
EFD Governing Board Meeting  
Wednesday, January 18, 2017**

**24100 Smithtown Road  
Shorewood, Minnesota  
6:00 P.M.**

## MINUTES

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chief Gerber called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

### **ROLL CALL**

Present: Excelsior Fire District (EFD) Boardmembers: Chair Erickson; Boardmembers Fletcher, Jennings, and Miller; and, EFD Chief Gerber

Also present: Deephaven Administrator/EFD Fiscal Agent Young; Excelsior City Manager Luger; Shorewood City Administrator Lerud; Tonka Bay Administrator Crawford; EFD Assistant Chief George; and, Excelsior Firefighters Relief Association (EFRA) President Duncan (arrived at 6:13 P.M. and departed the meeting at 6:53 P.M.)

Absent: Boardmember Sundberg

### **2. INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME OF BOARD MEMBERS**

Chief Gerber welcomed new Excelsior Fire District Boardmember Adam Jennings from Tonka Bay. He asked Boardmember Jennings to say a few things. Jennings noted he has lived in Tonka Bay for approximately 1.5 years and expressed his excitement about being on the EFD Board.

Gerber explained that Kristine Sundberg and Debbie Siakel, both from Shorewood, have switched roles. Sundberg will serve as the regular Boardmember for 2017 and Siakel will serve as the alternate. Sundberg had served as the alternate for the past couple of years. Deephaven does not have a designated alternate to the Board. Excelsior Councilmember Beattie, Greenwood Councilmember Quam and Tonka Bay Councilmember Groth will again serve as alternates.

He welcomed back Steve Erickson from Deephaven, Tom Fletcher from Greenwood and Greg Miller from Excelsior.

### **3. AGENDA APPROVAL**

**Erickson moved, Miller seconded, approving the EFD Governing Board meeting agenda as presented. Motion passed 4/0.**

Discussion moved to Item 5 on the agenda.

### **4. CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION**

This was discussed after Item 7 on the agenda.

Chief Gerber thanked former Boardmember Eli Ansari for her service to the Fire District and stated he thought the District was in a better place because of her service. He presented her with a certificate titled Excelsior Fire District Honorary Badge. He read what the certificate says.

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*This certificate is presented to Elli Ansari in appreciation for your years of commendable service as an Excelsior Fire District Boardmember.*

*As an EFD Boardmember you will be remembered in its history as a leader in the continuing development and preservation of a bright future for the Excelsior Fire District and its firefighters. The legacy you leave to those who follow you in service, is a group of dedicated firefighters and the united community they serve called*

*The Excelsior Fire District.*

*Issued on this 18<sup>th</sup> day of January 2017.*

Ms. Ansari thanked Chief Gerber for his leadership and mentorship. She also thanked the other members of the Board. She expressed her gratitude for everything people did to help her make her experience on the Board meaningful and memorable. She thanked the recording secretary for the detailed minutes she prepares for Board meetings.

Discussion moved to Item 8 on the agenda.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

This was discussed after Item 3 on the agenda.

**A. November 16, 2016, Regular Meeting Minutes**

**Erickson moved, Miller seconded, approving the EFD Board Regular Meeting Minutes of November 16, 2016, as presented. Motion passed 4/0.**

**6. SELECTION OF 2017 BOARD CHAIR**

**Fletcher moved, Miller seconded, appointing Boardmember Erickson to the position of Excelsior Fire District Governing Board Chair for 2017. Motion passed 4/0.**

Chair Erickson accepted the appointment to Chair.

Chief Gerber turned control of the meeting over to Chair Erickson.

**7. SELECTION OF 2017 VICE-CHAIR**

Boardmember Miller stated maybe Boardmember Sundberg would like to serve as Vice-Chair.

Boardmember Jennings offered to serve as Vice-Chair.

**Miller moved, Fletcher seconded, appointing Boardmember Jennings to the position of EFD Governing Board Vice-Chair for 2017. Motion passed 4/0.**

Discussion returned to Item 4 on the agenda.

**8. CONSENT AGENDA**

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This was discussed after Item 4 on the agenda.

Chair Erickson asked if anyone wanted to discuss any of the items on the consent agenda. No one commented.

- A. Approval of Annual Resolutions**
  - 1. Adopting **RESOLUTION NO. 17-001**, “A Resolution Making the Annual Appointments for the Excelsior Fire District.”
  - 2. Adopting **RESOLUTION NO 17-002**, “A Resolution Authorizing Payment of Certain Claims by the Fire Chief Without Prior Board Approval.”
  
- B. Setting EFD Board Meeting Dates for 2017** (This item was moved to under Item 13 on the agenda.)
  
- C. Monthly Fire District Administrative Reports – December 2016**
  - 1. Call Reports
  - 2. Firefighter Activity
  - 3. Firefighter Percentages
  - 4. Inspection Reports
  
- D. Operating Committee Report – December 7, 2016, and January 4, 2017**

**Fletcher moved, Miller seconded, Approving the Motions Contained on the Consent Agenda and Adopting the Resolutions Therein. Motion passed 4/0.**

**9. MATTERS FROM THE FLOOR**

**10. REPORT AGENDA**

**A. Fire Chief / Fire District Report**

- **Training**

Chief Gerber explained the eight new recruits continue to do well. One recruit had previously been a firefighter. The other seven recruits have completed Firefighter I training and are currently actively involved in hazardous materials training which will conclude the end of January or beginning of February. After that is completed the recruits will go on to Firefighter II training. Most of the recruits have completed the medical portion of their training. Sometime in April they will have completed the majority of their training and will be able to provide fire service in the Excelsior Fire District (EFD).

He noted that about 60 percent of the service the EFD provides is medical. He explained that quarterly instructors from Hennepin County Medical Center EMS Education conduct emergency medical technician (EMT) training on site. The first session will be held on January 19, 2017.

He explained that during 2017 the focus of leadership training will change. Some of it will focus on personnel related things and some of the focus will be on operational things. Leadership training does not occur during the summer.

- **Fire Prevention**

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Chief Gerber noted there are about 785 inspectable businesses that need to be inspected in the District. About half are inspected annually and others every two or three years based on certain criteria.

With regard to special inspections, this is the quite time of the year for them. He plans to update the EFD's Cost Recover Policy. The Board will be asked to consider the updates during one of its future meetings.

With regard to re-inspections, he stated Fire Inspector Murphy-Ringate continues to be active with inspections and re-inspections. The number of multiple re-inspections at any one location has gone down. There are still businesses that continue to require re-inspections.

He explained the Department is close to going live with an iPad inspection system that would allow the inspection report to be emailed to the business owner and have the data flow into the Fire House System. Former part-time Fire Inspector Shawn Johnson worked hard to get that system functional when he was working for the Department and he did additional work after he left.

- **Fire Suppression / Response**

Chief Gerber stated there were 755 suppression / response calls in 2016; there were 810 in 2015, 769 in 2014, 677 in 2013, and 639 in 2012. He thought one of the reasons for the high volume of calls in 2015 was the one day in July when there were 40 calls for service related to a storm. There have been 30 calls this year-to-date. For the same period in 2016 there were 30. Calls are the most variable part of the fire service business.

He displayed a couple of photographs of a structure fire that occurred in December 2016 near Edgewood Road in the City of Shorewood. There was a lot of fire coming out of a detached garaged. The fire occurred at the same time the EFD Firefighters were assisting a neighboring agency at a fire.

He noted that the Department participated at a fire in the City of Mound the previous week. And, the other day the firefighters participated at a structure fire in the City of Eden Prairie.

- **Special Events**

Chief Gerber explained the firefighters were involved with the Kids Free Movie event and Giving Tree Project late in 2016. Fire Inspector Murphy-Ringate does a lot of behind-the-scenes work for the Giving Tree Project. There was a group of firefighters present at the Polar Plunge event hosted by ALARC (Active Life and Running Club) and held on January 1<sup>st</sup> in case there were any problems. The Plunge was held near the Excelsior Commons this year. ALARC usually makes a donation to the Department. The Department withholds the cost recovery fee and the rest goes into the donations fund. The Department participated a little in the planning for the Arctic Fever event.

Because it has been so warm he is not sure if the Pond Hockey championship on Lake Minnetonka will be held the weekend of January 19 – 22. More than 60 teams have registered for the event. The group that coordinates that event does an outstanding job. The Department does not have firefighters at the event.

The Department was involved with special event planning for the upcoming Nordic Ski event schedule for the end of January. He was not sure that would happen because of the lack of snow.

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- **Emergency Management**

Chief Gerber noted a South Lake public safety / emergency management meeting / training session is scheduled for February 28, 2017, from 10:00 – Noon at Station 1. Representatives from the South Lake communities and their public works departments, the South Lake primary ambulance service providers (HCMC and Ridgeview Medical Center), CenterPoint Energy, Xcel Energy, the Excelsior – South Lake Chamber of Commerce, and the Minnetonka School District have been invited. There won't be a table top exercise this year.

- **Administrative**

With regard to the EFD 2016 financial audit, Chief Gerber stated the EFD's auditor has completed the audit and is in the process of preparing the reports. The findings will be presented to the Board during its March 22 meeting. The same thing is true for the Excelsior Firefighters Relief Association (EFRA).

With regard to the staffing, Gerber noted the Department currently has 43 paid-on-call (POC) firefighters. The maximum number the Department can have is 50. During his tenure 47 firefighters were the most the Department had. The first of the year was the official start date for the 43<sup>rd</sup> firefighter. Tom Brown is the newest firefighter. He had lived in Excelsior and is relocating to Shorewood.

Since the Board's last meeting Firefighter Darren Aschoff resigned due to time constraints. Also, Firefighter Kevin Stern retired. He was a 30-plus-year member of the Department. He will stay with the organization as a reserve member. The retirements of Kevin Stern and Bruce Duncan will be recognized during the 2017 recognition event. He will also invite the two of them to come to an upcoming Board meeting to be recognized. He noted there is one captain's position open; it will not be filled at this time.

He explained that nationwide 45 percent of firefighters are 35 – 49 years old, 27 percent are 25 – 34 years old, 18 percent are 50 – 59 years old, 4 percent are 60 years old or older, and 4 percent are under 25 years old. The cost to train and equip a new firefighter is \$27,095. Staff is in the process of creating an Excel spreadsheet that will show the cost for a new EFD firefighter and also the cost going forward. The POC firefighter model is the best way to provide service to the EFD community. Yet, there are challenges with that model.

The Office of the State Auditor's Minnesota Center for Fiscal Excellence has shared information that indicates in 2013 the State of Minnesota ranked 47<sup>th</sup> in the nation in spending per household on fire services and it ranked 21<sup>st</sup> in population. In 2013 there were 780 fire departments in Minnesota with 19 of them being all career, 74 being combination (the Department is one of them because there are three full-time employees) and 687 of them are all volunteer organizations. And, there were an estimated 21,032 firefighters with 19,232 of them being volunteers and about 1,800 of them being career. Regional comparison (North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota) data indicates that Minnesota has the fewest firefighters, fire stations and fire departments; significantly fewer than North Dakota.

He explained that in 2017 there will be continued discussion about POC response, the Duty Officer Program, the Duty Shadow Program and the Duty Crew. The EFD's chiefs and captains provide the Duty Officer response. It is efficient and cost effective to be able to send only one person to certain types of calls. But, that places a burden on the chiefs and captains. They get paid something to go on a call and they get paid something for being a Duty Officer for a day. Yet, time is often more valuable than the small amount of money they are paid for providing that service. The Duty Shadow Program is a mentoring program for those firefighters who are not a chief or captain who may want to provide

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Duty Officer response services. The 2017 budget includes funding for 10 hours of duty crew coverage per week. At full staffing – 4 total firefighters, 2 at each station. The coverage hours are 5:30 – 7:30 A.M. on Tuesday and Wednesday and 6:00 P.M. – Midnight on Friday. Some Duty Crew shifts had to be cancelled because there were not enough firefighters to fill the shifts.

Effective January 1, 2017, there was a change to a participation points requirement from a call percentage/drill attendance requirement for a six-month trial basis. A firefighter has to earn 400 participation points every six months. That change had been discussed for close to a year before it was implemented. A participation tracking form was created. On the front side is a list of firefighter names and a section to write a narrative/explanation. On the back side there are various things firefighters do with points assigned to them. Some firefighters are supportive of the change and others are uncomfortable with it.

He noted that there are two new senior living facilities being built in the EFD community. Based on experience with the senior living facility in Deephaven those facilities generate medical calls. He explained the fire service business continues to change for the EFD community.

He explained that on January 17, 2017, representatives from 10 area fire departments (including the EFD) met in the Station 1 emergency operations center (EOC) to discuss a number of topics. The hot topics included new officer development, time/work/life balance, mandates/points system, engagement/feedback, recruitment/retention, referrals from firefighters or others, social media, public awareness, ride-along, and funding. It was apparent that all of the fire departments talk about the same types of things.

He noted research shows that 30 years ago a person had about 17 minutes to escape a house fire. Today, a person has only 3 or 4 minutes. He played a video where TODAY national investigative correspondent Jeff Rossen conducted a dramatic demonstration that shows why and how you should prepare. The video can be found at:

<http://www.today.com/video/why-you-have-less-time-to-escape-a-house-fire-today-than-30-years-ago-601680451516>

In the demonstration there were two rooms built side by side. One was a room that is similar to how living spaces used to be in the 1970s/1980s. A coffee table was built out of real wood and there were more natural fabrics around. In the second room there was modern furniture and a lot of synthetic fibers in the curtains, the backing on carpet, the sofa, the pillows and even in the coffee table. Synthetic materials burn hotter and faster than natural materials do.

The modern room was totally engulfed in fire in less than 3 minutes.

In the old room the fire was barely noticeable after 2 minutes. At five minutes the flames were just peaking over the pillow on the couch. After 10 minutes only the corner of the couch (where the pillow was burning) was burning and the drapes were catching on fire. After 15 minutes the room was still intact. After 26 minutes the fire was mostly contained to the couch and the black smoke was not overwhelming. A person could still escape. In the end it took 30 minutes for the old room to burn.

The furniture industry group has told NBC News it supports a Federal Flammability Standard for upholstered furniture but only if product changes are safe, effective and affordable. Experts say that until that happens there is no time for people to waste in getting out when a smoke alarm goes off. The National Association of Home Builders has told NBC News that new building codes make homes safer.

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On the Red Cross's website there are instructions for preparing an escape plan.

Chief Gerber explained the purpose in showing the video was to show how things have changed when responding to a fire call. There have also been changes in what types of services are provided and how they are provided.

He then explained that in 2017 there will be more discussion about data. Staff, in large part the Administrative Specialist, will do some data mining. Then the various data elements will be assessed.

With regard to the 2017 EFD recognition event, Gerber stated if the event is approved by the EFRA membership a new location will have to be found for the event.

With regard to the 2016 Year in Review, Gerber stated it will hopefully be presented during the March 22, 2017, EFD Board meeting. The format of the review will be the same as in past years.

With regard to 2017 goals, Gerber encouraged the Boardmembers to submit to him any ideas they have for goals. He noted he thought the EFD Board has been very supportive of the organization and where it is headed.

With regard to 2017 mission and vision discussions, Gerber stated he has copies of a draft list of visions for the EFD and a draft list of 2017 Goals for the EFD for those who want them.

With regard to 2017 station projects, Gerber explained that thanks to help from City Manager Luger and City Administrator Lerud he has been pursuing different options for the concrete repair work that needs to be done to the apron at Station 1. He was provided with the name of another concrete person. Lerud had suggested to him to wait until one of the EFD member cities are going to have concrete work done and bid the EFD's project in with that work.

The uninterrupted power supply (UPS) system for the Public Safety Facility in Shorewood failed last year. The Excelsior Fire District 2017 Building Projects Improvement Program (BPIP) has allocated \$8,345 for the UPS replacement/batteries, noting that is only one-half the cost because the South Lake Minnetonka Police Department (SLMPD) pays for half of the total cost. The 2017 BPIP also has funds slated for the seal coating of parking lots at the facilities.

The large EFD sign outside of Station 1 is starting to fade. The SLMPD is going to change its sign at some point so that it reflects the SLMPD's new patch. It would make sense for the EFD to replace its sign at the same time. The EFD does not have any funds budgeted for a new sign.

With regard to the EFD's 125 Anniversary, Gerber thanked the EFD Board for its support of the celebration. He noted the time capsule will be filled and buried in the spring. All of the special Anniversary logos that were on apparatus have been removed.

- **Other**

### **11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **A. Excelsior Firefighters Relief Association Updates**

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Excelsior Firefighters Relief Association (EFRA) President Duncan noted the meeting packet contained a copy of the EFRA's Investment Report Card for the year ending December 31, 2015, from the Office of the State Auditor (OSA). He explained for 2015 the EFRA split its investment portfolio between the State Board of Investment (SBI) and Parr McKnight Wealth Management Group of Wells Fargo. The EFRA Board was not satisfied with the earnings from Parr so it put its entire portfolio back with the SBI. In 2015 the EFRA lost about 2.29 percent based on its benchmarks. If it would have its entire portfolio in the SBI's State-wide Voluntary Plan it would have earned 0.09 percent. The SBI's Voluntary Plan is more conservative than the EFRA's Investment Policy. The Voluntary Plan is about 50 percent stocks and 45 percent bonds. The EFRA's policy is 70 percent stocks and 25 percent bonds. Depending on how the market performs the EFRA will do either better or worse than the Voluntary Plan. After discussions with experts in the past the EFRA decided it wanted to be more aggressive with its Investment Policy. That would in part minimize the District's need to make a required contribution because the earnings would be higher if the markets performed well.

He then noted the packet contains a copy of the Monthly Dashboard for December 2016. It indicates the EFRA earned almost 7 percent on its investments. He explained that according to his math the EFRA's fund for pensions is 117.66 percent funded. The Policy Guidelines for the Excelsior Fire District Pension Benefit recommends a 3 percent increase (or approximately \$200) in the per-year-of-service (PYOS) pension benefit if the Funding Coverage Percentage (FCP) is equal to or greater than 117 percent but less than 124 percent. It would increase the PYOS to \$7,250. The EFD Board will be asked to ratify that during its March 22, 2017, meeting.

Boardmember Jennings asked what the expense ratio is for the actively managed funds. Boardmember Fletcher stated for the SBI it is very low. EFRA President stated the SBI is the cheapest.

EFRA President Duncan explained that within the SBI there is an actively managed fund and an index fund. Up until now the EFRA's investments have been equally distributed. He asked the EFD Board if it believes actively managed is better or if passively managed is better. He noted the passively managed account did a little better in 2016. He stated the EFRA Board would likely discuss that over the next few months.

Chief Gerber noted that during 2016 the EFRA made some expensive donations to the EFD. The EFRA contributed up to \$10,000 to the EFD's 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. The EFRA purchased a Lucas automated CPR device for a cost of \$18,000 and Class A uniforms for all firefighters for a cost of \$18,000 and donated those items to the EFD.

### **B. New Ladder Truck Update**

Chief Gerber explained the purchase contract for the new aerial/ladder truck has been signed. The total amount allocated for all truck costs was \$862,225. Of that \$774,683 was for the truck itself, \$47,500 was for financing, \$4,500 was for graphics, \$23,004 was for equipment, and \$12,538 was for change orders. He thanked the City of Shorewood for pre-paying the \$774,683 on January 17. Shorewood is financing the truck at an interest rate of 2 percent. The truck will come without EFD graphics on it. He reiterated his previous commitment that the truck and associated costs will come in at or under \$862,225.

He reviewed the timeline. The agreement was signed on January 3, 2017. The pre-payment was made on January 17. Pre-construction is scheduled to begin in roughly June 2017. There will be a pre-construction meeting at Pierce located in Appleton, Wisconsin. The post paint meeting is scheduled for January 2018. The truck is scheduled to be delivered in March 2018.

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Gerber noted the contract the EFD signed was for a 13.5 month build schedule. He then noted that the Golden Valley Fire Department and the Hopkins Fire Department have purchased a similar type of truck and they did so a little bit ahead of the EFD finalizing its purchase.

### 12. NEW BUSINESS

#### A. Sale of Current Truck # 15 – Aerial Truck

Chief Gerber noted the meeting packet contained a copy of a memorandum from him regarding the sale of the EFD's current Truck 15 (the aerial/ladder truck Aerial 11).

Chair Erickson noted the memo indicates the minimum bid price would be \$60,000.

Chief Gerber stated the City of Montgomery and the Montgomery Fire Department (MFD) want to purchase the EFD's aerial/ladder truck. Per state law the EFD has to put a bid out for the truck. He would like to put the bid out through the local newspaper the Sun Sailor. If the EFD Board approves doing that this evening he would contact the Sun Sailor the next day.

Boardmember Miller asked if there is a legal reason that would require the bid be put out to a larger area. Chief Gerber stated he does not think so because the Sun Sailor is a legal newspaper for the EFD.

Boardmember Fletcher asked Chief Gerber if he was comfortable with the minimum \$60,000 sale price. Gerber responded yes. He explained that originally staff had hoped the District would be able to sell Aerial 11 for around \$80,000. Most vendors thought the sale price would be in the \$50,000 – \$60,000 range.

Chief Gerber noted the MFD is operating a telesquirt 1975 truck. The EFD's Aerial 11 is a 1998.

**Fletcher moved, Jennings seconded, authorizing Excelsior Fire District Chief Gerber to finalize a sale of the current aerial/ladder truck to the highest bidder with a minimum sale price of \$60,000 with the actual delivery/sale date to be determined by staff. Motion passed 4/0.**

### 13. NEXT MEETING

#### A. Excelsior Fire District Board Meeting Dates for 2017

This item was removed from the Consent Agenda at Boardmember Fletcher's request.

Boardmember Fletcher noted that he cannot make the budget work session scheduled for April 26, 2017.

After ensuing discussion there was consensus to reschedule the work session to April 18, 2017, at 7:30 P.M.

**Fletcher moved, Miller seconded, adopting the 2017 meeting dates as amended. Motion passed 4/0.**

#### B. Regular Board Meeting – March 22, 2017 6:00 P.M.

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**The next regular EFD Governing Board Meeting is scheduled for 6:00 P.M. Wednesday, March 22, 2017, at Station 1.**

**14. ADJOURNMENT**

**Fletcher moved, Miller seconded, Adjourning the EFD Governing Board Meeting of January 18, 2017, at 7:06 P.M. Motion passed 4/0.**

**RESPECTULLY SUBMITTED,  
Christine Freeman, Recorder**