

**Excelsior Fire District Board  
EFD Governing Board Meeting  
Wednesday, May 30, 2018**

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

## MINUTES

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

Vice Chair Jennings called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

### **ROLL CALL**

Present: Excelsior Fire District (EFD) Boardmembers: Chair Erickson (arrived at 6:10 p.m.), Vice Chair Jennings; Boardmembers Fletcher, Miller (arrived at 6:15 p.m.), Sundberg

Also present: Excelsior Fire District (EFD) Chief Gerber; Shorewood City Administrator Lerud; Excelsior Operations Committee Luger, Greenwood Fiscal Agent Young and, Excelsior Fire District (EFD) Assistant Chief McCarthy

Absent: Tonka Bay City Administrator Tingley

### **2. AGENDA APPROVAL**

**Sundberg moved, Fletcher seconded, approving the EFD Governing Board meeting agenda as presented. Motion passed 3/0.**

### **3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. March 28, 2018, Regular Meeting Minutes**

**B. April 25, 2018, Work Session Minutes**

**Fletcher moved, Sundberg seconded, approving the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 28, 2018, and the Work Session Minutes of April 25, 2018, as presented. Motion passed 3/0.**

### **4. CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. Monthly Fire District Administrative Reports – April 2018**

- 1. Call Reports**
- 2. Firefighter Activity**
- 3. Firefighter Percentages**
- 4. Inspection Reports**

**B. Report of the Operating Committee – April**

**C. Treasurer Report**

Sundberg moved, Fletcher seconded, approving the motions contained on the consent agenda and adopting the resolution therein. Motion passed 3/0.

## 5. MATTERS FROM THE FLOOR

There were none.

## 6. REPORT AGENDA

### A. Fire Chief/Fire District Report

- **Training**
  - **Weekly Training**

Chief Gerber stated that weekly trainings are held on Thursday nights. He explained that Chief Stern is the leader of that group and stated the previous person (Craig Zaim) resigned; therefore, Lee Christopher is filling in as an Interim until August.

- **Fire prevention**
  - **Inspections**
    - **Part-time Fire Inspectors**

Chief Gerber stated that the part-time summer inspector has been hired. He stated that there was an internal posting to which two people applied, and this year unlike previous years, they decided to hire both of the applicants. The applicants, Karl Narveson and Thom Brown, will have to decide how to divide the hours accordingly. Both applicants are paid on call firefighters.

- **Special Event Inspections**

Chief Gerber stated that this is the time of year when there are more special events going on and that the special events require more inspections.

- **Pre-Plans**

Chief Gerber stated that Dave Cole has helped with upgrading the pre-plan program and stated that some updates were done in the hard map book and some were electronic. He stated that there are about 80 pre-plans in place.

Vice Chair Jennings asked if that would include schools. Chief Gerber replied yes and listed other examples of large facilities where there are pre-plans in place. He explained that there are also a few examples of homes that are uniquely placed, therefore, pre-plans have been created to help with those also.

Vice Chair Jennings asked how long it would take to practice with 80 pre-plans in place. Chief Gerber replied that the pre-plans are used more as a reference to layout an overview of where the major shut-off valves are located on site.

- **Public Education**

Chief Gerber stated that they are currently in the process of planning education strategies for the fall.

- **Fire Suppression/Response**

- **Responses -year to date**

Chief Gerber stated that there have been 316 calls, 69 more calls, compared to this same time last year. He stated that that is approximately 6-7 calls per day. He stated that the month of May has been busy and that they are not even deep into the storm season yet.

Boardmember Fletcher questioned if 6-7 calls per day could be wearing on the firefighters. Chief Gerber replied absolutely.

Boardmember Fletcher inquired if the calls were primarily medical calls. Chief Gerber stated that the calls were a little bit of everything. He stated that medical calls are up slightly and stated that there have also been more crash calls. He stated that there seems to be more traffic passing through due to the proximity of near by road construction projects. He stated that there have been more lake responses as this is the time of year when people are out on the lakes. He stated that there have been more box alarm calls as well.

Chief Gerber shared some information regarding a fire that happened the previous Saturday. He explained that there was a very fast response time by police and stated that the fire was already heavily involved when the firefighters began arriving. He stated that staffing was lighter due to the holiday weekend and stated that there were approximately 75 firefighters that responded to the call. He stated that this was the first fire that the new ladder truck responded to. He stated that the family and their pets made it out of the home safe.

Boardmember Sundberg asked Chief Gerber to further explain the family care and how that part works. Chief Gerber stated that they try to provide someone from the department to act as a liaison for the family. He stated that there are documents that are available to the family for assisting with the next steps after a fire. He explained that they try to ensure that the family has a place to stay. He stated the fire is then investigated as well. He stated that there is a long time in the recovery process for the family.

Boardmember Sundberg inquired if the structure would be demolished. Chief Gerber replied that he would assume so, but stated that is really up to the insurance agents to decide.

Chief McCarthy pointed out that the new ladder truck played an important role in fighting this fire due to the extended reach of the ladder truck they were able to suppress the fire from higher and more difficult angles.

Boardmember Sundberg pointed out that the ladder truck information would be great to see in a local news story to highlight the benefit of the tax funds that are spent on such equipment.

Chief Gerber pointed out the supply line hoses and stated that there were multiple alarms that were called which triggered response from multiple different departments.

- **Special Events**

- **Follow-ups**

- **Lake Minnetonka Half Marathon**

Chief Gerber stated that the group organizing this event does a great job. He commented that it was a busy event and stated that a couple people were assisted and needed to be transported by ambulance.

- **Memorial Day – May 28<sup>th</sup>**

Chief Gerber said that this was a very busy day.

- **Crossfit SISU Murph event – May 28<sup>th</sup>**

Chief Gerber stated that a couple people were transported by ambulance at this event.

- **Future**

- **Maynard's 20th anniversary – May 31<sup>st</sup> – June 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Chief Gerber pointed out that there is a Fireworks event on Saturday night that the department is scheduled to assist with for this event.

- **Art on the Lake – June 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>**

- **Lake Minnetonka Triathlon – June 16<sup>th</sup>**

- **4<sup>th</sup> of July**

- **EFD Dance – July 20<sup>th</sup> (5pm – 11 pm)**

- **Concords Elegance – July 22<sup>nd</sup>**

- **Safety Camp – August 8<sup>th</sup>**

- **EFD VIP Event – August 15<sup>th</sup>**

- **EFD Open House – October 4<sup>th</sup> (5:30 pm – 8:00 pm)**

- **Emergency Management**

- **Lake Area Emergency Management Meetings**

Chief Gerber stated that these meetings are still scheduled monthly. He stated that the May meeting was scheduled for tomorrow May 31, 2018.

- **Hennepin County Emergency Management**

Chief Gerber stated that this organization often gets overlooked but is a great resource from a planning and a response standpoint.

- **Administrative**

- **Board Meeting Follow – ups**

Chief Gerber stated that the website has been updated since Shorewood Mayor Zerby brought up the concern regarding website access to past meeting minutes. He explained that the website now has some items related to the board meetings and board packages. He stated that the website will continue to be updated with meeting minutes in the future. Chief Gerber also addressed some concerns brought up by Mayor Zerby regarding internal controls as related to the audit. He stated that there is an internal control policy for the board which was put into place back in 2009. He explained that the board would start to review this policy annually.

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Boardmember Sundberg questioned if they were able to track the website to see which areas were the most heavily used. Chief Gerber replied that they are able to track the website usage, but he did not know off hand what the usage was. He commented that in general a lot of traffic on the website is related to the permitting and inspections processes.

Vice Chair Jennings asked if it would be difficult to hire another firm to do the audit rather than using the same firm that was creating the financial statements. EFD Fiscal Agent, Dana Young, stated that the findings were the separation of duties and the fact that the finance staff does not have the ability to put together the audit due to the small size of the organization. He pointed out that these two findings were common among organizations of that size and stated it was likely that each city's individual audit would have similar findings.

Vice Chair Jennings inquired if outsourcing the audit to someone rather than Abdo would be a good option. Chair Erickson stated that would increase the cost of the audit. He asked if their audit, for Tonka bay, had the same findings. Vice Chair Jennings replied that he was not sure; he would have to look into it.

Boardmember Fletcher stated that the City of Greenwood doesn't do an audit anymore, rather they save money by just doing a compilation.

Chair Erickson stated that he read through the March meeting minutes since he was not at the meeting and commented that it is not unusual for cities of their size to have such findings. He pointed out that it is not unusual then for the board's audit to also have the same findings since the board itself is smaller than any one of the cities.

Boardmember Fletcher agreed and stated that he would rather see the funds spent elsewhere, not on the audit.

Chief Gerber stated that the audit currently costs around \$8,500 per year.

Chair Erickson questioned if that included the pension audit as well. Chief Gerber stated no, that is only for the board audit.

Boardmember Fletcher stated that it was possible that if Shorewood did the finances rather than Deephaven that the area in question might be avoided because it is a bigger city, but he noted that Deephaven has the contract for now.

Shorewood Administrator Greg Lerud stated that only big cities with professional staff can avoid such findings. He commented that other cities won't hire an outside firm to do their audit if they have the staff to do it themselves.

Chair Erickson questioned then if Shorewood's audit did have similar findings and asked Mr. Lerud if that was the case. He stated that the meetings minutes led him to believe that was not the case. Mr. Lerud agreed that Shorewood's audit does have similar findings. He pointed out

that Mayor Zerby was only stating that Shorewood did not have the small staff finding as the other cities' audits did.

- **Recognition Event**

Chief Gerber stated that years of service are recognized and stated that this recap of the recognition event is an opportunity for the board to recognize them as well. He stated that the event also recognizes top responders.

Vice Chair Jennings asked if the responders know their ranks along the way. Chief Gerber replied that they do get reports of their points along the way. Chief Gerber pointed out the he also responds to a lot of calls which is important in thinking about future positions. He stated that top drill attendance is also recognized at the event. He explained three retirements from 2017 that were recognized at the event.

- **Retirements**

- 1.Keith Bunting**

Chief Gerber shared some information and recognized Keith Bunting for his 25 years of service.

Chair Erickson stated that he enjoyed Keith's ability to teach and share information with others.

- 2. Ron Zuehl**

Chief Gerber shared some information and recognized Ron Zuehl for his 32 years of service.

- 3. Joe Uran**

Chief Gerber shared some information and recognized Joe Uran for his 13 years of service.

Boardmember Miller thanked everybody for the years of service.

- **Staffing**

- **Recruitment**

Chief Gerber stated that they currently have 38 paid on call firefighters and stated that there are few people that they are interested in bring on. He explained there are a few administrative steps and that they are hoping to bring on a few more recruits by the fall time. He stated that they are making a few changes to the duty crew hours.

- **Hennepin Fire Chief's SOP Group**

Chief Gerber stated that Hennepin County has spent significant amounts in upgrading their paging system. The system is expected to be up and running in June and he explained that the new system might affect the types of call they receive.

- **Ladder Truck Update**

- **Push in Ceremony**

Chief Gerber thanked all of those that helped with the push in ceremony. He stated that part of the ceremony included moving equipment around from truck to truck and he stated that is was a good opportunity to get everyone together and also involve the community.

- **Hose and Ladder Testing**

Chief Gerber stated that the testing is scheduled for June 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. He stated that an outside company is hired for that.

- **Construction**

Chief Gerber pointed out that there are currently a lot on projects going on including road construction and redevelopment projects and new homes within the five cities. It is good to be mindful of these projects and practice safety.

- **Facility Maintenance**

Chief Gerber met with a contractor regarding the concrete repairs. He gave an update on the status of the station remodeling and explained that they are in the process of meeting with architects and obtaining quotes.

## **7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **A. 2019 Budget Discussion**

Chair Erickson asked Chief Gerber to go over some of the updates that were made to the packet for the CIP and Operating Budget Draft for 2019.

Chief Gerber explained that from the last meeting he heard the board members two major concerns, one being a concern with the capital plan and the desires to see data demonstrating that the plan was sufficient, and the other concern being whether financially moving up would be feasible. Chief Gerber stated that he tried to take the major concerns and address them. He stated that he reached out to the Metro and Hennepin County Fire Chiefs to discuss details of the capital survey. He explained that the data collected suggested that they were on track with their capital plans and moving to the 25-year replacement schedule. He stated that the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft was changed to a \$10,000 increase to the capital plan over time rather than a one-time \$50,000 jump. He said he felt that was a more sustainable plan. He explained that he was able to reduce the operational costs from a 5% increase down to a 4% increase by taking the \$25,000 which was set aside for future full-time fire fighters in the 1<sup>st</sup> draft and remove it completely. He stated they received another \$18,000 from the state in grant money and he explained that remaining funds needed could be used from the unfunded reserve account without putting the reserves at risk. He stated that the operating budget had specific staffing changes based on the discussion. He pointed out that there were six different options and suggested that moving forward they would need to begin by first eliminating some of the six options before discussing the other options in detail.

Chair Erickson asked if the boardmembers' concerns regarding the capital improvement plan were being addressed by the changes specifically related to the \$10,000 increases over time rather than the one-time \$50,000 increase.

Boardmembers seemed to be in agreement.

Chair Erickson suggested they table the staffing portion of the discussion due to the fact that it would likely be a lengthy discussion.

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Boardmember Fletcher commented that the staffing discussion should not be tabled for too long. Chair Erickson agreed and stated that they would try to fit it into the discussion as quick as possible.

Boardmember Fletcher stated he would rather be proactive than reactive.

Chair Erickson asked Chief Gerber to discuss a program that would be put in place to trial run some of the staffing ideas. Chief Gerber explained that there were proposed changes to the 2018 hours. He summarized that two weekends in the summer have been scheduled for a trial of adjusted hours to see how participation is and see if there is room to adjust hours.

Chair Erickson stated that these trial hours would be during week nights and a couple weekends to help decide budgeting in the future and to get a better understanding of what works and what increases response times. He explained that the adjusted hours will hopefully help families and retention efforts also.

Chief Gerber stated that the data was helpful in showing what others have done.

Boardmember Miller stated agreed and stated that there is a potential risk but stated that he is comfortable with the changes.

Chief Gerber stated that the budget would affect each City slightly differently.

Boardmember Miller thanked Chief Gerber for taking the time to go back and make those revisions.

Chief Gerber questioned if the board was comfortable with moving thing forward or if there were still other concerns.

Boardmember Miller said his only other concern was if postponing the discussion on the staffing portion would affect the budget for next year. Chief Gerber stated that he feels they are in good shape with the 2019 budget and that although he wants to discuss the staffing piece as soon as possible he felt that the discussion would be okay if postponed.

Boardmember Miller stated that if Chief Gerber was comfortable and confident with the proposal as it sits then he also feels more comfortable with it and would be okay with the staffing discussion being postponed as long as it would not affect the budget.

Chair Erickson stated that some of the things discussed such as sleep rooms and stipends are all in the 2019 budget; therefore, he also feels comfortable with the proposal. He explained that everything is in the 2019 budget there just might be adjustments to be made later on.

Boardmember Miller asked if they received good feedback regarding the changes. Chief Gerber stated that there was not a whole lot of discussion but of the discussions that have occurred there are some people that are for the changes and some that are not for the changes.



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He stated that they will continue to treat it as a trial and if things are not working then they will reassess things down the road.

Boardmember Miller questioned whether the fund balance was affected. Chief Gerber stated that they have planned to access \$65,000 and still be at a 25 percent fund balance. He also stated that they would not likely need to use the whole \$65,000.

Boardmember Fletcher stated that the entire balance that is budgeted does not have to be used. He said that they can change things along the way.

Excelsior Operations Committee Kristi Luger commented that planning for budget adjustments is difficult in the budgeting process.

Boardmember Fletcher stated that Excelsior has had quite a bit of construction and table revenue. Ms. Luger replied that much of that has not been captured. She stated that budgeting for Fire is important and commented that Excelsior is definitely being affected by the increases.

Chair Erickson stated that he understands how the formulas can significantly affect the Cities budgets.

Boardmember Miller stated that that Excelsior's budgets have gone up about 7 percent but commented that the fire services are a huge benefit.

Chair Erickson referenced the memorial weekend fire and stated that although the fire affects each cities budget significantly the results are worth the monies spent. Boardmember Miller agreed and stated that the firefighters' efforts are often taken for granted because they are negatively impacted when out there trying to save lives and fight fires.

Chief Gerber stated that there were three graphs depicting calls by week, calls by time of day and staff salaries. He stated that all were emailed and commented that the graphs would be helpful in preparing for the staffing discussion.

Chair Erickson agreed that the mentioned graphs would be helpful for the staffing discussion. He questioned if there were any other questions thoughts or concerns. Boardmember Fletcher stated that he felt he still had changes he would like to see but he felt that the presented changes were a reasonable compromise.

Miller thanked Gerber for the information and data.

Chief Gerber discussed the work session scheduled for June 27<sup>th</sup> with the mayors and councils. He asked that the boardmembers find out if their mayors and councilmembers are interested in attending the work session. He stated that they are always willing to meet, but if there is no interested from the mayors and councilmembers then the meeting could be canceled.

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Boardmember Sundberg stated that was a good idea because she recalled that last year the issues were all worked out prior and therefore nobody attended the work session meeting for mayors and councils. She stated that she did not feel that there were any burning issues at this time.

Boardmember Jennings stated that he would not be available to attend the June 27<sup>th</sup> meeting but will pass along the information to his Tonka Bay.

**8. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Purchase of a LUCAS CPR Device (Fire Chief Memo)**

Chief Gerber stated that purchasing the item now versus in 2019 will save over \$5,000. He stated they were confident that it will not significantly affect the current CIP plan and recommend approval. A memo provided by the Chief was in the Board Packet.

**Fletcher moved, Jennings seconded, to authorize the board to purchase the LUCAS CPR Device, as recommended. Motion passed 5/0**

**9. OTHER BUSINESS**

**10. NEXT MEETING**

- A. Budget Work Session with the Cities – Wednesday, June 27, 2018 6:00 pm**
- B. Regular Board Meeting – July 25, 2018 6:00 pm**

**11. ADJOURN**

**Sundberg moved, Jennings seconded, adjourning the EFD Governing Board Meeting of May 30, 2018, at 7:33 P.M. Motion passed 5/0.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Natasha Lukacs, Recording Secretary  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*