

**Excelsior Fire District Board
EFD Governing Board Meeting
Wednesday, November 14, 2018**

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

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Present: Excelsior Fire District (EFD) Boardmembers: Chair Erickson; Vice Chair Jennings (arrived at 6:04 p.m.); Boardmembers Fletcher, Miller and Siakel.

Also present: Excelsior Fire District (EFD) Chief Gerber; Deephaven Administrator/EFD Fiscal Agent Young; Excelsior City Manager Luger; Tonka Bay City Administrator Tingley; Mayor DeLaVega, EFD Assistant Chief McCarthy, Battalion Chief Kim Stern, Firefighter George, Firefighter Lugowski, Firefighter Brown, and Battalion Chief Alex Stern.

Absent: None

2. AGENDA APPROVAL

Siakel moved, Miller seconded, approving the EFD Governing Board meeting agenda as presented. Motion passed 5/0.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. September 26, 2018, EFD Board Regular Meeting Minutes

Miller moved, Fletcher seconded, approving the EFD Board Regular Meeting Minutes of September 26, 2018, as presented. Motion passed 5/0.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Monthly Fire District Administrative Reports – October 2018

- i. Call Reports**
- ii. Firefighter Activity**
- iii. Firefighter Percentages**
- iv. Inspection Reports**

B. Report of the Operating Committee – September, 2018, and October, 2018

- C. **Treasurer's Report**

- D. **2019 Insurance Coverage Waiver Form: 18:006; Adopting RESOLUTION NO. 18-006, "League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust Liability Coverage – Waiver Form for 2019."**

- E. **2019 Health, Dental, and Life Insurance (Fire Chief Memo)**

Miller moved, Siakel seconded, approving the motions contained on the consent agenda and adopting the resolution therein. Motion passed 5/0.

5. MATTERS FROM THE FLOOR

There were no matters from the floor presented this evening.

6. REPORT AGENDA

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

Chief Gerber introduced Battalion Chief Kim Stern to the Board and indicated Battalion Chief Stern will be providing an update on 2019 training operations.

Battalion Chief Stern reported he has been with the Excelsior Fire District for the past 40 years. He explained weekly training occurs on Thursdays and several Saturdays throughout the year. He noted he works with Lee Christopher on the training schedule. He reported a training calendar was planned a year in advance to ensure all members are properly trained. He stated all members were trained on use of fire hoses, ladders, SCBA, auto extrication, water/ice rescue, and boats.

Battalion Chief Stern provided the Board with several examples of calls to which the EFD had recently responded. He described how important it was for the Fire District to be at their best when their clients are at their worst. Further discussion ensued regarding the EMS, apparatus operator, live burn, and duty crew training that was provided on a yearly basis.

Boardmember Fletcher asked if additional homes for live burns would be of benefit to the EFD. Battalion Chief Stern answered this would benefit the EFD. Chief Gerber reported when he receives inquiries regarding live burn training, he informs the public that buildings were not always burnt to the ground but rather were set up for situational burns.

Chief Gerber thanked Battalion Chief Stern for his presentation.

- **Fire Prevention**

Chief Gerber stated with regard to prevention activity, the department continues to work on inspections and public education. He commented on the importance of properly educating children in the community.

- **Fire Suppression / Response**

Chief Gerber stated there have been 743 responses for the year and noted the EFD had 705 at this time last year.

- **Special Events**

Chief Gerber reported the EFD Fire Prevention Open House and Safety Fair was held, along with the St. Therese Fall Festival. He stated he was looking forward to the Kids Free Movie and noted the event was being sponsored by Excelsior Real Estate. He discussed the current ICA needs and encouraged the public to consider a donation to the Giving Tree Project.

Chief Gerber reported the Arctic Fever would be in the future and ALARC Polar Plunge event would be held in Excelsior on New Year's Day.

- **Emergency Management**

Chief Gerber stated he continues to work with the Lake Area Emergency Management group around the lake to make sure the group's plan is viable and active.

- **Administrative**

Chief Gerber explained EFD currently had 36 paid on-call firefighters. He noted Vicky Narveson has retired and was a 17-year member of the organization. He encouraged each community to inform him of new Councilmembers or staff members and explained he would be happy to provide new members with a tour.

- **Other**

Chief Gerber thanked the Board and cities for their continued support of EFD.

Chair Erickson thanked the firefighters for another great year.

7. Unfinished Business

A. Excelsior Firefighter Relief Association Update

Chief Gerber reported President Duncan was not able to attend this meeting. He stated he spoke with President Duncan and noted a year-end report would be provided to the Board in January.

B. Station Remodel Update – Dorm Rooms

Chief Gerber updated the Board on the most recent copies of the dorm room renderings from Wold Architects. He discussed the cost breakdowns and asked for comments or questions from the Board.

Boardmember Fletcher indicated he supported the proposed dorm rooms and asked if the Board was seeking only one option at this time. Chair Gerber reported this was the case.

Chair Erickson provided further comment on the four bunk rooms that were being proposed and described on how the space within Fire Station 1 would be converted. He noted the cost for the individual heating/cooling units for each dorm room were quite expensive.

Boardmember Miller questioned how many companies were interested in bidding this project. Chief Gerber stated two contractors are already interested and Wold Architects would be completing the project documents. The project would be bid in January and he anticipated construction would begin in February and the project would be substantially complete by May.

Boardmember Siakel asked if there were any companies that specialized in this type of work. Chief Gerber stated he had hired Wold Architects for this purpose as they had expertise in this type of work and had contacts for the bidding.

Vice Chair Jennings asked if the financials for the project had changed. Chief Gerber reported the project remains on target but noted initial costs had come in higher than anticipated, which meant more reserves would have to be used for this project.

Chair Erickson commented on the importance of completing all seven rooms with the control and alarm systems in order to attract a highly qualified commercial contractor.

Boardmember Siakel inquired if the proposal included furnishings for the dorm rooms. Chief Gerber reported the furnishings were included in overall project expenses.

Vice Chair Jennings questioned how the reserve account would be impacted by this project. Mr. Young reported \$129,000 was within the 20-30%. At this time, the number was estimated to be around 23%.

Chair Erickson discussed how the four dorm rooms would assist with bringing in new recruits to shadow more senior members of the EFD.

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Boardmember Miller asked if all work had to be completed in order to receive the grant funds. Chief Gerber reported this was the case, which meant the timing of this project was critical.

Boardmember Fletcher stated he supported the Chief putting together a single project without alternates in order to streamline the bidding process.

Chair Erickson explained the architect would be completing the final drawings in the coming weeks in order for this project to be sent out for bid. He stated the Board would have numbers by early 2019.

Boardmember Fletcher recommended alternates not be included in the bid as this made bidding difficult for contractors.

Vice Chair Jennings commented it may benefit the project to have three alternates in order to offer contractors more flexibility.

The Board supported moving this project forward for bid.

C. EMS Response in the South Lake Area

Chief Gerber stated the EFD met in June with the Mayors and other City Councilmembers. He reviewed those meeting minutes, noting the discussion centered on EMS response. He described the current EMS response system and how pre-arrival dispatch was managed by 911 dispatchers. The medical response considerations were reviewed, along with six recommendations for EMS responses.

Boardmember Fletcher commented HCMC was understaffed at this time. He asked if the EMS response from Hennepin County and Ridgeview had been impacted. Chief Gerber stated there was a difference in response times between Hennepin County and Ridgeview. He stated Hennepin County had very good response times, noting that response times from Ridgeview can sometimes be longer as their trucks are coming from Chaska or Chanhassen. He explained that HCMC has trucks based in our area, at Station 2 much of the time.

Boardmember Siakel thanked Chief Gerber for his thorough report on EMS response services.

Vice Chair Jennings questioned what increases were anticipated in the coming years with the aging population. Chief Gerber stated volume has changed but noted over the past 12 years, the percentage of medical responses has stayed at or around 55% and fire calls has stayed at 45%. He commented EFD was below national averages as other departments were facing 70% to 80% EMS calls and 20% fire related calls. He commented the EFD will have to continue to plan for the aging population and how this will impact EMS calls. He stated the community now has three senior living complexes, which could increase the EMS volume.

Chair Erickson indicated 10 to 15 years ago, the community had no senior living complexes and now the area has three. He discussed how the population in Deephaven was rolling over and noted not all seniors would remain in the community.

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Vice Chair Jennings questioned if full-time EMS response services should be considered for the EFD. Chair Erickson estimated it would cost \$1.2 million to provide these services on a full-time basis. He supported the EFD continuing with its current model.

Boardmember Fletcher reported the EFD does a wonderful job providing EMS services to the community.

Boardmember Miller thanked the Chief for his thorough report on EMS services. He stated he was interested to know why the calls for service in Deephaven had increased. Chief Gerber stated the calls for service that were added are for the birth of a baby, breathing, shooting, stabbing, and suicide. He commented on the benefits of getting EMS services onsite early for these types of calls. He noted he had discussed these changes with the Deephaven Police Chief.

Boardmember Siakel asked why these calls were just added now and were not being responded to all along. Chief Gerber explained this was due to staffing and philosophical changes that occurred in Deephaven.

Boardmember Fletcher stated he anticipated the calls for service within the senior living communities would be on the rise over the next five to ten years as the population ages.

Chair Erickson commented this may occur but noted the senior living communities did have staff on site. He described how seniors progressed through senior living units.

Vice Chair Jennings stated he has discussed with his City Council what was the most cost-effective way to provide services both now and down the road. He encouraged the EFD to further study how the demographics of the community will be changing over the next five to ten years. He explained he wanted to better understand how EMS calls for service may be impacted.

Chair Erickson described how calls were split between EMS, Fire, and Police. He discussed how each of these three entities were vital to first responder services.

Vice Chair Jennings stated he just wanted to be sure the proper vehicles and personnel were being sent to EMS calls. He asked if the EMS structure should be reconsidered.

Chair Erickson commented this could be considered but noted that highly-trained paramedics would still remain essential.

Boardmember Siakel stated she did not believe \$104,000 was a great deal of money to pay for highly trained EMS services. She questioned what other alternatives could be considered to provide these services for that amount of money.

Vice Chair Jennings discussed how changing demographics would impact the metro area. He explained he would like to better understand how these changes would impact the EFD and its

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future calls for service. Chief Gerber indicated he believed a tiered response system was the best possible way for the EFD to move forward. However, he noted if the EFD policymakers wanted to study this further he would support that action.

Vice Chair Jennings stated he was receiving questions from his community and wanted to be sure this group was making the best decisions possible both now and in the future. Chief Gerber explained this would require a study to be completed.

Boardmember Miller commented it would be interesting to know how the changing demographics would impact EMS calls. He stated so far, the number for total calls has not been impacted. He explained he was very proud of the services being provided to the community and would like to see the paid on-call model continue going forward.

Chair Erickson explained he supported the current model for EMS response and he believed the EFD was providing the community with a tremendous value for these services.

Vice Chair Jennings agreed the EFD was providing tremendous services to the community. He stated his only concern was that the Board may not fully understand how calls for service would be impacted by changing demographics over the next five to ten years. He commented again on how a study may benefit this group.

Boardmember Miller stated he would like to be sure the deliverables were clearly defined if a study was pursued.

Chair Erickson asked if the Board would allow a member of the audience to speak on this topic. The Board supported comment to be made from the public.

Tonka Bay Mayor Gerry DeLaVega stated he was appreciative of the discussion held in June and now. He indicated he would like this group to address the number of firefighters that were responding to each call. He believed this number was higher than necessary as it cost people time. Mayor DeLaVega suggested a more efficient model be created that would state how many firefighters were to respond to different types of calls. He anticipated this would help with firefighter burnout.

Chair Erickson agreed but noted the current dispatch system would not allow for a specific number of firefighters to be sent to a call. He discussed how the EFD was working to create a better staffing model to reduce the wear and tear on its firefighters while improving efficiencies.

Mayor DeLaVega commented he did not need a third party to be brought in to evaluate EMS response numbers but, rather, wanted to dig deeper into how the EFD can work with its staff on the medical portion of the business.

Chief Gerber stated at some calls there may be 5 firefighters and other calls may have 20. He explained firefighters wanted to respond to medical calls and anticipated that only three to four

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may roll with the truck. He discussed how the EMS response model has changed over time and anticipated this model would continue to evolve in the coming years.

Boardmember Siakel noted this model was not perfect but functioning very well for the community. Chief Gerber stated the EFD was very fortunate that its paid on-call firefighters continued to show up.

D. EFD Staffing

Chief Gerber reviewed the EFD's staffing mission, core values, and goals for the organization. He discussed the six core values, which were excellence, teamwork and cooperation, honor and respect, integrity, innovation, and communication in further detail. He then reviewed the six goals of the organization and requested support of this document from the Board.

Boardmember Siakel commented the document was slightly wordy and asked how the document would be used by the Chief. She suggested the vision and goals be made more succinct.

Boardmember Miller stated he supported the document, was pleased it was all on one page, and noted he appreciated the level of detail.

Vice Chair Jennings concurred.

Boardmember Fletcher explained he supported the document as is.

Chair Erickson requested the Board make a motion to offer their support for the document.

Miller moved, Jennings seconded, approving the EFD Staffing Mission, Core Values, and Goals and direct staff to distribute this document to the City Councils. Motion passed 5/0.

8. NEW BUSINESS

None.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

10. NEXT MEETING

A. EFD Governing Board Meeting January 23, 2019, 6:00 P.M., Station 1

Chair Erickson noted the next regular EFD Governing Board Meeting is scheduled for 6:00 P.M. on January 23, 2019, at Station I.

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11. ADJOURNMENT

Siakel moved, Miller seconded, Adjourning the EFD Governing Board Meeting of November 14, 2018, at 7:46 P.M. Motion passed 5/0.