

**Excelsior Fire District Board
EFD Governing Board Meeting
Wednesday, March 20, 2019**

**24100 Smithtown Road
Shorewood, Minnesota
6:30 P.M.**

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Jennings called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Present: Excelsior Fire District (EFD) Boardmembers: Chair Jennings; Vice Chair Labadie; Boardmembers Erickson, Fletcher, and Miller.

Also present: Excelsior Fire District (EFD) Chief Gerber; Deephaven Administrator/EFD Fiscal Agent Young; Tonka Bay City Administrator Tingley; Excelsior City Manager Luger; EFD Assistant Chief McCarthy, Relief Association President Bruce Duncan; Firefighter David Hoo; Captain Joe Perez; Firefighter Andy Hein; Ken Prillaman; Deb Prillaman; Reserve Captain Dave Cole; Firefighter Dana George; Administrative Specialist Ana Fatturi; and Firefighter Rian Firkus.

Absent: Shorewood City Administrator Lerud

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. January 23, 2019, EDF Board Regular Meeting Minutes

Labadie moved, Fletcher seconded, approving the EFD Board Regular Meeting Minutes of January 23, 2019, as presented. Motion passed 5/0.

B. February 20, 2019, EDF Board Special Meeting Minutes

Fletcher moved, Erickson seconded, approving the EFD Board Special Meeting Minutes of February 20, 2019, as presented. Motion passed 5/0.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Monthly Fire District Administrative Reports – February 2019 **i. Call Reports**

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

- B. Report of the Operating Committee – January / February 2019**
- C. Treasurer’s Report**
- D. State Fire Marshal’s Office Shared Services Planning Grant Authorized Representatives Changes – Resolution #19-003**

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

5. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE 2018 FIRE DISTRICT AUDIT – ABDO, EICK & MEYERS, LLP

Chief Gerber introduced Andy Berg, with Abdo, Eick & Meyers LLP. He stated that Mr. Berg would be presenting the 2018 fire district audit and the 2018 relief association audit. He explained that the fire board would review and accept the fire audit and then simply review the relief audit but not accept it. Hard copies of the audit were distributed to the Board members and City Administrators/Mangers.

Mr. Berg stated that Abdo, Eick & Meyers, LLP issued an unmodified or clean opinion for the Fire District, noting page four detailed two recurring findings that were common for an organization of this size. Mr. Berg explained that finding one was the preparation of financial statements and finding two was the limited segregation of accounting duties. He then went over a summary of the numbers providing the Board with a three-year history. He briefly explained some of the variances in the specific numbers, summarized the funds, and commented on the change in the vehicle fund balance due to the purchase of a new fire truck. Lastly, Mr. Berg summarized the pension and asked if the Boardmembers had any questions.

Chair Jennings asked if there was anything the fire district could do to mitigate the deficiencies that were in place. Mr. Berg commented this would be difficult given the fire district’s staffing model. He reported these deficiencies were quite common for organizations of this size. He discussed the compensating controls that were in place to assist with addressing this concern. Chief Gerber described the policies that were in place to address cost controls.

Boardmember Fletcher asked if the League of Minnesota Cities provided coverage for this type of concern. Mr. Berg stated this was the case, up to a certain amount.

Boardmember Miller commented the fire board also had certain policies in place to ensure a certain amount of dollars could not be spent without board approval. Chief Gerber reported this was the case noting he could not spend more than \$5,000 without board approval.

EFD GOVERNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 20, 2019

Page 3 of 12

Boardmember Erickson explained there were many organizations that were not large enough to have a full segregation of duties but rather was quite common for small cities and organizations.

Boardmember Miller requested further information regarding the GASB changes. Mr. Berg discussed the GASB changes with the Board and noted none would affect the organizations cash flow.

Fletcher moved, Labadie seconded, accepting and approving the 2018 Fire District Audit. Motion passed 5/0.

6. REVIEW OF THE 2018 EXCELSIOR FIREFIGHTERS RELIEF ASSOCIATION AUDIT – ABDO, EICK & MEYERS, LLP

Andrew Berg, Abdo, Eick & Meyers, LLP, referenced the management letter reporting the Relief Association received a clean or unmodified opinion. Mr. Berg discussed a graph and commented on the rate of return for 2018 noting the funding percentage was based on the State's form.

Boardmember Fletcher stated based on all of the assumptions the pension was 129% funded. Mr. Berg reported this was the case. He commented on the different ways the assumptions and liabilities are calculated to find the fund percentage.

Boardmember Miller was pleased the Relief Association has a good plan in place and has had a good return on their investments.

**7. EXCELSIOR FIREFIGHTERS RELIEF ASSOCIATION REPORT/RATIFICATION OF A PENSION INCREASE
A. RELIEF ASSOCIATION MEMO AND RESOLUTION #19-004**

Chief Gerber explained Relief Association President Bruce Duncan would be presenting this item to the Board.

Bruce Duncan, Relief Association President, referenced his memorandum relating to a pension benefit increase and noted the Relief's Special Pension Fund finished 2018 at just over 118% funding. Therefore, based upon the 2014 Resolution, the Relief membership approved a 3%, or \$255, increase to the per year of service amount from \$7,625 to \$7,850. He asked the Board to ratify or guarantee the benefit increase.

Boardmember Erickson commented on what would have to happen to the fund before the City's would have to start kicking in funds. He stated he was pleased the pension fund was in great shape at this time. He hoped the fund would continue to perform in this manner.

Fletcher moved, Miller seconded, approving Resolution #19-004, 2019 Guaranteed Pension Benefit Level. Motion passed 5/0.

8. MATTERS FROM THE FLOOR

There were no matters from the floor presented this evening.

9. REPORT AGENDA

A. Fire Chief / Fire District Report

• **Training**

Chief Gerber updated the board on the five new recruits and discussed the training they have been involved in. He explained the Fire District would not be attending the Fire Department Instructors Conference (FDIC) this year.

• **Fire Prevention**

Chief Gerber commented on the Fire District's Fire Prevention efforts. He thanked Fire Marshal Kellie Murphy-Ringate for her inspection efforts. He commented on the public education efforts that would be occurring next fall.

• **Fire Suppression / Response**

Chief Gerber reported the EFD had responded to 191 events year to date in 2019. He explained the EFD had responded to 167 events by this time in 2018. He noted calls for service were up, noting February had 81 calls alone. He reviewed photographs of several significant structure fires that took place in the past month. He described how the photographs from these fire events were used to assist in educating firefighters. He noted crews from Minnetonka, Mound, multiple other agencies and Excelsior assisted at these structure fires.

Boardmember Miller questioned why the EFD was seeing a rise in calls. Chief Gerber stated he believed this was due to the type of winter the area has had, as this led to more slips and falls. He anticipated that this trend, or the rise in calls, was similar around the nation.

Boardmember Miller asked if the two new senior living centers were creating an increase in call volume. Chief Gerber stated he originally projected he would see roughly 20-30 calls per year from each of the senior living centers and reported the actual calls for service was more than this.

Boardmember Labadie requested further comment on the structure fires that occurred in Shorewood. Chief Gerber reported he did not have specific investigative information available noting the Fire Marshal was working with the insurance agents to better understand the causes of both fires. He was confident the fires were not linked and explained he has been speaking with residents in the neighborhood to address their concerns.

EFD GOVERNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 20, 2019

Page 5 of 12

Boardmember Labadie indicated she received a number of positive comments regarding the EFD and how they managed both fires in Shorewood.

- **Special Events**

Chief Gerber reported the pond hockey event, Big Island and Back Nordic Ski event and the Luck of the Lake 5K event were held in the last month. He explained the EFD provided inspection services for each of these events and noted there were no significant occurrences. He commented the Ice Castle was no longer operating but was being disassembled. He thanked all of the staff that assisted with the Ice Castle inspections.

Boardmember Miller asked if the EFD received any calls regarding the Ice Castle. Chief Gerber explained he thought the Ice Castle was an overall good experience. He stated he did not have any medical calls to this event.

Chief Gerber explained the next event that would occur would be the Lake Minnetonka Half Marathon and this would occur on Sunday, May 5th. He noted the marathon begins in Wayzata and ends in Excelsior near the commons.

- **Emergency Management**

Chief Gerber stated the Community Public Safety Meeting was held on Tuesday, March 19th. He updated the board on the topics that were discussed by those in attendance at the meeting.

- **Administrative**

Chief Gerber reported the EFD currently had 40 paid on-call firefighters, which included the five recruits that were brought on in January. He explained operations continue as a combination of three full-time staff and 40 paid on-call staff. The three full-time employees were the Fire Chief, the Fire Marshal and the administrative specialist. It was noted the administrative specialist position was shared between the EFD and the City of Chanhassen. He reported a part-time inspector would be considered in the coming months to assist with inspections at special events.

Chief Gerber commented further on the service delivery model that was being followed by the EFD. He reported the night time staffing model would be in place by July of 2019. He indicated the participation points program was working well. He explained the 2020 budget includes the points program and new staffing model.

Assistant Chief Pat McCarthy introduced himself to the board and explained his family has lived in the area since the late 1800's. He then provided the board with an update on his supervisory position over the EFD's captains and coordinators. He reported he was also responsible for duty officer/shadow scheduling, new firefighter orientation, performance reviews, vehicle titles and licenses, ground ladder testing, and ladder truck coordination and records. He indicated he also supported the Fire Chief, assisting with planning and creating a

EFD GOVERNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 20, 2019

Page 6 of 12

vision for the EFD's future. He discussed the advantages of the coordinator program with the board and reviewed the members currently serving in the coordinator program. He thanked those serving on the EFD and asked for comments or questions.

The board thanked Assistant Chief McCarthy for his presentation.

Chief Gerber reminded the board that the recognition event would be held on Saturday, April 6, 2019 at the Chanhassen Dinner Theater. He noted Chris Pass, Vickie Narveson and Jay Goetz would be recognized at this event. He commented these individuals would be invited to attend the June board meeting in order to be recognized by the Board.

Chief Gerber explained an outside company would be used for gear inspection and cleaning. He noted hose and ladder testing was being coordinated at this time and would occur over the summer. He updated the board on the facilities maintenance that was occurring at Station 1 with the concrete replacement project. He reported this project would be completed in 2019.

Chief Gerber commented on the SCBA maintenance and replacement noting all units would be replaced in 2020.

- **Other**

None.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Station Remodel Update

Chief Gerber updated the board on the station remodeling projects. He reviewed several photographs and noted the dorm room projects at station 1 and station 2 were on track. He anticipated all walls would be taped, sanded and painted by the end of next week. He explained Cal-TEX has been an outstanding contractor and thanked them for all of their great work. He reported this project would be completed by the end of April or early May.

Boardmember Fletcher stated he was very pleased that Cal-TEX was performing well at both station remodeling projects.

Informational; no action required.

11. NEW BUSINESS

A. EFD Media Point of Contact and Information Sharing (Fire Chief Memo)

Chief Gerber reviewed his memorandum of March 14, 2019 that clarified media point of contact and sharing information. He stated for all emergency and non-emergency events, the Fire Chief is the media point of contact. During emergency scenes, the Assistant Chief, Battalion Chief, and Captains may also play a role in coordination of media information. For

EFD GOVERNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 20, 2019

Page 7 of 12

public education, public relations, and general public awareness, the Fire Marshal and Administrative Specialist may also play a role in media and information coordination. Certain media events may require assistance of the EFD Board Chair, EFD Vice-Chair, and/or the EFD Operating Committee Chair or EFD Operating Committee Vice-Chair.

Chief Gerber stated with information sharing during a major structure fire or other significant emergency event, the EFD Board, EFD Operating Committee, and others in the Critical Incident Contact Group are provided an update about the incident. The information provided is considered public information and could be shared as each recipient deems appropriate.

Informational; no action required.

B. 2018 Year in Review (sent under separate cover)

Chief Gerber thanked members of the Excelsior Fire District, Administrative Specialist Ana Fatturi who is a core part of making this Year in Review document, the Fire District Board and Operating Committee for all they do to support the organization and drive the service provided, City Councils and all city staff who have been supportive and assist the Fire District in its accomplishments. He also thanked the City of Deephaven for its fiscal support and Mary Courtney for her day-to-day work. Last, he thanked Jim Douglas for serving as the EFD's photographer.

Chief Gerber presented the 2018 Year in Review, discussed some of the challenges, emphasized the importance of prevention and training, and then described demographic changes, types of calls, times of calls, and the duty officer and duty crew programs. He thanked the board for their support in purchasing a new fire truck.

Chief Gerber continued the presentation with slides depicting firefighter compensated hours; firefighter/citizen volunteer hours; special events; training events and hours; community risk reduction / prevention; projects and maintenance at each of the stations; list of apparatus and its usage; equipment pieces, maintenance, and repairs; administration activities; communication and other activities; emergency management; Relief Association; volunteer/reserve, and Auxiliary activities. It was noted the 2018 Year in Review document is available in hard copy at station 1 and is on the website.

Boardmember Fletcher recommended the turnout numbers be broken down further excluding mutual aid calls as this increased the EFD's response times.

Boardmember Labadie requested a second graph be created for special response calls the EFD responded to. She believed this would be valuable information for her City Council to review.

Informational; no action required.

C. 2020 Initial Budget Discussions

Chief Gerber reported he and his staff had begun working on the 2020 budget. He stated he was committed to having a draft budget in place for the Interim Fire Chief. He explained his staff has provided input on the draft budget and noted this document would be coming before the board in April.

Informational; no action required.

D. Fire Chief Replacement Process

i. Review and Direction on the Hiring Process for the New Fire Chief (City Administrators/Managers Memo)

Excelsior Administrator Luger, on behalf of the Operating Committee, summarized the Board's February 20, 2019 discussion of the recommended hiring process for the Fire Chief position. She explained the Operating Committee has reviewed the hiring process to determine the best approach for conducting the second round of interviews and the final interview with the Board, and whether two separate interview processes are necessary. She asked the Board to discuss: 1) whether it wants to appoint representatives to serve on a panel representing various groups to conduct the second round of interviews; and, 2) if such a panel is created and makes a recommendation on a preferred candidate, does the Board only want to interview the preferred candidate or collectively interview all finalists.

Boardmember Erickson stated he would like to see the board interviewing at least three candidates for the Fire Chief position. He explained he was very impressed by the work that had been completed by the Operating Committee.

Boardmember Miller indicated he supported Boardmember Erickson's recommendation that at least three candidates should be interviewed by the board for this position. He suggested a rating system be used for these interviews.

Boardmember Labadie commented a point or rating system would be beneficial for the final interviews. Ms. Luger explained she would be providing the board with feedback from the Operating Committee and the firefighters in order to assist with the decision-making process.

Chair Jennings commented the Fire Chief position was posted on March 1st and was scheduled to close on March 28th. He asked if there was another variation where two panels could be created for the interviews. He stated he would also like to see the firefighters brought into the interviewing process. He questioned who was willing to serve on an interview panel.

Boardmember Fletcher and Boardmember Labadie were willing to serve on an interview panel.

ii. Interim Fire Chief Interview (City Administrators/Managers Memo)

EFD GOVERNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 20, 2019

Page 9 of 12

Tonka Bay Administrator Tingley stated the Operating Committee had invited four candidates to interview for the Interim Fire Chief position and been impressed with the quality of the candidate pool and their qualifications. On March 20, 2019, the Board interviewed finalist Ken Prillaman and noted Mr. Prillaman was recommended to the Interim Chief Position.

Ken Prillaman thanked the board for their time and stated it was a real honor to be considered for the position of Interim Fire Chief. He explained he has served for 20 years in the fire service industry, his first 10 years as a volunteer. He noted he has served 15 years as an executive leader in the private sector for a financial services organization where he had over 4,000 employees. He reported for the last 10 years he served as the Fire Chief/Fire Marshal/Emergency Management Director for the City of Brooklyn Park. He indicated he has a degree in Fire Administration with a Fire Investigation Major. He stated he has been active with the Minnesota All Hazard Management Team for the last eight years and has been deployed to several state and national events. He commented he recently wrote and published his first book on leadership.

Chair Jennings thanked Mr. Prillaman for being present. He asked if Mr. Prillaman had worked at the Super Bowl. Mr. Prillaman reported he had worked this event and served as the Deputy Director where he coordinated efforts between various agencies. He stated it was a great experience being a part of this high-level national security event.

Chair Jennings questioned what work he had completed with the Liberian population in Brooklyn Park. Mr. Prillaman explained his wife Debbie had befriended a Liberian man, Samuka, who had escaped the civil war in Liberia on a freighter. Samuka began working for Wycliff and made his way to the United States. After living in the States for a year, Samuka approached him requesting help for his home nation's fire service. At the time, Mr. Prillaman didn't understand how to assist the Republic of Liberia with fire service. After several conversations, a phone call was made and he began leading a six-year mission to help rebuild the Liberian National Fire Service. He commented on the gear and equipment that has been shipped to Liberia to assist their fire service. He explained this has been a labor of love for him, while also being quite challenging as well as he tries to impress upon the Liberians the importance of ongoing training.

Chair Jennings commended Mr. Prillaman for his efforts with the Liberian National Fire Service.

Boardmember Erickson questioned why Mr. Prillaman was interested in serving as the Interim Fire Chief for the EFD. Mr. Prillaman stated the reputation of the Fire District was outstanding. He explained he saw it as a real privilege to serve with this organization, even for a short while. He indicated he and his wife became empty nesters a year ago and noted he and his wife would be relocating out of the state by the end of October. He stated he could contribute to this organization in a meaningful way as they were undergoing a change in leadership.

EFD GOVERNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 20, 2019

Page 10 of 12

Boardmember Miller stated he was very impressed by Mr. Prillaman's background. He asked if the Brooklyn Park Fire Department was volunteer. Mr. Prillaman explained the Brooklyn Park Fire Department had 25 career and 35 paid on-call firefighters.

Boardmember Miller questioned how Mr. Prillaman viewed the paid on-call model. Mr. Prillaman stated in 2008, when he was appointed the Fire Chief in Brooklyn Park, the department had only three career firefighters. He discussed how the paid on-call firefighter's contributions were on the decline and how this had to be turned around given the level of calls for service in Brooklyn Park. He anticipated the call volume was burning people out. He stated he increased the number of career firefighters and described how this kept the on-call firefighters engaged. He discussed the importance of having roles and responsibilities for on-call firefighters in order to keep them engaged in the organization, while not burning them out. He indicated a points program may be a great way to add value to the organization.

Boardmember Fletcher asked if Mr. Prillaman planned to respond to calls from his home. Mr. Prillaman stated he had some conversation around this during initial discussions. He commented he was willing, interested and able to respond after hours. He explained he would not be issued a take home vehicle per the terms of the contract. He accepted the fact that his primary role would be administration but noted it would be key for him to respond to calls in order to properly connect with the organization.

Boardmember Fletcher questioned if administration would consider a change in order to allow Mr. Prillaman to have a take home vehicle. Deephaven Administrator Young explained things may need to evolve over time and reported the number of hours per week may vary. He stated he did not believe it was necessary for the Interim Chief to attend medical or incidental calls.

Boardmember Fletcher commented he supported Mr. Prillaman being able to respond to significant calls in the evening hours and being able to have a take home vehicle given the fact his certifications were up to date. He indicated the organization already had a Chief's vehicle and stated he believed this would allow the Interim Chief to have a better connection with the organization.

Chair Jennings agreed stating this was a great point. He suggested the Board discuss this further in order to work through the details. Mr. Prillaman indicated he supported the way the contract was currently drafted.

Excelsior Administrator Luger explained the Operations Committee believed the delay in response from the Interim Chief during an evening event did not warrant a take home vehicle. She reported the organization was more than capable to respond to an event noting the Interim Chief would arrive after picking up his vehicle from the station.

Tonka Bay Administrator Tingley reported the proposed contract did include mileage for the Interim Fire Chief.

Boardmember Fletcher stated he supported the Interim Fire Chief having a take home vehicle.

EFD GOVERNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 20, 2019

Page 11 of 12

Chair Jennings questioned if this action had to be ratified by the board.

Boardmember Miller indicated Mr. Prillaman was comfortable with the contract as drafted.

Boardmember Erickson understood this fact and stated he was less concerned if the Interim Chief took a vehicle home or not. Deephaven Administrator Young commented the contract should be considered a fluid document that could be amended or changed over the coming months.

Chair Jennings asked if there were any other questions at this time.

The board had no further questions.

Mr. Prillaman indicated he would be speaking with Chief Gerber over the coming weeks and noted he was a proponent of open and honest communication. He explained working for a board like this was new to him and he thanked the board for their consideration.

iii. Appointment and Contract of the Interim Fire Chief (City Administrators/Managers Memo)

Tonka Bay Administrator Tingley stated after interviews, the Operating Committee recommends appointing Ken Prillaman as the Interim Fire Chief. He presented the terms of the proposed contract, as negotiated with Mr. Prillaman, to pay the Interim Chief \$45 per hour, 24 to 32 hours a week, with flexibility for both the Department and Interim Chief to make operational changes. If approved, Mr. Prillaman will begin work as soon as March 21st.

Chair Jennings requested an addition to the Appendix stating he would like to see a provision added to the Expectations and Priorities requesting Mr. Prillaman complete a baseline assessment on the department during his tenure with the EFD.

Boardmember Erickson questioned if this work item had to be added to the contract. He anticipated the candidate would be more than willing to provide this information to the board without making it a part of the Appendix.

Mr. Prillaman stated he wanted the board to feel they could come to him and request reports or information during his time with the fire district. He noted he could get an assessment to the board during his tenure.

Boardmember Labadie explained she would like the Interim Fire Chief to speak to her City Council as to the benefit of having or not having fire hydrants and how this would impact fire response times. Mr. Prillaman commented he could attend a Shorewood City Council meeting to address this concern.

Miller moved, Erickson seconded, approving the appointment of Ken Prillaman as the Interim Fire Chief and contract with Interim Fire Chief Prillaman, as recommended by the Operating Committee. Motion passed 5/0.

12. NEXT MEETING

- A. Work Session – April 24, 2019 6:30 P.M.**
- B. Regular Board Meeting – May 29, 2019 6:30 P.M.**

Chair Jennings noted the next work session is scheduled for 6:30 P.M. on April 24, 2019 and the regular board meeting is scheduled for 6:30 P.M. on May 29, 2019, at Station I.

13. ADJOURN

Chief Gerber thanked the board for their support and encouragement. He stated it had been a pleasure and honor to lead this organization for the past 12½ years.

Boardmember Miller thanked Chief Gerber for his dedicated leadership.

Chair Jennings stated Chief Gerber would be dearly missed and wished him well. A round of applause was offered by all in attendance.

Erickson moved, Labadie seconded, adjourning the EFD Governing Board Meeting of March 20, 2019, at 8:55 P.M. Motion passed 5/0.