

**Excelsior Fire District Board
EFD Governing Board Meeting
Wednesday, January 23, 2019**

**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 Jennings; Vice Chair Labadie; Boardmembers Erickson, Fletcher, and Miller.

Also present: Excelsior Fire District (EFD) Chief Gerber; Deephaven Administrator/EFD Fiscal Agent Young;; Shorewood City Administrator Lerud; Tonka Bay City Administrator Tingley; Excelsior Alternate Dale Kuschner; EFD Assistant Chief McCarthy, Battalion Chief Kim Stern; Captain Jesse Steinwand; Relief Association President Bruce Duncan; Firefighter David Hoo; and Firefighter Thom Brown.

Absent: Excelsior City Manager Luger

2. INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME OF BOARD MEMBERS

Chief Gerber welcomed back Steve Erickson from Deephaven, Tom Fletcher from Greenwood, Greg Miller from Excelsior, and Adam Jennings from Tonka Bay. He reviewed the member City alternates with the group and welcomed Dale Kuschner from Excelsior to the meeting. He explained Deephaven had no alternate at this time.

Chief Gerber welcomed the new Excelsior Fire District Boardmember Jennifer Labadie from Shorewood. Boardmember Labadie stated she looked forward to serving with this group.

3. AGENDA APPROVAL

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

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. November 14, 2018, EFD Board Regular Meeting Minutes

Miller moved, Jennings seconded, approving the EFD Board Regular Meeting Minutes of November 14, 2018, as presented. Motion passed 5/0.

5. SELECTION OF 2019 BOARD CHAIR

Boardmember Fletcher nominated Boardmember Jennings for the position of 2019 Board Chair.

Boardmember Jennings accepted the nomination to Chair.

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Fletcher moved, Miller seconded, appointing Boardmember Jennings to the position of Excelsior Fire District Governing Board Chair for 2019. Motion passed 5/0.

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

6. SELECTION 2019 VICE CHAIR

Boardmember Fletcher nominated Boardmember Labadie for the position of 2019 Board Vice Chair.

Boardmember Labadie accepted the nomination to Vice-Chair.

Fletcher moved, Miller seconded, appointing Boardmember Labadie to the position of EFD Governing Board Vice-Chair for 2019. Motion passed 5/0.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Annual Resolutions

- i. Annual Appointments: 19-001; Adopting RESOLUTION NO. 19-001, “Annual Appointments for Excelsior Fire District Designating Official Meeting Dates, Time, and Place for the Excelsior Fire District Board in 2019; Designating Official Newspapers; Authorizing Excelsior Fire District Officials to Transact Banking Business; and, Approving Official Depositories and Approving Securities Pledged as Collateral for District Funds.”**
- ii. Resolution for Payments: 19-002; Adopting RESOLUTION NO. 19-002, “Authorizing Payment of Certain Claims by the Fire Chief Without Prior Board Approval.”**

B. EFD Board Meeting Dates for 2019

C. Monthly Fire District Administrative Reports – December 2018

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

D. Report of the Operating Committee – December 2018

E. Treasurer’s Report

Chief Gerber requested the Board discuss the 2019 meeting dates. Boardmember Labadie explained she had a conflict with the March 27th meeting date as this was the week of spring break for the Minnetonka School District. She requested her alternate sit in for her at that meeting, or that the meeting date be changed. Boardmember Erickson commented he would not be able to attend the March 27th meeting either. Chair Jennings suggested the March meeting be held on March 20th.

Chair Jennings asked if it would be feasible to start the Fire Board meetings at 6:30 p.m. instead of 6:00 p.m. EFD Fiscal Agent Young stated he could support at 6:30 p.m. start time. Boardmember Labadie indicated she could make either time work. The consensus of the Board was to change the meeting start time to 6:30 p.m.

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Chief Gerber reported the worksession meeting previously planned for February has been changed to October.

Erickson moved, Labadie seconded, approving the motions contained on the consent agenda as discussed and adopting the resolutions therein. 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 stated the organization had five new recruits that started the beginning of January. He explained Chief Stern was working on fire and EMS training as these new recruits become involved in the organization. He reported in 2019 medical training would continue quarterly with HCMC. He stated the Leadership and Coaching staff would meet once monthly and would be discussing skill-based issues to enhance the organization.

- **Community Risk Reduction**

Chief Gerber stated Fire Marshal Kellie Murphy-Ringate had a presentation for the Board.

Fire Marshal Kellie Murphy-Ringate introduced herself to the Board and discussed how she became a Fire Marshal. She described the work she conducted on behalf of the Fire District which included public education, fire inspections, code enforcement, plan review, fire investigations, and public relations. She stated she was proud of the fact the EFD has been on the cutting edge of things for a very long time.

Boardmember Fletcher commended Fire Marshal Murphy-Ringate for all of her efforts and discussed a compliment he received from a local contractor on how great Fire Marshal Murphy-Ringate was for the organization.

- **Fire Suppression / Response**

Chief Gerber stated the EFD responded to 844 events in 2018. He explained this was the largest number of responses for the Fire District ever. He reported 2017 had 811 responses. He indicated he was uncertain why the number was growing. He stated year to date the EFD has had 37 responses.

- **Special Events**

Fire Chief Gerber reviewed the events that have been hosted by the EFD since the December meeting. These events included the Kids Free Movie, Giving Tree Project, Arctic Fever, ALARC – Ice Dive and pond hockey. He stated he was looking forward to the Big Island and Back Nordic Ski Event that would be held in February. He reported the ice castle was up and operating. He noted the site had been inspected by the himself and Fire Marshal Murphy-Ringate.

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Chief Gerber stated he created an Operational Consideration document that was being utilized by the EFD. He stated this document was also forwarded to all local Police Departments and EMS services. He indicated this document addressed the “what if’s” for special events and to have key contact numbers in place.

- **Emergency Management**

Chief Gerber stated he continued to meet with the Lake Area Management Group planning for and looking at the things that could happen within the communities around the lake. He explained he was planning to host a community public safety meeting in March of 2019. He reported cities, EMS, fire departments, Xcel Energy, law enforcement, elected officials, appointed officials, and school districts would be invited to this event.

Chief Gerber stated at the end of this month the EFD and SLMPD would be hosting the Lake Area Emergency Management meeting. He reported the focus of this meeting would be to complete an emergency operation center tour and all in attendance would receive an overview on how the EOC works for the EFD and SLMPD.

- **Administrative**

Chief Gerber explained the EFD currently had 40 paid on-call firefighters. He stated this includes the five that were brought on in early January. He reported Jay Getz recently retired from the Fire District after serving for 10 years out of Station 2. He indicated Jay and two other recently retired firefighters would be recognized at the EFD Recognition Event which would be held in April.

Chief Gerber presented the Board with further information on the EFD’s combination staffing model. He explained the organization had a mix of full-time and paid on-call staff. The three full time employees were the Fire Chief, the Fire Marshal and the administrative specialist. He indicated the administrative specialist position was shared between the EFD and the City of Chanhassen. He reported the majority of the services are provided through the paid on-call employees.

Chief Gerber commented further on the overnight staffing that would be implemented in July of 2019. He explained this new staffing model was innovative and would have a positive impact on the EFD firefighters. He reviewed the five key reasons the new staffing model was being pursued as it would spread the workload out for the firefighters, would address sleep concerns, and would provide predictability for firefighter scheduling. It was noted the overnight hours would be from 10:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. four days a week. He stated historical data shows that approximately 140 events occur between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. each year.

Chief Gerber explained overnight staff members would be paid \$60 per night and would be paid their hourly rate if they respond to a fire. He indicated firefighters would be giving five (5) points for working an overnight shift. He commented this new staffing model would require each paid on-call firefighter to work two overnight shifts per month. He described the seniority bidding process that would be followed to fill these shifts.

Chief Gerber described the types of calls the overnight duty crews would be responding to and the tone system that would be followed for calls. He stated alarms, crashes and medicals would be the main types of responses. He explained more help could be requested if a structure fire were to occur as this would be an all call event. He discussed how the evening and overnight staffing would be implemented

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through the remainder of the year. He reviewed the call points firefighters would be receiving for attending calls and responding.

Boardmember Fletcher commented on the necessary coverage that had to be in place for the fire department. He asked how the EFD would balance the hours amongst the firefighters. Chief Gerber anticipated with 35 on-paid firefighters the shifts would be filled. He understood that some firefighters may be taking more shifts than others. He was of the opinion that the proposed staffing model would assist in spreading calls out to everyone within the organization.

Boardmember Fletcher stated Greenwood was fully supportive of the overnight staffing model and the \$60 per night rate. He explained Greenwood would support paying these firefighters \$100 overnight.

Boardmember Erickson commented Deephaven supported the overnight staffing model at a rate of \$60 per night. He stated he could not support a rate of \$100 per night at this time.

Boardmember Miller believed the \$60 per night rate would be a good starting point for the overnight staffing model. Boardmember Erickson agreed.

Chair Jennings feared how junior firefighters may be impacted by selecting their shifts last as this may take away more of their weekends. Chief Gerber reiterated that the overnight staffing would be Monday through Thursday. He understood this to be a real concern but explained the overnight shifts would be required or mandatory. He stated not every firefighter within the organization supported the overnight staffing model, however the majority did. He commented adjustments could be made along the way to the new staffing model.

Boardmember Labadie explained there would be a transition period for the EFD and she understood this may be difficult. She recommended the overnight staffing model be reevaluated in the fall to see how the new staffing model was working.

Chair Jennings asked if the EFD had a defined period of time to measure the success of the new staffing model. Chief Gerber stated the staffing model could be evaluated at three and six months. He reported the plan going forward would be to maintain this staffing model into 2020 with five overnights. He explained if any major concerns were to arise, he would bring these matters to the Board in a timely manner.

Boardmember Fletcher commented that paid on-call firefighters were far less expensive to the member cities than full-time firefighters. He encouraged the Board to be mindful of this when considering the overnight staffing model.

Boardmember Miller recognized this as well and encouraged EFD to make adjustments to the overnight staffing model as needed going forward. He stated he anticipated the new staffing model would improve service and response times for the community.

Boardmember Labadie suggested through the trial period that the opinions of the firefighters also be considered and heard as part of the evaluation process. She believed this would be important to make the new staffing model successful.

Boardmember Fletcher agreed the firefighters had to be on board and be happy with the new staffing model.

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Asst. Chief McCarthy stating his day job affords him the opportunity to talk with other firefighters around the metro area. He discussed what he has learned from these firefighters with respect to their staffing models, what works and what does not. He explained the majority of the firefighters really appreciated their time being more scheduled. He reported the goal would be to make the new staffing model work for everyone and noted changes could be made along the way based on feedback the Fire Chief receives from staff.

Chair Jennings stated he looked forward to kicking off the new staffing model in July of this year.

Chief Gerber stated he was working on the 2018 year in review and 2019 goals document. He encouraged the Board to pass along specific goals or visions to him so this information could be included in the 2019 goals document. He anticipated these documents would be completed for the March EFD meeting.

Chief Gerber commented on station projects that would be completed in 2019. He described the concrete repairs that would be completed at Station 1 and noted this project would be bid in February.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Excelsior Firefighter Relief Association Updates

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

Bruce Duncan, Excelsior Firefighter Relief Association President, discussed the process that was followed for pension/benefit increases. He explained the Fire Relief Association would be proposing a pension increase with the Relief Association Board next week. The Fire Relief Association would then be holding its Annual Meeting on February 28th where a vote would be taken on the proposed increase by the firefighters. The item would then be brought to this Board for consideration in March for ratification.

Mr. Duncan reviewed the fund balance of the pension. He reported the fund was 118% funded at this time, even with the slight loss in December of 2018. He explained the Relief Association would be proposing a 3% increase for 2019. He described how the fund would be impacted by the proposed increase. He then discussed what the fund has earned on a yearly basis for the past three years.

Chair Jennings asked what the minimum funding level was for the pension. Mr. Duncan indicated the pension had to be 100% funded and at this time was 118% funded. He reported the fund would have to lose \$1.2 million in order to be at the 100% funding level.

Boardmember Fletcher discussed the history of the pension fund and management issues that occurred in the past. He stated he was very pleased with the progress that had been made on the pension balance.

B. Station Remodel Update **i. Construction Contract**

Chief Gerber updated the Board on the station remodeling project. He presented information on the 10 bids the organization received. It was noted the low bid was provided by Cal-TEX Construction. He requested the Board accept the bids and move forward with the project.

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Chair Jennings asked if legal counsel had reviewed the construction contract. Chief Gerber stated this had not occurred but noted Wold Architects had reviewed the contract and supported it moving forward. Discussion that the contract was a standard construction contract. All present were ok proceeding.

Miller moved, Erickson seconded, accepting the bids and approving the construction contract with Cal-TEX Construction.

Boardmember Fletcher explained he reviewed the work that had been completed by Ca-TEX in the past and found their work to be just acceptable. He understood the Board had to move forward with the low bid, but for this reason, he would not be supporting the motion.

Boardmember Erickson commented he appreciated this input but noted Wold Architects would be assisting with this project and would hold Cal-TEX Construction accountable on this project.

Boardmember Labadie concurred.

Motion passed 4/1 (Fletcher opposed).

11. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2019 Vehicle Purchases (Fire Chief Memo)

Chief Gerber reviewed the two vehicles that were included in the 2019 Capital Improvement Plan. He requested the Board approve the purchase of the two vehicles. He explained the recommendation was to purchase a Chevy Tahoe and a Ford F-250.

Chair Jennings stated he supported the vehicles being purchased.

Fletcher moved, Erickson seconded, approving the purchase of two vehicles: Ford ¾ pick-up truck and topper from Waconia Ford in the amount of \$38,682 and Chevrolet Tahoe from Lenzen Chevrolet for \$37,427, as recommended by EFD staff. Motion passed 5/0.

12. NEXT MEETING

A. ~~Work Session on Staffing – February 27, 2019 6:30 P.M.~~

B. Regular Board Meeting – March 20, 2019 6:30 P.M.

Chief Gerber explained the next work session meeting had been canceled and noted the regular board meeting was scheduled for 6:30 P.M. on March 20, 2019, at Station I.

13. ADJOURN

Erickson moved, Labadie seconded, adjourning the EFD Governing Board Meeting of January 23, 2019, at 7:42 P.M. Motion passed 5/0.