



Fire Advisory Board Meeting Minutes April 4, 2023

Roll Call of Attendees

The meeting was called to order by Assistant Chief Shane Gardner and Fire Chief Mike Heiland. Please note that members in attendance are noted with an asterisk (*):

Long Lake

Scott Weske *
Mike Heiland *
Charlie Miner *
Jahn Dyvik *

Orono

Adam Edwards *
Ron Olson
James Van Eyll *
Rich Crosby
Victoria Seals

Medina

Scott Johnson *
Jason Nelson
Dino Deslauriers
Kathleen Martin *

Minnetonka Beach

Heidi Honey
Jennifer Halverson *

Welcome & Introductions

Welcome Fire Chief Mike Heiland, Long Lake Fire Department

Long Lake Fire Chief Mike Heiland gave a brief overview of his background and experience with the Excelsior Fire District.

As no Orono Councilmembers were present, City Administrator Edwards was asked about their status and Mr. Edwards stated Councilmember Seals had a work conflict and Councilmember Crosby had not responded.

Budget

2023 Operating Expenses

Assistant Chief Gardner reviewed the draft 2023 Operating Expenses budget information. He commented that it was still early and explained that despite some things appearing to trending over budget for the year, he believed that expenses will end up being closer to the target.

2023-2037 15-Year CIP

Assistant Chief Gardner reviewed some of the upcoming and expected CIP items.

The Fire Advisory Board asked questions and discussed upcoming equipment needs and funding for the Department. They explored possible ways to share services and equipment through the surrounding geographic area; and Medina Mayor Kathleen Martin mentioned the idea of doing a cost-benefit analysis on the idea of sharing some items with the surrounding areas.

Long Lake Mayor Miner pointed out that one of the purposes for the Future Fire Services group was to talk about ways to share equipment.

There was a discussion regarding the command vehicle (Tahoe) that Orono purchased and offered to loan to the LLFD. Orono City Administrator Edwards indicated Long Lake had turned the vehicle down in December. Long Lake representatives stated there was now a need for the vehicle for use of the LLFD chief. Orono City Administrator Edwards indicated that the need has changed Long Lake could reach out. There was further discussion about the age of the current Tahoe that Chief Van Eyll had been using, which was model year 2009 with 140K miles.

The Fire Advisory Board discussed details, priorities, and specific line items from the CIP, including opportunities to purchase used equipment; on CIP contributions and what they should be; and expressed the desire to discuss the proposed preliminary budget in June or July rather than waiting until August.

Long Lake Council Member Dyvik noted that he felt it was also important to consider what CIP items the City of Orono would approve.

Orono City Administrator Edwards indicated that they would not approve any future CIPs for the Long Lake Fire Department under the current contract. Any need identified by the Long Lake Fire Department would be purchased 100% Orono knowing in 2026 the Orono Fire Department would need it. Orono would let the Long Lake Fire Department borrow it until the end of the contract.

Dyvik stated that he was under the impression that individual purchases would be considered on a case by case basis.

Edwards stated that he did not think there would be an approval from the Orono City Council for any kind of shared purchases.

Dyvik expressed frustration that the terms of the contract were not being honored by all cities.

Assistant Chief Gardner stated that from an operational standpoint, the firefighters do not care about ownership and just want to be able to have the appropriate equipment in order to do their jobs.

The Fire Advisory Board discussed including more funding in operations to cover truck repairs.

It was the consensus of subcommittee members that the group should meet in June/July in order to be able to discuss budget in more detail prior to the final budget adoption in August.

Medina Mayor Martin observed that she felt it would make sense for Long Lake to work on the CIP, but noted that there appeared to be some things that should be discussed amongst Long Lake and Orono without others just listening in.

2023 Fire Allocations

Long Lake City Administrator Weske reviewed the 2023 Fire Allocations document which depicted the approved budget, the CIP (if it had been adopted), and each city's share of operations.

Orono Fire Chief Van Eyll mentioned that two out of the three cities rejected the CIP Mayor Martin expressed concern about putting funding into the Long Lake Fire Department with the current uncertainty regarding the future of the department. She stated that whatever the outcome is from the discussions between Long Lake and Orono, she hopes that the portion of

Medina that is currently served by the Long Lake Fire Department continues to be served well. She added that she was not as comfortable that the Orono City Council would commit to serving Medina if they were to become the 'ruling' party under an agreement. If Medina had that commitment, it would allow them to be much more comfortable injecting money into the existing department if, regardless of how the chips may fall, they would still be confident they would be served equitably by the outcome. She indicated that she felt that this issue was the 'elephant in the room' that needed to be addressed and Orono Chief Van Eyll will get back to her on those concerns.

Shared Services

Medina Future Fire Service Planning Meeting Update

Mayor Martin reported that both the Loretto firefighters and Hamel firefighters have voted to approve the merger of the two departments, and special legislation would be passed to permit the merger of the two pension funds. She advised that it is anticipated the merger would be effective on June 1, 2023. She observed that from her perspective, what could be learned from this process was that the real professionals should be allowed to determine what is best rather than trying to legislate it from the outside. She explained that this was why she is a big proponent of a fire district because she feels it take a lot of the angst off of the Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs so they are able to focus on delivery of services in a cost effective manner. She noted that she was hopeful the Loretto/Hamel planned merger may be a more regional step in this direction.

Mayor Miner mentioned that he believed that the legislation for their merger was dated July 1, 2023. He also shared that the next Future Fire Services group meeting will be held May 3, 2023.

Other Topics

LLFD Public Events

Assistant Chief Gardner advised that the Pancake Breakfast will be held on April 23, 2023. He reported that the LLFD had also held a hands-only CPR class that had 40 people in attendance, and indicated that they will probably hold this type of class a bit more frequently in the future. He noted that they had decided not to continue with the 5K and will probably steer more towards public education events. He added that the Orono Fun Fest event is also coming up in a few weeks.

Wrap-Up / Adjourn

At the meeting's conclusion, the subcommittee agreed to hold their next Fire Advisory Board meeting on June 6, 2023.