



Fire Advisory Board Meeting Minutes September 18, 2023

Roll Call of Attendees

The meeting was called by Long Lake Fire Chief Heiland.

In attendance:

Long Lake

Scott Weske
Charlie Miner
Jahn Dyvik
Mike Heiland

Orono

Adam Edwards
Richard Crosby
Maria Veach
Ron Olson

Medina

Scott Johnson

Minnetonka Beach

Jennifer Halverson

Note: This meeting was inadvertently not recorded.

Welcome & Introductions

Long Lake Fire Chief Heiland welcomed everyone and introductions were made.

Budget

2023 Budget Report – As of September 15, 2023

Chief Heiland reviewed the 2023 Budget Report as of September 15, 2023 and noted that the revenues are on track. The sale of pagers went into the sale of land/capital assets for \$3,335. They were sold to the City of Cottonwood and we are expected to sell around \$1,500 more in pagers to another City.

Crosby asked how much new pagers cost and Heiland responded around \$2,500 each.

Heiland reviewed the expenses and highlighted a few line items that are over but believes that overall the department will be close to on budget.

Duty Crew Update

Staff provided an August update in the agenda packet. Heiland explained that the Monday through Friday shifts are being covered around 48% and Saturday's are not seeing much activity yet. Further, probationary shifts are slim at the moment due to the small number of probationary firefighters. September signups are looking a little slower than August because several firefighters are on vacation. However, different firefighters are signing up which is a good sign. Trends are starting to be seen as weeks go by.

Final Draft 2024 Operating Expenses with Wage Increase

Weske presented the 2024 budget and explained the only difference from the 8-15-23 version is the agreed upon wage increase. This was the \$15.50/hr to \$15.65/hr that was discussed in email exchanges in August.

City Administrator Edwards was asked if he felt the Orono Council would approve the budget. He believes they will pass a levy that includes Orono's share of the LLFD budget but he is not sure about the LLFD budget itself. Both Long Lake and Orono agree the verbiage in the contract on how to determine the budget amount if a City doesn't approve the budget could be difficult to interpret. It could take all three cities to agree on the interpretation.

Since Orono voted to reduce the service area that is covered by LLFD, starting July 1, 2024 they are concerned on how the budget will be reduced since the Orono FD will be covering that area.

Orono would like to see a written statement from Long Lake on the process for determining the revised budget for July through December and then reallocating that cost among the three cities. Orono is still working with Hennepin County to create the new CAD zones and will share the market value and PIDs with LLFD for budget calculations.

A budget concern for Orono is the cost of the duty crews. With the reduction in service area, they believe there would be less of a need for firefighters at Station 2. The current duty crew budget was set at \$83,900 based on an estimated 85% participation rate. Councilmember Crosby indicated that was too high of a number for him to approve. Councilmember Dyvik asked him to propose a different number that he could agree on. Councilmember Crosby stated he would be more comfortable with that line item being around \$60,000. A calculation was made that if the estimated participation rate was dropped to 60%, then the cost would be \$59,280. Councilmember Crosby was in support of that number. Councilmember Veach also expressed her support for that number.

Councilmember Veach stated that she would like to see Chief Van Eyll used by LLFD to serve as a duty crew member to reduce costs. It would be a "free" service along with training LLFD so that another vendor isn't needed.

Long Lake Councilmember Dyvik and Long Lake Mayor Miner both expressed that having Chief Van Eyll help LLFD is not a good idea at this time. They expressed concern for firefighters' opposing that idea and with mediation a week away, and that other things need to be worked out first.

After further discussion, Councilmember Dyvik stated he was willing to have Heiland consider using Chief Van Eyll if he (Heiland) wanted to run the idea by the firefighters and leadership. But Dyvik stated he didn't want to have the use of Chief Van Eyll as a "condition" of approving the budget.

Chief Heiland mentioned that the officer group voted at one of their meetings and decided they didn't want Chief Van Eyll to be their trainer. He would check in with the group to understand their feelings related to having Chief Van Eyll as a duty crew responder.

Before adjournment, Councilmember Dyvik asked Councilmembers Veach and Crosby if they supported this revised budget. They both said yes.

Estimated 2024 Fire Allocations

Weske noted that the allocations will be changed to reflect the duty crew budget reduction.

Adjourn

The Fire Advisory Board discussed that we are required to have four meetings each year per the contract and this was our fifth meeting. The idea of potentially meeting again was discussed, possibly in December.