

## North Shore Fire Department Board of Directors Meeting Minutes: October 13, 2020

### Meeting held via Zoom Conferencing

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m.

Present: Eido Walny, representing Bayside  
Wanda Montgomery, representing Brown Deer  
Douglas Frazer, representing Fox Point  
Bryan Kennedy, representing Glendale  
Peter Kingwill, representing River Hills  
Allison Rozek, representing Shorewood, joined at 8:10 a.m.  
Julie Siegel, representing Whitefish Bay

Also Present: Robert Whitaker, Fire Chief  
Andrew Harris, Assistant Chief  
John Maydak, Assistant Chief  
KateLynn Harrigan, Finance Director  
Kerry Wenzel, Administrative Coordinator  
Nick Padway, Fire Commission Chair  
Andy Pederson, Bayside Village Manager  
Rachel Safstrom, Glendale City Administrator  
Rebecca Ewald, Shorewood Village Manager  
Paul Boening, Whitefish Bay Village Manager

#### 2. PERSONS DESIRING TO BE HEARD

#### 3. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Correction to the Sept Minutes: Tammy LaBorde was present.

*It was moved by Mr. Kennedy and seconded by Ms. Montgomery to approve the September 15, 2020 Board of Directors Minutes as corrected. Motion carried unanimously.*

#### 4. FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT ON DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES RELATING TO DEPARTMENT CALLS, STAFFING, APPOINTMENT/PROMOTION NEEDS, TRAINING, FIRE PREVENTION ACTIVITIES AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Staff continues to work with the architect for the Station 82 project. Crews have moved into the Shorewood station completely. Final testing of the concrete pad will be coming this week. After a successful test, we will be in the building completely. Staff hopes to create a short video tour for everyone to see the completed project.

Six firefighters completed their recruit academy and are now on shift. Members successfully completed four weeks and then the Academy did have to pivot to virtual due to a COVID test result. Subsequently, that test was considered a false-positive and all Academy participants and instructors were cleared.

Chief Whitaker outlined the Performance Indicator Report noting the call processing times are expected to be increased in 2020 due to additional COVID screening questions resulting in increased call processing.

Mr. Kingwill asked what the current vacancies are for the Department and what the future plans are to fill those positions. Chief Whitaker stated Staff believes we will be hiring six candidates for a spring academy.

Ms. Montgomery asked about the false alarm report. Chief Whitaker stated false alarm calls are monitored closely and when there is an issue with a particular address, Staff does follow up.

## **5. NSFD COMMISSION CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Chairman Padway stated the Commission has not met. The Commission has initiated the upcoming recruitment process. The goal is to have a group of candidates prepared for the spring Joint Fire Training Academy. He added, the Department also has the Fire Intern process to keep candidates involved in the Department. The Commission also has the availability to appoint candidates from this group to a full time position.

Mr. Walny confirmed Bayside is looking to fill their vacancy on the North Shore Fire Commission.

## **6. MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT – KATELYNN HARRIGAN**

Ms. Harrigan reported the Department is 75% through the fiscal year. Revenue is on target at 75.46%. Ambulance collections are doing well and are on budget estimates. The Department has some expenses in October for overtime and anticipate this month to be higher than usual.

Ms. Harrigan outlined the Quarter 3 Financial projections noting the Department is expected to exceed revenue and expenditure amounts. The Department is looking at a slight deficit of approximately \$15,000. However, Ms. Harrigan noted she only included grant funds that have been received in these projections. There are still outstanding grant funds and the Department is waiting to be notified of the outcome.

## **7. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE NORTH SHORE FIRE SERVICES AGREEMENT**

Ms. Siegel stated this discussion, for the proposed Amendment to the Fire Services Agreement, has been ongoing for a while.

In 2017, the Board created a Subcommittee to study several recommendations. This final amendment is the remaining recommendation to be acted upon by the Board of Directors. Currently, the Fire Services Agreement states the Board can increase a budget by CPI + .5%. When CPI is in a good position, there are no issues. However, when CPI is low, it does create a challenge to keep up with negotiated wage increases. The Subcommittee found when the Department cannot keep up with budget increases consistent with wage increases, staff reductions could result.

For ten years, the Board had an amendment to have CPI + 2% as the cap. This amendment expired in 2014. CPI + 2% matches the language for State levy cap exemptions; it was modeled after the Department's language.

The proposed language change for Section 5.2 of the Fire Services Agreement is outlined on page 68 of the Board packet. On page 75, a projection of .5% is outlined for the 2021 budget.

Mr. Kennedy stated he is supportive of getting this information in to the Fire Services Agreement. He added, the Board does have an adopted 2021 budget so he did not feel the Board needed to rush Amendment for that purpose. He added, the Department needs the State of Wisconsin to pass a statute to keep the levy limit exceptions in line with expenditure restraint exceptions. Due to the pandemic, he did not feel the Board can amend the agreement until there is consistency from the State.

Ms. Siegel stated she is hoping to be proactive and does not want to cut the Department. This Department is an essential service and added she believes it is important to begin these discussions.

Mr. Kennedy stated, for the expenditure restraint issues, we are hopeful that by starting early to get this provision added to the budget, it will remain through the Joint Finance review.

Ms. Montgomery asked if there is a timeframe to have this finalized to be used for the 2022 budget year. Ms. Siegel stated there is time. This has been discussed for quite some time and is an introduction for the group today.

Mr. Frazer asked if Board members should we bring this to their respective Boards for a heads up. Ms. Siegel that is up to each municipality.

Ms. Rozek asked what is the average CPI increase. Chief Whitaker directed the group to page 72 in the packet, and noted the ten-year average was 1.73%.

Mr. Walny stated municipalities are not sure what the 2022 budget will look like adding that he believes every budget will see deficits. He is concerned moving forward at this time.

Ms. Siegel stated her concern is the Board is not increasing the budget enough to keep up with negotiated wages. She would like to see this revisited again in the near future.

Mr. Kennedy stated he understands wanting to keep the Department fiscally solvent, but we have a reality in the communities where many private sector workers have lost jobs or have taken wage reductions. He recommended the Board revisit this topic in March. Mr. Walny agreed and understands conversations will happen with all Departments including dispatch, police, and health departments.

Ms. Rozek stated the unions have to realize that the private sector is suffering.

*It was moved by Mr. Kennedy and seconded by Ms. Rozek to lay this item over until the March meeting. Motion carried unanimously.*

## **8. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Kennedy stated the ICC scheduled a press conf. for Thursday at 4:00. He encouraged everyone to attend.

Ms. Montgomery stated Brown Deer in the process of renovating the library.

**9. DATE AND LOCATION FOR NEXT MEETING**

The Board is set to meet on November 10 at 8:00 a.m. via Zoom.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

*It was moved by Mr. Kennedy and seconded by Mr. Frazer to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously at 8:49 a.m.*

Kerry Wenzel for  
Wanda Montgomery  
Secretary/Treasurer  
NSFD Board of Directors