

Holmen Area Fire District

Meeting Minutes – December 17th, 2024

Jeff Herlitzke called the Holmen Area Fire District meeting to order at 6:30 pm on December 17th, 2024 at the Town of Holland Town Hall.

Members Present: Doug Jorstad (Holmen), Travis Elam (Holmen), Rick Hauser (Holland), Jeff Herlitzke (Holland)

Alternates Present: None

Members Excused:

Also Present: Ryan Ostreng (Fire Chief)

Guests: None

Pledge of Allegiance Recited

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Motion by Jorstad. Second by Hauser. Chief Ostreng commented that the minutes did not indicate that there was a closed session at the last meeting and gave Elam tips on how to document it properly. Motion to amend the minutes contingent on the change to include notes about the closed session. Motion carried unanimously.

Financial Review:

Jorstad gave the board a brief overview of the current finances for the department. Jorstad specifically noted total operating expenditures was at 90.5% of the budget, and total expenses was 89.8%. Jorstad inquired if the department had any upcoming expenses before the end of the year. Chief Ostreng stated that the brush truck needed new tires but it wasn't unexpected.

The board discussed the remaining funds that it owed itself. Chief Ostreng stated that the only money that had been moved was the \$36,000 that was part of the 2024 budget. The board stressed that they would like to see the remaining \$44,000 paid back to the department before the end of the year.

The board reviewed check detail thoroughly.

Chief Ostreng informed the board about the EMC Workers Compensation Insurance Policy payment. Chief Ostreng explained that he had communicated with Herlitzke prior to paying the larger than normal amount to avoid late fees during the holiday season. Chief Ostreng stated that in general roughly $\frac{1}{4}$ of the checks sent are close to their deadlines. Chief Ostreng noted the requirement of signatures and the frequency of board meetings as the issue. The board discussed solutions to avoid the same issue in the future.

Chief Ostreng informed the board that the department would likely be getting the Wisconsin EMS FAP (Funding Assistance Program) Grant. Ostreng stated that the department could receive up to \$50,000 from the grant. Ostreng stated that the funds for the grant would go towards purchasing two new heart monitors.

Chief Ostreng informed the department that changes to the county's CAD software could result in unexpected fees for the department. Ostreng stated the total amount of fees could be roughly \$15,600 and was coming from the software vendor and not the county.

Fire Administration Report:

The board reviewed the calls for the month. Chief Ostreng estimated the total calls for the year to be around 1100.

Chief Ostreng noted some policies and priorities he'd like to see implemented in the department in the upcoming year. Specifically, he stated would like to have new policies similar to FMLA for department staff and highlighted one of the firefighters who was going to be a dad soon. Chief Ostreng informed the board about the newly discovered PFAS contaminated turn out gear and what his plan was to address the risks moving forward which included the replacement of the gear because it was end-of-life. Chief Ostreng also informed the board of his intent to hire out a company to create a vehicle replacement plan, a possible strategic plan, and his intent to create a training captain which would be modeled after the flex captain position that La Crosse has.

Chief Ostreng stated that engine 1 was finally fixed but rescue 1 had recently started having issues.

Chief Ostreng stated that the department had a meeting with Tri-State on December 11th to discuss some issues the department had recently been having with the service.

Chief Ostreng explained to the board that the auto-aid agreement with the Onalaska Fire Department was finally working after many years and that it was working well.

Fire Station Study:

Chief Ostreng gave an overview of the virtual meeting he had with Wendel Five Bugles Design. Chief Ostreng stated that members of Five Bugles visited recently to review the existing infrastructure. Chief Ostreng stated that Five Bugles anticipated having the report finished in the first quarter of 2025. In addition, he stated that Five Bugles would be showing a presentation to the board of their findings from the final report. Chief Ostreng gave a very detailed explanation of the importance of a 4-minute response time to any call and stressed its importance in considering a future location for the new fire station.

Training Plan:

Chief Ostreng gave a summary of the new six-month training plan and referenced the departments deficiencies in the previous ISO report as reasoning for establishing a more

thorough and structured training regimen. Chief Ostreng also stated it was his intent to use the training plan as justification for funding in future budgets.

Closed Session: Motion by Jorstad to go into closed session pursuant to Wis. Stats. 19.85(1)(c). Second by Hauser. Roll call was taken, all members were present

Reconvene into Open Session: Motion by Hauser. Second by Jorstad to reconvene into open session. Motion carried unanimously.

Reservation of right for action and/or recommendation on Closed Session items(s):
Motion to investigate violation of the chain of command defined in Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) 200 Organizational Structure. Second by Jorstad. Herlitzke stated that he would be leading the investigation and putting together a report that he would present before the board in the next meeting. Motion carried unanimously

Announcement and Future Agenda Items:
None

Next Regular Meeting: January 21st, 2025

Adjourn:
Motion to adjourn Jorstad/Elam. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes by Travis E. Elam, Secretary