

Holmen Area Fire Department Board

Meeting Minutes – January 21st, 2025

Jeff Herlitzke called the Holmen Area Fire District meeting to order at 6:30 pm on January 21st, 2025 at the Town of Holland Town Hall.

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

Alternates Present: Patrick Barlow (Holmen)

Members Excused:

Also Present: Ryan Ostreng (Fire Chief)

Guests: None

Pledge of Allegiance Recited

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Motion by Hauser to approve the meeting minutes of 12/17/2024, second by Jorstad. Motion carried unanimously.

Resident or Employee Concerns/Comments:

None.

Financial Review:

Jorstad gave the board a brief overview of the 2024 end of year balance sheet and stated that he thought the department did pretty well overall and noted there was even a small amount of funds left over at the end of 2024.

Jorstad gave the board a brief overview of the current 2025 balance sheet for the department. Jorstad noted the percentage of the budget used for the year was very small.

The board reviewed check detail thoroughly. Hauser questioned a \$1,845.45 payment to Reliant Fire Apparatus. Chief Ostreng stated that it was for work done on Engine 1 and that the cost was due to labor and not parts. Ostreng stated the knob in question was under warranty.

Jorstad presented the board with an invoice from ImageTrend for a total amount of \$9,975 and explained it was an annual fee. Chief Ostreng explained to the board what ImageTrend was and how it was used within the department. Herlitzke asked if the invoice was a budgeted item. Chief Ostreng stated it was and that it increases in price roughly 5% per year. Elam questioned if Chief Ostreng had looked into any multi-year discounts to reduce the cost of the software. Chief Ostreng stated he hadn't, but would look into it. Motion by Herlitzke for the approval of the ImageTrend Annual Fee Invoice, not to exceed \$9,975, contingent on the chief inquiring about a multi-year agreement with annual payment. Second by Elam. Motion carried Unanimously.

Jorstad presented the board with a second invoice from ImageTrend for a total amount of \$3,500. Chief Ostreng explained the purpose of the one-time charge, and explained it was necessary to import data from La Crosse County. Chief Ostreng stated he attempted to get Image Trend to drop the fee but was unsuccessful. Chief Ostreng stated the \$3,500 fee was not budgeted for. Motion by Herlitzke for the approval of the ImageTrend Quote #Q-10338 for a total of \$3,500. Second by Jorstad. Motion carried unanimously.

Jorstad presented the board with a quote from MacQueen for the purchase of two MSA self-contained breathing apparatuses (SCBA) for a total amount of \$17,308. Jorstad explained it was the Chief's intention to use 2024's 2% dues to fund the purchase. Chief Ostreng explained the department was short the devices in the command vehicle and the tender. Chief Ostreng explained that he was recently put in a situation where one was required and he was without one. Chief Ostreng also explained why one was needed on the tender especially during mutual aid calls. The board questioned how many devices the department currently had and what the life expectancy of the devices was. Chief Ostreng stated that the devices could last as long as 20 years if maintained properly. Elam asked if any grants could be used for the purchase of the equipment. Chief Ostreng stated that wasn't an option. The board re-reviewed the 2024 Balance Sheet and the remaining 2% dues that would be carried over to pay for the quote. Hauser motioned to approve the two SCBAs for a total amount of \$17,308. Second by Elam. Motion carried unanimously.

Chief Ostreng presented the board with a quote from Blazestack for the purchase of their Fire Investigation Case Management Software for a total amount of \$5,400, equaling half the cost of the total software license. The board reviewed the quote in detail. Hauser asked if the City of Onalaska had approved their half of the quote already. Chief Ostreng stated that the City of Onalaska was in the process of approving the invoice. The board reviewed the different tier options of the software. Herlitzke motioned to approve the Blazestack multi-year agreement with an annual cost of year 1 equaling \$2,700, year 2 equaling \$2,835, year 3 equaling \$2,977, and contingent on the approval of Onalaska's 50% match. Second by Jorstad. Elam requested that Chief Ostreng share reports from the software with the board in the future. Motion carried unanimously.

Jorstad presented the board with a request to purchase two more Rescue Task Force Sling packs for use by the department for mass casualty events. Firefighter Wilson had a pack available to show the board. Firefighter Wilson explained the pack was put together with the expertise from Firefighter Caden Douglas who is a trained combat medic in the Army. Firefighter Wilson explained the department currently has one pack available and that it is kept on Rescue 1. Elam asked if the fire department had spoken with the police department about establishing a standardized pack that both departments could be trained on for mass casualty events. Chief Ostreng stated that was actually against best practice, but that the department did need to do more joint training with the police department. Motion by Elam for approval of the Rescue Task Force Sling packs for a total of \$3000. Second by Jorstad. Motion carried unanimously.

Chief Ostreng informed the board that the previous concerns about the La Crosse County New Central Square costs had been taken care of and that those fees would be absorbed by the county.

Chief Ostreng informed the board that Jamie Schloegel had reached out to the department to help apply for sources of funding. Chief Ostreng stated this would be very beneficial to the department and she was offering her help free of charge.

Fire Administration Report:

The board reviewed the calls for the month. Chief Ostreng stated that for 2024 there was a total of 1131 calls which was down compared to the prior year. The board reviewed the breakdown of the calls. Chief Ostreng gave a summary of the end of the year administrative tasks he was finishing up for 2024. Chief Ostreng stated he was already working on the 2026 budget.

Chief Ostreng stated that Engine 1 blew a 200 Amp fuse and the vehicle was unusable for service. Chief Ostreng stated that he had already contact Reliant Fire Apparatus and that it would be fixed as soon as possible but was unsure of the cost to fix it. He stated this happened during a call to a recent major structure fire.

Chief Ostreng stated that Engine 2 was experiencing some electrical issues but the truck was still in service and just required paying attention to certain gauges until it is fixed.

Chief Ostreng stated that Rescue 1 is in need of an alignment based on the wear of the new tires. Firefighter Wilson explained the truck is too heavy for the majority of vehicles lifts at auto shops in the area. Chief Ostreng stated that a shop was found that could handle the weight and it would be taken care of soon.

Chief Ostreng updated the board on upcoming training for the department.

Fire Station Study:

Chief Ostreng stated that he met with Wendel Five Bugles today and that they discussed 1, 2, and 3 station solutions. Chief Ostreng stated they also evaluated a village wide demand as well as a jurisdiction wide demand, in addition to the 4-minute response time previously discussed. Chief Ostreng also stated that Wendel Five Bugles created a heatmap of historical calls and that he was in the process of reviewing that map and requesting changes as necessary to proposed solutions. Chief Ostreng stated that Wendel Five Bugles would be coming down next Wednesday to do some analysis on station size and that the report is estimated to be finished in March.

Command Vehicle Replacement Status:

Chief Ostreng stated there was no update yet.

Kenwood Portable Radio Cache:

Chief Ostreng stated that he would like to donate the department's older radios to the Farmington Fire Department. Chief Ostreng explained that currently the department has enough radios for everyone minus backups and that the older radios were of no use to the department. Chief Ostreng explained some of the older parts including batteries and chargers would be kept, but it was his intent to upgrade their radios in the future. Chief Ostreng gave examples of communication issues the department has had when responding to calls with Farmington Fire, and stated he believed the radios would resolve some of these issues. The board was in favor of donating the radios to Farmington Fire Department.

Closed Session:

Motion by Jorstad to go into closed session pursuant to Wis. Stats.

§19.85(1)(b). Second by Hauser. Roll call was taken, all members were present.

Reconvene in 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 item(s):

Herlitzke read a synopsis of his investigation into the violation of the chain of command defined in Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) 200 Organizational Structure. Herlitzke stated he contacted Holmen Village Administrator Scott Heinig directly and that Heinig stated there was no malice or ill intent by the Firefighter in question to cause any harm to

HAFD. Heinig stated that the firefighter exercised poor judgment in voicing their concerns about the department. Heinig stated he did not want to give up the name of the Firefighter in question, due to fear of causing more issues within the department. The consensus of the board was that the investigation should be closed pending additional training in the department regarding the chain of command and proper communication outside the department to non-department members.

Announcement and Future Agenda Items:

None.

Next Regular Meeting: February 18th, 2025

Adjourn:

Motion to adjourn by Jorstad. Second by Elam. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes by Travis E. Elam, Secretary