

# Holmen Area Fire Department Board

Meeting Minutes – February 18, 2025

Jeff Herlitzke called the Holmen Area Fire District meeting to order at 6:30 pm on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at the Town of Holland Town Hall.

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

**Alternates Present:**

**Members Excused:** Rick Hauser (Holland) **Also**

**Present:** Ryan Ostreng (Fire Chief) **Guests:**

Captain Mike Lavery

**Pledge of Allegiance Recited**

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

Minor changes were recommended to secretary Elam regarding the use of “Holmen Area Fire District” in the meeting notes title, a verbiage change in the section “Reservation of right for action and/or recommendation on Closed Session item(s)”, and an unfinished sentence. Motion by Jorstad to approve the meeting minutes of 1/21/2025 contingent on minor changes discussed, second by Herlitzke. Motion carried unanimously.

**Resident or Employee Concerns/Comments:**

None.

**Financial Review:**

Jorstad gave the board a brief overview of the January 2025 balance sheet for the department. Jorstad noted the percentage of office budget spent already was rather high. Chief Ostreng explained this was mostly due to a 4-5% increase in costs in general and the departments software budget had some unexpected items come up. Elam questioned if the “Office Software” line item was overbudget due to the fee for the data migration from the county’s software, or if it was due to the approval of the fire investigation software.

Chief Ostreng explained this was not the case and these items were under different line items in the balance sheets.

The board reviewed check detail thoroughly. No purchases were questioned.

Chief Ostreng provided the board with an overview of his request for new PPE equipment for the department.

Captain Lavery provided the board with examples of their current equipment and explained to the board their gear was over 10 years old and that their equipment was not fitted for them. Captain Lavery also stated the department has a lot of equipment that is so large nobody in the department can use it.

Captain Lavery gave the board a detailed explanation of how the new equipment was superior to their current equipment and the challenges the department faced using equipment that was old and unfitted. In addition, Captain Lavery provided the board with an example of the new helmet the department would be looking to purchase. Captain Lavery had no examples of the rest of the new gear on hand but stated department members were all able to try on the gear they were requesting at the department when the vendor visited and that members of the department were very satisfied with the PPE recommendation from Chief Ostreng. Motion by Elam to purchase the PPE equipment from MacQueen using 2% not to exceed \$68,000. Second by Jorstad. Motion carried unanimously.

Chief Ostreng stated it was his intent to purchase two new Motorola radios for use in the new command vehicle. Chief Ostreng re-iterated the purpose of the radios and why having the ability to communicate on multiple frequencies simultaneously was so important.

Chief Ostreng reminded the board the department would be donating their old radios to the Town of Farmington. Motion for the approval of the two mobile radios for \$9,588 by Jorstad. Second by Elam. Motion carried unanimously.

Chief Ostreng and the board discussed minor changes to the names of line items in the balance sheet to better illustrate how money was being spent. The board agreed with the Chief's decision and voiced their support for the approval.

Chief Ostreng updated the board on recent donations the department received. These included thank you letters/cards from residents who very positively impacted by the department, donated snacks from Sam's club, and a large \$5000 donation from Altra Federal Credit Union.

### **Fire Administration Report:**

Chief Ostreng provided the board with a summary of the calls and activity for January 2025.

Chief Ostreng stated it was a busy month and the department had responded to numerous fire calls including some large structure fires.

Chief Ostreng informed the board that a Firefighter had resigned and would be taking a position at the La Crosse Fire Department. Elam asked if the department did exit interviews to figure out why staff left. Chief Ostreng stated the department does exit interviews and that the Firefighter had stated department growth and future career opportunities as their reasoning for leaving the Holmen Area Fire Department.

Chief Ostreng gave the board an update on the status of the departments fleet. Chief Ostreng stated Engine 1 is still having issues, Engine 2 was doing better, and Rescue 1 got an alignment to resolve the tread wear issues it was experiencing.

#### **Fire Commission Report:**

Chief Ostreng gave a brief update regarding the previous fire commission meeting.

#### **Command Vehicle Replacement Status:**

Chief Ostreng gave the board a status update on the replacement command vehicle and noted the vehicle was ready for purchase. Chief Ostreng reiterated that the \$62,000 request was for the vehicle only, and that there would need to be more work done like the addition of radios and a car wrap before it could be put into service. Motion by Elam for the approval of payment to Ewald Automotive Group not to exceed \$62,000. Second by Jorstad. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **Fire Station Study:**

Chief Ostreng updated the board on the current status of the ongoing fire station study by Wendel Five Bugles Design. Chief Ostreng explained, that based on the GIS study and historical call data, the current fire station is in a prime location. Chief Ostreng stated that the same data suggested the placement of an additional fire station farther north. Chief Ostreng informed the board that he met with Village of Holmen Administrator Scott Heinig to discuss the study and the overall scope. Chief Ostreng stated the primary goal was to find the location for a new fire station and think about purchasing land for a second station to accommodate for future growth in the fire district. Chief Ostreng stated that he would be meeting with Wendel Five Bugles Design tomorrow February 19th, 2025.

### **Collaborative Fire Investigation Group MOU:**

The board reviewed the Memorandum of Understanding Document in detail. Board members from Holmen saw no issue with the document but wanted to have the document reviewed by Village of Holmen Administrator Heining before agreeing to the MOU. Herlitzke stated he would also bring the document for review by the Town of Holland. No motion occurred.

### **AFG 2021:**

Chief Ostreng stated the AFG 2021 was finally coming to an end and the grant should be finished soon.

### **Fundraiser Related Surplus Cooking Equipment:**

The board discussed equipment the fire department no longer intended to use for fundraisers. Chief Ostreng stated it was his intent to give away what he could and recycle the rest. The board voiced their approval for this plan of action.

### **762 Support Vehicle Plan:**

The board tabled this motion until further information could be provided per Chief Ostreng's request.

### **Announcement and Future Agenda Items:**

None.

**Next Regular Meeting:** March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025

### **Adjourn:**

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

Minutes by Travis E. Elam, Secretary