

Holmen Area Fire Department Board

Meeting Minutes – March 25th, 2025

Jeff Herlitzke called the Holmen Area Fire District meeting to order at 6:30 pm on March 25th, 2025 at the Town of Holland Town Hall.

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

Alternates Present: Patrick Barlow (Holmen)

Members Excused:

Also Present: Ryan Ostreng (Fire Chief)

Guests: Captain Mike Lavery

Pledge of Allegiance Recited

Approval of Agenda:

Motion to approve the agenda by Jorstad, second by Elam. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of February Meeting Minutes:

Motion by Jorstad to approve the meeting minutes, second by Herlitzke. Motion carried unanimously.

Resident or Employee Concerns/Comments:

Captain Lavery expressed optimism about the upcoming collective bargaining negotiations, highlighting the department's strong track record of success built on collaboration and mutual understanding.

Financial Review:

Treasurer Jorstad gave the board a brief overview of the February 2025 balance sheet for the department. Jorstad explained that the finances looked typical for this time of the year but noted that fire capital expenditures were at 105.1% of the budget. Chief Ostreng commented on this and explained he believed it was an accounting error regarding purchases made with 2% dues. Chief Ostreng stated he would investigate it and get it taken care of

Herlitzke, questioned the high percent of budget used from the EMS training line item. Chief Ostreng explained that this was due to national registry recertification and that he didn't anticipate more training but noted that the department would take advantage of further training opportunities should they arise.

Jorstad stated the department had used 21.7% of the total operating expenditures for the year.

The board reviewed check detail thoroughly. Hauser questioned a check to DeBauche Truck C Diesel Inc., as well as a check to Reliant Fire Apparatus. Chief Ostreng justified the purchases.

Chief Ostreng notified the board that the department had been granted its FAP grant for a total amount of \$59,761. Chief Ostreng explained that the grant money would be used to purchase new cardiac monitors.

Chief Ostreng notified the board that the department had been awarded \$13, 559.87 for the Wisconsin DNR Forest Fire Protection Grant. Chief Ostreng stated that the grant was a 50% match, and that he had exceeded half that amount by roughly \$400 to purchase new forest firefighting equipment, with the Wisconsin DNR contributing the other half.

Chief Ostreng thanked Jim Westfall for letting the department use his property for training. Chief Ostreng thanked Altra Federal Credit Union for a \$5000 donation towards the purchase of the cardiac monitors. Chief Ostreng thanked the Mayo Foundation for a donation of \$7500. Chief Ostreng thanked Kwik Trip Cares for a \$1000 donation. Chief Ostreng thanked the Holmen Area Foundation for a donation of \$1500. Chief Ostreng stated that the department had received roughly \$15,000 in donations. The board discussed ways to properly and publicly thank everyone who donated to the department.

Fire Administration Report:

Chief Ostreng provided the board with a summary of the calls and activity for February 2025 as well as an updated version of the calls for January. Chief Ostreng stated there was an error in the previous report and there were more calls than previously reported for January. Chief Ostreng updated the board with the specifics of the various fire calls for the past month. Hauser asked if the Chief anticipated a busy grass fire season. Chief Ostreng stated that he did and that the PPE provided by the Wisconsin DNR grant would be held up until the DNR could verify the purchases of the equipment.

Chief Ostreng stated that paid on-call firefighter Jordan Freybler resigned. Chief Ostreng stated that Freybler had served the community for 9 years and 3 months. Chief Ostreng noted the department was down to only 1 paid on-call firefighter now.

Chief Ostreng gave an update on the fleet and noted that tender 1 had a shifting issue but had been sent to DeBauche to be repaired.

Chief Ostreng stated that the firefighters had been fitted for new gear and that the department should expect the new gear in about 6 weeks.

Chief Ostreng updated the board on the department's recent training with electrical vehicle fire training.

Fire Commission Report:

Chief Ostreng gave a brief update regarding the previous fire commission meeting. Chief Ostreng stated that the bulk of the meeting revolved around the 10 candidates that applied for the new position within the department. Chief Ostreng stated that the candidates were narrowed down to 3 and those were presented to the commission along with Chief Ostreng's pick. Chief Ostreng stated the commission approved a conditional offer to one of the candidates.

Command Vehicle Replacement Status:

Chief Ostreng stated that the department received the vehicle February 19th, and that he had already purchased the two radios required for the vehicle's operation and expected to receive those in about 8 weeks. Chief Ostreng stated he is finalizing the final details for a vehicle wrap quote from National Fleet Graphics. Chief Ostreng also stated he would like to get a quote for paint from Holmen Custom C Collision. Chief Ostreng stated that he was refining his requirements for the vehicle's light package and once those were finalized, he would be waiting to receive quotes from 3 different organizations. Chief Ostreng noted it would be a couple months before the vehicle was in service.

Fire Station Study:

Chief Ostreng gave a brief update on the fire station study and stated that Wendel Five Bugles would be presenting to the municipalities to narrow the scope of the project to 2 stations or 1 and then discuss the preliminary station space needs based on available lot space.

Collaborative Fire Investigation Group MOU:

Chief Ostreng gave a summary of the purpose of the collaborative fire investigation group. The board reviewed the Fire Investigation MOU thoroughly. Jorstad noted that Holmen Village Administrator reviewed the document and approved it. Motion by Jorstad for the approval of the Collaborative Fire Investigation Group MOU with the City of Onalaska. Second by Hauser. Motion carried unanimously.

762 Support Vehicle Plan:

Chief Ostreng gave a summary of the vehicle's condition. Chief Ostreng stated the vehicle no longer served a purpose for the department and it was his intent to sell the vehicle via a closed bidding process. Jorstad questioned what the funds from the sale of the vehicle would be used for. Chief Ostreng explained that the funds would be used for capital expenses like the extra equipment for the new command vehicle. The board consensus was to move forward with selling the vehicle. No motion occurred.

Selection of HAFD collective bargaining team:

The selection of collective bargaining team members was postponed until after the Village of Holmen's annual reorganizational meeting to ensure appointees would be active fire board members. No motion occurred.

Closed Session:

No closed session occurred due to postponing the selection of members for the HAFD collective bargaining team.

Announcement and Future Agenda Items:

Herlitzke announced voting for a new board president at the next meeting and how that process works.

Next Regular Meeting: April 15th, 2025

Adjourn:

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

Minutes by Travis E. Elam, Secretary