

Holmen Area Fire Department Board

Meeting Minutes – May 20th, 2025

President Barlow called the Holmen Area Fire District meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. on May 20th, 2025, at the Town of Holland Town Hall.

Members Present: Patrick Barlow (Holmen), Travis Elam (Holmen), Jeff Herlitzke (Holland),

Alternates Present: Bob Stupi (Holland)

Members Excused: Rick Hauser (Holland)

Also Present: Ryan Ostreng (Fire Chief)

Guests: Fire Department Staff

Pledge of Allegiance Recited

Approval of Agenda:

Motion to approve the agenda by Herlitzke. Second by Stupi. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of April Meeting Minutes:

Motion to approve the minutes by Herlitzke. Second by Stupi. Motion carried unanimously.

Resident or Employee Concerns/Comments:

No employee concerns or comments.

Financial Review:

The board reviewed the **Balance Sheet** in detail. No comments or concerns were raised. The board reviewed **Profit s Loss Budget vs. Actual** in detail. Elam raised concerns about the Fire-Capital Expenditures **% of Budget** exceeding the budget which was equal to 122.5%. Chief Ostreng stated that a couple of items needed to be pulled out of that line item and that it was closer to 100% of the line-item budget. Herlitzke questioned the **Holiday Pay** line item which was equal to 51.4% of the budget for the year. Chief Ostreng

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stated he would investigate the budget for that line item. Herlitzke also raised concerns about the **EMS Training** budget which was equal to 72% of the budget for the year. Chief Ostreng stated it was very likely the department would go over budget for the training this year. The last item Herlitzke questioned was the **Fire Testing/Insp** which was equal to 131.5% of the budget for the year. Chief Ostreng stated most of these funds were used to pay for National Registry Testing, which is required. Herlitzke stated only 36.2% of the total budget had been used thus far and stated he was not concerned.

The board reviewed check detail. Elam asked if the check to Motorola Solutions was the second radio for the command vehicle. Chief Ostreng stated this was the case.

The board reviewed the informational memos regarding the light package for the new command vehicle. The board discussed the status of the command vehicle. Chief Ostreng stated the vehicle was being wrapped and could be completed as early as tomorrow. Chief Ostreng reminded the board he was approved for up to \$100,000 to spend on the command vehicle.

Chief Ostreng presented the board with a quote for 4 new mattress box/spring sets and 2 frames from King Furniture for a total of \$3,249. Herlitzke motioned to approve the purchase of four mattress/box spring sets and two frames not to exceed \$3,500. Second by Elam. Motion carried unanimously.

Chief Ostreng stated that the department had recently received some donations toward the purchase of a new cardiac monitor. HD Tavern donated \$845, Carol and Thomas Hale donated \$50, and Holmen Youth Volleyball donated \$6,679 through a spike-a-thon.

Fire Administration Report:

The board reviewed the **Calls by Month** in detail. Chief Ostreng updated the board on noteworthy fire in the past month. There were no additional comments or concerns on incidents or activity.

Chief Ostreng stated that the department is an official partner of the Red Cross in installing smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors. Herlitzke asked for clarity on the installation process. Chief Ostreng stated the department could install them, however they are only battery operated, and no department staff would be modifying electrical, and anything else would be forwarded to the Red Cross for follow up.

Chief Ostreng stated that the department would be starting a new full-time firefighter, Emmaline Zabel.

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Chief Ostreng stated the fire department roof was leaking extensively again, to the point the entire bottom of the wall was damaged. Chief Ostreng stated he was ripping up soaked carpet in his office, and that he anticipated there was mold in the walls. Chief Ostreng stated the department was running multiple dehumidifiers to attempt to deal with the issue. Elam questioned how many times the department had paid a professional to fix the roof leak, and at what point would those business be held liable for faulty work. Chief Ostreng stated he wasn't entirely sure where the leak was coming from in his office. Herlitzke noted the previous leak had damaged the captain's office. Fire department staff noted that two different companies had come out 7 or 8 times to attempt to fix the leaks. Herlitzke raised concerns about black mold developing causing health issues and the new fire station not being available for a few years. Fire department staff stated that roughly 10 years ago a new roof was recommended to be installed. The board directed Chief Ostreng to get quotes on a new roof.

Fire Commission Report:

Nothing was discussed.

Fire Station Study:

Chief Ostreng informed the board that he and the department had reviewed two concepts, scheduled a tour for the La Cross Fire Department Station #4 May 22nd, and had additional tours scheduled for May 29th. Chief Ostreng stated the station tours ended up being later than anticipated and that the final report would likely be available in July, rather than June. Chief Ostreng questioned if the final report should be open to the public or if that should wait. The board advised waiting until a final concept was agreed upon by both communities.

Review Draft Apparatus Replacement Plan:

The board reviewed the draft apparatus replacement plan. Chief Ostreng explained the plan in detail and highlighted the differences in miles and age for each type of vehicle. Chief Ostreng stated he was still in the process of collecting information and that it was his intent to create a matrix that would be easier to read. Stupi questioned if the plan would eventually consider the hours of service for vehicles. Stupi raised concerns about stationary vehicle use at scenes not being properly tracked. Chief Ostreng stated that the department wasn't ready to track the vehicles in that level of detail and that would be something the department would do someday if they had a dedicated mechanic. Elam

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asked if there was a way to pull utilization statistics from the dispatch data used to track calls so data wouldn't have to be collected manually. Chief Ostreng stated this wasn't currently possible and that the easiest thing to do to start was to read the odometers manually.

Review of Fire Chief Annual Evaluation Options:

The board gave Barlow context on the purpose of the sample evaluations as well as the intent of the board to create a standardized review process for evaluating the Chief of the fire department. Chief Ostreng stated that any of the samples would be a great place to start. Chief Ostreng also stated that these types of evaluations were not received well by the fire service at his previous employment in Rochester MN. However, the Chief stated he was currently researching a formal review process internally for the department. Stupi questioned if it would make sense to reach out to the City of Onalaska for examples of their current review process. Individual board members gave their experiences with their previous review processes. Barlow suggested going back and using the most recent job descriptions as review criteria as well. Elam suggested keeping the review process as simple as possible and stated that it would naturally evolve over time.

Announcement and Future Agenda Items:

Herlitzke stated that Hauser might be out for a couple of months.

Next Regular Meeting: June 17th, 2025

Adjourn:

Motion to adjourn at 7:37 p.m. by Herlitzke. Second by Stupi. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes by Travis E. Elam, Secretary