

DRAFT MINUTES

Subject To Change Before Approval By The Holmen Area Fire Department Board

Holmen Area Fire Department Board

Meeting Minutes – December 16th, 2025

1. Call to Order

Chair Barlow called the Holmen Area Fire District meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. on December 16th, 2025, at the Town of Holland Town Hall.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Roll Call

Present: Rick Hauser, Jeff Herlitzke. Patrick Barlow, Travis Elam, Doug Jorstad (Alternate)

Absent: None

Guests: Chief Ostreng

Virtual: Laura Eysnogle

4. Consideration of Agenda Order

Motion by Herlitzke to move agenda item 10 to after Resident or Employee concerns to accommodate virtual guest Laura Eysnogle. Second, by Hauser. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Motion by Herlitzke to approve the November minutes with minor typo changes specified by Chief Ostreng. Second, by Hauser. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Resident or Employee Concerns/Comments

There were no resident or employee comments or concerns.

10. Presentation about next steps for future Holmen Area Fire Department fire station

Eysnogle provided a brief update on the current state of the Holmen Area Fire Department design plan. She reviewed the original plan and outlined changes made to reduce costs by approximately \$2 million. Eysnogle explained what a shovel-ready plan would consist of and described the phases of the design process. She stated that the department was currently in Phase 1 and would need to complete three additional phases before the plan could be considered shovel-ready. Eysnogle stated that the costs to continue through the next 3 phases to get to a shovel-ready plan would cost the department about \$737,000.

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Eysnogle reviewed potential funding strategies, including referendums, USDA loans and grants, and Community Development Block Grants. She warned that USDA funding could result in substantial delays and unknown obstacles and noted that most departments do not qualify for Community Development Block Grants. Barlow mentioned the possibility of funding the new station with general obligation bonds. The board discussed all the funding options in detail.

Barlow provided mill rate increase estimates based on funding with general obligation bonds. He stated he worked with Village Administrator Heinig as well as Village Finance Director Hornberg to come up with the estimates. The board reviewed the estimates in detail.

The board discussed what to do with the current station after building a new station.

Members of the Town of Holland expressed concerns regarding both the cost of a new fire station and the pace at which the board was moving forward. They also raised concerns about the impact of potential tax increases on constituents and stated they wanted to explore additional options before making a final decision.

Elam stated the board should continue to seriously consider purchasing land for a new fire station, noting that suitable land currently for sale would be ideal for the project. The board then discussed possible locations of the available properties

7. Financial Review (Treasurer)

- a) The board reviewed the 2025 balance sheet.
- b) The board reviewed Profit and Lost – budget versus actual. Herlitzke noted the department had used 93.9% of the budget.
- c) 2% dues detail was not provided for review.
- d) The board reviewed check detail. No specific checks were questioned.
- e) The board reviewed the invoices and quotes in detail.
 - i) **Motion by Herlitzke to approve payment of Invoice PS-INV120767 from ImageTrend in the amount of \$10,473.75. Second, by Elam. Motion carried unanimously.**
- f) Chief Ostreng explained that the department had received the 2026 FAP Grant for a total amount of \$59,847.96 and that it was his intention to use the funds to purchase a new cardiac monitor for use on Engine 1.
- g) Chief Ostreng stated that he and his wife donated money for holiday gatherings, that a substantial number of people and organizations had dropped off treats, and that the department would be receiving a \$5,000 charitable gift.

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8. Fire Administration Report (Chief Ostreng)

- a) The board reviewed the calls for November. Chief Ostreng noted that the department was on track for a record number of calls by the end of the month. Chief Ostreng also updated the board on noteworthy fires for the month. Barlow requested an update on the late dispatching issue. Chief Ostreng stated that nothing had changed at the county level, but the department continued working with the Village of Holmen Police Department to improve dispatch timeliness. Elam stated that he spoke with County Administrator Klekamp about the issue as well.
- b) Chief Ostreng gave an update on staffing and personnel updates. Chief Ostreng noted a firefighter was injured on duty, and another was finishing up rehabbing an injury.
- c) Chief Ostreng gave an update on the fleet and noted that Boat 1 was out of commission due to a leak, Rescue 1 should finally have its shaking/wheel issue resolved, and Engine 1 went back into the shop for a coolant leak.
- d) Chief Ostreng gave an update on the facility and stated that the new mini split unit was installed and that fire department staff were comfortable.
- e) Chief Ostreng noted the county's new CAD system went live on the 9th and that he was working with a representative from Image Trend.

G. Update on fire department collaboration workgroup

Chief Ostreng provided a brief update on the recent meeting, noting the group was seeking a timeline and cost estimate for a plan outlining potential collaboration between the Village of Holmen and the City of Onalaska to support the four municipalities. Chief Ostreng stated he was hoping to receive a quote by January 2, 2026.

11. Consideration of new fire pumper specification process

Chief Ostreng gave a brief overview of the Option List provided by Pierce. Chief Ostreng stated that it was his intention to get a new engine that was similar in specification to Engine 2. Board members noted there was a lot of detail on the Option List. Chief Ostreng stated the lead time on a new engine was currently 46 months. Chief Ostreng requested approval to move forward on communication with Pierce to get a more formal quote. Town of Holland members stated they needed to bring the documents to their full board to consider financially before moving forward. Chief Ostreng noted that Engine 2 is a 2014 model.

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12. Consideration of Training Captain job description

Chief Ostreng gave the board a brief overview of the Training Fire Captain position, and the board reviewed the Fire Captain of Training Job Description in detail. Hauser asked if any additional education was required for the new captain position. Chief Ostreng stated that some additional education was preferred but not required. Barlow reiterated that it was the board's duty to define and approve the position, but it was the fire commission's duty to approve hire the position. **Motion by Hauser to accept the job description as written. Second, by Elam. Motion carried unanimously.**

13. Consideration of fire chief evaluation process input

The board discussed the sample evaluation document and discussed it in detail. The board consensus was that the evaluation document should be used for the growth of the fire chief and for the growth of the department. Herlitzke stated that the evaluation should be started mid-year so that the fire chief has time to budget properly for goal set in the evaluation document. The consensus by the board was to use the document for the first fire chief evaluation and then make changes necessary after going through the process.

14. Closed Session

Motion to convene into closed session pursuant to Wis. Stats. §19.85(1)(c) by Herlitzke. Second, by Elam. Motion carried unanimously.

Closed Session Discussion Topics:

Considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility. To Wit:

- a. 2026 Fire Chief compensation review

15. Reconvene in Open Session

Motion by Herlitzke to reconvene into open session. Second, by Elam. Motion carried unanimously.

16. Reservation of right for action and/or recommendation on Closed Session item(s)

Motion by Hauser to award the fire chief a 3% raise to salary, mirroring the cost-of-living adjustment awarded to the union fire fighters for 2026. Second, by Elam. Motion carried unanimously.

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17. Announcements and Future Agenda Items

Barlow noted the fire chief evaluation and new fire engine as future agenda item.

18. Next Regular Meeting

Tentatively scheduled for January 20th, 2026.

1G. Adjourn

Motion by Herlitzke to adjourn. Second, by Elam. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Minutes by Travis E. Elam, Secretary

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