

DRAFT MINUTES

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

Holmen Area Fire Department Board

Meeting Minutes – July 27th, 2026

1. Call to Order

President Barlow called the Holmen Area Fire Department Board meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. 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

Absent: None

Guests: Chief Ostreng, Fire Department staff

4. Consideration of Agenda Order

Herlitzke motioned to approve the agenda order. Second, by Hauser. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Herlitzke motioned to approve the meeting minutes with a correction to a typo relating to First American Roofing. Second, by Barlow. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Resident or Employee Concerns/Comments

Fire department staff stated they were happy to be back into the station after living in the apartments near the station while the mold issue was mitigated.

7. Financial Review (Treasurer)

- a. Current balance sheet
 - a. There were no questions or concerns raised by the Board.
- b. Current profit and loss - budget versus actual
 - a. Herlitzke noted the department was on track regarding the budget and had used 55.8% of the budget.
- c. Check detail
 - a. The Board questioned payments to Stetter electric. Chief Ostreng noted that there was a power surge that seemed to cause some issues with electrical in the building, specifically regarding the generator and some lighting. In addition to the fixes, Stetter relocated some outlets and some low voltage wiring.
- d. Approval of quotes and invoices

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- a. There were no quotes or invoices for the Board to review.
- e. Special topics
 - a. Chief Ostreng explained that he applied for the WI DNR Forest Fire Protection Grant and that he was requesting approval from the Board to continue. Specifically, he applied for a backpack blower for forest fire fighting and VHF pagers for firefighters. Herlitzke moved to approve the WI DNR Forest Fire Protection Grant application as presented. Second, by Elam. Motion carried unanimously.
- f. Donations
 - a. No donations were presented to the Board.

8. Fire Administration Report (Chief Ostreng)

- a. June 2026 incident/activity report
 - a. The Board reviewed the June 2026 incident/activity report. Chief Ostreng stated that the department responded to 110 calls in June and had responded to 715 calls year-to-date. June's call volume was one call below the previous month. Chief Ostreng noted that the call volume was mostly medical calls per usual. Chief Ostreng highlighted notable calls for the month.
 - b. Board members questioned the calls categorized as Injury/Trauma. Fire department staff noted that those were mostly falls and that the department was called for lift assists involving injuries.
- b. Staffing/personnel updates
 - a. No updates were provided.
- c. Fleet update
 - a. No updates were provided.
- d. Facility update
 - a. Chief Ostreng deferred this discussion to later in the agenda.
- e. General
 - a. No updates were provided.

G. Fire commission report

No Fire Commission report was provided because the Fire Commission did not meet.

10. Update on Fire Department collaboration workgroup

Chief Ostreng noted that the work group had completed a variety of milestones for collaboration, including the kickoff meeting, stakeholder interviews, and the findings meeting. The Board questioned if all parties were still interested in continuing the collaboration. Chief Ostreng stated he believed all parties were still interested and that another meeting was scheduled for September 2026.

11. Update on new fire station project

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Village of Holmen members requested an update from the Town of Holland board members following their town meetings with residents.

Town of Holland members explained that feedback received during their meetings and through mailers indicated general agreement that there was a need for a new fire station. Town of Holland members noted that they received a lot of feedback from residents regarding a two-station scenario instead of a single larger station. The justification for the two-station scenario was to spread the tax burden over multiple years. Town of Holland members also explained that residents were concerned about the proposed 15-million-dollar project and wanted to see it closer to 10 million with a more equitable split.

Town of Holland members stated the discussion on the fire station project had reached an impasse due to the cost of the project and the soon-to-expire boundary agreement between the Village of Holmen and the Town of Holland.

Village of Holmen members questioned the sample size of the feedback received from Town of Holland residents and asked if that was truly representative of what the people of the Town of Holland thought.

Town of Holland members reiterated that the people of the Town of Holland fundamentally disagreed with the current Holmen Area Fire District contract and the 50-50 split that occurred due to the Town of Onalaska pulling out of the contract when they left the fire district.

The Board discussed the current proposed station and a two-station scenario. Chief Ostreng noted that the bulk of the new proposed station square footage was due to planning for future personnel growth and that the majority of the space for the trucks and equipment remained the same. Chief Ostreng noted that he never received direction from the Board to pursue a two-station scenario.

Village of Holmen members explained that the village already incurred additional costs for the purchase of the land for the new fire station in addition to the future costs to run utilities to the building during its development. Town of Holland members disagreed.

Town of Holland members stated that they wanted to revisit the capital expenditures contract. The Board discussed this at great length and Village of Holmen members noted that if the contract was revisited and a 70-30 split was agreed upon there would be no reason to have the Fire Board since the Village of Holmen would have the majority stake and send the Town of Holland a bill for services instead.

Town of Holland members stated that contracting for fire services from the Village of Holmen remained an option.

Town of Holland members stated they reached out to Town of Onalaska regarding rejoining the Fire District and that the current board stated they had no intent to rejoin.

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Chief Ostreng stated that in order for him to move the project forward in any way both municipalities needed to come up with a hard number that he could bring back to Wendel Five Bugles.

12. Update on existing fire station mold mitigation activities

Chief Ostreng notified the Board that they found a leak in the building but that it was due to AC condensation and that it was resolved right away. Chief Ostreng stated that the project was mostly complete. Approximately \$54,099.16 in expenses had been recorded, with approximately \$13,000 in additional expenses incurred but not yet reflected. The final project cost was not yet available but was expected to be close to the approved budget.

13. Consideration of new fire pumper specifications

Chief Ostreng presented the final new fire pumper specifications for the Board's consideration. Village of Holmen members noted that the village was in support of moving forward with the purchase of the new fire pumper and was flexible on all payment options.

Town of Holland members questioned paying for the truck upfront given the approximately four-year delivery lead time. Chief Ostreng noted that cost savings were available by purchasing the truck in advance by locking in pricing for the truck.

Town of Holland representatives stated that they would go back to their board to discuss financing options for the truck. No action was taken by the Board.

14. Closed Session

Herlitzke motioned to convene into closed session pursuant to Wis. Stats. §19.85(1)(c) considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility. To Wit: 2026 Fire Chief evaluation process. Second, by Elam. Motion carried unanimously.

15. Reconvene in Open Session

Hauser motioned to reconvene in open session. Second, by Barlow. Motion carried unanimously. Board reconvened in open session at 9:08 p.m.

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

No action was taken on closed session items.

17. Announcement and Future Agenda Items

There were no announcements or future agenda items.

18. Next Regular Meeting

The next regular meeting was tentatively scheduled for August 18, 2026. The Board discussed potentially moving the meeting to August 17, 2026.

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1G. Adjourn

Hauser motioned to adjourn. Second, by Herlitzke. Motioned carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Minutes by Travis E. Elam, Secretary

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