

**MINUTES**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Bauman called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Excelsior Fire District (EFD) Boardmembers: Chair Bauman; Boardmembers Skrede, and Viesturs; EFD Chief DuCharme; Firefighter/Trustee Duncan

Also present: Deephaven: Administrator Young; Tonka Bay: Administrator Irvine

Absent: Boardmembers Love and Saunders

**2. AGENDA APPROVAL**

Chair Bauman reviewed the Agenda for the meeting.

**Viesturs moved, Skrede seconded, approving the EFD Board Meeting Agenda, as presented. Motion passed 3/0.**

**3. MINUTES – MEETING OF: MAY 25, 2005**

**Viesturs moved, Skrede seconded, to continue the approval of the May 25, 2005 Minutes to the next Board meeting. Motion passed 3/0.**

**4. REPORT AGENDA**

**A. Monthly District Review – May, 2005**

Chief DuCharme said that the department responded to 50 emergency calls during the month of May, for a total of 264 calls for the year. It is getting close to the end of the first half of the year, so firefighters are being reminded to watch their call percentages. There are currently four firefighters who are serving in the military.

Skrede thanked the Excelsior Fire District for all the work they did during the recent storm. Their assistance was very helpful to the public work crews in all of the member cities.

**B. Report of Operating Committee – June 15, 2005**

Administrator Irvine reported on matters considered and actions taken at the Operating Committee Meeting of June 15, 2005 (as detailed in the minutes of that meeting).

The main topic of discussion was the draft 2006 budget. The administrators voiced concern with the 8.68% increase. They understand the Capital Equipment Budget was already approved. A number of changes were suggested by the administrators to help reduce the budget. The Chief was asked to add a

**4. REPORT AGENDA**

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**B. Report of Operating Committee – June 15, 2005 - (Continued)**

column with the actual expenses for 2004 and the year-to-date expenses for 2005. The Operating Committee made a motion to have the Excelsior Fire District Board member from each city present the budget to their respective city council in July.

Viesturs said that she noticed there was some discussion with regard to having the Board discuss response time goals. She asked if the Board should schedule a work session to discuss this, or put this on a future agenda. Chair Bauman said that an update regarding response times is on the agenda this evening, Item 6(f), but that agenda item was mainly informational. It would be helpful to have this as a discussion on a future work session agenda.

Skrede said that he realized that the draft budget that the Board had before them this evening does not include the changes discussed at the Operating Committee meeting. He asked if there would be an updated version to present to their respective councils. Chief DuCharme apologized for not having the updated version for this evening's meeting. Most of the changes have been incorporated, and an updated budget will be provided to the Board members for their respective council meetings.

**Skrede moved, Viesturs seconded, approving the reports and minutes, as presented. Motion passed 3/0.**

**5. MATTERS FROM THE FLOOR**

None

**6. FIRE CHIEF REPORT**

**A. General Report**

Chief DuCharme said that Deputy Chief George, District Chief Heiland, and Captain Berglund were unable to attend this evening. He reported that three of the firefighters from Station #1 are on leave. Firefighter Mattox will be on personal leave beginning June 20. He will be leaving to work as a civilian Firefighter on US Military Bases in Iraq. All apparatus is operational. The County Road 19 construction is going well. He is working closely with Shorewood Public Works Director, Larry Brown, on the closures and detours. A total of 15 firefighters have signed up for the new HazMat Trailer Team. The firefighters will take part in a live burn starting June 23, 2005. Live burns are a huge advantage for the firefighters, because they are required to have two hours of hot burn drills per year. If they didn't have live burns, it could cost the Department from \$500 to \$1,000 to go elsewhere for training. The Excelsior Fire Relief Association Dance will be held on Friday, July 15, 2005.

DuCharme said that John "Skip" Sweeney will be officially retiring as of July 13, 2005. He will retire after giving 55 ½ years of service to the community.

**B. Operating – Fire Chief for the Deputy Chief**

Deputy Chief George was unable to attend the meeting, so Chief DuCharme provided this information under the General Report.

**6. FIRE CHIEF REPORT**

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### **C. East, West, Navarre**

District Chief Heiland was unable to attend the meeting, so Chief DuCharme provided this information under the General Report.

### **D. Fire Prevention**

Chief DuCharme said that they will include monthly reports so the Board will be able to see what the Fire Marshals are doing. Everything is going well, and the Fire Marshals are documenting accurate information that they will be able to use in emergency situations. They will easily surpass 300 inspections this year, which was the goal that was originally established.

Skrede asked if when the Fire Marshals go through the commercial block in Deephaven, do they explain that they do not have water. Chief DuCharme said yes, that they have explained that.

Skrede asked if they are able to use the hydrants that are there, even though they belong to the City of Minnetonka. Chief DuCharme said that a lot of those businesses are also hooked up to the Minnetonka water system, and a number of the businesses are also are sprinkled.

Chair Bauman said that when Chief DuCharme had recommended three part-time versus one full-time Fire Marshal, the Board was quite convinced. It looks to him, based on what Chief DuCharme has reported, that the three part-time Fire Marshals have completed more than what one Fire Marshal would have done. Chief DuCharme said yes. The Fire Marshals have had good success completing the inspections and have opened good communications with the businesses.

### **E. Trustee Report**

Trustee Duncan said that he had nothing to report.

### **F. Response Update and Clarification**

Chief DuCharme said that he had met with Deputy Chief George, and they have four questions that they thought the Board should help answer at some point to help guide them in the strategy of how the Excelsior Fire District will run operationally. They would suggest that the Board either hold a work session, or establish a task force group to study this. The task force could include members from the Board and Operating Committee. The task force could then look at the questions that the Operating Committee identified at their June 15, 2005 meeting.

Chief DuCharme summarized the questions for the Board. Does the Board want the District to have a formal standard for response time, or should it be an average? Should the same response time be the same for all areas? Would it help if they looked at historical data? The District is eager to help the Board come to a decision, but the Board has to give them some parameters.

Viesturs said that she likes the idea of a subcommittee more than a work session. The subcommittee could be made up with a couple of members from the Board and Operating Committee, the Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief, and possibly two firefighters.

## **6. FIRE CHIEF REPORT**

### **F. Response Update and Clarification - (Continued)**

Skrede said that he went through the minutes of the Deephaven Council meetings back to year 2000.

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There was a presentation by the Fire Chief to the Council where he discussed response times being better than they were and that there were contingency plans if these were not met. The Deephaven Council was led to believe that with a two station approach, response times would decrease. That has been lost in the dialogue. This has been something they've wanted to track, but going back to 1985 or 1995 might be too far back. The District is probably getting an "A" in 85% of the areas within the District. If you adopt a standard, and then do not meet that standard, there is usually a consequence. He thinks it would be more beneficial to find a goal versus adopt a standard. The impression he got from the feedback is that there might be a punishment phase. He looks at this as a project, much like establishing a mission statement. If you don't meet that goal, you just work harder.

Chair Bauman said that he supports a subcommittee. He would also be interested in serving on that subcommittee. This is one of the more important issues to be looked at and addressed. This issue is being discussed in the communities and in the press. It is critical that they move forward with this process. He likes having the Operating Committee represented on the subcommittee.

Skrede said he would like to have that subcommittee be somewhat fluid. It is important to have the attendance rather than having the same people attend all the time. This is a good opportunity to roll up our sleeves and fix the problem. Rather than risk not having enough representatives in attendance, he would prefer to have whoever can attend be at the meetings.

Chair Bauman said they could establish the membership, and then allow others to attend if they want to. So that all cities can be represented, it might be appropriate to have Operating Committee members serve from the cities that do not have a Board member represented. Then they could have Chief DuCharme determine who from his staff should serve on the subcommittee. The first meeting the subcommittee could identify what information is needed.

Skrede said that he would be happy to begin by answering the questions that the Operating Committee presented. He would suggest that Chief DuCharme chair the meetings. If three or more Board members are going to be present, they will also need to post the meeting at least three days in advance of the meeting.

Viesturs said that she can see the subcommittee be more fluid than structured. It is important to have alternates so there is enough critical mass in order to get to an end result. She also agrees that it would be good to have a mix of Operating Committee members and Board members, so all cities can be represented.

Viesturs said that she would hate to have someone excluded from this group. She said that Administrator Young is incredibly knowledgeable about this issue, so she would hate to have him excluded.

**6. FIRE CHIEF REPORT**

**F. Response Update and Clarification - (Continued)**

**Skrede moved, Viesturs seconded, to establish a subcommittee to analyze and come up with a recommendation on response time and goals that were discussed to date. The membership of the subcommittee will consist of Chief DuCharme, Excelsior Fire District membership, members of the Board, members of the Operating Committee, and interested citizens. A majority would not be needed to convene, and the meetings would be a little more formal than a work session. The subcommittee will evaluate this issue, and when decisions and ideas are determined, the subcommittee can present these to the Board in pieces or as a full recommendation.**

Viesturs said that the Chief should be directed to go out to the firefighters and/or public and pull that subcommittee together as quickly as possible. She questioned whether they should appoint Board members to serve on this subcommittee this evening or wait until their next Board meeting.

Skrede said that if they called a meeting by next Wednesday, they could find out if there were enough people to attend. If the Chief was unable to attend, he could appoint an Acting Chair in his absence.

Chief DuCharme said that he agreed that it was important to begin as soon as possible.

Chair Bauman said that he would hope that this subcommittee could meet at least twice before the next Board meeting. Viesturs suggested that it would be up to the Chief to get this organized.

Firefighter/Trustee Duncan asked how they will deal with the notification requirements. Viesturs said that the Chief will need to get notice to the cities at least three days in advance, noting that there might be a quorum of the Board present.

Skrede said that he can also have this put on the front page of Deephaven's website within 24 hours. Viesturs said that staff can also get this posted on Excelsior's website. Chair Bauman said that Tonka Bay can also put the notification on their website.

Viesturs asked if there is a restriction with regard to there being a quorum of the Board in attendance. Administrator Irvine said that the Board members could discuss the issues, but they could not vote on anything.

**Viesturs said that she would add a friendly amendment that the meetings would be posted at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting, and that each of the cities would also post a notice of the meetings on their website. Skrede agreed to the friendly amendment.**

**The vote on the motion, as amended, was 3/0.**

**G. FY 2006 Budget**

Chief DuCharme said that the original budget that was presented to the Operating Committee had an increase of 8.68%. After making the changes that the Operating Committee suggested, the overall increase was 6.62%. The increase in the Capital Equipment Plan was previously approved by the Board

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### G. FY 2006 Budget - (Continued)

and member city councils. The debt service, or lease payments on the buildings, are sent via the Shorewood EDA and bond documents. The overall payroll increase is 3%, and the proposed utility costs are based on the past year history. The increase in professional services illustrates the past history of legal costs. The firefighter salaries are estimated with the Orono service contract in account. No Orono revenue has been used to offset any part of the proposed budget.

Viesturs said Chief DuCharme mentioned that the payroll increase was 3%, but it actually shows an increase higher than that. Is it because of the increase in the number of firefighters that it shows a 21% increase. Chief DuCharme said that the salary for the firefighters is proposed to increase from \$8.75 to \$9.00 per hour. In doing the budget he is projecting more firefighters per call and more calls. Last year they had 807 calls. They are moving forward to selective station calls. The east and west will handle medical and fire alarms.

Skrede said that he believes it would be better if they broke out training from performance time. It is difficult to try and track \$30,000 in training time under firefighter salaries. There is a large number of probationary firefighter's who will require a large amount of training.

Viesturs said that the detail and numbers should track better. He should show the firefighters's and part-time employees on the itemization so they know these two are added. She also agrees that it would be a better representation if the training is separated out.

Skrede asked Chief DuCharme if he would also separate the training from the firefighter salaries for 2004 Actual. Chief DuCharme said that he will carry that change all the way through all of the years on the budget data.

Viesturs asked about the PERA, FICA, and health insurance deductions. Chief DuCharme said that they went from one full-time Fire Marshal to three part-time Fire Marshals, so they have eliminated some of the deductions for that position. One of the original budgets that was discussed with the Operating Committee was having a full-time administrative person. This position is not currently in the proposed budget. Viesturs had sent him some information on possible grant money that may be available for hiring full-time firefighters, which he will be looking into. If they do decide to put a full-time administrative person in place, that person would also be required to respond to calls.

Skrede said that the ability to have only a 6 ½% increase is good. However, since last year in 2004, they have spent nearly ½ million dollars. That does not truly reflect what the actual expenses are. He asked Chief DuCharme if there is anything he can think of that might be budgeted too low for 2005. Chief Ducharme said they have been operating a little below the monthly benchmark. The next payroll cycle is coming up next week, and he'll have a better idea at that time. It is difficult to budget firefighter salaries. He agrees that it would be helpful to breakout the training from the firefighter salaries. There have also been more firefighters responding to calls. When the 2006 budget was put together, they tried to estimate the salaries closer to what they have been.

Viesturs said it is helpful for her to have the percentage differential between the 2004 Budget and 2004 Actual.

## 6. FIRE CHIEF REPORT

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### **G. FY 2006 Budget - (Continued)**

Skrede requested that Chief DuCharme transmit the budget to the Board electronically as spreadsheet versus a .PDF file.

Viesturs said that she noticed that office supplies increased 52%. What is the rationale for the large increase? Chief Ducharme said that they looked at what they were actually using. The Excelsior Fire District experienced an increase in office supplies when they broke away from the City of Excelsior. Realistically, the Excelsior Fire District was probably using the same amount of supplies previously, but was not aware that they were because the supplies were coming from Excelsior.

Chair Bauman asked why the insurance amount fluctuated so much. Chief DuCharme said that is because they are now paying property insurance for their portion of the building. The amount is an estimate from their fiscal agent. They will not know what the exact premium for next year will be until toward the end of the year.

Skrede said that they had discussed having a web page. In his opinion, the website could be developed and in service for a full year for about \$350. Chief Ducharme said that the 2006 budget includes the expenditures for a web page. The domain name will be: excelsiorfire.org. They have a flash page up and running, but they do not have a webmaster yet. Skrede said that he can probably assist him with that.

Viesturs said that she recently attended a meeting of the Western Area Fire Training Association (WAFTA). Unfortunately, she missed the portion of the meeting on the financial aspect. WAFTA has received \$250,000 in grant money. She notice that this line item was left blank in the budget. Was that because they did not know how much to budget? Skrede said that it was left blank because the Excelsior Fire District is not a member of WAFTA. The Excelsior Fire Department was. Chief Ducharme said that the Board Chair has determined that the Excelsior Fire District is not a member of WAFTA.

Skrede said that staff has done a good job on the budget. He would still like to have additional data on the fund balances. There is still one question that is not answered with regard to the fund balance. The discussion last year with the Auditor lead them to the fact that they did not have to have a large fund balance in reserve. To require that there be a 37% fund balance is an excessive use of reserves as far as he is concerned.

Chief Ducharme said that the final draft budget will be available at the July meeting. The final piece that needs to be incorporated pertains to the buildings, and they need that information from the Shorewood EDA. The Excelsior Fire District also received a refund of approximately \$54,000 in FICA payments from the Internal Revenue Service. They would also be reimbursed for approximately \$179,000 from the EDA for items that they purchased for the building. Skrede asked if the money that the Shorewood EDA owes the Excelsior Fire District goes into the operating budget. Chief DuCharme said yes.

Viesturs asked for the detail on the 12% increase for part-time employees. Chief Ducharme said that it incorporates a 3% increase in salary (\$12.00 to \$15.00) and an increase in the number of hours to 520.

Viesturs asked if the workers compensation premiums increased. Chief DuCharme said this is an estimate. He said that there is very little change for not having a full-time Fire Marshal. The premium is based on the number of firefighters.

## **6. FIRE CHIEF REPORT**

### **G. FY 2006 Budget - (Continued)**

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Chair Bauman said that the Board members and city administrators will present the proposed budget to their respective city councils to review and comment. After the budget is presented to the city councils, he would like to see the budget go back before the Operating Committee. Then, when the Board meets in July, they will decide on the final budget. The final budget will then be presented to the individual cities to approve in August.

Skrede said he has a difference of opinion with regard to the role of the Operating Committee. In his opinion, if the Board members take the budget to their respective city councils, the Board should work through any changes that are suggested by the city councils. The Board already has input from the Operating Committee. The policy decisions are made at the Board level. Something might get missed if this goes to the city councils, then to the Operating Committee, and then back to the Board. Chair Bauman said that he is not quite as concerned as he is, but he would be alright with whatever process the Board wants to follow.

Viesturs said that if this goes before the Operating Committee, it would ensure that the spreadsheet has all the necessary information that was requested. She would like the Chief to have another opportunity to make sure everything is included.

Skrede said that when the Capital Equipment Fund got to the Board, there were three different versions. The Operating Committee had reviewed it, and they thought they had the final version. Administrator Young asked for clarification. He asked the Chair if he was suggesting that the Operating Committee look at the budget after the changes this evening, or after the cities make their suggestions and/or changes. Chair Bauman said both. He wants to make sure the comments tonight and from the city councils are addressed. He was looking at having another step to insure that the information the Board gets has been sifted through and is correct.

Chief DuCharme said that he can incorporate the information that he has received this evening. Then he will e-mail the updated version to both the Operating Committee and Board members, and include a date that he would need to receive comments. Skrede said that the only change the Board made this evening was to separate salaries from training.

Administrator Irvine said that the Operating Committee meets on July 13, 2005. All of the cities will not have met and provided their comments prior to that date, so the Chief's suggestion on distributing the budget via e-mail is probably best. Administrator Young said that the Operating Committee members can work directly with Chief DuCharme on this. Viesturs said that based on the city council meeting dates, she would also recommend they work through DuCharme.

### **7. OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **A. Mission Statement**

**Viesturs moved, Skrede seconded, to continue this agenda item to the Board's next regularly-scheduled meeting. Motion passed 3/0.**

### **7. OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **B. Special Unit of Government Discussion — Paul Skrede and Woody Love**

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**Viesturs moved, Skrede seconded, to continue this agenda item to the Board's next regularly-scheduled meeting. Motion passed 3/0.**

**C. Ongoing Items**

**Flag Pole at East Station (Paul Skrede)**

Skrede requested that his name be removed from this item, because Chief DuCharme was handling this item.

**Monument Signage at East Station (Paul Skrede)**

Skrede requested that his name be removed from this item also, because Chief DuCharme's was handling this item.

**Viesturs moved, Skrede seconded, to continue this agenda item to the Board's next regularly-scheduled meeting. Motion passed 3/0.**

**C. Role of Governing Board and Operating Committee**

**Viesturs moved, Skrede seconded, to continue this agenda item to the Board's next regularly-scheduled meeting. Motion passed 3/0.**

**D. New Business**

Skrede said that it was brought to his attention that some residents homeowners insurance policies have increased substantially lately. Some residents have asked whether they were getting credit for living within ½ mile from the fire station. Chief DuCharme said that he answers between 10 to 12 calls per week from insurance companies on how close the fire station is, where the hydrants are located, how much water the department carries, etc. Insurance underwriters call when they are reviewing a current policy or writing a new policy. Earlier this year he met with an ISO member. ISO does a lot of background information for insurance underwriters. However, not all insurance companies use ISO. He did a walk through with the ISO member and updated him on the stations, hydrants, etc. Chief DuCharme has been proactive with the ISO, but in a lot of cases that information is slow in filtering to the insurance companies.

Skrede asked if he tells his insurance agent that they have a new fire station within so many miles from his house, does the underwriter come out to verify? Chair Bauman asked how they let homeowners know that they may get break in their insurance premiums. Chief DuCharme said that the underwriters don't always come out, but they do call him to verify.

Skrede asked if it is possible to put together a memo with this information so the residents can provide this information to their insurance agent. Chief DuCharme said that Station #2 still has to go through an official ISO inspection, and that will happen within the next couple of months.

**7. OTHER BUSINESS**

**D. New Business**

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Viesturs said that she noticed when she drove past the Minnetonka Fire Department that it looked like they had a burned car at the station. She asked if residents can donate vehicles for training purposes. Chief DuCharme said that is a possibility, but that the Excelsior Fire District does not normally take donated vehicles. The Excelsior Fire District has a working relationship with a towing agency who brings cars in and out for them to use for training purposes.

**8. NEXT MEETING(S):**

**A. Board Meeting: July 27, 2005**

Viesturs said she may have a conflict for that evening, but the City's alternate can attend.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

**Viesturs moved, Skrede seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m. Motion passed 3./0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cheri Johnson  
Recording Secretary