

**Excelsior Fire District
Operating Committee Meeting Minutes
January 12, 2005**

1. Call to Order:

City Administrator Dana Young called the meeting to order at 1:45 p.m.

Members Present: Fire Chief Mark DuCharme, City Administrator Craig Dawson of Shorewood, City Administrator Sara Irvine/Tonka Bay, City Administrator Roberta Whipple/Greenwood and City Manager Larry Whittaker/Excelsior.

2. Approval of Agenda:

Hearing no objections, Chairman Young declared the Agenda approved as written.

3. Selection of Officers:

Motion by Young, seconded by Dawson, to select Sara Irvine as Chairman of the Operating Committee for 2005. Motion approved 5/0.

Motion by Young, seconded by Irvine, to select Larry Whittaker as Secretary of the Operating Committee for 2005. Motion approved 5/0.

4. Fire Chief Report

a. Monthly review - Chief DuCharme reported that the District had responded to 800 calls in 2004: 60 in Navarre, 57% medical and 43% fire calls. He said he would complete the annual report by January 31, 2005 and send one hard copy and an electronic copy to each city - for distribution to the City Council members in each city. He said two firefighters had not met the call requirements and would be terminated. Six other firefighters will be placed on probation for six months as a result of inadequate call response.

b. Relief Association - Chief DuCharme expressed concern that the Fire District Board did not approve the increase in the annual contribution for firefighters to the Relief Association in December. The likely reasons for the action were discussed. Chief DuCharme said timing might have been a problem. Chief DuCharme said that he would not place the item on the Board agenda until, at least, February. He also expressed concern about a request from the City of Excelsior that the Relief Association explain their reasons for the increase to the Finance Advisory Commission for the City of Excelsior. He said that he thought it was more appropriate for the Association to report to the Fire District Board and that EFD Board's committees - rather than individual cities. Whittaker said he was acting on the direction of the City Council and that such meetings would result in a better understanding of and support for benefits adjustments.

Young said he would like to see the impact of the increase in benefits on city contributions over time. He asked if the fund is actuarially sound. Chief DuCharme provided a copy of the Relief Association's report to those who requested it and noted

that the automatic escalator in benefits, which was in the report, was not a part of the final request.

c. FEMA Grant - Chief DuCharme said that it now appears that this grant of for 15 dry hydrants and software to process a Pre-plan Program (a comprehensive plan and floor plan drawing of all businesses in the District) may be offered to the District - after earlier denials. The grant would cover 85% of the costs. Once completed, the Pre-plan would be tied to PID numbers and the 911 call system that Hennepin County will have operational in five years.

d. New Rescue/Utility truck chassis - Motion by Young, seconded by Dawson, to recommend that the EFD Board approve the claim for the new rescue/utility track. Motion approved 5/0.

5. Approval of Bills - Chief DuCharme advised the Committee that the EFD, the Chief and the Fire Marshal contribute to Fire and Police PERA - which prohibits contributions to FICA. Therefore, the District is required to refund past contributions to FICA; and, those claims are on the current list of prepaid invoices. The EFD will then secure a refund from FICA for those employee and employer contributions made in error. Motion by Whittaker, seconded by Dawson, to recommend approval of the claims. Motion carried 5/0.

6. Other Business

a. Work Session - New EFD Board member Heidi Viesturs cannot attend the 1/19/05 work session; so, Chief DuCharme is meeting with her to discuss those issues and her role on the Board.

b. Chief DuCharme described a meeting with the Insurance Services Organization (ISO) to discuss risk classifications. This was not the normal review that ISO schedules every ten years. He cited errors on the maps describing areas in the District that are served with public water systems. He said this could substantially reduce insurance premiums for those living in these areas. He said the dry hydrants and Pre-plan for businesses would also reduce premiums.

c. Resignation of Fire Marshal - Chief DuCharme advised the Committee that Scott Anding had resigned effective January 31, 2005. He shared his plan to hire three part-time firefighters to handle the jobs that Mr. Anding performed: Code compliance, Plan review and Pre-plan preparation. The position had also handled public education and outreach; and, Chief DuCharme said that one person could not adequately handle these jobs. He said the personnel would have regularly schedule hours on Monday - Saturday each week - of about 20 hours per week each.

Young asked if Chief DuCharme was prepared to supervise the additional employees, if there are three firefighters who could manage the additional hours and if the program should be tried for one year. Dawson suggested a two-year trial and evaluation. Chief DuCharme said each employee would serve a six-month probationary period. Motion by Dawson, seconded by Whittaker, to endorse Chief DuCharme's proposal to replace the position of Fire Marshal with three part-time firefighters. Young again asked for a review after one year. Irvine said that the Chief could evaluate the program through the probationary performance reviews and report back to the Committee. Motion approved 5/0.

7. Next Meeting - Chief DuCharme announced that the EFD Board would hold a Work Session on January 12, 2005, a Board meeting on January 26, 2005 and the next Operating Committee meeting will be held February 9, 2005 at 1:30 p.m.

8. Adjournment - Motion by Whittaker, seconded by Whipple, to adjourn the meeting at 3:07 p.m. Motion approved 5/0.