

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

West Metro Fire Protection District
Board of Directors Meeting
February 20, 2024

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the West Metro Fire Protection District board of directors was called to order by President Jerry Cassel at 6:00 p.m. This meeting was held in accordance with the applicable statutes of the state of Colorado, at West Metro Fire Protection District's Administrative Office Building, at 433 South Allison Parkway, Lakewood, Colorado, and available remotely via Teams.

II. ROLL CALL

President Jerry Cassel	Present
Vice President Bill Clayton	Present
Secretary Don Sherman	Present
Treasurer Carolyn Wolfrum	Present
Director Mike Feeley	Present
Director Amira Watters	Absent
Director Mike Williams	Present

Also present were Fire Chief Don Lombardi; Deputy Chief Mike Kirkpatrick; Deputy Chief Jeremy Metz; Deputy Chief Dan Pfannenstiel; Ms. Adele Reester, Esq.; Mr. Bruk Mulaw; and, Ms. Jennifer Wheaton as recording secretary.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & MOMENT OF SILENCE

President Cassel led the Pledge of Allegiance and requested a moment of silence to honor all fallen firefighters.

IV. REVIEW OF MINUTES

MOTION: It was moved by Mike Williams and seconded by Bill Clayton to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of the board of directors dated January 9, 2024, as presented. The motion was voted upon and carried.

V. PROMOTIONS

A. Promote Jasen McConaghy to the Rank of Assistant Chief, Effective February 11, 2024 and Promote Shane Finley to the Rank of Engineer, Effective January 16, 2024 – Fire Chief Don Lombardi

MOTION: It was moved by Don Sherman and seconded by Mike Feeley to promote Jasen McConaghy to the rank of Assistant Chief, effective February 11, 2024 and to promote Shane Finley to the Rank of Engineer, effective, January 16, 2024. The motion was voted upon and carried.

VI. OATH OF OFFICE FOR ASSISTANT CHIEF JASEN McCONAGHY, ENGINEER TRAVIS HINES, ENGINEER BRIAN HOLCOMB, AND ENGINEER SHANE FINLEY

VII. CITIZEN AWARDS

- A. Presentation of Citizen Award to Jefferson County Sheriffs, Sergeant Brandon Payne, Deputy Jessica Burley, and Deputy Benjamin Carter - Fire Chief Don Lombardi
- B. Presentation of Citizen Award to Rick Hiltman – Fire Chief Don Lombardi

RECESS

At approximately 6:33 p.m., President Cassel announced the board would take a 15-minute recess to congratulate the newly promoted employees and citizens, and would reconvene the regular meeting of the West Metro Fire Protection District Board of Directors at 6:48 p.m.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

IX. REPORTS

- A. Report of the Fire Chief – Fire Chief Don Lombardi
 - 1. Accreditation Update
 - a. 2023 Annual Program Appraisals

Work has begun to review and assemble the annual program appraisals for the year 2023 as a part of the Annual Compliance Report #2 that is due to the Commission on Fire Accreditation International in late March 2024.
 - 2. Hazardous Materials Response Update

Chief Lombardi reported to the board on the District’s involvement with the Adams/Jefferson County Hazardous Response Authority (AJCHRA). Many changes have occurred since the District began participation in the Authority through an intergovernmental agreement (since 1997), including the development of standards and practices, grant funding, advanced technology, hazards within the boundaries of all participants, lack of authority management, and the over-reliance on the District from the other agencies within the Authority. After much consideration and preparation, Chief Lombardi is recommending that the board consider terminating West Metro’s involvement in the Authority in favor of prioritizing a stand-alone hazmat response team that is equal to, if not more robust than what is in place today with the AJCHRA.

3. National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS) Update

The National Fire Information Reporting System (NFIRS) has been used in the years past as a central data collection site to evaluate state and national trends in the fire service. Since inception, the current system has been a challenging platform to use. The current Fire Administrator, Dr. Lori Moore Merrill, has put together federal funding to develop an improved reporting system, which will be called the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS). West Metro has been invited to participate in the NERIS pilot project and is eager for the opportunity to participate in the feedback process in these early stages of the system development.

4. Insurance Services Office (ISO) Classification Process

The ISO classification process for West Metro has begun. West Metro currently holds an ISO Classification 1 which is the highest and best classification a fire agency can receive. The ISO review process occurs every five years and takes into consideration staffing, fire station location, apparatus, response capabilities, equipment, training records, communications, and water sources and distribution in order to determine the classification for an organization. An ISO Class 1 rating affects the insurance rates in the community, benefiting residential and commercial property owners in terms of insurance premiums. West Metro is one of only 120 agencies in the United States that is both internationally accredited and that holds an ISO Classification 1.

B. Finance – Finance Director Bruk Mulaw

1. December 2023 Financial Statements

Mr. Mulaw reviewed the December 2023 financial statements which will be brought to the board for approval at the March 19, 2024 meeting.

Mr. Mulaw also reviewed the total COVID-19 grant funding received by the District since 2020.

C. Administration – Deputy Chief Jeremy Metz

1. Administration Update

The Station 12 generator replacement project is finally complete after over two years since it was damaged by a car crash in early 2022. Chief Metz is working with the insurance company to cover the final expenses.

The remodel project at the administration building is nearly complete. Final details will be handled in the coming weeks. With the new health center in place, firefighter physicals will begin in the new space on March 3, 2024.

Organizational chart changes that were approved earlier this year are beginning to be filled. The new Facilities Specialist position was filled by an internal candidate. This move will create a Facilities Maintenance Technician vacancy. Interviews for this position will be held in early March.

Jeffcom 911 that currently operates out of the West Metro Administration building, has purchased a new building for their operations on Indiana Street. The current dispatch center at Administration will serve as a back-up center for Jeffcom 911 once their operation moves to the new location.

Chief Metz has been working with Mr. Tim Raub on evaluating the transition process to bring the Wheat Ridge volunteer pension fund to the Fire Police Pension Association (FPPA).

The new hire testing process is underway. At the close of the application process, 943 total individuals applied. At present, 400 candidates have passed the physical agility test (PAT). The written test will be held during a two-week timeframe between February 19 - March 1 and is an on-line proctored format. The next step in the process is the oral board that will be held mid-March.

Designs have been created for the Reserve Apparatus Storage facility. Construction on this facility is scheduled to begin in the fall.

D. Operations – Deputy Chief Dan Pfannenstiel

1. Operations Update

The Training Division staff are taking advantage of the availability at the Training Center in the absence of a spring firefighter academy. This availability has allowed more opportunities for tenured firefighter training as well as opportunities for much needed maintenance and repairs at the heavily used Training Center.

Twelve West Metro employees will be graduating from paramedic school later this week. An additional 14 employees will be headed out to paramedic school in the near future with a graduation scheduled for the summer 2024.

Two notable calls in recent weeks included a fire in a townhome complex and also in a motel. Both fires occurred during very cold temperatures, leading to challenging conditions for the firefighters. Chief Pfannenstiel noted that the community generously came forward with donations to aid those displaced by the fire.

E. Life Safety – Deputy Chief Mike Kirkpatrick

1. Comprehensive Project Report – Electronic Report

Chief Kirkpatrick also noted that the new schedule for the fire investigators is going very well.

The city of Lakewood emergency shelter at 8000 West Colfax is in place. Efforts continue to work with the staff for long-term planning as the District works to support their needs.

Progress is underway on the 2024 International Fire Code with a current focus on developing amendments to the code.

F. Other Matters

Chiefs Lombardi and Metz have been meeting to plan for the next steps with regard to mental wellness resources for employees of the District. West Metro had developed a partnership in recent years with the counseling services program that serves first responders and their families, Building Warriors. This counseling service has dissolved and will no longer be available to the District. In addition to the change with Building Warriors, a recent evaluation of the overall wellness program has found that gaps exist. While West Metro has implemented a variety of mental wellness options for employees seeking resources, opportunities for improvement could be satisfied by implementing an in-house, full-time mental health coordinator to address a comprehensive mental wellness program that West Metro endeavors to provide the employees of the District. This role would provide consistency and stability with counseling and resource navigation for mental wellness in coordination with the Peer Support Team, the Employee Assistance Program, the State of Colorado Mental Wellness Trust and the Wellness SPT.

G. Report of Legal Counsel – Adele Reester, Esq.

Ms. Reester reported on the results of a recent decision from the Colorado Supreme Court regarding a case in Arapahoe county related to TIF and base evaluations for planned developments which affect special districts in the state of Colorado. Ms. Reester will continue to monitor this topic and report updates to the board when they become available.

H. Report of the President – President Jerry Cassel

Mr. Cassel reported on two former Wheat Ridge Fire Department board members who passed in recent weeks, and thanked Chief Metz for arranging West Metro presence at the services.

- I. Treasurer's Report – Treasurer Carolyn Wolfrum

MOTION: It was moved by Carolyn Wolfrum and seconded by Mike Feeley to approve the November 2023 Financial Statements as presented. The motion carried.

- J. Report of the Union – Lieutenant Mike Mulcahy

Chief Lombardi reported on behalf of Lieutenant Mulcahy. The Local 1309 will be hosting a beer tap event at the Westfax Brewing Company on February 24 from 12 – 8 p.m., featuring the Hook & Halligan IPA.

- K. Report of Civil Service Committee – Secretary Don Sherman

Mr. Sherman reported on the February 13, 2024 Civil Service Committee meetings. The next meeting of the CSC is scheduled for March 12, 2024.

X. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Resolution 2024-05 - FPPA Money Purchase Employee Contribution Change – Deputy Chief Jeremy Metz

MOTION: It was moved by Don Sherman and seconded by Mike Williams to approve Resolution 2024-05, a resolution amending member rate of contribution to the statewide money purchase plan administered by the Fire and Police Pension Association and for West Metro Fire Protection District. The motion was voted upon and carried.

- B. Training Center Media Blasting/Painting Contract - Deputy Chief Jeremy Metz

MOTION: It was moved by Mike Feeley and seconded by Carolyn Wolfrum to approve the contract with Denver Commercial Property Services, Inc. and authorize Chief Lombardi or his designee to execute all contract documents. The motion was voted upon and carried.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Set Public Hearing for the Petition for Inclusion for the Dinosaur Ranch Resort, LLC property – Deputy Chief Mike Kirkpatrick

MOTION: It was moved by Don Sherman and seconded by Mike Williams to set a public hearing at the March 19, 2024 board meeting for the petition for inclusion for the Dinosaur Ridge Resort LLC property. The motion was voted upon and carried.

- B. 2024 Kenworth Tractor Purchase CO-TF1 – Division Chief Bob Olme

MOTION: It was moved Bill Clayton and seconded by Don Sherman to approve the request for purchase of a new 2024 Kenworth Sami Tractor

from Colorado Kenworth LLC in the amount of \$204,329.00, and allow Chief Lombardi or his designee execute any documents necessary to complete this project. The motion was voted upon and carried.

- C. Request the Top Four Names from the Eligibility Register for the Rank of Captain (established at the March 12, 2024 Civil Service Committee meeting) and the Top Four Names from the Eligibility Register for the Rank of Lieutenant, and the Top Three Names from the Eligibility Register for the Rank of Engineer – Fire Chief Don Lombardi

Chief Lombardi requested and received consensus to request the top four names from the eligibility register for the rank of captain, the top four names from the eligibility register for the rank of lieutenant and the top three names from the eligibility register for the rank of engineer from the Civil Service Committee.

- D. Fire Chief Selection Process – Fire Chief Don Lombardi

With Chief Lombardi’s retirement approaching at the end of 2025, the time has arrived to begin discussions surrounding the selection process to hire West Metro’s next fire chief. Introducing this topic now will allow the board members sufficient time to become familiar with the selection process; will allow time to establish a Search Committee; and will also allow adequate time to develop and hold the selection process, ideally in the fourth quarter of 2024, with the goal of identifying the new fire chief in early 2025. This timeline will allow Chief Lombardi to execute a formal and comprehensive transition plan with the new fire chief throughout 2025. Chief Lombardi advised the board to consider establishing a Search Committee at tonight’s meeting with the short-term plan to begin establishing the framework for the search in the coming weeks. Additional Search Committee responsibilities will include oversight of the process to hire the new fire chief, assembling a detailed job description, establishing requirements for applicants, establishing deadlines for applicant submissions, the selection process timeframe for final decision, and developing a contract for finalist. Chief Lombardi suggested that he be considered as a subject matter expert to assist the Selection Committee, and to include Ms. Adele Reester for legal advice throughout the process. Selection Committee meetings will be posted and open to the public.

MOTION: It was moved by Jerry Cassel and seconded by Mike Williams to establish a Search Committee consisting of board members Don Sherman and Bill Clayton to lead the selection process for West Metro’s next fire chief. The motion was voted upon and carried.

XII. BOARD BRIEFS

- A. Board Policy #1615 – Professional Development – Deputy Chief Jeremy Metz
- B. Dish LLC Contract – Deputy Chief Jeremy Metz

XIII. OTHER MATTERS

None.

XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: There being no further business to be presented it was moved by Mike Feeley and seconded by Don Sherman to adjourn the regular meeting of the West Metro Fire Protection District board of directors. The motion was voted upon and carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

Recording Secretary: /s/s/ Jennifer Wheaton
/s/ Don Sherman