



Fire Board Meeting
Tuesday November 12, 2024, 5:00PM

Big Lake Fire Department • 20243 County Road 43 NW • Big Lake, MN 55309

The Big Lake Fire Board met on Tuesday November 12, 2024, at the Big Lake Fire Department, located at 20243 County Road 43, Big Lake, Sherburne County, State of Minnesota. The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Bruce Aubol at 5:00PM and the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America was recited.

Joint Powers Board Officials present were Bruce Aubol, Dean Brenteson, Paul Knier, and Kim Noding. Additional attendees: Fire Chief Seth Hansen, Town Clerk Brenda Kimberly-Maas, City Administrator Hanna Klimmek, Town Treasurer Ken Warneke, and City Finance Director Deb Wegeleben. Fire department member Eric Rosa was in the audience. Assistant Chief Mark Hedstrom joined the meeting after it commenced.

Chief Hansen requested the addition of three items to the business portion of the meeting. Items G. First Due reporting software; H. Reader board for Tender 17; I. Discussion of lateral pay; J. Purchase of polo shirts and duty pants – 2025 budget item.

Approval of Meeting Agenda

Motion/Second to approve the amended agenda by: Noding/Knier. Approved by Aubol, Brenteson, Knier, and Noding. None opposed. Motion prevailed.

Approval of Consent Agenda

The consent agenda consisted of September 3, 2024, Meeting Minutes; claims paid 09/03/2024 through 11/12/2024 (*claims and payroll were reviewed in electronic format, prior to the meeting*); adopt Resolution 2024-5 Accepting General Donation of \$305.93 from MMBA & Molson/Coors fundraiser c/o Big Lake Liquor.

Motion to approve the consent agenda as presented by: Brenteson/Knier. Approved by Aubol, Brenteson, Noding, Knier, and Noding. None opposed. Motion prevailed.

Open Forum: None.

Regular Business

Liability Coverage Waiver Form - Plan Year 2025

The League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust (LMCIT) members that obtain liability coverage from LMCIT must decide whether to waive the statutory tort liability limits to the extent of the coverage purchased. The decision has the following effects:

- Member does not waive the statutory tort limits – an individual claimant would be able to recover no more than \$500,000 on any claim to which the statutory tort limits apply. The total all claimants would be able to recover for a single occurrence to which the statutory tort limits apply would be limited to \$1,500,00.00

- Member waives the statutory tort limits and does not purchase excess liability coverage; a single claimant could potentially recover up to \$2,000,000 for a single occurrence. The total of all claimants would be able to recover for a single occurrence to which the statutory tort limits apply would also be limited to \$2,000,000, regardless of the number of claimants.

Historically the Fire Department has chosen to accept (NOT waive) the \$500,000 monetary limits on the municipal tort liability as described above.

Motion/Second to accept (NOT waive) the monetary limits on municipal tort liability on the 2025 general liability insurance by: Knier/Brenteson. Approved by Aubol, Brenteson, Knier, and Noding. None opposed. Motion prevailed.

Medical Pendant for workout room

Staff researched the cost of having medical pendants available for those individuals that use the workout room, in the event of an emergency.

WH Security offers pendant panic buttons and the cost ranges from \$474.95-\$504.95 for equipment and installation for a system that would include 2 wireless pendant panic buttons. The monthly cost would range from \$36.90 - \$37.45 per month with a 3-year monitoring contract for the system to be required.

Staff posed the question of if there is a benefit in the event an individual is working out and something happens, the individual would be able to press the panic button and help would be dispatched.

Board members and fire staff discussed the need for such a device and determined it is unnecessary.

Motion/Second to forego purchasing a panic button for the workout room by: Knier/Noding. Approved by Aubol, Brenteson, Knier, and Noding. None opposed. Motion prevailed.

Truck Bays floor resurfacing/sealing

Resealing the truck bay floors is a capital improvement project – budgeted amount is \$70,000.00. This project was placed on hold until the fire station was re-roofed. The hold was placed on the project because prior to 2023, the roof was not watertight, and water pooled on the bay floors after heavy rains and snow melting. Rather than damage new sealant, the decision to postpone the resurfacing was made. The station was re-roofed in 2023, no leaks have been found, and the board decided to move forward with getting the floors resealed. Staff was instructed to draft a project scope and acquire quotes.

Quotes were received from Zach's Painting/Xtreme Coatings – \$49,875.00; Concrete Coatings, Inc. - \$74,843.00; Dynamic Concrete - \$87,500.00; Endless Possibilities - \$79,735.00. The Board recommended the floors be striped as part of the process and gave Chief Hansen the latitude to add this providing the cost is reasonable. Upon review of the quotes, the Fire Board recommended going with Zach's Painting/Xtreme Coatings quote of \$49,875.00 plus striping.

Motion/Second to recommend to the Town Board and City Council to accept the quote and proceed with the project awarding it to Zach's Painting/Xtreme Coatings in the amount of \$49,875.00 plus striping by: Knier/Noding. Approved: Aubol, Brenteson, Knier, and Noding. None opposed. Motion prevailed.

Annual Chief evaluation

Each year the Fire Board must do an annual evaluation of the Fire Chief. This is done at the January meeting, at which time the Fire Board will choose to re-appoint or not the existing Fire Chief. A revised evaluation form was presented to the Board. It consisted of three areas to evaluate. What's going well. What's not going well. Areas of emphasis moving forward. And a section for additional comments. The new evaluation form indicates a job description is included. The only job description

information available to staff is found in the stipend duty lists. To ensure evaluations reflect the Chief's ability to fulfill the position, staff requested thorough job descriptions be written, for all positions – Chief, Asst. Chief, Training Chief, Captain, Lieutenant and members.

A proposal to send the updated evaluation form with additional areas of evaluation to all department members was also discussed. This evaluation would be sent to all current department members, via Survey Monkey. Responses do not have any identifying information to ensure the results were anonymous. The additional subjects will use a rating scale of 1-10. They include inspiring a shared vision, decision making of self and others, valuing others, self & staff development, candid and open communication, actions reflect high regard for Fire Department and its members.

Survey Monkey results will be due on December 15, 2024. The survey results and Board member evaluations will be used for the Chief's review at the January 7, 2025 meeting. Board members are to bring their evaluations to the 01/07/2025 meeting.

Motion to use the new format, for Chief evaluations. The form will be used by the Board members and will have additional subjects for disbursement, via Survey Monkey to all department members. Department-wide reviews due on December 15, 2024, and will be compiled for distribution to Joint Powers Board members, prior to the January 7, 2025 meeting by: Noding/Brenteson. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Knier, and Noding. None opposed. Motion prevailed.

Benevity platform

During the July meeting, the Board authorized the opening of an account for the specific purpose of receiving a \$500 donation from Tricia Hedstrom's employer, United Health and their United for Giving program. When working to get the account information to United Health, staff learned that United Health partners with Benevity to facilitate their United for Giving program. To participate on the Benevity platform, non-profits must be verified as a charitable organization by Benevity. Once verified, they must create a profile on the platform. Profiles can be discoverable, allowing multiple organizations to donate. Assistant Chief Hedstrom has created a profile for BLFD of which he is the page administrator. Assistant Chief Hedstrom informed staff that the profile he created was set up as a private profile, for the sole purpose of receiving the donation from United Health's Giving program.

Staff communicated with the Fire Department's auditor to ensure there are no significant concerns with this process. The FD audit firm advised the current BLFD profile be deactivated or transferred to the fiscal agent/Town, the profile be listed as a governmental organization – not a non-profit or 501c3, and the profile be set-up as non-discoverable/private. The reason the page needs to be non-discoverable/private is because fire departments are not allowed to fundraise or solicit funds. Staff included information from the Office of the State Auditor regarding fire department fundraising.

Prior to moving forward with the creation of a profile on the Benevity platform, staff wanted the Joint Powers Board to be fully informed so they may determine if they would like staff to proceed.

Motion/Second to transfer ownership of the Big Lake Fire Department's Benevity profile to the Town by: Knier/Noding. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Knier, and Noding. None opposed. Motion prevailed.

Staffing study report debrief

The Big Lake Fire Board released a Request for Proposals to facilitate a Comprehensive Staffing Study of the Big Lake Fire Department (BLFD); the Board hired McGrath Consulting Group, Inc. in January 2024 and accepted the completed study on July 2, 2024.

A Joint Meeting of the Big Lake City Council and Township Board was held on June 20, 2024, to receive a presentation of the Staffing Study from Bob Stedman of McGrath Consulting Group, Inc. After the presentation was over, it was decided that each governing body would debrief separately

prior to calling another Joint Meeting to begin discussions on possible implementation of the Staffing Study recommendations.

The City Council engaged in two debriefing sessions during workshops held on July, 24, and August 29. The Town Board engaged in one debriefing session during a special meeting held on July 17, 2024. The two governing bodies met again on October 09, 2024, to discuss the results of the debriefings done, and determine their recommendations to the Joint Powers Board.

The next step is to have the FD JPB discuss the recommendations made by the governing agencies and determine what and how to implement any changes. Board members didn't want the study results and recommendations needed to be kept in front of them and addressed, rather than set aside and forgotten. They also felt the matter needed its own time and meeting. Rather than set an additional FD meeting, they decided to cancel a committee meeting and commit the meeting time slot for a full Joint Powers Board meeting to discuss the staffing study results, and governing agency recommendations.

Motion/second to cancel the February 4, 2025, personnel committee meeting and hold a special Big Lake Fire Department Joint Powers Board meeting on February 4, 2025, commencing at 5:00PM at the Big Lake fire station for the purpose of discussing staffing study debrief recommendations made by the governing agencies by: Knier/Brenteson. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Knier, and Noding. None opposed. Motion prevailed.

First Due reporting software

Chief Hansen presented information and a contract on First Due software which could replace three platforms currently used by the department. First Due has the ability to perform timekeeping, record incident data, and keep account of the department's equipment. First Due would implement the software, migrate the current data, and train personnel to use the product. First Due has the ability to collect a lot of information and house it in one location. Quoted implementation cost of \$1,800 and annual subscription of \$8,500. Software which would become obsolete, should the Board decide to move forward with First Due are IAmResponding, ImageTrend, and Sortly. The cost for all three of the current platforms is less than \$600 annually. Thoughts and concerns shared were that having one platform to perform all the functions is desirable. Issues post implementation and support timeframe, could be problematic. Additional data is currently being entered into ImageTrend, as recommended by the staffing study. Most local departments use IAmResponding and can see where each are located when on a run. The tools being used by the department have additional functionality which are currently being under-utilized. Are the benefits of the single platform worth the cost? No action was taken.

Motion to table item until the February 4, 2025, meeting by: Knier/Noding. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Knier, Noding. None opposed. Motion prevailed.

Reader board

Chief Hansen inquired if the department could purchase a Traffic Commander reader board for deployment at incidents. The reader board would be installed on Tender17 (T17) to give the traveling public notice, as they approach an incident. The messages are deployed by iPad which is installed in T17 and other vehicles. The reader board cost is \$6,995 plus mounting hardware, is an unbudgeted item. However, there is a significant balance in the tire budget and those funds could be used to purchase the reader board. The purchase will be considered a capital asset (costs over \$5,000), but not a CIP item. Board members thought the reader board would be a good addition to the department's equipment, as it will help keep responders, victims, and the traveling public safe.

Motion/second to purchase a Traffic Commander reader board for installation on Tender 17, at a cost of \$6,995 plus mounting hardware, by: Aubol/Brenteson. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Knier, Noding. None opposed. Motion prevailed.

Previous experience lateral pay

Chief Hansen brought forward lateral pay for members who have previous experience with other departments. BLFD has three active members who have previous experience – with certification. Chief expressed he feels it is appropriate to compensate these members for their years of experience and recommends the Board implement a lateral pay policy. He believes this will be a useful recruitment tool, as well.

Motion/second to implement a lateral pay program for members who have experience with other departments and current certification effective for hours worked, beginning January 1, 2025, by: Aubol/Noding. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Knier, and Noding. None opposed. Motion prevailed.

Polos & duty pants

Chief Hansen informed the Board that the department supplies members with a BLFD t-shirt. He requested the ability to purchase duty pants and polos for members to wear to non-formal events and trainings and to add these items to the department supplied clothing list in the SOGs and personnel policy. He noted that Elk River training academy’s dress code requires a button-up shirt and dress pants/khaki’s.

Motion/second to supply members with BLFD issued polos and duty pants, language will be included in the personnel policy by: Knier/Brenteson. Approved by: Aubol, Brenteson, Knier, and Noding. None opposed. Motion prevailed.

Fiscal Update

Treasury Report

The financial reports were emailed to Board members in advance of the meeting. Treasurer Warneke reviewed the interim financial report ending on 10/31/2024. He noted training is a bit over budget, payroll is just about on target, and there have been no expenditures in the tire or hose budget. The donation fund balance includes the purchases of the extrication equipment for E22 and the new fitness equipment. The cash balance statement was also provided to the board for review. The general fund balance \$ 294,957.90 donation fund balance of \$ 32,728.94. The total treasury ending balance was \$ 327,686.84. *Financial Reports are retained as part of the Official Minutes and available in the Clerk’s Office.*

Motion/Second to approve Financial Reports by: Knier/Noding. Approved by Aubol, Brenteson, Knier and Noding. None opposed. Motion prevailed.

Adjournment

Motion/second to adjourn by: Knier/Noding. All present Board Members Approved. Motion prevailed. Meeting adjourned at 6:20 PM.

Recorded by: Brenda Kimberly-Maas, Town Clerk

Accepted this 7th day of January 2025, by the Big Lake Fire Board.

Bruce Aubol, Chair

Attest:_____
Brenda Kimberly-Maas, Clerk