

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS  
MADISON FIRE DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
REGULAR SESSION**

**08-27-2024**

**CALL TO ORDER @ 18:06 hrs.**

Chair Donaldson called the meeting to order; this being a reschedule of the regular session that was canceled on August 21, 2024.

**ROLL CALL** - Roll call done; Mr. Adams & Mr. Wayman absent.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** - The pledge was recited by all.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The June 17, 2024 Regular Session minutes were presented for approval.

Motion made to approve the May 15, 2024 minutes by: Mr. Anderson

Seconded by: Mr. Lee

ROLL CALL: All ayes

**BILLS & PAYROLL - July, 2024**

Bills (\$65,966.74) and Payroll (\$200,997.86) for a total of \$266,964.60 are motioned for acceptance and payment.

Motion made to approve bills and payroll as presented by: Mr. Anderson

Seconded by: Mr. Sill

ROLL CALL: All ayes

**FINANCIAL REPORT - July, 2024**

Ms. Clapp provided a summary of the Revenue and Expenditures (Fund Summary Reports).

June interest earned was \$33,968.34.

Ms. Clapp stated that the extraordinary payment made in July was to Pike's Carstar Collision in the amount of \$6,457.87. This was to repair damage done as a result of a deer collision. MFD did receive reimbursement in entirety from the insurance company.

Ms. Clapp reminded all that they must complete the State Auditor Fraud Reporting Training, print off the certificate, print and sign the acknowledgement of receipt and return to Laurie or her. Mr. Lee asked Ms. Clapp to resend the link to him. Laurie will also send to those Board members who have not yet completed it.

**OPENING PUBLIC PORTION** - Tod Baker (guest attendance sheet states he resides on Ford Road) was present and expressed the following:

He has a few concerns he would like to share with the Board. He stated it has been a year since his retirement and he has kept his distance from the fire district to give the new administration time to settle in, and secondly because it's terribly unwelcoming. He felt the need

to speak up about a few things that he is hearing from members of the department who still communicate with him. He would like to address three (3) specific points; leadership, personnel and planning.

**Leadership:** When he was leading the district he participated in day to day operations and took criticism from officers for having open door policies. One of the things he is hearing now is that in the day to day operation, people aren't really engaged and don't really know the direction of the department. He has heard that the officers are talking about having staffing and during his time here that was something he was trying to promote as well, but at the same time officers aren't participating on calls. We're worried about numbers and there's officers that send two people to calls rather than going to participate; that's not really an example of leadership. He stated leadership is about educating, setting the bar, setting an example. He continued, stating that strong leaders step up in times of challenge and weak leaders buckle. He had heard he is referred to as "the other guy" and how he wasn't there for the succession. He stated it is/was not his responsibility to "chase down his successor", the new leadership and all of the Board members have his contact information and could have reached out to him. Mr. Baker stated that he served the community for 35 years and gave his heart and soul, probably more than he should have. He expressed that it is disheartening to hear that response from the people that are here in the administration and leadership team. Leadership is also about setting an example with moral and ethical decisions. He stated he has concerns with some things that have happened recently. In December, the Board meeting minutes reflect the fact that there was going to be a purchase of two (2) sets of Halmatro extrication tools. He is very familiar with the bid process as he sat in the role. He knows the cost to be between \$45K - \$50K and are a bid threshold, yet in January in resolution #24-01 one set was purchased and in February, in resolution #24-03 a second set was purchased. He stated he didn't know that Halmatro was on the state bid process, but these are examples of things that bring questions to leadership.

**Personnel:** He stated he is not filing a complaint, he simply has concerns because he hears that in the last 12 months, there has been multiple write ups, there was somebody suspended for a week (which has never happened in the history of the district to a full-time member). He heard that it was stated the member is not protected by the collective bargaining agreement because he is a probationary employee, however in the probationary handbook it talks about progressive discipline and it being done lawfully and with consideration. Mr. Baker thinks that suspending somebody for saying a word sets a horrible precedent, because what happens to somebody who unlawfully gets into your email? Mr. Baker believes there are inconsistencies - in his six year tenure, there were no grievances and in one year there have been two. There have been write ups, suspensions, and grievances that probably ought to be looked at. Mr. Baker stated that he tried to get the Board to realize the value in members during their first six to twelve months. He stated that the most important asset to the fire department is its employees, not the equipment. A new hire is a 2, 3 or 4 million dollar investment over the course of their career. He feels that suspending someone over spelling out a bad word to de-escalate a situation with a patient is not appropriate. He referred to Mr. Anderson's career as a police officer, and stated that de-escalation comes in many forms. Suspending someone for spelling a word? He believes it should be a teaching moment at best. He travels all over, and stated that the district has a reputation and people have concerns about working for the district. Over the past several months he has heard staff here talk about how they don't have any idea what's going on. They are not included in a plan, they are just expected to come in day to day to day.

He again reiterated that the full time employee being suspended shocks him. He is aware of other people who received write ups as teachable moments, stating that leadership is about setting an example and molding people, not managing them. He stated when you create an environment that is hostile, you're going to create employees who are less productive. He stated he is also aware that there was an injury that happened and the district did things to employees that had never been done before. He expressed that he is trying to determine what angle the fire district is coming from; "If your greatest asset is your employee, then the goal should be to build them, not tear them down". He stated that while the target of these actions may be just one or two members, a message is sent to the entire staff.

**Planning:** The last item he wanted to discuss was planning. He asked what the district's plan is in the future. He stated that there is \$6M in the bank today and there is relief coming in the next two years with the Station #3 building payments coming off the budget, but asked what the plan is to secure funding. He stated that he knows that unless money has been pulled from somewhere he is not aware of, the district will be looking at deficit spending in the future. He stated he has reviewed the Board meeting minutes and there has been no discussion about this and the new county assessments just came out; how does that work out for the district? He stated that \$100K has been added to the budget by adding an employee with what appears to be no plans to secure funding in the future. Mr. Baker stated "It took a team of people years to build, it'll take a team of people months to tear down". He challenges the Board to make sure everyone is awake and ensure they're doing what's right for Madison because Madison deserves that. Madison does not deserve employees being treated as they are, and it wasn't that long ago that there was maleficence that went with just a slap, but somebody says the "B" word and they're suspended for a week. He stated that he hopes the Board was involved in that decision making because it sends some terrible messaging. He stated he still loves the department and he will not appear again until he hears people talk about things that somebody needs to speak up about. He ended with the statement "Failing to plan is planning to fail."

### **LEGAL COUNSEL**

Mrs. Dame reminded all that under the Chiefs contract, the Board has to review his performance. She asked that all get them to her as soon as possible so that the review can be conducted in an executive session at the next meeting.

She clarified that Resolution #24-18 is the same ambulance purchase that was approved via motion at the June meeting, not an additional ambulance purchase. She and Ms. Clapp thought it prudent to have a resolution in place for ease of tracking to support the purchase/reallocation of funds.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS** - None to report.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Relocation of one (1) meeting to Station #2 - all in attendance agreed that since there will likely be an executive session at the September meeting, it would be better to hold the October meeting at Station #2 (due to the fact that there is not a private room at Station #2 to accommodate an executive session). A final decision will be made during the September meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Resolution #24-16** - Authorizing the Transfer of Funds From General to Miscellaneous Capital Projects Fund.

Motion to accept Resolution #24-16 made by: Mr. Lee

Seconded by: Mr. Sill

**Resolution #24-17** - Approving the Amendment of Permanent Appropriations.

Motion to accept Resolution #24-17 made by: Mr. Lee

Seconded by: Mr. Anderson

ROLL CALL: All ayes

**Resolution #24-18** - Authorizing Purchase of a 2026 E450 Lifeline VictoryLiner Ambulance from Pfund Superior Sales, not to exceed \$284,865.00.

Motion to accept Resolution #24-18 made by: Mr. Anderson

Seconded by: Mr. Sill

ROLL CALL: All ayes

**CHIEF'S REPORT**

**Anniversaries:**

Inspector Jim Solymosi - 5 years and Captain Frank Henry who is in the audience today has 25 years. Congratulations!

**Financial:** EMS revenue is 76.5% of yearly projection while tax revenue is 63.2% of budgeted collection YTD.

**Staffing:** Continues to be fluid but stable. Some overtime has been needed to cover vacation and sick time. The three (3) new part time members have completed phase 1 of their orientation and are now eligible to sign up for shifts.

**Volume:** The District responded to 353 calls for service in July. On pace for 3876 calls in 2024 (3720 in 2023).

**Inspections:** Remain on-going; see report in your folder.

**Vehicles:** Currently shopping for a new Chiefs vehicle (#2100). He drove both a Ford Explorer and a Dodge Durango earlier today. He will ask for further discussion at the next meeting as well as the possibility of obtaining a new vehicle for Inspector Solymosi whose vehicle also has >100K miles as well (for the 2026 budget cycle). The Station #2 chase vehicle (#2127) had 4 additional lights installed to the sides of the cab (2 on each side). It was becoming difficult to get out of the driveway at Station #2 so they felt increased light visibility would solve this problem.

**Buildings:** Ongoing general maintenance and cleaning. Old landscaping at both stations is being revamped with rocks being put down to help with weed control and to give the beds new life and the buildings curb appeal. Station #2 had two (2) clogs with sewage backup that needed to be jetted by Vince's. These were under the old foundation and solutions will need to

be considered in the future due to old pipes and configurations. The two areas affected were the front bathroom and the new laundry room. Staff is looking at options to replace the living room furniture/recliners. They are several years old and in various levels of disrepair. A brand called "Fire Station Furniture" is being looked into. It was started by a firefighter and the items are made to withstand the continuous usage 24/7/365. More to come at the next meeting. Station security options are also being reviewed. Sean with CMH is helping with this project and options that will easily integrate into our current technology will be reviewed.

**Other:** New gloves and hoods were received through a BWC 5 to 1 match grant. Captain Faulhammer and Captain Sopko worked together on the project and are ensuring all members receive new items. A couple of members will be attending an honor guard class at Wickliffe FD in October. This will help offset upcoming retirements and help keep our staff trained in proper procedures for the inevitable. MABAS alarms are being reviewed and updated prior to the September 1st deadline (Chief Unger (Willoughby) and the Lake County Chiefs heads up this project each year). The new updates will be put into place on January 1, 2025. Staff completed hydrant testing in early August. The Hazmat fee which is paid yearly (covers maintenance expenses, etc.) will slightly increase (approximately \$400) for 2025. They will also be purchasing blankets for electric vehicles whose fires can be very difficult to extinguish. They either have to be submerged in water or cover with a blanket to smother the oxygen from getting into the fuel and battery. These will be strategically placed throughout the county and Chief let them know MFD would be happy to house one and be a resource when a need arises. All district employees have completed the mandatory auditor training. Crews attended the Light Up The Park event with Captain Sopko overseeing the fireworks and Captain Faulhammer manning the Touch a Truck piece. Coloring books, helmets and wristbands were given out to the children with a display table for public interaction and handouts. The dispatch increase was discussed at the EOC meeting in July. It was determined that 2025 will see a 3-4% increase in fees with a 1-year contract. There will be new charges based on call volume for the FSA upgrades that alert the members/stations to calls coming soon. Chief Meister did discuss with Chief Hager other options and at this time determined a change in dispatch is just not feasible.

Chair Donaldson asked if the District received any notice of the activity at the Thompson quarry over the weekend. Chief Meister stated that we initially did not, however the Village PD did phone Captain Henry to advise it was a military operation. Captain Henry stated that there were a few phone calls from residents asking what was happening.

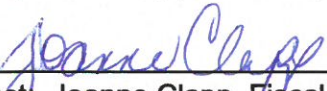
**CLOSING PUBLIC PORTION** - None.

**CLOSING BOARD COMMENTS** - None.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made @ 18:36 by: Mr. Anderson  
Seconded by: Mr. Sill ROLL CALL: All eyes

Accepted and Approved: September 18, 2024

  
Attest: Joanne Clapp, Fiscal Officer

  
Dan Donaldson, Board Chair