

**Excelsior Fire District Board
EXFD Governing Board Meeting
Wednesday, July 23, 2025**

**24100 Smithtown Road
Shorewood, Minnesota
6:00 P.M.**

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Maddy called the meeting to order at 6:03 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Present: Excelsior Fire District (EXFD) Boardmembers: Maddy, Gallagher, Jewett, Tyler, and Eckland.

Also present: Excelsior Fire District (EXFD) Chief Mackey; Excelsior Fire District Assistant Chief Basinger; Deephaven Administrator Madsen; Shorewood City Administrator Nevinski; Tonka Bay City Administrator Holl; Excelsior City Manager Luger.

Absent: None

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Tyler moved, Jewett seconded, approving the EXFD Governing Board meeting agenda as presented. Motion passed 5/0.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April through June, 2025, EXFD Board Minutes

Jewett moved, Gallagher seconded, approving the EXFD Board Minutes from April 2025, as presented. Motion passed 4/0/1 (Tyler abstained).

Jewett moved, Tyler seconded, approving the EXFD Board Minutes of June 2025, as presented. Motion passed 5/0.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Monthly Fire District Administrative Reports – April – June, 2025

B. Report of the Operating Committee Minutes – April – June, 2025

C. Treasurer's Report (Year to Date)

Jewett moved, Tyler seconded, approving the Consent Agenda, as presented. Motion passed 5/0.

5. MATTERS FROM THE FLOOR

Adam Jennings, Mayor of Tonka Bay, explained that 4 of the 5 mayors who are part of the JPA were present at tonight's meeting, and noted that the mayor from Deephaven was unable to attend the meeting

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due to work obligations. He stated that they were present tonight because they felt the proposed budget required additional scrutiny with the member cities and noted that all but one of the current Board members were in their first year of service on the EXFD Board. He reviewed his past service on the Board and how things worked in the past, and noted the current loss of institutional knowledge on the Board. He explained that he felt it was time to have an in-depth discussion about the overall structure of the Department and how it was utilizing its resources that had been provided over the last 5-6 years. He explained that he had received a note from Chair Maddy that non-Board/non-Committee members could not be treated differently from the general public and stated that he disagreed with that assessment and believed the Chair could invite anyone they saw fit to be part of their conversations. He noted that he understood that the mayors would not have a vote, but explained that 3 of them had been EXFD Board members in the past and would be able to provide the Board with some of the institutional knowledge that had been lost on the Board. He expressed concern about not being able to have a back-and-forth conversation or the ability to ask clarifying questions, if they were only allowed to speak during Matters from the Floor. He shared details of what the proposed budget would mean for the City of Tonka Bay and explained that not allowing for a more robust conversation would be wrong. He referenced the SCBAs and the Chiller expenses and stated that the decisions that got them to this point merit additional scrutiny to ensure it does not happen again. He referenced the line item in the proposed budget increase for the operational budget and stated that the Board had the duty to tear into this line item and ask questions. He read aloud the questions he had about the budget that needed additional explanation and reasoning. He stated he sent to McQueen in response to the invoice that was presented on April 23, 2025 and explained that through conversations, they have agreed to reimburse the EXFD \$10,156.66 and noted that it appeared that Chief Mackey was aware of many of these costs as of October 2024 even though it was not included in the meeting minutes from the previous meetings. He noted that this information would be distributed to the Board.

Tom Fletcher, Mayor of Greenwood, stated that he was fine with the questions asked by Mr. Jennings, supports Greenwood Councilmember/Board member Gallagher and her discretion and judgment in these matters, and did not want his presence to take away from that.

Jennifer Labadie, Mayor of Shorewood, stated that she agreed with some of the statements and questions shared by Mr. Jennings, but acknowledged that she had not received information about all of them, so she would not comment on all of them. She noted that Chair Maddy had the authority to run this meeting anyway he saw fit, so she would defer to him and explained that the statement made in this forum, the mayors should be treated as members of the public, was correct, because they were not part of the EXFD Board. She thanked the Board for allowing the mayors to speak through Matters from the Floor.

Gary Ringate, Mayor of Excelsior, stated that he cannot comment on the budget because his wife was an employee of the EXFD, but could philosophically share that they just went through a difficult meeting upstairs where they held the people across the hall to a pretty hard task of reducing their budget. He stated that he also wholeheartedly trusts the individual serving as the representative on the Board for Excelsior with that task, as well. He stated that the task the Board has tonight is not comfortable, but he felt it was necessary.

6. REPORT AGENDA

A. Fire Chief / Fire District Report/ Major All Calls/Staffing Update

Chief Mackey noted that year to date, they were about 665 calls, which was about 111 calls above last year's numbers. The en route time is still around 2 minutes, and on on-scene time is

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hovering around 4 minutes. He noted that the work-life balance plans that were put into place about 5 years ago have been very successful. He stated that there have not been any major all calls since their last meeting and explained that the current staffing level was at 50, which requires more full-time staffing to manage the increase in members and shared examples of some of their duties. He noted that the felt things within the EXFD far exceed other paid-on-call fire departments in relation to staffing, recruitment, retention, and response times. He explained that their weak point was in the duty officer program, which was essentially on life support right now. He stated that they cannot put people into the duty officer positions who are not qualified, experienced, and capable.

B. Communications

Chief Mackey noted that the communications the EXFD received were included in the packet and explained to the visitors in the room that the Board had made a decision recently not to read them aloud at the Board meetings.

7. Unfinished Business

A. Chiller Replacement at Station 1- Update

Chief Mackey explained that the chiller had been ordered and was expected to arrive in November and was expected to be installed and completed by the end of the year as a 2025 expense, which was unbudgeted. He reviewed some of the options they would have for paying for the chiller replacement and which ways may be the easiest to track, including the member cities paying up front.

Chair Maddy asked if all of the member cities would be able to pay these costs up front, as suggested by Chief Mackey, and asked when the payment would be due.

Chief Mackey stated that payment may be due when the chiller arrives because initially, they had wanted payment when it was ordered, but after he talked to him, the contractor expressed his willingness to push off the payment until the equipment arrived.

Chair Maddy did an informal poll of the Operating Committee members who were present to see if they would be able to do the lump sum payment option as outlined by Chief Mackey, and they indicated that it would be possible.

Chief Mackey stated that they can send updates to the member cities' Finance Directors so they can monitor where they are in this process.

Chair Maddy stated that the Board had admitted that they ended up surprised by the SCBA needs and the chiller replacement, and asked Chief Maddy if they were working on a 20-year capital plan document that would include all of this kind of stuff, so this would not happen again.

Chief Mackey noted that the document existed, but there was no money, and explained that they were working on updating a CIP for the building with the help of an outside entity.

The Board had a brief discussion about how and when they should begin to budget and save for the various CIP expenses that they know are coming.

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B. Fire Chief Review and Coaching Options

Shorewood City Administrator Nevinski stated that this was discussed at the Operating Committee level, and they recommended that the Board hire Lisa Sorensen with Sorensen Consulting to complete the performance review for Chief Mackey. He noted that the proposal from Ms. Sorensen had been included in the packet, and a contract that had been reviewed by the EXFD attorney. He explained that Ms. Sorensen had indicated that she felt the overall cost for this would be less than the dollar figure he had included in the report.

Chair Maddy asked if the cost was \$200/hour with a not-to-exceed amount of \$7,000, even though Ms. Sorensen had indicated that the cost would be much less than that amount.

Mr. Nevinski stated that the number he had initially included was \$6,600, and she had indicated that Ms. Sorensen stated that she expected that it would be closer to \$2,500, so they could amend the not-to-exceed amount listed in the contract.

Boardmember Gallagher asked about what would be included and referenced the job description, goals, and objectives, and how they would be incorporated. She asked if this would just be getting input and opinions from people about what they think Chief Mackey's job is, or if it would be based on the actual job description. She stated that she did not know who wrote the job description and asked if the goals and objectives were measurable.

Mr. Nevinski explained that the job description would be the basis to inform the process, but did not believe it would be the sole measurement. He noted that he did not know the origin of the job description.

Boardmember Gallagher stated that she felt her question was valid because most jobs have job descriptions that have measurable objectives, and if they are not meeting those, when they are reviewed, that is communicated as something that they need to work on. She assumed that would be the same for this particular performance review for Chief Mackey.

Chair Maddy asked who would be managing the consulting contract for the review and noted that he would like to make sure that whoever is managing it ensures that Ms. Sorensen has the information that the Board was expecting, including a reference to the job description.

Chief Mackey stated that he had spoken with Justin, who knew of another consulting company that had an ex-police officer who had lived in these shoes and been a chief in the past. He noted that they had used Ms. Sorensen for the last review and believed that they had decided that the end product was not very helpful because it was more of a boilerplate approach suitable for many different businesses. He stated that the other consultant he found through Justin was more geared toward Public Safety and would include a lot more quality coaching for him on the backend. He suggested that the Operating Committee review and interview the other possible consultants before they spend any money.

Mr. Holl stated that he felt Chief Mackey was conflating different things because the work being done for Chief Bowser for more of a leadership and coaching activity, and this situation was more of a performance review. He stated that the other consultant did have a strong background in public safety, but did not know if he had experience in guiding a performance review process.

Chief Mackey stated that it was part of the process, with the performance review on the front end and the coaching on the backend. He explained that he had seen both proposals, and they were very similar in their scope and their pricing.

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Chair Maddy asked the mayors in the room if any of them had been on the EXFD Board when the analysis from Ms. Sorensen had been presented during the last performance review process, and if they were willing to share their opinion.

Mr. Fletcher stated that he did not want to discourage the Board from conducting a performance review for Chief Mackey. He explained that he had not been 'wowed' by the last iteration of the performance review completed by Ms. Sorensen, nor felt it ended up being hugely helpful.

The Board discussed member cities and their past experiences and outcomes with the services offered by Ms. Sorensen.

Chair Maddy asked if the Board supported vetting the other consultant shared by Chief Mackey.

Mr. Fletcher clarified that Mr. Nevinski had asked him about this, and he had communicated that he would be fine utilizing Ms. Sorensen's services again, so he did not want it to seem like he was speaking out of both sides of his mouth with the statement he just made to the Board.

Boardmember Eckland stated that he didn't think it would hurt for the Operating Committee to talk to the other consultant referenced by Chief Mackey.

Boardmember Gallagher referenced information in the report, which stated that the Operating Committee felt that a consultant may be desired from time to time to facilitate a review, but an annual review of the Chief, with the Board, in a closed session, to review accomplishments, set goals, and discuss feedback, should generally be sufficient. She explained that this meant that the Board needed to set up a system for an annual review process. She noted that was not something that was included in the proposal and asked if that would be a separate discussion.

Boardmember Jewett stated that he agreed with Boardmember Eckland that the Operating Committee should consider the other consultant.

Chief Mackey reiterated that he would appreciate the Operating Committee considering the other consultant because he did not get much out of the last review process with Ms. Sorensen.

Boardmember Tyler stated that he did not like pushing things off, but agreed that it would be good for them to know what the other consultant's experience was with respect to the review of a fire chief. He noted that with his background in police public safety, he may have more of an understanding of the position, but Ms. Sorensen may have more experience with this type of review process. He stated that they could also consider getting the feedback from people and sharing it with the consultant before they sign the contract, with the message that they want those things to be coached as part of the process, and did not want to drag out the process. He explained that he appreciated Chief Mackey doing the work to find other possible consultants, but from a process standpoint, his picking the person he wanted to handle his review was probably not the best approach. He stated that he was open to vetting this other consultant and allowing the Operating Committee to select who they felt was the best individual for the job.

Boardmember Eckland stated that he did not think delaying this for another month or so would be a problem.

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Ms. Luger noted that Ms. Sorensen lists a lot of public safety entities in her past client lists and stated that she offers services outside of performance reviews, so they could reach out to those public safety entities to ask what services they had used Ms. Sorensen for.

Chief Mackey stated that the coaching aspect of the performance review was key for him.

Mr. Nevinski clarified that coaching was not included in the proposal from Ms. Sorensen. He stated that it could come after, or if the other consultant was preferred to do that, it could be another option.

Chair Maddy stated that the Board could approve Ms. Sorensen to conduct the performance review and then possibly bring in the other consultant, Mr. Clark, for the coaching aspect, and asked about the Police Chief review.

Mr. Nevinski stated that because the Police Chief was new, the decision was made to bring in a coach to help.

Boardmember Tyler stated that it did make sense for Chief Mackey, from the coaching perspective, to indicate who he could bond with and feel the most comfortable with.

Chief Mackey noted that Mr. Clark offers both services and stated that in the last review, the way some of the things were asked by Ms. Sorensen did not make a lot of sense and were confusing to many.

Ms. Luger stated that she didn't feel the questions themselves were bad, but agreed that Ms. Sorensen's rating system had been very confusing.

Mr. Nevinski explained that Ms. Sorensen's proposal talks about the development of a customized questionnaire so which could be something that the Operating Committee could take on and provide some feedback.

Chair Maddy asked if the Board or Operating Committee would be able to approve the questions and the rating system before it was sent out, and if they could ask Ms. Sorensen to change the questionnaire if they didn't like it.

Mr. Nevinski stated that they could work with Ms. Sorensen to develop the questionnaire.

Boardmember Jewett asked if it would make sense for them to get examples of what the two consultants' questions looked like before they make a decision. He noted that the reviews for Ms. Sorensen were less than stellar, and they did not know anything about the other consultant yet, and explained that he wasn't sure he had enough information tonight to be able to decide on this item.

Boardmember Gallagher stated that if the Board was going to spend money on something, she would like to know that the information gleaned from it would be functional and useful to the Chief.

Chair Maddy explained that he was sensing hesitancy in the room regarding this decision tonight because there was another possible consultant proposed at the last minute that the Operating Committee had not vetted. He noted that he did not want the Board to make a less informed decision, but would like to keep the process moving forward.

Ms. Luger suggested that, if the Board did not care who was selected, they could approve a not-to-exceed dollar amount and allow the Operating Committee to do their due diligence and vet the individual

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suggested by Chief Mackey, and then move forward with whomever the Operating Committee deemed would be best.

Chair Maddy stated that he liked the idea and clarified that he trusted the Operating Committee, but they did not have the full information when they last met about the other possible consultant.

The Board discussed setting a not-to-exceed amount with and without coaching options, and where the funds to pay for this service would come from.

Tyler moved, Jewett seconded, to Authorize the Operating Committee to select a consultant to do a 360 review of Chief Mackey, in an amount not to exceed amount of \$6,000.

Boardmember Eckland stated that he felt the not-to-exceed amount of \$6,000 was out of line, if it didn't include coaching.

Chair Maddy asked if the Board wanted to lessen the not-to-exceed amount in the motion or could just give the message to the Operating Committee to try to keep the cost well below \$6,000, unless they had a really good reason.

Mr. Nevinski stated that the Operating Committee knew the value of a dollar and assured the Board that they would look for the best value option.

Motion passed 5/0.

C. 2026 Budget Update – Version 5

Chief Mackey gave a brief overview of the changes between Version 4 and Version 5 of the budget, ways they have looked at reducing budget items, possible fundraising efforts for specific items, possible things that could be pushed out a year, and explained the reasons they were looking for approval to sell Rescue 11, to offset costs for things in the CIP.

Boardmember Tyler explained that he would not support pushing out the equipment purchase to clean the SCBA equipment for another year or two, and believed that there would be other areas where they would be able to find budget reductions.

Chief Mackey stated that he did not want to push it out either, but had been looking at possible budget savings.

Boardmember Gallagher asked how much the washer cost.

Chief Mackey stated that it would cost \$25,000.

Boardmember Eckland asked if the SCBAs had been included in the budget.

Chief Mackey confirmed that they were included in the budget.

Chair Maddy clarified that it was a loan, and the loan repayment was included in the budget.

Chief Mackey explained that loans were an option, but they had initially decided not to do the loans.

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Chair Maddy asked if they chose the loan option, if that would take \$400,000 off the bottom line of the budget.

Chief Mackey noted that it would take \$400,000 of the CIP and noted that they could potentially push the purchase of the compressor off to a future year, which was \$35,000 of the planned SCBA purchase, but cautioned that, because of its age, if there were problems, it would be difficult to find parts for it. He noted that usually the compressors are changed out with the SCBAs, and it was currently on its second cycle because they had not replaced it the last time.

Mr. Holl asked how the EXFD's CIP was reflected within the Operating Budget.

Chief Mackey explained that the CIP is added into the Operating Budget, which comes out the other side as their overall budget.

Mr. Holl stated that his understanding was that the SCBAs were going to be done on a separate cash basis, similar to how the chiller was handled. He explained that the budget he had received from Rochelle had not included the SCBAs within the budget.

Chief Mackey explained that they had sliced it out so they could get cost estimates to look into financing the SCBAs and noted that it had been sent out in two versions, one with the SCBAs and one without them, but a final decision had not been made about whether the member cities had an appetite for financing it or not. He explained that the initial proposed 29% budget increase was the worst-case scenario, and now they were working on ways to bring the budget increase down, while keeping in mind firefighter safety. He noted that the chiller issue, coming along when it did, impacted the whole budget situation.

Mr. Hall explained that he was not arguing against the safety of the firefighters, but there will be a significant impact on the cities, whether it was a fully loaded purchase or a financing cost, but there has not been a final decision in that direction yet.

Chair Maddy noted that the Version 5 budget presented did not touch SCBAs or associated equipment and noted that even if they decided to finance it, they would need to include debt service payments in the budget. He stated that if they were able to sell Rescue 11, it would help lessen the blow, but he did not want to count on money that they do not have yet. He noted that they would still need to raise their overall budget, cut something else, or get a special payment from the cities to pay.

Boardmember Jewett stated that this is the same situation as one year ago when the Board began talking about the chiller, now it was going to end up being an expense, but it was not included in the budget, so this was the second year in a row that this kind of thing has happened. He noted that the SCBAs were not included in the latest version of the budget, which, to him, says that they will pay for it the same way they paid for the chiller.

Chief Mackey asked if the Board would support taking about \$35,000 for the compressor and pushing the purchase off for a few years to ease the overall expense to the member cities.

Boardmember Jewett stated that it would ease the expense to the member cities, but would not ease the health of the firefighters.

Boardmember Gallagher stated that they don't know how long it will last, which means that they could be hit with the expense for replacing it next year.

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Chief Mackey acknowledged that there was a risk that they would be taking.

Boardmember Eckland stated that he did not want to be cheap when it comes to safety.

Chief Mackey asked if the Board wanted the SCBAs to be included in the budget or wanted them to be handled and paid for separately.

Chair Maddy stated that paying for it separately felt like a workaround on the overall budget increase percentage.

Boardmember Tyler explained that Excelsior was looking at this as the proposed 9% increase, plus the SCBAs. He noted that the CIP shows the SCBAs as an expense in 2027.

Chief Mackey explained that originally, they had pushed them to 2027 because of the chiller situation, but they expired in February of 2026. He asked if the Board was okay if they brought it into the budget once they get the last bid, they will tighten up the overall numbers, and do a worst-case scenario situation where the trucks don't sell.

Chair Maddy stated that he did not like the idea of having a 'side' budget and stated that they will just have to be clear about why it was a higher increase.

There was a consensus of the Board to keep the compression and washer in the budget with the SCBAs.

Chief Mackey asked if the Board supported selling Rescue 11.

Chair Maddy suggested that they table budget discussions and move on to the next agenda item for that discussion.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. Looking for Approval to sell Rescue 11

Boardmember Gallagher stated that it made sense to sell it if they weren't using it and questioned why they would pay for something that was not being used.

Boardmember Tyler stated that he had not seen the numbers laid out that showed the value, the operating costs, and how much it was getting used. He stated that if this analysis had been done and the conclusion was that it made more sense to sell it than keep it, he would ask what other equipment they have that they may be able to sell.

Chief Mackey stated that they have looked around and have been able to purge a lot of stuff.

There was a consensus of the Board to approve selling Rescue 11.

Chair Maddy noted that once it is sold, it will save them in operating costs as well as future capital costs. He suggested that now that they have reached a consensus on selling Rescue 11, they return to their budget discussion with this expectation and asked if it could be sold before calendar year 2026.

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Chief Mackey stated that if it sells, it will end up selling pretty quickly and explained that from their initial research, they were expecting to have 2-3 buyers come forward right away.

Unfinished Business - 2026 Budget Update – Version 5 – continued.....

Chair Maddy stated that, based on their discussion, they were moving towards another iteration of the budget and were running out of time. He asked if that would put them in special meeting territory or if they would wait 2 months to make a recommendation to the member cities about the budget.

Mr. Nevinski stated that he would not wait 2 months because the cities need to set their preliminary levies in September, and they need to have a number from the EXFD.

Chair Maddy stated that meant that the Board would have to hold a special meeting to discuss the proposed budget sometime in August.

Boardmember Jewett explained that he understood that they were going to put together a new version of the budget that included the SCBAs at their costs, have the expectation that the proceeds from the sale of Rescue 11 would help offset those costs and reduce the overall budget percentage increase, but he was struggling because they did not add the chiller into the budget last year and just paid out of pocket. He noted that he looks at this like he would look at it if the air conditioner went out at his home, which meant it had to be paid for, but it was not part of his annual budget.

Chief Mackey reminded the Board that the only reason the SCBAs had been pulled out of the budget was to be able to look at them separately for different financing options. He stated that it sounds like they are past that now, so they will put them back into the budget and try to tighten up their numbers a bit more. He stated that if they sell the truck by then, he will factor that amount in.

Chair Maddy asked what the percentage increase would be with the inclusion of the SCBAs.

Boardmember Jewett and Mr. Madsen did some quick calculations and noted that it would be an increase of around 22.3%.

Chair Maddy noted that just over half of that proposed increase was due to the SCBAs and stated that if they sell the truck, that should get them below 20%.

Boardmember Jewett clarified that his calculations had included the sale of the truck already.

Mr. Madsen stated they were looking at a 22.3% increase and asked if the Board had given direction in the past on a target increase. He suggested that this may be good feedback to give to Chief Mackey if the Board was asking him to take another look at his numbers and find a way to lower the total percentage increase by a certain amount.

Chair Maddy stated that the Board had already asked Chief Maddy to find everything he could to help decrease the budget, but had not discussed staffing. He asked if the Board had any other ideas on what they could ask Chief Mackey to do other than reduce the staffing plans.

Boardmember Jewett stated that the rest of the budget was pretty skinny and noted that without the SCBAs, the budget showed a 9.8% increase. He asked questions about whether or not they should move ahead with the hiring of an additional staff person or if they should do something else. He stated that they

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cannot push off the chiller or SCBAs, but could push off employees, which was the question the Board needed to struggle with.

Boardmember Tyler stated that they could go line by line in looking at the budget, which was something that he and his alternate had done. He explained that they both found similar items and places where they felt a bit could be pulled out in various areas. He noted that, from his analysis, he believed there was about \$60,000 to \$75,000 that could be pulled out of the budget. He stated that the budget information did not appear to be consistent with expenditures over prior years.

Chief Mackey stated that they rely on the auditors to let them know trends because some years, things cost more, and sometimes less. He cautioned the Board that when they shorten things, they should plan to double them the following year, and shared examples from the past where they have done those kinds of things, and they hadn't kept up with inflation. He stated that they could try it, but cautioned that it would be a risk.

Boardmember Tyler shared some specific examples of where Chief Mackey could wrench down and pull money out of certain areas of the budget.

Chief Mackey stated that he can do that, but reiterated that it may come back to bite them the next year.

Ms. Luger outlined a few areas where she would encourage Chief Mackey to take a look at the trend data and lower some of the numbers.

Chief Mackey reiterated that he can do that, but stressed that it could end up biting them next year.

Boardmember Jewett asked if Mr. Tyler's Council had an issue with the additional full-time employee.

Boardmember Tyler acknowledged that it was also a concern.

Chief Mackey stated that not having the employee would have a trickle-down effect on the entire department and wasn't sure how they would be able to continue without it. He explained that he would be happy to go back and look line by line at some of the things suggested by Mr. Tyler and Ms. Luger, if it would let him keep the employee.

Boardmember Tyler stated that he understood what Chief Mackey was saying, but suggested that to keep that employee, other cuts would need to be made in other areas of the budget.

Boardmember Eckland stated that, from what he was seeing, they were looking at about a 13% increase in the operating budget and noted that he did not like going through and asked whether or not the department needed a new hammer. He noted that it looked like everything in there increased by about 13% and felt that there had to be some room in there for the budget to come down a bit.

Ms. Luger explained that they also did not want to get into the position of telling Chief Mackey which hammer to buy, but explained that if he would just look at the trend data and update it, it would add up.

Chief Mackey stated that he can certainly do that.

Boardmember Jewett stated that the budget that had not included the SCBAs showed an increase of 9.8% and if they backed out the employee salary of \$110,000, that would be a 5.1% difference, which was why he wanted to see if the Board was still on board with the proposed employee plan, as presented.

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Chair Maddy asked where the under-budget money would go for things that were budgeted but not spent.

Chief Mackey stated that those funds are moved into their reserves at the end of the year, which currently has about 17%.

Chair Maddy stated that adjusting their budget would also slow down the accumulation of the reserves, which were already under the target percentage. He explained that he was not too worried about the line items, but agreed that staff is a big one. He noted that they had already pushed one staff member out of the calendar year 2026 and asked if they were talking about moving the 4th quarter of 2025 hire to the 4th quarter of 2026.

Boardmember Jewett clarified that was not what he had been talking about and explained that he was saying that if the Board was comfortable with the staffing plan, then all they had to talk about was the other things, but he did not have a high level of confidence that there would be a lot of things that could be pulled out. He asked if there was a percentage that would make each city happy. He stated that if they include everything, that was an increase of about 23% which is a crazy high number, but they have to do the SCBAs, and, unless they are planning to change the hiring plan, they also have to hire the employee.

Chair Maddy noted that even if they took out the employee, the overall budget increase would be around 18%, because of the SCBAs.

Boardmember Jewett asked if it would be worth it to get the increase down to 18% and hope that the employees would be able to cover things without burnout.

Chief Mackey suggested that Assistant Chief Basinger speak to this point because he was in burnout mode, because if there is a shift that isn't covered, he ends up taking most of them.

Boardmember Eckland asked if there was anybody coming up who could fill the position.

Assistant Chief Basinger stated that the trend is downward with hours and commitment from paid on-call.

The Board discussed staffing, training, responsibilities, experience, and the decrease in people picking up responsibilities.

Chief Mackey explained that time and lack of experience were their biggest hurdles because they were competing for people's discretionary time and, in general, the most people can give is about 10-12 hours/week. He shared examples of situations where employees are getting burnt out and briefly outlined the staffing plan that has been built out and how it has affected their response times. He stated that if this position were cut, it would have a massive trickle-down effect on the department.

Assistant Chief Basinger reiterated that any duty crew position that isn't covered falls back on him or Chief Mackey. He explained that 50-60 hours as Assistant Chief, but on top of that, in April, for example, he covered 144 hours of duty officer coverage as well, 100 hours in March, and 151 in February. He stated that hired a new Battalion Chief in May, who was able to take on some of those hours, so for June, his extra hours dropped down to 92, but explained that this was not sustainable for him to be able to continue covering those extra hours on top of his regular job. He noted that his numbers for July are shooting up again, even though the Battalion Chief is covering about one-third of those hours. He

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explained that he loved the people in the Department, but he and his family were living in burnout and feeling its effects.

Boardmember Jewett asked what Assistant Chief Basinger's hours would look like in a scenario where there were 3 Battalion Chiefs.

Assistant Chief Basinger stated that it would decrease, but most likely not down to zero, due to vacation or sick days.

Chair Maddy asked if there was a date for Mr. Stern's retirement.

Chief Mackey stated that he has stated that he may stick around until January, but had also communicated that he may only stick around until September or October. He stated that when he leaves, the impact will be significant.

Chair Maddy stated that it looked like they would be holding a special meeting to take a look at an amended budget once they give Chief Mackey some additional direction regarding the budget.

Boardmember Jewett stated that he was in favor of hiring the Battalion Chief for 2026, and despite the large increase, he would like to stick with the staffing plan put into place 5 years ago.

Boardmember Eckland asked if there was a percentage range that they were trying to get to.

Chair Maddy stated that, in his experience, the Board had never given that kind of direction to Chief Mackey and noted that right now they would end up between 18% and 23%.

Boardmember Tyler shared that he understood the story of the need for a Battalion Chief and can see the effects of burnout and would like to avoid that. He reiterated that he felt the budget could be tightened up a bit more to keep the Battalion Chief. He noted that he understood the point made earlier by Chair Maddy that they may or may not spend that money and believed that the tightening up with only get them down to about a 20% increase. He noted that if the member cities did not vote in support of the proposed budget, he believed what would happen would be a 3% increase, which he assumed would be catastrophic.

Chief Mackey suggested that they consider directing him to go back and see what he could do to tighten up the budget, but also buy down the reserves for a year or two, and then have the goal of building them back up once they get past the staffing goals.

Chair Maddy stated that they were talking about not refilling the reserves in a year where they had an unexpected expense.

Chief Mackey explained that he would be okay buying down the reserves for a year or two because they were intended to be used for short-term needs, which is what this situation is.

Boardmember Tyler stated that to him, the chiller is something that came up, but they knew about the SCBA situation.

Chair Maddy noted that the real mistake may have been relying on being able to get grant money to cover them and stated that he felt where the Board had landed tonight was to just really tighten up the budget wherever possible and be forgiving next year if they go over budget and have to dip into the reserves. He

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stated that he hoped that they would not end up with any other unplanned expenses, so they would be able to get their CIP and reserve plans in order moving forward.

Chief Mackey stated that he would plan to schedule the Special Board meeting in August.

NEW BUSINESS - Approval to sell Rescue 11 – continued.....

Jewett moved, Tyler seconded, to Authorize Selling Rescue 11, as proposed. Motion passed 5/0.

9. NEXT MEETING

A. EXFD Governing Board Meeting September 24, 2025, 6:00 P.M., Station 1

The Board discussed possible dates in August to hold a Special Board Meeting.

Gallagher moved, Tyler seconded, to schedule a Special Board Meeting on August 13, 2025, 6:00 P.M., Station 1. Motion passed 5/0.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Tyler moved, Gallagher seconded, Adjourning the EXFD Governing Board Meeting of July 23, 2025, at 8:51 P.M. Motion passed 5/0.