



EXCELSIOR FIRE DISTRICT

Proudly serving the communities of: Deephaven, Excelsior, Greenwood, Shorewood, & Tonka Bay

Excelsior Fire District Board Meeting
Wednesday, May 27, 2026
6:00 pm
Excelsior Fire District - EOC (Station 1)
Meeting Minutes

Call to Order by Chair Gallagher at 6:01pm.

Attendance: Board members present: Kevin Broas (Tonka Bay), Jennifer Gallagher (Greenwood), Tony Jewett (Deephaven), Dustin Maddy (Shorewood), Jennifer Caron (Excelsior); Operating Committee (ex-officio) members present: Max Peters (Tonka Bay), Dan Madsen (Deephaven), Marc Nevinski (Shorewood), Kristi Luger (Excelsior); Guests: Joe Neubauer (League of MN Cities Claims Adjuster), Julie Fleming-Wolfe (Fleming-Wolfe Law, P.A.)

1. **Approval of Agenda**
Motion by Jewett, seconded by Maddy. Approved 5-0.
2. **Approval of Meeting Minutes (April) –**
Motion by Jewett, seconded by Broas to approve April meeting minutes. Approved 5-0.
3. **Consent Agenda**
Motion by Maddy, seconded by Jewett. Approved 5-0.
4. **Closed Session**
Motion by Maddy and second by Jewett to move into a closed session pursuant to MN Statute §13D.05, Subd. 3(b) under the Attorney-Client privilege exception to discuss threatened litigation. Approved 5-0. The board then entered closed session.

Coming out of closed session, there was a motion by Jewett, second by Broas, to accept the recommendation of Attorney Fleming-Wolfe on how to proceed with the threatened litigation. Approved 5-0.
5. **Matters from the Floor**
None.
6. **Report Agenda**
Interim Chief Basinger updated on recent major all calls. The fire at Haskell's and several fires as mutual aid to other cities. Staffing is still at 43. Planning to hire around six more for a fall start. Anticipating several retirements between August and January. Want to stay in the 45-50 range.
7. **Unfinished Business**
 - a. **Verbal update from OC on Fire Chief process**
Nevinski provided an update to the Board regarding the Operating Committee's work to-date on the fire chief hiring process. The focus has been on providing the District with HR support, and to a lesser extent, finance

support. He reviewed the three options that had been the focus of the Operating Committee. The third option was the one favored by the operating committee, which was to establish the interim fire chief position for a 12-month period and to hire an interim, part-time District Administrator that would take on the HR responsibilities of the District and provide high-level finance oversight and direction for the District. Discussion was had around the viability of a part-time District Administrator, and it was felt that there was a decent pool of former or part-time city administrators that would be interested in a role like this. Interim Chief Basinger was asked his thoughts on the third option and he stated that he was willing to stay on for a twelve-month period and that having a defined period of time would help get buy-in from the firefighters. He stated that he thought the option for an interim district administrator would be helpful and affirmed Luger's position that this would allow the District to try the position without making permanent changes at this time. Basinger stated that they were down a full-time operational position and did not want to give that up permanently. At the end of the 12-month interim period, once a fire chief was hired, the focus should shift back to how to fill that vacant operational position, as the district administrator would not have operational responsibilities. Caron asked what the opinion was of anyone on the Operating Committee that had a differing opinion. Madsen stated that he wanted to ensure that the fire department was being provided with what they needed and to ensure that it was what leadership felt they needed. Madsen stated his concern that the fire department staffing model was build based upon having three Battalion Chiefs, a Fire Chief and an Assistant Fire Chief. The proposed plan appeared to remove one full-time Chief position and replace it with a part-time City Administrator, which would in effect remove a full-time leadership position from the fire department for at least one year. Caron said she appreciated hearing both sides.

Basinger stated that he would be bringing the proposal to the firefighters to get their reaction and feedback. The Board gave direction to the Operating Committee to put together a proposal for an interim district administrator for the Board to review at the next meeting.

b. Interim Fire Chief wage adjustment

Motion by Caron, seconded by Maddy to adjust Interim Chief Basinger's salary to that of the budgeted amount for the Fire Chief, to be back-dated to April 8, 2026, per the recommendation of the Operating Committee in the memo provided by Fletcher. Approved 5-0.

c. 2027 Budget update

Interim Chief Basinger updated that there were no significant changes to the 2027 budget. He stated that his task was to work with Chief Ballsrud and Kraus Anderson to level out the deferred maintenance and put together a prioritized list of building projects that were needed. He stated that there had been discussions of either some members of the Coordinating Committee and Fire Board working on it together, or perhaps the full group from both PD and Fire. But that his task was to work with Chief Ballsrud to figure out building costs and schedules for the next Board meeting. Basinger stated that at the last Board meeting where the budget was discussed, there did not seem to be any issues with the proposed Operating and CIP budgets. That they were proposed with the flat roofs and the third Battalion Chief for 2027. He stated that they may need to add in Fire's portion of the battery backup system, which would be around \$50,000. Maddy asked what the battery backup system was for. Basinger explained that it provided constant power to specific electronics when the building switched over to generator power. Maddy confirmed that was the same as a "UPS" system. Basinger agreed. Basinger stated that he needed to know if there was anything that the Board wanted worked on or changed with the proposed 2027 budget but said it seemed like everyone had been good with it and that it was about a 1.8% increase.

8. New Business

a. Policy Review process

Basinger referenced the memo regarding the policy review process, recommending the types of policies the Board should review and the recommended cadence of the review process. The Board gave direction to proceed with the recommendations laid out in the memo.

b. EFO

Basinger referenced the memo regarding his acceptance into the EFO program. He stated that he had discussed this with the Operating Committee and felt this was good opportunity. He explained that there were four in-person sessions over two years and requested that be counted as salaried time and not the use of paid-time-off/vacation time. He explained that there were no out-of-pocket costs for tuition, airfare, or lodging for the EFO program. The only costs were for meals. He stated that the District had a policy provision for per diems and that the EFO program provided meal passes at approximately \$10 per day less than the standard per diem. Motion by Gallagher, seconded by Maddy to approve the recommendations stated in the memo. Approved 5-0.

c. Discussion of Joint Powers Agreement Draft Amendment

Jewett read through the JPA draft amendments proposed by Deephaven. Discussion was had regarding the proposed amendments and requested actions. Jewett requested that the other Board members bring the draft amendments to their city councils and bring feedback to the July Board meeting.

9. Next Meeting

a. Fire Board Meeting, June 24, 2026, at 18:00.

10. Motion by Maddy, and second by Broas, to adjourn. Approved 5-0.