

**Excelsior Fire District Board
EXFD Governing Board Meeting
Wednesday, June 24, 2026**

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

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gallagher called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Present: Excelsior Fire District (EXFD) Boardmembers: Vice Chair Tony Jewett (Deephaven), Jennifer Caron (Excelsior), Mike Marti (Greenwood alternate), Kevin Broas (Tonka Bay).

Also present: Excelsior Fire District Interim Fire Chief Basinger; Deephaven Administrator Madsen; Shorewood City Administrator Nevinski; Tonka Bay City Administrator Peters; Excelsior City Manager Luger, Greenwood Tom Fletcher.

Absent: Chair Gallagher, Boardmember Maddy.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Caron moved, Broas seconded, approving the EXFD Governing Board meeting agenda, as presented. Motion passed 4/0.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. May 2026, EXFD Board Minutes

Jewett moved, Broas seconded, approving the EXFD Board Work Session Minutes of May 2026, as presented. Motion passed 4/0.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Monthly Fire District Administrative Reports – May 2026**
- B. Report of the Operating Committee Minutes – May 2026**
- C. Policies 200, 323, 701, 1024, 1042**

Caron moved, Broas seconded, approving the Consent Agenda, items A through C, as presented. Motion passed 4/0.

5. MATTERS FROM THE FLOOR

No one wished to address the EXFD.

6. REPORT AGENDA

A. Relief pension update formula generates yearly contribution increase.

Kyle Green, a firefighter with the EXFD, and President of the Excelsior Fire Relief Association introduced himself.

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Mr. Green noted he was looking for an increase to the Firefighters' Annual Pension amount from \$12,750 per year of service to \$12,800 per year of service.

Boardmember Caron asked if the benefit becomes partially vested after 10 years of credited service and fully vested after 20 years. Mr. Green stated the schedule has changed to 5 years and 15 years.

Boardmember Caron stated the packet needs to be updated as the EXFD is relying on it to back up documentation. Mr. Green noted that is something the EXFD could look into, and his team would look into it too.

Boardmember Caron asked if the resolution would describe the funding percentage. Mr. Green noted that the funding percentage is based on assets and liabilities. ABDO determines the liability number and combined determines the funding percentage.

Boardmember Caron noted there is not a goal funding percentage. Mr. Green stated the funding percentage will increase based on the money coming from the state and investment returns, but there is no benchmark goal.

Mr. Green asked what a goal would entail. Boardmember Caron stated that if the goal is to be funded without asking cities for support, that only happens if there is a big enough surplus number year over year and there is no record of what that number previously was in the packet.

Mr. Green noted that looking at the funding coverage percentage, if the number is 112 percent or less, that would mean there could not be an increase for the fire pensions.

Mr. Green continued that the increase is in line with what the MOU is, and will require the EXFD to approve it, and if the fund ever goes negative, it would be backstopped based on state statutes.

Boardmember Caron asked if this resolution happens every year. Mr. Green stated that is correct.

Mr. Green noted that there will also be a Board salary increase, and because the Board salaries are paid out of a special fund, it must be approved by the EXFD itself. Currently, the salaries are \$2,200 for officers and would be increased to \$2,500. Trustees' salaries will increase significantly, due to the workload. He asked the EXFD for their support in approving those increases.

Boardmember Caron asked Mr. Green to explain the special fund. Mr. Green noted there are two funds that are maintained by the Relief Association: one is a general fund, and the other is the special fund. The special fund is money that comes from the state for earnings, pension, and direct benefits for firefighters, audits, salaries, and office supplies. The general fund is used for things that benefit the firefighters, like boat motors that make the firefighters' lives easier, and members now pay monthly dues that go into the general fund.

Boardmember Jewett asked if the retirement benefit is tied to the year the firefighters served. Mr. Green confirmed that at five years, firefighters receive 30 percent of the benefit, and every year after, up to 15 years, the firefighter would receive an additional seven percent.

Boardmember Jewett asked if the firefighters receive a percentage of the \$12,800 for every year of service or the full amount. Mr. Green noted that firefighters would receive the full amount for every year they served. He added that the fund is currently sitting at 149 percent funded as of the end of May.

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Boardmember Jewett asked if there would be additional talks if the fund ever got to 160 percent. Mr. Green stated that there is a formula in place if that happens.

Interim Fire Chief Basinger added that the fund would be reset back to 150 percent.

Mr. Green stated that it has only happened once in his time there. Boardmember Jewett asked if the fund is reset by increasing the contribution.

Mr. Fletcher stated that it would bring the asset-to-liability ratio back down to 150 percent assets over liabilities. He asked Mr. Green if that was correct. Mr. Green confirmed that is correct.

Boardmember Caron asked if the fund has ever been below 112 percent. Mr. Green stated that the fund has been below 112 percent one time during the recession.

Mr. Kuhnly stated the fund has been consistent for the last five years.

Mr. Green noted that the fund works with the state board investments to help allocate the money and see returns with minimal fees compared to a private group.

Boardmember Jewett stated that the EXFD would pass the resolutions individually.

B. Resolution 26-004

Caron moved, Broas seconded to adopt resolution 26-004, to approve the 2026 retirement benefit increase of \$725 per year of service, raising the benefit from \$12,075 to \$12,800 per year of service, effective August 1, 2026. Motion passed 4/0.

C. Resolution 26-005

Caron moved, Broas seconded to adopt Resolution 26-005, to approve the 2026 Relief Board salary increase, which increases the officer salary to \$2,500 annually and the trustee salary to \$2,000 annually. Motion passed 4/0.

D. Fire Chief: Fire District Report/Major All calls/ Staffing update

Interim Fire Chief Basinger noted that last month the call per city information was requested and has been shared with the Operating Committee. Staff is looking through it now in order to make decisions based on staffing. Times are calculated in the report differently based on time with a duty officer, which shows how quickly a firefighter will be in service and on scene after a 911 call.

Boardmember Jewett asked if the numbers in blue on the report include the duty officer. Interim Fire Chief Basinger confirmed that those times include the duty officer, who is the first one on service, and noted that the report is showing year over year, so from May 2025 to May 2026 can be compared.

Interim Fire Chief Basinger added that there were no major outcalls since the last meeting. The final investigation came back from Hennepin County regarding Haskell's, and determined that the fire was

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caused by a cigarette butt. A presentation is available reading the Fire Department's response to that fire if the cities wish to see it.

Interim Fire Chief Basinger added that the Fire Department received a grant from the Rotary, as well as a grant for electric vehicle fire blankets, and will have one in each fire station.

Interim Fire Chief Basinger noted that Rescue 12 is in the shop getting repairs done from a recent accident. He added that the Fire Department is still sitting at 43 firefighters, looking to hire six to seven in the fall, and is anticipating between three and five retirements by year-end. The Fire Marshall is also retiring in November.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Interim Administrative Coordination position

Interim Fire Chief Basinger explained that at the last meeting, Mr. Nevinski came with three different options that the Operating Committee had discussed in order to move forward with the Chief role. The EXFD made recommendations for the Operating Committee to put together a job description to hire an Interim District Administrator. This position would most likely hire a former City Administrator with experience in HR, Finance, and other backgrounds with a one-year contract period.

Interim Fire Chief Basinger stated he sent out the potential job description to the EXFD, but would like to discuss the hourly rate for this position at 30 hours a week.

Boardmember Jewett asked if this position would be on site, remote, or partially remote. Interim Fire Chief Basinger stated the expectation is for the position to be on site.

Mr. Broas stated the position lists a required Associate's Degree and three to five years of HR experience, and asked why the hourly rate is listed so high. Interim Fire Chief Basinger noted that he deferred to the Operating Committee for the hourly rate.

Mr. Nevinski pointed out that the Operating Committee looked at other interim work that is being done, and some rates were much higher than this. The position is listed at \$80 to \$90 an hour, which the Operating Committee felt was reasonable, as this position will not have benefits and is a contract position.

Ms. Luger stated it is a fair question to ask why this position only requires an Associate's degree.

Mr. Broas added that he would rather see the work and education experience match that dollar range.

Ms. Luger pointed out that temporary positions are really difficult to hire, but the concerns are valid. The minimum qualifications were not discussed when the job description was made, and the Operating Committee can go back and increase those qualifications.

Mr. Broas noted that 30 hours a week at that rate would be very expensive for the District. Ms. Luger agreed, and this position has to stay budget neutral.

Interim Fire Chief Basinger added that Staff figured out what the Assistant Chief salary for that duration and benefits would look like to ensure the District stays budget neutral.

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Boardmember Caron stated that the job qualifications need to be listed for a higher level of experience to attract a former City Administrator with a Bachelor's degree.

Mr. Nevinski pointed out that when reviewing applications, those applications would be scored based on the minimum requirements and then looking at any additional desired requirements to look at the whole package. The requirements can be tweaked to make it more precise.

Ms. Luger added that if there is not an applicant that meets the District's needs, she will not be inclined to hire them, but is confident there are retired administrators who would be interested. Mr. Nevinski added that settling for even an Interim position is not advisable.

Mr. Broas noted that the rate is maybe lower than what highly experienced administrators make, but the District is looking for someone who is retired, and this position would be part-time with no benefits, but could have a flexible schedule.

Ms. Luger pointed out that the rate is still low even for what is described, but this position is unique because it is for the District as a Department head.

Boardmember Caron asked who is currently doing the job requirements listed. Interim Fire Chief Basinger stated that the Fire Chief is doing the job with Office Manager Rochelle Johnson's assistance.

Boardmember Caron asked if this position would be one level below the Interim Fire Chief, and if Ms. Johnson would be comfortable with how this new position would work with hers. Interim Fire Chief Basinger stated that he has had conversations with Ms. Johnson about this new position, and this role is seen as providing guidance for her and acting as a backstop.

Boardmember Caron pointed out that this is a temporary position, and the employee will need assistance, so there needs to be clear communication between Ms. Johnson because she is the expert, and the applicant because the applicant is being hired to accomplish a lot.

Mr. Broas added that this is only a temporary position, unless it works out, and then it could be a permanent position.

Ms. Luger stated this position may not replace the Assistant Fire Chief role but be in addition to the Assistant Fire Chief. She added that the Police Department also needs additional administrative support, so this role may eventually work part-time for both Departments.

Mr. Broas noted that labeling it as a temporary position sends the wrong message because the intent is not for the position to go away. The intent is to try this model to see if this position could work for both the Fire Department and the Police Department.

Mr. Fletcher stated that Deephaven has their own Police Department and full participants in the Fire Department could potentially complicate things for this position.

Boardmember Jewett stated this position is temporary, which means the District would be hiring an Assistant Fire Chief and a full-time Fire Chief in a year but could revisit that 10 months from now if the District Administrator position is working out. He added the job should be posted somewhere intentionally for retired administrators to see.

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Mr. Nevinski stated that the League of Minnesota Cities has a list of people who do this type of work, and that is the pool. Boardmember Jewett added that it better frames the position, because those applicants are not looking for permanent positions. Mr. Nevinski agreed; those applicants are looking for short-term positions.

Boardmember Caron acknowledged that temporary only applies to the person, and this position is a test of a model, but Staff needs to ensure that everything can work smoothly together. She asked why the position would be changed to Administrative Coordinator versus District Administrator.

Interim Fire Chief Basinger explained that the District Administrator title sounded more like a top position, whereas Administrative Coordinator sounded more in line with what the District is looking for, but should be labeled as an Administrative Consultant and will be updated.

Mr. Broas confirmed that Administrative Consultant makes more sense. Boardmember Caron stated it also implies that the applicant will have more experience.

Interim Fire Chief Basinger stated he would also update the job posting to a Bachelor's degree requirement, along with years of experience.

Ms. Luger stated that was discussed by the Operating Committee, where feedback would be given to the person in this position once a month, but Interim Fire Chief Basinger would be the judge of when that would happen.

Mr. Broas stated it makes sense for this position to have guidance from the Operating Committee.

Boardmember Jewett stated the 30 hours per week would be the maximum, and once the position is figured out, the administrative work involved will be quick and easy.

Boardmember Caron noted that even once things are figured out with this position, there will still be a need for an administrative position to take some of the workload off of the Assistant Chief.

Mr. Fletcher stated that this position could write the job description for their successor.

Boardmember Caron asked what the EXFD needs to do regarding the job position.

Boardmember Jewett noted that he already made the discussed changes to the job description and is looking for a motion to get the job posted.

Caron moved, seconded by Broas, to direct the Interim Fire Chief Basinger and the Operating Committee to post the position of Administrative Consultant as discussed in the meeting with the job description and pay scale that was reviewed.

Mr. Nevinski asked if the EXFD wants the Operating Committee to look through applications with Interim Fire Chief Basinger and bring candidates back for discussion.

Boardmember Caron asked if that needs to be discussed before voting. Mr. Nevinski stated it could be a second motion if the EXFD is comfortable with what has been written and amended.

Boardmember Jewett stated the EXFD could vote and spend a few minutes discussing what the hiring process would look like.

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Motion carried 4/0.

Boardmember Jewett asked how many applicants the EXFD should see. Ms. Luger stated she assumed Interim Fire Chief Basinger would pick the appointment. The EXFD only has jurisdiction over the hiring and firing of the Fire Chief.

Interim Fire Chief Basinger noted that in other full-time positions, the EXFD Boardmembers have sat in on interview panels and are open to continuing that. Mr. Broas added that the Operating Committee should be involved too.

Boardmember Caron noted that the EXFD did not need to participate in the hiring process.

Boardmember Jewett added that if it was past practice to have the EXFD Chair there, then Chair Gallagher can be there. Mr. Nevinski added that a Chair has not been present for any hiring of members of the Operating Committee before.

Interim Fire Chief Basinger noted that Boardmember Maddy sat in on the hiring process for the Battalion.

Mr. Nevinski pointed out that the JPA states that the Fire Chief and District shall be responsible to the EXFD Board in the hiring, termination, supervision, discipline, and direction of District personnel.

Ms. Luger stated that the Operating Committee also came to the conclusion that the one-year contract starts when the applicant is hired. Mr. Broas agreed with that.

Mr. Nevinski stated that the Operating Committee would come to the EXFD with a successful applicant and a contract for approval.

Mr. Broas asked if the position can be structured as a three-month contract with the option to renew. Ms. Luger stated that she has seen other positions opt to terminate employment with an exit clause within a certain time period.

Boardmember Jewett stated it will be up to Interim Fire Chief Basinger to have Chair Gallagher involved in the hiring process. Interim Fire Chief Basinger added that the Operating Committee would also be involved in the process, and a contract will come back before the EXFD once an applicant is picked.

Boardmember Caron stated that Boardmembers should not be part of the process, and that is clear in the JPA. Mr. Broas stated he agreed.

Boardmember Jewett stated it is Interim Fire Chief Basinger's operation.

Ms. Luger added that the position would be given two weeks' notice if the choice was made to terminate the position.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. July Board meeting date

Interim Fire Chief Basinger stated that the meeting was scheduled for July 22, but he will be absent and asked it to be rescheduled for July 15.

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Boardmember Jewett stated he would notify Chair Gallagher and Boardmember Maddy of the schedule change.

9. NEXT MEETING

A. Fire Board Meeting July 15, 2026, at 18:00

Boardmember Jewett confirmed the schedule change date of July 15, 2026, at 18:00.

10. ADJOURNMENT

(1:15:29) Broas moved, Caron seconded to adjourn the EXFD Governing Board Meeting of June 24, 2026, at 7:15 P.M. Motion passed 4/0.