

Northwoods Emergency Medical Services District
Special Board Meeting
Tuesday, August 26, 2025, 7:00 PM
Presque Isle Community Center

A quorum of Town Board members from each of the four member Towns may be present at this meeting. No official Town Board action will be taken by these members during their attendance at this meeting.

1. The Meeting was called to order by Phil Harris at 7:00 pm and he verified that the Agenda had been posted appropriately. Those in attendance were:
Board: Phil Harris, John Hanson, Steve Herzberg, and Daniell Wahlgren
EMS Staff: Chief Jason Joling
EMS Consultant: Dana Sechler
Others in the audience and online: Kim Prott, Destinee Harris, Donna Jukich, Cathy Logan-Weber, Corky Curtis, and Al Eschenbauch
2. Motion by Daniell Wahlgren, second by Steve Herzberg, to approve the Agenda as posted. Voice vote: All ayes, motion carried.
3. Motion by Steve Herzberg, second by Daniell Wahlgren to approve the Minutes from the Board meeting on 8/12/25. Voice vote: All ayes, motion carried.
4. Phil Harris indicated that payment checks from two of the Member Towns have been received, and he has the third check from the third Town with him. He asked John Hanson if the Manitowish Waters check would be arriving by August 31st. John indicated ‘yes’, but had some comments about the payment that he expressed to the group. Discussion followed, and Phil read through the Bylaws Section VIII, which states that there shall be two equal payments made by the Members—one in February, and one in August. Steve stated that there was only one Budget that had been approved by the District. Phil continued on with reading the minutes from September 16, 2024, October 4, 2024, and October 30, 2024, which listed the details of the 2025 Budget that had been approved by the NEMSD Board. John indicated that he never stated that Manitowish Waters wouldn’t pay the amount due, but he would like to continue to review the numbers that have been presented for the 2026 Budget, to assure that they are accurate for the upcoming year. Phil clarified that the payment that is due by August 31st is reflective of two equal payments, as stated by the Bylaws.
5. Phil asked if the Director’s errors and omissions insurance has been purchased for 2025. John had started working on that item, and Jason clarified that the E&O insurance has been purchased.
6. Phil Harris asked Dana Sechler to discuss the pros and cons of the District considering the option of the District becoming a 501(C)(3). Dana explained that if the District changed their organizational status to a 501(C)(3) corporation, that they would lose the benefits associated with

being a Municipal-like entity. The District would not be eligible to participate in the employee benefit programs such as the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) and the State Health Insurance program. As well, the new entity would need to be relicensed through the DHS EMS Office, and submit a new Operational Plan. John Hanson mentioned that (1) a group could consider creating a “Friends of” organization that is non-profit/not-for-profit, that could collect funds, and transfer them to the District, and (2) each Town could accept donations from a person (to be used by the District) and could accept tax-deductible donations for that purpose. John stated that a common fund could be established by the Towns (though accepting donations seems to be the best option) and the “Friends of” group might be eligible to obtain a grant on behalf of the District. It was discussed if a motion was needed regarding this topic. It was suggested that the motion be made in the positive format. Initially, a Motion was made by Steve Herzberg, seconded that the organizational status remain the same, however, it was decided that a motion / vote was not needed.

7. Phil Harris discussed a property that is located at B&M that might be an option for a future station location. Daniell Wahlgren indicated that the property that he had been looking at fell through. At the end of the meeting today, the group will decide a time/place that the Building Committee can meet to further discuss future station locations.
8. The proposed 2026 Budget was discussed in great detail. Some of the points are detailed below.
 - a. Phil Harris pointed out the following:
 - i. There are no increases / raises for personnel in 2026.
 - ii. The Revenue was anticipated to be billed at 425 calls. The District is on track to respond to 425 calls by the end of the year, however, the ambulance crews are only transporting about 70% of the patients, which equates to 298 billable calls.
 - b. Steve Herzberg stated the Towns should be focusing on the service that is being provided by the District and its staff.
 - i. The Paramedic with the least amount of experience is at 10 years.
 - ii. The District also has a Critical care paramedic, and a person who is taking nursing classes.
 - iii. The ambulances are out the door in less than 90 seconds—and is on scene within an average of 14 minutes from the time of the page, which is a significant positive change from the prior year.
 - iv. Steve proposed that a “fee-study” occur this year, to determine the best fee at which to Bill.
 - v. Some of the line items that are included in the 2026 Budget, that were not included in the 2025 budget, were discussed by the group.
 - c. Danielle brought up a question from the Town of Boulder Junction:
 - i. There was a question regarding the Administrative wages, and why that is high, and a clarification of their roles on staffing the ambulances. Both the Chief and Deputy Chief each work 50 hours, and they do cover on the ambulance, however, as a salaried-exempt employee, they cannot work more than 20% on the ambulance in each given week.
 - d. A spreadsheet was shared with the group, that showed all the payroll and benefits expenses for the staff. Discussion also occurred about the difference between the WRS contributions for Protected status employees—by the employer, as well as the employee.

- e. Discussion occurred about budgeting to the amount of potential costs for Insurance benefits. Some felt that the budget should reflect having all the staff at the family level, some felt that it should reflect the average of what is expected each year. Discussions occurred regarding the payroll wages and benefits worksheet.
 - f. John Hanson brought up the following comments and questions.
 - i. John had an issue with the increase of the amount to be provided by the Towns. He thinks that it can be addressed by adjusting the below items. Discussion occurred within the group regarding each of the suggested points.
 - 1. Decrease / remove the \$12 loaded mileage from the budget.
 - 2. \$120,000 for the Facilities fund. The suggestion was that the amount should be placed in a capital fund, not the operations fund.
 - 3. \$70,000 for Ambulances.
 - ii. John felt that adjusting the above items would bring the proposed 2026 Budget to be very close to what the 2025 Budget currently is. Phil asked what the difference would be in the equalized value numbers. Roughly speaking, it would take the amount from \$66 to \$55.
9. After all the discussion was completed on the proposed 2026 Budget document, a Motion was made by Phil Harris, second by Steve Herzberg to accept the budget as presented, but move the \$120,000 accrual for the Building into an approved line item. An Amendment to the Motion was made by John Hanson, second by Phil Harris to move the \$120,000 accrual for the Building and the \$70,000 ambulance / intercept fund into a reserve account. Voice vote on the amendment: All ayes, motion carried. The original motion was then voted on to approve the Budget as presented, with the amendment portion. Voice vote: 3 ayes, 1 nay. Motion carried.
10. The date for the next Building committee meeting was set for September 2, at 4:00 pm.
11. The meeting was then adjourned by the President at 8:50 pm.