

**Whatcom County Fire District #21  
Station 61 – Blaine  
9408 Odell Street, Blaine WA 98230  
7:00 pm  
June 16, 2016  
Regular Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Bosman called the regular Whatcom County Fire District #21 Board of Fire Commissioners meeting for June 16, 2016 to order at 7:02 p.m. at Station 61 – 9408 Odell Street, Blaine, WA 98230.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE**

Chairman Bosman requested a moment of silence for those affected by the Orlando, Florida shooting.

**ROLL CALL**

Attendees: Chairman Rich Bosman; Vice-Chairman Larry McPhail, Commissioners Dean Berkeley, John Crawford and Bruce Ansell; Fire Chief William Pernet; Division Chief Henry Hollander; Training Captain Joe Noonchester.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

- None

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

1. Meeting Minutes
  - a) May 19, 2016 – Regular Meeting
  - b) May 21, 2016 – Special Meeting
2. Staff Reports - Chiefs / Operations / Training / Technical Support
3. Financial Report / Revenue - May \$519,372.64
4. Voucher / Payroll / Benefits
  - a) NWFR Employees Direct Deposit Payroll # 458-518: \$278,528.97
  - b) Volunteer Direct Deposit Payroll # 519-544 :\$4,563.12
  - c) Non-Direct Payroll # 14-15: \$198.43
  - d) Benefits Vouchers # 60-70 : \$158,835.49
  - e) Monthly Expenditure Vouchers # 984-1201: \$59,871.86
  - f) Capital Projects Voucher #1202: \$2,950.00

The Board requested clarification on some consent agenda items:

2. Staff Reports – City of Blaine inspections: Chief Pernet explained that the number of inspections by occupancy recorded in May was deceiving. Crews must set up and

complete inspections and re-inspections while on shift, which can sometimes prove difficult and take longer than expected. The completed data is not recorded until the entire process is complete. In addition, crews had to complete various mandatory training requirements including firefighter survival training, VO2 Max, and air management during the month of May. Chief Pernet further noted that the 2016-2021 Strategic Plan has allocated a committee to work on providing recommendations to enhance the inspection / pre – planning program in the future.

**Recruit Graduation:** The five new recruits will graduate from the Washington State Fire Training Academy on Friday, June 22 in Burien. Since some Board members are interested in attending, Captain Noonchester will provide the Board with additional information.

3. **Financial Report – Long Term Debt Obligation:** Chief Pernet pointed out that the commissioner approved 2010 bond to purchase three engines and a ladder truck is paid twice yearly in June and December with monies from the general fund. Extra monies are invested until needed for the payment. The bond is slated to be paid in full by 2019.

**Overtime Budget:** Chief Pernet reminded the Board that the staffing model was altered in 2015 and the first half of 2016 to better maintain a three person staffing at each career station. Some of the funds were reallocated from the vacant firefighter positions in addition to the budgeted overtime. Although the overtime budget looks over budget at the moment, once the five new probationary firefighters begin to pull shifts, it is expected that overtime will continue to decline and normalize. Regardless, Chief Pernet plans to keep a close eye on the overtime usage.

**Volunteer Shift Hours:** There was discussion regarding why the monthly volunteer shift hours have declined in the last few months. Chief Pernet noted that there has been a lot of separations, in part because volunteers are looking for career jobs and eventually get hired by other departments. Other volunteers find it difficult to stay up-to-date with all of the firefighter requirements while maintaining employment elsewhere. Chief Pernet reiterated that other departments are having the same concerns regarding volunteer retention. With the new volunteer probationary firefighters beginning to pull shifts, it is hoped that the district can keep them engaged and part of our reserve pool. In addition, Chief Pernet and Captain Noonchester plan to meet to discuss an upcoming volunteer informational meeting.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Crawford moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ansell and approved 5-0.

Chairman Bosman explained the consent agenda process. Board members were encouraged to send him questions regarding any of the consent agenda items prior to the

meeting. The Board member will receive a clarification via email and the item may also be discussed during the meeting, prior to approval.

## **FIRE COMMISSIONER MONTHLY REPORTS**

- **Blaine City Council Meeting:** Commissioner Ansell provided an overview of the Blaine City Council meeting held on Monday, June 13. Chief Hollander also attended the meeting. The meeting was a public hearing to address fireworks where arguments from both sides were heard. Ultimately an ordinance was passed which bans fireworks in West Blaine and limits the use of fireworks within the City of Blaine to July 4, from 10:00 a.m. until midnight. The ordinance will not go into effect until 2017. It also allows for the Fire Marshal, City Manager, Mayor or Chief of Police the power to proclaim an emergency banning fireworks for reasons such as unseasonable dry conditions. The ordinance will not impact the professional fireworks show held near the Blaine Marina. There is a concern that an exorbitant amount of people will flock, to Birch Bay on the holiday once the ban goes into effect.

Commissioner Ansell questioned if North Whatcom Fire and Rescue should take a position on the fireworks trepidations. Chief Pernet noted that the district does not have jurisdiction to enforce the fireworks ordinance. In addition, law enforcement will also have a difficult job with enforcement due to the sheer number of anticipated complaints. Chief Pernet stated that the district will continue to offer yearly fireworks education and recommendations to keep everyone safe on the Fourth of July. In addition, the district has an Incident Action Plan for the holiday, which encompasses the parade, car show and where to stage emergency vehicles to maneuver during the heightened traffic flow.

Commissioner Ansell asked if fireworks incident statistics could be gathered from the district and sent to the Blaine City Council for informational purposes. Chief Hollander agreed to gather some data to pass along. Currently the district sends yearly fireworks injury statistics to the state.

- **Birch Bay Chamber of Commerce:** Commissioner Ansell noted that the Birch Bay Chamber of Commerce meeting had been rescheduled from their normal third Thursday of the month meeting date to Thursday, June 2. Commissioner Ansell was unable to attend the meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for July 21, which may also be rescheduled. Commissioner Ansell intends to keep in contact with the Chamber members and attend meetings as he is able.
- **Cascadia Rising Drill:** Commissioner Ansell briefly attended the Cascadia Rising drill held on Wednesday, June 8 and Thursday, June 9. The drill was based on a nine point zero earthquake hitting the west coast affecting California up to British Columbia, Canada. Chief Pernet ran the fire branch of the drill at the emergency operations center (EOC) during the event. He noted that the drill provided opportunities for networking between agencies.

- **Other:** There was discussion about identifying Board members as NWFR Fire Commissioners when they are representing the district at meetings and public events. It was agreed to have name badges made for each Board member to wear at meetings and events where they are representing the district.

Chairman Bosman reiterated the importance of completing the Commissioner Compensation form correctly. Approved meetings should be documented on the forms for auditing purposes. The auditors define the form as a legal document.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- **Custer Station 64 Real Estate Contract Update:** Chief Pernet signed a contract with realtor Mike Kent to assist with the sale of Custer Station 64. A flyer has also been created to showcase the station. At this time there has been multiple showings although no offers have been generated. Chief Hollander is in the process of completing a disclaimer on the station alerting potential buyers to any known issues. Chief Pernet will keep the Board updated.

### **POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

- None

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Resolution 2016-02 Support for Countywide EMS Levy:** Chief Pernet noted that all the fire districts have been asked to approve a resolution supporting the Countywide EMS levy. Chief Pernet reiterated that he continues to work with the County on an inter-local agreement to ensure that Fire Protection District #4 (D#4) will be compensated for any D#4 levy monies lost as a result of the countywide levy.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ansell moved to approve Resolution 2016-02 Support for Countywide EMS Levy. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman McPhail and approved 5-0.

- **Consultant Contract Approval:** The operations chief's position has remained vacant for the past year. Chief Pernet noted that the operations chief is a vital role and needs to be filled by the right person who will be both a good fit for the district and excel in the position. Several districts within the area utilize professional human resource (HR) consultants in the hiring process. By utilizing a consultant, Chief Pernet will be able to keep his focus on the many facets of running the department. The Board directed Chief Pernet to move forward with researching various HR consultants to assist with an internal / external hiring process and to present a contract to the Board for approval during the next Board meeting.
- **Board Meeting Attendance Query:** Commissioner Berkeley announced that he would be unable to attend the NWFR Fire Commissioner Meeting scheduled for July 21, 2016 and asked to be excused.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

- From Graham Hunter, United States Power Squadrons re: Thank you for assistance with the annual Marine Distress Flare Practice in Blaine Marine Park
- Northern Light article re: Volunteer John Hatfield recognition
- Northern Light article re: Custer Station 64
- Bellingham Herald article re: EMS Levy
- Bellingham Herald article re: Cascadia Rising
- Bellingham Herald article re: City of Blaine fireworks
- Custer Station 64 Flyer
- Jack Louws, Whatcom County Executive re: Thank you for assistance during Trump rally
- The Responder: District newsletter, June issue

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- None

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- None

## **AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

- Custer Station 64 update
- Consultant Contract update
- July 4<sup>th</sup> Holiday Report (Chief's report)

## **SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** There being no further business Vice-Chairman McPhail moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Berkeley and approved 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted by:

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Jennie Sand, Recording Secretary

**ATTEST:**

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Rich Bosman, Chairman

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Larry McPhail, Vice-Chairman

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Dean Berkeley, Commissioner

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John Crawford, Commissioner

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Bruce Ansell, Commissioner

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Chief Pernet, Board Secretary