

**Whatcom County Fire District #21  
Station 61 – Blaine  
9408 Odell Street, Blaine WA 98230  
7:00 pm  
January 16, 2014  
Regular Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Acting Chairman Larry McPhail called the regular Whatcom County Fire District #21 Board of Fire Commissioners meeting for January 16, 2014 to order at 7:08 p.m. at Station 61 – 9408 Odell Street, Blaine, WA 98230.

**ROLL CALL**

Attendees: Chairman Bill Salter (via phone); Vice-Chairman Dean Whitney (via phone); Commissioners Rich Bosman (via phone), Larry McPhail and Dean Berkeley; Chief Anderson; Division Chiefs Henry Hollander and John Swobody; Training Captain Joe Noonchester; Business Manager Benita Williams.

**FIREFIGHTER / FIRE COMMISSIONER SWEARING IN**

- Commissioner McPhail conducted the swearing in of Fire Commissioner Dean Berkeley.
- Chief Anderson conducted the swearing-in of Volunteer Firefighters: Stephen Bowerman, Tyler Hansen, Jessica Loudon, Branden Millsap, Gareth Moore, Jon Richardson, Josh Walker and Robert Yaple.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

- None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION:** Chairman Salter moved to approve the December 19, 2013 special commissioners meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Whitney and approved 5-0.

**MONTHLY REPORTS**

- **Chief's Report:** Chief Anderson provided a summary of the chief's report.

Chief Anderson congratulated the volunteers as well as the new fire commissioner and welcomed them to the district.

Chief Anderson reported that activity for both districts during the month of December was eighty-three (83) fire related calls and one hundred ninety-seven (197) medical related calls for a combined total of two hundred eighty (280) calls.

Chief Anderson noted that the 2013 year to date total of three thousand fifty-seven (3,057) is slightly lower than the combined calls in 2012. The average combined fire response time was eight minutes forty seconds while the average combined EMS calls was eight minutes thirty seconds. Due to some significant fires, NWFR had a total dollar save rate of approximately fifty-six (56%) percent while District 4 had no structure fires during the month of December. NWFR's total dollar save rate for 2013 was approximately seventy-five percent (75%).

Chief Anderson announced that firefighter Jonni Hill has made the decision to accept a position with the Shoreline Fire Department to pursue her career as a paramedic. The Board and Chiefs wished her the best in her new position.

Chief Anderson noted that as a result of Jonni Hills' resignation, a line firefighter position has become available. Chief Swobody has requested to be reassigned to the line firefighter position. After much discussion, Chief Anderson has accepted his request and it is anticipated that Chief Swobody will be placed back on line as a firefighter in early February.

With the reassignment of Chief Swobody, the district will begin a nationwide search for his replacement. A selection committee will be formed and will consist of chief officers as well as fire commissioner, union and volunteer representation. Promising candidates will be invited to participate in an interview and assessment lab process. The goal is to have the Division Chief of Operations position filled between April 1 and May 1, 2014.

There has been no word to report on either the SAFER or Fire Act grant.

- **Operations Report:** Chief Anderson provided a summary of the operations report. Chief Anderson noted that in order to track both NWFR's and District 4's transports separately, a new code was implemented into the Firehouse database that will provide a more accurate report.

In addition, the City of Lynden's personnel and units have also been added to the Firehouse database in an effort to correctly report NWFR's average response times. By not being able to record the times of any first responding unit regardless of which district responds to an incident, NWFR's response times are currently not accurately reflected.

Chief Swobody, Lieutenant Clark along with Firefighter Kettman continue to work on finalizing the new electronic time card system that will be utilized by all members in 2014.

One firefighter who has been injured off duty has requested to be placed on light duty for up to two months.



Chief Anderson reviewed the most recent structure fires within the district's response area.

Chief Anderson reviewed the staffing and time off statistics for December. Five hundred sixty-three (563) hours of sick time was utilized and volunteers pulled a total of eight hundred seventy-two (872) shift hours during the month of December.

- **Training Report:** Training Captain Noonchester provided a summary of the training report. Captain Noonchester noted that the training department spent a total of three hundred fourteen (314) hours on training during the month of December. The majority of training was spent on engine training. A detailed review of the monthly crew training hours will be provided in the upcoming 2013 annual report.

The NWFR recruits who recently graduated from the Whatcom County Recruit academy have currently begun EMT school. One recruit who had previously received his EMT certification began his twelve (12) month probation at Britton Loop Station 12 in January.

The district has received an annual EMS regional grant as well as a fifty percent (50%) reimbursement from the state to assist with the Whatcom County Recruit Academy.

Captain Noonchester announced that Lieutenant Clark is attending the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland for a week long company officer level training.

Captain Noonchester acknowledged his appreciation to the tender group who continue to show their commitment to the district by their diligent training and emergency response activity.

- **Technical Support Report:** Chief Hollander provided a summary of the technical support report.

Chief Hollander reviewed the district "Help Desks" requests forms for 2013.

The district continues to work with the Semiahmoo Marina with the goal of providing an approved fire standpipe system.

The district will continue to work with Whatcom County to develop an updated capital facilities plan (CFP) that will meet the needs of the district as well as the county.

Chief Hollander provided an update of the anticipated building projects around the district.

Chief Hollander reviewed the significant December apparatus repairs.

Chief Hollander reviewed the facilities repairs and reported that CO monitoring alarms have been installed at all career stations. Although the replacement of the Birch Bay Station 63 maintenance shop high volume air compressor has been budgeted the decision was made not to replace this critical component until absolutely necessary. In addition, Chief Hollander confirmed that L&I does conduct vessel inspections on all pressurized tanks in the system on a yearly basis.

There was discussion regarding whether the generator at Laurel Station 69 was adequate to serve the needs of the station if there was a power outage. Although seldom needed, the current generator will not serve all the needs of the career station. It was agreed to replace the Laurel Station 69 generator sometime in the future.

## **FINANCE**

- **Fund Balances:** Benita Williams, Business Manager provided information regarding the District's current unreconciled fund balances. The County will forward their report to the District on January 20, 2014.
- **January Vouchers:**

**MOTION:** Vice-Chairman Whitney moved to approve the January NWFR Employees Direct Deposit Payroll Vouchers #0001-0064 in the amount of \$256,238.69. The motion was seconded by Chairman Salter and approved 5-0.

**MOTION:** Chairman Salter moved to approve the January Volunteer Direct Deposit Payroll Vouchers #0065-0102 in the amount of \$9,329.61. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Whitney and approved 5-0.

**MOTION:** Vice-Chairman Whitney moved to approve the January Non-Direct Deposit Payroll Voucher #100 in the amount of \$33.25. The motion was seconded by Chairman Salter and approved 5-0.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Bosman moved to approve the January Benefits Vouchers #0001-0012 in the amount of \$170,008.60. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Whitney and approved 5-0.



Benita noted that the January vouchers are higher this month due to various annual bills that are invoiced in January.

**MOTION:** Vice-Chairman Whitney moved to approve the January Vouchers #001-189 in the amount of \$146,142.20. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bosman and approved 5-0.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- **Real Estate Update:** Chief Anderson announced that a potentially interested buyer requested a second showing of Lynden Station 71. Although the real estate agent has shown Custer Station 64 on multiple occasions, there has been no serious interest in the station thus far.
- **Contract Negotiations Update:** Chief Anderson announced that after two and a half months of twice weekly meetings both parties are close to reaching a labor contract agreement. The labor negotiations group has submitted the contract proposal to their principal officers and then in due course will submit the contract to the body for a vote. Chief Anderson will be reviewing details of the contract with the Board during the upcoming executive session. Chief Anderson noted that it has been a great asset to have Fire Commissioner Bosman serve on the committee and offer his expertise. In addition, Chief Anderson reiterated that he was very pleased with the process and believes that the changes made to the contract will prove to be beneficial to both parties.

#### **POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

- **0400.0106.00 Discrimination and Harassment:** Chief Anderson introduced the discrimination and harassment policy for review and requested that it be placed back on the agenda for the next monthly meeting for approval. This policy has also been distributed to the Labor group for review.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- None

#### **CORRESPONDENCE**

- Washington State Fire Commissioners re: Saturday Seminars
- Bellingham Herald article re: Rural Ave fire
- Community Assistance Program re: Blaine Thanksgiving Baskets
- Northern Light article re: 2013 Year in Review
- Letter of Appreciation to Firefighter Neyens re: Ground ladder testing
- Letter of Appreciation to Firefighter Scott re: Grant assistance
- The Responder: District newsletter, January issue

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chief Swobody addressed the Board explaining his decision to be reassigned as a line firefighter. Although this was a difficult decision, due to Chief Swobody's recent medical issues and family priorities this is the best decision for both him and the district. The Board expressed their appreciation for all the work and effort Chief Swobody has put forth on various projects over the years and wished him the best in his new endeavors.

- Chief Hollander commended apprentice Brennen Wynne who has been interning in the district's maintenance shop. Even though Brennan has recently graduated and his internship is complete, he continues to lend a hand in the shop on a regular basis.

## AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- Contract Negotiations
- Real Estate Update

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

Acting Chairman McPhail recessed the meeting for an Executive Session, per RCW 42.30.140 "*Collective bargaining sessions with employee organizations, including contract negotiations, grievance meetings, and discussions relating to the interpretation or application of a labor agreement; or ... that a portion of a meeting during which the governing body is planning or adopting the strategy or position to be taken by the governing body during the course of any collective bargaining, professional negotiations, or grievance or mediation proceedings, or reviewing the proposal made in the negotiations or proceedings while in progress.*"

at 8:40 p.m. for approximately twenty minutes. Action will not be taken as a result of the executive session. Chief Anderson, Chief Hollander and District 4 Fire Commissioner Harry Andrews remained for the executive session.

## MEETING RECONVENED

Acting Chairman McPhail called the regular meeting back into open session at 9:02 p.m. No action was taken as a result of the executive session.

## SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS

## ADJOURNMENT

- MOTION:** There being no further business Commissioner Bosman moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 p.m. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Whitney and approved 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted by:


  
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Jennie Sand, Recording Secretary

**ATTEST:**

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Bill Salter, Chairman

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Dean Whitney, Vice-Chairman

  
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Rich Bosman, Commissioner

  
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Larry McPhail, Commissioner

  
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Dean Berkeley, Commissioner

  
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Chief Anderson, Board Secretary