

**Whatcom County Fire District #21
Station 61 – Blaine
9408 Odell Street, Blaine WA 98230
7:00 pm
March 19, 2015
Regular Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting**

CALL TO ORDER

Co Vice-Chairman Bosman called the regular Whatcom County Fire District #21 Board of Fire Commissioners meeting for March 19, 2015 to order at 7:04 p.m. at Station 61 – 9408 Odell Street, Blaine, WA 98230.

ROLL CALL

Attendees: Vice-Chairman Dean Whitney (via phone); Commissioners Rich Bosman and Larry McPhail; Chief Ron Anderson; Division Chiefs Henry Hollander and William Pernet; Training Captain Joe Noonchester; Business Manager Benita Williams.

Chairman Bill Salter and Fire Commissioner Dean Berkeley were excused from this meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Commissioner McPhail moved to approve the February 19, 2015 regular meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Whitney and approved 3-0.

MONTHLY REPORTS

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

Chief Anderson reported that activity for both districts during the month of February was sixty (60) fire related calls and one hundred eighty-two (182) medical related calls for a combined total of two hundred forty-two (242) calls. There were forty-three (43) overlapping incidents. The average fire response time was seven minutes forty-two seconds while the average EMS response time was eight minutes fourteen seconds. The combined average response time minus mutual aid and auto aid incidents was eight minutes eight seconds. NWFR has a year to date total dollar save rate of ninety-seven percent (97%) while District 4 has a year to date total dollar save rate of ninety-three percent (93%).

Chief Anderson stated that there are no updates to report on labor negotiations. A meeting will be scheduled with labor / management consultant Cabot Dow in the near future to discuss the open articles in the current labor contract.

The district has completed work with Prospect on standardizing Fire Response Lists (FRLs). The FRLs are what dispatch uses to determine which stations and what apparatus are dispatched to the various types of calls. Prospect continues to meet with all fire departments within the county with the hopes of implementing the changes sometime in the near future.

Chief Anderson announced that Tech Help has completed the task of installing equipment and software in a secure location needed to back up all district emails as mandated by state law. Chief Anderson noted that South Whatcom Fire Authority (SWFA) is sharing the cost of both the software and equipment. SWFA email accounts can utilize the equipment immediately while NWFR will need to be switched to the new email accounts. The goal is to have the project completed by the next NWFR Fire Commissioner scheduled for Thursday, April 16.

Chief Anderson reported on an annexation letter received from the City of Bellingham noting their intent to annex property within District 4's response area. The proposed area includes the Trickle Creek subdivision along with additional property along the Mt. Baker Highway.

Following some lengthy research Chief Anderson was able to ascertain that state law may require a city who annexes over sixty percent (60%) of a fire district's response area to take over the entire fire district. The fire district would then turn over their assets to the city who would then be responsible for providing fire protection. Chief Anderson further noted that the state law is vague regarding how the percentage is calculated.

Chief Anderson also discovered a previous inter-local agreement between the City of Bellingham, District 8, District 4 and District 2 (SWFA) signed in 1997. The agreement more clearly defines how the sixty-percent (60%) is calculated using assessed values. Chief Anderson is in the processing of researching the assessed values of the annexed District 4 areas as well as a timetable of when the City of Bellingham plans to annex additional urban growth areas located in the District 4 response area. If the sixty percent (60%) has been attained it will be up to the District 4 Fire Commissioners to decide whether to continue with a merger with NWFR or to turn over the fire district to the City of Bellingham. Chief Anderson noted that no decisions can be made until all the research has been completed.

Chief Anderson reported on the Community Assistance Program (CAP) Community Meals the district has become involved with under the direction of Lieutenant Leslee Smith. The CAP Community Meals provides free meals to the community every Wednesday throughout the school year. Leslee has organized members to assist with providing meals to the community at the Blaine Senior Center a few times throughout the year.

- **Operations Report:** Chief Pernett provided a summary of the operations report.

Chief Pernet highlighted the district's non-emergency crew activities around the district including participation in volunteer training, Girl Scout tour, annual mask fit testing, EMS training, engine company evolutions, apparatus maintenance and personal protective gear inspections.

Chief Pernet reviewed the meetings attended by the operations division including joint Academy planning, B76 incident simulations, Community meals, Border Fire Chiefs, Contract Negotiations, Labor / Management, Officer meeting and Career Fairs.

The operations division has been involved in many projects this month including MCS development, air monitor equipment, operational directives, light duty personnel, personnel management, L&I claims management, Trauma Care grant and Narcan proposal.

Chief Pernet reviewed recent incidents within the district's response area.

- 1/30/15: Infant CPR call – Although the infant did not survive the parents were able to donate the organs and later the grandmother presented the responding crew with a pendant that represents organ donation. Commissioner Bosman requested that letters reflecting crew's professionalism and compassion be put into their personnel files.
- 3/4/15: Structure fire – Jasmine Lane – Under investigation; additional details will be provided next month.

Chief Pernet noted that the district has implemented minimum staffing as needed at Blaine Station 61 and Britton Loop Station 12 to reduce overtime costs. Chief Pernet reviewed the staffing and time off statistics for February. The district utilized two hundred sixteen (216) hours of overtime, six hundred ninety-five (695) hours of sick time, six hundred twenty-four (624) hours of vacation and volunteers worked a total of seven hundred seventy-nine (779) shift hours during the month of February.

Commissioner Bosman requested that the report include overtime hours exhibited in twelve (12) month increments for comparison.

- **Training Report:** Training Captain Noonchester provided a summary of the training report.

Career and volunteer staff spent a total of one thousand fifty-one (1,051) hours on training during the month of February. The training division (Captain Noonchester and assistant) spent a total of two hundred sixty-three (263) hours on administrative duties, meetings, HR management, emergency response and shared instruction.

Crews have been involved in various trainings including vehicle stabilization and strut training during the month of February.

Captain Noonchester recognized firefighter Stefen Paige and probationary volunteer firefighter Haley Urling-Ehinger for completing the most training hours during the month of February.

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

Chief Hollander noted that the Semiahmoo Marina has completed pressurizing their standpipe system and are in the process of fixing small leaks prior to retesting. The new portable fire extinguishers are also being installed.

BNSF will be attending a hearing to request a permanent closure of Valley View Road at the railroad tracks between Creasey and Arnie Roads. Whatcom County has petitioned the Federal Utilities and Transportation Committee to attend a hearing. The district has written a letter and will also attend the meeting to formally oppose the request.

Chief Hollander continues to work on a draft capital facilities plan with the County Planning Department.

The district is preparing a mitigation agreement for the Crabtree subdivision at 8804 Berthusen Rd.

Chief Hollander reviewed recent apparatus and facility improvements:

- AP107 (A12): The officer's door which was having issues closing properly and ultimately causing minor body damage has been repaired.
- Front springs, mounts and brakes have been replaced on the 1987 one ton Chevy shop truck.
- The annual service on all district lawn equipment is nearly complete.
- All district apparatus traffic emitters (Opticoms) have been reprogrammed to work with the City of Bellingham's recently modified traffic lights.
- The BP Cherry Point Refinery has donated a surplus ambulance to the district. The older ambulance has low miles and is in relatively good condition. Retired volunteer Bill Griffith who is also an employee of BP was instrumental in making the acquisition. It is expected that BP will be formerly acknowledged during an upcoming meeting. Chief Hollander transported the ambulance to the meeting for viewing.
- Britton Loop Station 12 Burn Tower: The district is exploring options for updating and simplifying the burn tower control system.
- Semiahmoo Station 62: The Semiahmoo Resort Association (SRA) has installed computer wiring throughout the Semiahmoo Station at their own expense.
- Northwood Station 72: A broken window has been replaced.

Chief Hollander noted that district will be transferring the wireless mobile data computer (MDC) connections from Sprint to Verizon in installments over the next nine months. The transfer will not affect the monthly connection fee.

FINANCE

- **Fund Balances:** Benita Williams, Business Manager provided information regarding the District's current fund balances.
- **February Vouchers:**

MOTION: Commissioner McPhail moved to approve the March NWFR Employees Direct Deposit Payroll Vouchers #197-256 in the amount of \$246,144.20. The motion was seconded by Co-Vice Chairman Bosman and approved 3-0.

MOTION: Vice-Chairman Whitney moved to approve the March Volunteer Direct Deposit Payroll Vouchers #257-296 in the amount of \$8,632.91. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McPhail and approved 3-0.

MOTION: Co Vice-Chairman Bosman moved to approve the March Non-Direct Deposit Payroll Vouchers #8-10 in the amount of \$4,306.77. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McPhail and approved 3-0.

MOTION: Commissioner McPhail moved to approve the March Benefits Vouchers #026-037 in the amount of \$147,314.74. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Whitney and approved 3-0.

MOTION: Commissioner McPhail moved to approve the March Monthly Expenditure Vouchers #405-627 in the amount of \$56,130.20. The motion was seconded by Co Vice-Chairman Bosman and approved 3-0.

- **Resolution 2015-02 Cancellation of Warrant:**

MOTION: Commissioner McPhail moved to approve Resolution 2015-02 Cancellation of Warrant. The motion was seconded by Co Vice-Chairman Bosman and approved 3-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- **Exhaust System Update:** Chief Hollander noted that the district has submitted an amendment to utilize the remaining funds from the recent AFG grant to install a vehicle exhaust removal system at Delta Station 68.

- **Custer Station 64 Roof Update:** Chief Hollander noted that the district is still in the process of collecting bids to repair / replace the existing Custer Station 64 roof. The project will most likely begin in the late spring or summer.
- **Fire Commissioner Electronic Tablets:** Chief Anderson provided an update of fire commissioner electronic tablet acquisitions. Chiefs Anderson and Hollander recently met with Tech Help to discuss the desired specs and plan to order tablets that include Windows 10 which may delay the process.

Volunteer Firefighter Career Fair Update: Captain Noonchester reported that the district continues to organize a joint volunteer academy with the Lynden Fire Department. Both districts have jointly held three career fairs and an orientation before inviting potential volunteers to participate in a written exam and additional entry level requirements. Captain Noonchester will have an update during the next meeting scheduled for Thursday, April 16.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- None

NEW BUSINESS

- None

CORRESPONDENCE

- Washington Fire Commissioners Association re: PDC filing reminder
- What-Comm Communications Center re: 2014 annual dispatch fees excluding aide calls (*Information Only*)
- Bellingham Herald article re: Jasmine Rd. structure fire
- Lynden Tribune article re: Volunteer firefighter career fair
- Bellingham Herald article re: Grass fire near Grandview Golf Course
- Lynden Tribune article re: Jasmine Rd. structure fire
- Bellingham Herald article re: BNSF request to close Valley View Rd near Custer
- Thank you letter from: Lise and George Tranberg
- The Responder: District newsletter, March issue

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- None

AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- Exhaust Removal System - FEMA Grant Request
- District Email Backup
- City of Bellingham Proposed Annexation
- Fire Commissioner Electronic Tablets

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Co Vice-Chairman Bosman 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 8:10 p.m. for approximately forty-five minutes. Chief Anderson, Chief Hollander, Chief Pernet and District 4 Fire Commissioner Andrews remained for the executive session.

MEETING RECONVENED

Co Vice-Chairman Bosman called the regular meeting back into open session at 8:59 p.m. No actions were taken as a result of the executive session.

SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS

ADJOURNMENT


MOTION: There being no further business Commissioner McPhail moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m. The motion was seconded by Co Vice-Chairman Bosman and approved 3-0.

Respectfully Submitted by:



Jennie Sand, Recording Secretary

ATTEST:



Dean Whitney, Vice-Chairman



Rich Bosman, Commissioner



Larry McPhail, Commissioner



Chief Anderson, Board Secretary