

**Whatcom County Fire District #21
Station 61 – Blaine
9408 Odell Street, Blaine WA 98230
7:00 pm
July 16, 2015
Regular Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Salter called the regular Whatcom County Fire District #21 Board of Fire Commissioners meeting for July 16, 2015 to order at 7:01 p.m. at Station 61 – 9408 Odell Street, Blaine, WA 98230.

ROLL CALL

Attendees: Chairman Bill Salter; Vice-Chairman Dean Whitney; Commissioners Larry McPhail, Rich Bosman and Dean Berkeley; Chief William Pernet; Division Chief Henry Hollander; Training Captain Joe Noonchester; Business Manager Benita Williams.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Commissioner McPhail moved to approve the June 18, 2015 meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Dean Whitney and approved 5-0.

MONTHLY REPORTS

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

Chief Pernet reported that activity for both districts during the month of June was one hundred eight (108) fire related calls and two hundred twenty-eight (228) medical related calls for a combined total of three hundred fifty-four (354) calls. There were sixty-eight (68) overlapping incidents. The average fire response time was nine minutes eight seconds while the average EMS response time was seven minutes fifty-nine seconds. The combined average response time minus mutual aid and auto aid incidents was eight minutes sixteen seconds. Due to some significant fires, NWFR has a year to date total dollar save rate of eleven percent (11%) while District 4 has a year to date total dollar save rate of approximately seventy six percent (76.34%).

Chief Pernet announced that the ambulance donated by BP Cherry Point Refinery has been outfitted to function as a rehab vehicle. The decision was made to house the vehicle at Wisner Lake Station 70. There are a number of potential volunteers interested in responding with the rehab unit. The rehab unit can be requested through Dispatch. The process will be fine-tuned as necessary. Chief Pernet

noted that Chief Henry Hollander and Wellness Coordinator Kelly Freeman have been an integral part of this project.

Chief Pernet announced that the district has recently entered into two mitigation agreements with Smith Ridge Estates and North Shore Corporation.

Chief Pernet noted that the search for a Fire Chief continues. A job posting has been placed on the Washington Fire Chiefs website and the Daily Dispatch. The posting will close on Friday, July 31. The Fire Commissioners will determine the process for how to evaluate the candidates.

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

Chief Pernet highlighted the district's non-emergency crew activities around the district including commercial inspections, volunteer training, tender operations, air management, Tractor Pull standby and Hands Across the Border.

Chief Pernet reviewed the meetings attended by the operations division including exit interviews, Border Chief, Board, County operations, Labor / Management and Officer meetings.

The operations division has been involved in many projects this month including MCS development, Safety Committee, personnel issues, life safety rope, annual appraisals and the burn tower.

Chief Pernet reviewed recent significant structure fires within the district's response area.

- 6/5/15: Woodland Dr– Residential structure fire
- 6/13/15: E. Pole Rd – Barn fire

Chief Pernet reviewed additional challenging calls faced by the district.

Chief Pernet reviewed the staffing and time off statistics for June. The district utilized one thousand one hundred sixty-three (1,163) hours of overtime, four hundred three (403) hours of sick time, one thousand one hundred seventy-eight (1,178) hours of vacation hours during the month of June. And volunteers worked a total of seven hundred twenty-three (723) shift hours during the month of June.

Chief Pernet reviewed how the proposed health insurance "Cadillac Tax" may prove to be significant to the district. The forty percent (40%) excise tax is scheduled to go into effect in 2018. Chief Pernet has been discussing the possible impacts with the district's health care third party administrator and will keep the Board informed of any updates.

FIREFIGHTER SWEARING IN

Chief Pernet conducted the swearing-in of volunteer firefighter Sam Bowman. Sam is a lateral transfer from Lummi Island.

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

Career and volunteer staff spent a total of eight hundred thirty-nine (839) hours on training during the month of June. The training division (Captain Noonchester and assistant) spent a total of two hundred eighty-one (281) hours on administrative duties, meetings, HR management, emergency response and shared instruction.

Captain Noonchester noted that the newly hired training data entry assistant Marcia Dickinson is working out well.

The air management course was conducted in June. This course has been performed annually district wide for the past five years. This course measures each crew's air capacity as a team as well as how individual firefighters utilize their breathable air during moderate fire ground activities. The approximate twenty minute course consists of pulling hose, forcible door entry, navigating a search maze, dragging a mannequin and striking a sled. Volunteers also take part in the testing while on shift or during Monday night training.

Crews were given the opportunity to tour Enfield Berry Farms to gain a better understanding of how to respond to a potential ammonia emergency. Crews also reviewed Enfield's evacuation process and pre fire planning.

There will be up to six new volunteers participating in the 2015 fall Whatcom County Recruit Academy.

Captain Noonchester recognized Lieutenant Leslee Smith and volunteer firefighter Jeff Hayley for completing the most training hours during the month of June.

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

Chief Hollander has completed his work with the Whatcom County Planning Department on a draft capital facilities plan. The hope is to be able to utilize some of the information during the district's long term strategic planning session.

Chief Hollander announced that the Blaine boathouse ordinance has been approved by the Blaine City Council. Although the port has five years to update the existing sprinkler system they have already hired an engineer to proceed with the planning. According to the ordinance all new boat house additions will be required to be outfitted with a sprinkler system.

A new official ballot drop box has been installed at Birch Bay Station 63. The placement of the ballot box will not hinder traffic flow or apparatus from responding to an emergency.

Planning meetings for the annual 9-11 Memorial Ride and Ceremony have begun. An informational flyer was distributed during the meeting.

Nineteen (19) occupancy inspections were recorded in June.

Chief Hollander reviewed recent apparatus and facility improvements:

- The ambulance donated by BP has been outfitted to respond to all structure fires.
- All transport ambulances licenses from the Department of Health (DOH) have been renewed.

The remaining fire commissioner laptops were distributed during the meeting. Chief Hollander will be available to set up the laptops and provide training to the Board individually.

FINANCE

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

- **July Vouchers:**

MOTION: Vice-Chairman Whitney moved to approve the July NWFR Employees Direct Deposit Payroll Vouchers #577-633 in the amount of \$265,583.11. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McPhail approved 5-0.

MOTION: Commissioner Bosman moved to approve the July Volunteer Direct Deposit Payroll Vouchers #634-670 in the amount of \$7,112.33. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Whitney and approved 5-0.

MOTION: Commissioner McPhail moved to approve the July Non-Direct Deposit Payroll Vouchers #22-23 in the amount of \$169.79. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Whitney and approved 5-0.

Chief Pernet noted that the benefits voucher is higher than usual due to the quarterly L & I payment.

MOTION: Vice-Chairman Whitney moved to approve the July Benefits Vouchers #079-092 in the amount of \$227,439.61. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McPhail and approved 5-0.

MOTION: Commissioner McPhail moved to approve the July Monthly Expenditure Vouchers #1167-1321 in the amount of \$63,393.42. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bosman and approved 5-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- **Delta Station 68 Vehicle Exhaust System Update:** The new exhaust system has been ordered and it is anticipated that it will be installed the week of July 27. Some fittings will be changed at Laurel Station 69 to mirror other stations to ensure that all apparatus can utilize the same exhaust fittings. Chief Hollander reminded the Board that the district is responsible for ten percent (10%) of the cost of the exhaust removal system. The remainder of the cost will be covered by a FEMA grant.
- **Custer Station 64:** The Board agreed to delay moving forward with replacing the roof at Custer Station 64 to contemplate a potential offer.
- **Long Term Strategic Planning:** Chief Pernet provided follow-up to last month's long term strategic planning topic. Both he and District 4 Fire Commissioner Steve Ness met with Bellingham Fire Chief Bill Newbold to discuss regional fire authorities (RFA). Although there was consensus to not pursue an RFA at this time, there it remains a possibility for the future. In the interim, it was agreed to begin working with the Bellingham Fire Department in other areas.

It was agreed to have a long term strategic planning session during the district's scheduled annual retreat on Saturday, September 19. Chief Pernet offered to spearhead the event. Chief Pernet plans to gather information via a district wide survey prior to the retreat.

- **District Grievance Procedure:** The Board discussed the events that led up to the Fire Chief's resignation. Vice-Chairman Whitney encouraged all district members to review the Grievance Article 5 in the current labor / management contract as well as policy 04000106.00 Discrimination and Harassment Prevention.

Labor representative Chuck Shipp noted that labor is committed to establishing a better relationship with management and the Board. It was agreed to meet as a group (special meeting / retreat) in the future instead of individually to discuss essential issues and concerns and to keep the lines of communication open.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Resolution 2015-08 Attending Meetings via Tele-Communications:** The Board discussed the benefits and disadvantages of fire commissioner attending meetings via tele-communications. Items discussed included giving thirty (30) days prior notice for known absences of multiple meetings and not receiving compensation for attending meetings via tele-communications. Commissioner Bosman revealed

that he has heard complaints from the public sector, paid members as well as volunteers regarding Board member's physical attendance during monthly meetings. It was noted that attending meetings via tele-communications is permissible and not illegal.

MOTION: Commissioner Bosman moved to approve Resolution 2015-08 Attending Meetings via Tele-Communications. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McPhail. The motion was denied 3-2 with Commissioners Bosman and McPhail voting for and Commissioner Berkeley, Vice-Chairman Whitney and Chairman Salter voting against.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- None

CORRESPONDENCE

- Bellingham Herald article re: Wildfires
- Bellingham Herald article re: Wildfires still burning
- Northern Light article re: Wildfires
- Thank you from South Whatcom Fire Authority re: Assistance with June 11 structure fire
- The Responder: District newsletter, July issue

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- None

AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- Delta Station 68 Exhaust System Update
- Custer Station 64 Update
- Retreat Planning

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Salter recessed the meeting for an Executive Session, per RCW 42.30.110(i) *“to discuss with legal counsel representing the agency matters relating to agency enforcement actions, or to discuss with legal counsel representing the agency, litigation or potential litigation to which the agency, the governing body, or a member acting in an official capacity is, or is likely to become, a party, when public knowledge regarding the discussion is likely to result in an adverse legal or financial consequence to the agency;*

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.”

Per RCW 42.30.110(c)” to consider the minimum price at which real estate will be offered for sale or lease when public knowledge regarding such consideration would cause a likelihood of a decreased price.”

at 8:00 p.m. for approximately fifty minutes. Chief Pernet and District 4 Fire Commissioner Andrews remained for the executive session.

MEETING RECONVENED

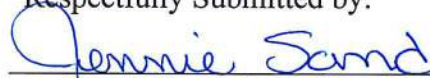
Chairman Salter called the regular meeting back into open session at 8:52 p.m. No actions were taken as a result of the executive session.

SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: There being no further business Commissioner McPhail moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Berkeley and approved 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted by:

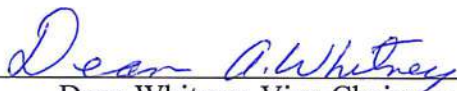


Jennie Sand, Recording Secretary

ATTEST:



Bill Salter, Chairman



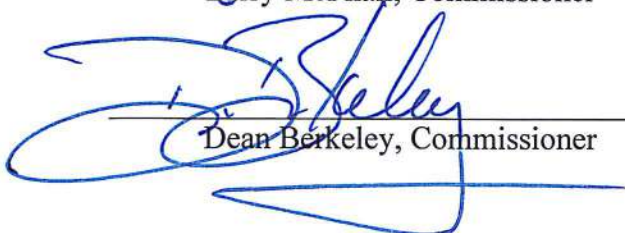
Dean Whitney, Vice-Chairman



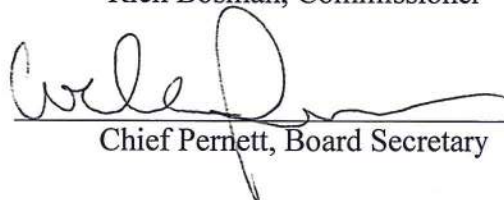
Larry McPhail, Commissioner



Rich Bosman, Commissioner



Dean Berkeley, Commissioner



Chief Pernet, Board Secretary