

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

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**ROLL CALL**

District #21 Attendees: Chairman Salter; Vice-Chairman Dean Whitney; Commissioners Rich Bosman, Larry McPhail and Dean Berkeley; Chief Ron Anderson; Division Chiefs Henry Hollander and William Pernet; Training Captain Joe Noonchester; Business Manager Benita Williams.

District #4 Attendees: Chairman Harry Andrews; Commissioners Mary Beth Neal and Steve Ness; Board Secretary Kris Parks.

**WHATCOM COUNTY PLANNING PRESENTATION**

Whatcom County Planning representatives Matt Aamot and Wayne Harrison gave a presentation on the Whatcom County Growth Management Act and the progress of their comprehensive plan.

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires Whatcom County as well as the adjacent cities to update their comprehensive plan and review their urban growth areas by June 30, 2016. A comprehensive plan is a guiding document that guides land use, transportation, environmental protection and capital facility planning. There are ten urban growth areas including Blaine and Birch Bay where higher density, residential, commercial, and industrial uses is encouraged. The County needs to ensure that the urban growth areas can accommodate the planned growth over the next twenty years. Matt Aamot reviewed the seven step process set up by the County for updating the comprehensive plan.

1. Inter-local agreements with all cities within the county (2012-2022)
2. Develop preliminary twenty year growth projections
3. Draft Environmental Impact Study (EIS)
4. Whatcom County Planning Commission
5. Urban Growth Area (UGA) proposals including Capital Facilities Planning (summer 2015)
6. Final EIS (summer/fall 2015)
7. County Council review (adopted June 2016)

Matt Aamot provided an overview of the capital facilities planning efforts:

- Inventory of existing facilities
- Forecast future needs based upon level of service
- Proposed facilities (station and apparatus replacement)
- Funding plan
- Re-access land use plan if funding falls short

The idea is that public facilities and services should keep pace with development and that levels of service should not degrade below industry standards.

Chief Hollander continues to work with the County to develop their capital facilities plan.

Currently the NWFR charges mitigation fees on larger projects. Whatcom County may charge impact fees in the future and the district would be able to collect them only if the capital facilities plan reflects those projects impact fees will affect. Mitigation fees are only applicable in the urban growth areas whereas impact fees will be charged county wide.

Chief Anderson noted that one of the challenges is that the NWFR's capital facilities plan has adopted three levels of service (urban, suburban, rural) while the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan has adopted only two levels of service (urban, rural). An additional factor is that the district's capital facilities plan was developed and adopted during an era of tremendous growth which is not applicable today. Chief Anderson recommended that the Fire Commissioners consider hiring a professional to update NWFR's capital facilities plan as soon as possible.

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION:** Vice-Chairman Whitney moved to approve the April 16, 2015 regular meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Berkeley and approved 5-0.

**MOTION:** Vice-Chairman Whitney moved to approve the May 5, 2015 special joint meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Berkeley and approved 5-0.

## **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 April was one sixty six (66) fire related calls and two hundred ten (210) medical related calls for a combined total of two hundred seventy-six (276) calls. There were fifty-one (51) overlapping incidents. The average fire response time was eight minutes forty-eight seconds while the average EMS response time was seven minutes forty-five seconds. The combined average response time minus mutual



aid and auto aid incidents was eight minutes. Due to several significant fires NWFR has a year to date total dollar save rate of forty-four percent (44%) while District 4 has a year to date total dollar save rate of sixty-four percent (64%).

Chief Anderson has resigned effective June 1, 2015 to pursue other interests.

The district continues to wait for Prospect to finalize the 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 is having difficulty entering all the pertinent information in their computer aided dispatch (CAD) system. Chief Anderson noted that due to major changes of the FRLs the implementation date has been rescheduled for some time in June or July.

- **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 Pump operator course, Volunteer training, Tender operations, EMS training, PXT extrication, Live Fire training, and Apparatus / Hall maintenance.

Chief Pernet reviewed the meetings attended by the operations division including Employee meeting, Quarterly Admin meeting, Board meetings, County Operations, Personnel meeting, and Officer meeting.

The operations division has been involved in many projects this month including MCS development, County Resource list, Personnel management, Life Safety Rope, Annual appraisals and Narcan program.

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

- 4/20/15: 5323 E 21<sup>st</sup> Dr- residential structure fire
- 4/24/15: 355 W Wisner Lake Rd – commercial structure fire
- 4/27/15: 599 E Axton Rd – manufactured home fire

Chief Pernet reviewed the staffing and time off statistics for April. The district utilized one hundred sixty-eight (168) hours of overtime, three hundred nineteen (319) hours of sick time, one thousand one hundred ninety-seven (1,197) hours of vacation and volunteers worked a total of seven hundred fifty-three (753) shift hours during the month of April.

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

Career and volunteer staff spent a total of one thousand eighty-four (1,084) hours on training during the month of April. The training division (Captain Noonchester and assistant) spent a total of two hundred ninety (290) hours on administrative

duties, meetings, HR management, emergency response, shared instruction and shared instruction.

Six agencies and twenty-one (21) students participated in a two day vehicle extrication event delivered by the Puyallup Extrication Team.

A house donated by Enfield farms was used for a live fire training on Sunday, April 26.

Captain Noonchester recognized Lieutenant Burr McPhail, probationary firefighter David Comp, firefighter Troy Freeman and tender operator Scott Wood for completing the most training during the month of April.

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

Chief Hollander continues to meet with the Whatcom County Planning Department to assist with drafting a capital facilities plan.

Chief Hollander will be representing the Chief's Association on a subcommittee for the Water Utility Coordinating Council (WUCC). Their task will be to establish standards for independent water districts including fire flow, hydrant maintenance and electronic records.

The Blaine City Council has been provided language for a new fire ordinance regarding boathouses and covered moorage. The Blaine City Council has scheduled a public hearing for Tuesday, May 26. Chief Hollander provided a copy of the ordinance.

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

- Blaine Starbucks
- Serene Green

Ten occupancy inspections were recorded in April including the entire Blaine School District.

Chief Hollander reviewed recent facility improvements:

- Britton Loop Station 12 Training Tower – The district continues to explore options to update the burn tower control system.
- Northwood Station 72 / Delta Station 68 : Front bay doors painted
- Bids are still being collected on the roof replacement for Custer Station 64.

Chief Hollander noted that the district email migration is now complete.



## FINANCE

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

**MOTION:** Vice-Chairman Whitney moved to approve the May NWFR Employees Direct Deposit Payroll Vouchers #394-452 in the amount of \$241,112.64. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bosman and approved 5-0.

**MOTION:** Commissioner McPhail moved to approve the May Volunteer Direct Deposit Payroll Vouchers #453-485 in the amount of \$8,226.03. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Whitney and approved 5-0.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Bosman moved to approve the May Non-Direct Deposit Payroll Vouchers #17-18 in the amount of \$374.34. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McPhail and approved 5-0.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Bosman moved to approve the May Benefits Vouchers #052-065 in the amount of \$129,583.94. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Berkeley and approved 5-0.

**MOTION:** Commissioner McPhail moved to approve the May Monthly Expenditure Vouchers #797-976 in the amount of \$59,280.30. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Berkeley and approved 5-0.

**MOTION:** Commissioner McPhail moved to approve the May Capital Projects Voucher #977 in the amount of \$8,246.00. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Whitney and approved 5-0.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- **Exhaust System Update:** The district has received written notification from FEMA approving NWFR to utilize the remaining grant funds to install a vehicle exhaust removal system at Delta Station 68. The project will begin in approximately six weeks.
- **District Email Update:** Chief Anderson noted that the email migration project is now complete with only a few additional issues that need to be addressed. The district has partnered with South Whatcom Fire Authority and recently Fire District #8 to share the cost of the archiving equipment and software to back up district emails.

Chief Anderson reiterated the importance of using district email accounts for all district business.

- **Fire Commissioner Electronic Tablet Update:** Chief Hollander announced that he is in the process of ordering the Fire Commissioner electronic tablets (Microsoft Surface) which will arrive prior to the next NWFR Fire Commissioner meeting. After some training, the Fire Commissioners will use the tablets to conduct all district business.
- **Custer Station 64 Roof:** Chief Hollander presented the bids for the Custer Station 64 roof replacement however since there may be renewed interest to purchase the station, bids will not be reviewed until any offers have been considered.

## **POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

- None

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Resolution 2015-04 Interim Fire Chief:**

**MOTION:** Commissioner McPhail moved to approve Resolution 2015-04 Interim Fire Chief. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Whitney and approved 5-0.

- **Resolution 2015-05 Secretary to the Board:**

**MOTION:** Commissioner McPhail moved to approve Resolution 2015-05 Secretary to the Board. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Whitney and approved 5-0.

- **Resolution 2015-06 Investment Officer:**

**MOTION:** Vice-Chairman Whitney moved to approve Resolution 2015-06 Investment Officer. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McPhail and approved 5-0.

- **Separation Agreement for Chief Anderson:**

**MOTION:** Commissioner McPhail moved to approve the separation revision for Chief Anderson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Berkeley and approved 5-0.

- **Amendment and Employee Agreement for Chief Pernet:**



**MOTION:** Commissioner McPhail moved to approve the amendment and employee agreement for Chief Pernet. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Whitney and approved 5-0.

- **Long Term Strategic Planning:** District #4 Fire Commissioner Steve Ness led the discussion regarding long term strategic planning and possible options for the future:
  - NWFR & D#4 go separate ways: If Bellingham continues to annex land in D#4's area can they afford to pay NWFR consolidation fees down the road?
  - D#4 consider partnering discussions with the Bellingham Fire Department (BFD).
  - Regionalization / Regional Fire Authority (RFA): Steven Ness noted that RFA's are more efficient and provide a better service delivery for the same amount of money. Commissioner Ness noted that there are a number of Whatcom County fire chiefs set to retire in the next few years and this may be the optimum time to begin a discussion regarding regionalization on a large scale. D#4 Fire Commissioner Ness was given direction by his Board to contact the BFD Fire Chief to discuss possible regionalization in the future. D#4 Fire Commissioner Ness believes that it will be a disservice to the citizens not to at least investigate the possibility of an RFA.
  - Benefit Charges may be the future of the fire service: Charge citizens based on what resources it is going need to put the fire out instead of by what their property is worth.

Both Boards agreed to have D#4 Fire Commissioner Ness do some preliminary investigation and report his findings back to both Boards. If the idea has merit a NWFR Fire Commissioner and Chief Pernet will also become involved in how both districts plan to move forward.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

- Northern Light article re: Tony Esser's Lieutenant Promotion
- Northern Light article re: Fire Chief resignation
- Northern Light article re: Stolen school bus
- Lynden Tribune article re: Fire Chief resignation and contract tension
- Bellingham Herald article re: Training burn
- Bellingham Herald article re: Axton Rd. structure fire
- Bellingham Herald article re: Fire Chief resignation
- Bellingham Herald article re: Whatcom County emergency medical services
- Bellingham Herald article re: Structure fire
- NWFR & District 4 Press Release re: Contract negotiations
- NWFR & District 4 Letter to NWFR staff re: Leadership change
- Fire Marshal's Office re: Chief Anderson letter of appreciation

- NWFR Tender Group re: Chief Anderson letter of appreciation
- Dispatchers: Thank-you for remembering Telecommunicators Week
- Whatcom County Boundary Review Board re: City of Lynden Annexation
- The Responder: District newsletter, May issue

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- None

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

- Exhaust

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Chairman Salter recessed the meeting for an Executive Session, 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.”* and;

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;”*

at 8:12 p.m. for approximately sixty minutes following a ten minute break. Chief Anderson, Chief Pernet, District Attorney Rich Davis and District #4 Fire Commissioners Andrews, Neal and Ness remained for the executive session.

#### **MEETING RECONVENED**

Chairman Salter called the regular meeting back into open session at 9:36 p.m. No actions were taken as a result of the executive session.

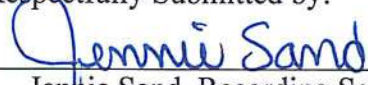
#### **SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS**

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** There being no further business Commissioner Bosman moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 p.m. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Whitney and approved 5-0.



Respectfully Submitted by:

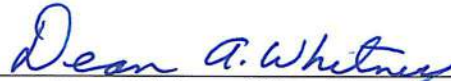


Jennie Sand, Recording Secretary

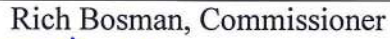
**ATTEST:**




Bill Salter, Chairman



Dean Whitney, Vice-Chairman



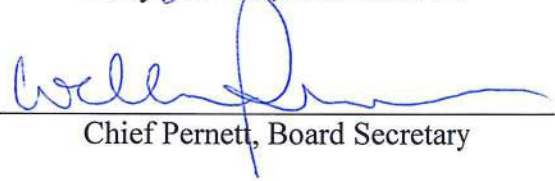
Rich Bosman, Commissioner



Larry McPhail, Commissioner



Dean Berkeley, Commissioner



Chief Pernet, Board Secretary