

**Whatcom County Fire District #21
Station 61 – Blaine
9408 Odell Street, Blaine WA 98230
7:00 pm
September 17, 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 September 17, 2015 to order at 7:03 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.

FIRE CHIEF OATH OF OFFICE

Chairman Salter conducted the swearing in of Fire Chief William Pernet.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Leslee Smith – 4012 Sweet Rd. Blaine – Leslee reminded the Board that the upcoming Community Assistance Program (CAP) dinner will be held on Wednesday, October 7. Members are asked to contact Leslee Smith if they would like to assist with the event.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Vice-Chairman Whitney moved to approve the August 20, 2015 meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McPhail 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 August was one hundred sixty-six (166) fire related calls and two hundred thirty-five (235) medical related calls for a combined total of four hundred one (401) calls, which is a significant increase over last year's calls. There were one hundred sixty-three (163) overlapping incidents. The average fire response time was eight minutes twenty-five seconds while the average EMS response time was eight minutes thirty-one seconds. The combined average response time minus mutual aid and auto aid incidents was nine minutes thirty-three seconds. NWFR has a year to date total dollar save rate of approximately fifty-two percent (52.16%) while District 4 has a year to date total dollar save rate of approximately seventy-six percent (76.31%).

Chief Pernet announced that the district has six qualified candidates who will participate in the upcoming lieutenant promotional process in November. Although there are no lieutenant vacancies at this time a promotional list will be established.

Chief Pernet announced that the district recently deployed a fire engine company to Newhalem to perform structure protection for the town. The district will be reimbursed for the costs.

Chief Pernet recently met with Erven Bong & Associates, an insurance broker recommended by the Washington States Fire Chiefs' Association to discuss health care options. Chief Pernet will also be meeting with the district's current insurance broker, Coastal Administrative Services (CAS), to discuss options for the upcoming year.

- **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, business inspections, volunteer training, wild land training, quarterly training, and demolition derby standby.

Chief Pernet reviewed the meetings attended by the operations division including Fire Chief Interview, Border Chiefs, Board, County Operations, Labor Negotiations and Officer.

The operations division has been involved in many projects this month including Safety, Rehab unit, burn tower conversion and annual appraisals.

Chief Pernet noted that although the district has provided full time and volunteer staff to assist with the Northwest Washington Fair's Demo Derby in the past, the district is in preliminary discussions to receive some type of compensation in the future.

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

- 8/6/15: Vail Dr – house / garage fire
- 8/29/15: Storm / wind event
 - Birch Terrace Dr – house fire
 - Ramona Ln – house fire
 - North Shore – house fire
- 8/31/15: Yellow Brick Rd – house fire
- 9/2/15 – CO poisoning
- 9/5/15 – fire fatality

Chief Pernet reviewed the staffing and time off statistics for August. The district utilized one thousand four hundred thirty-six (1,436) hours of overtime, five hundred eight (508) hours of sick time, one thousand six hundred eighteen (1,618) hours of vacation hours during the month of August. Approximately thirty-five (35) volunteers trained or pulled shifts a total of five hundred eighty-two (582) hours during the month of August.

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

Due to the increased call volume, career and volunteer staff spent a total of four hundred fifty-four (454) hours on training during the month of August. The training division (Captain Noonchester and assistant) spent a total of two hundred fifty-five (255) hours on administrative duties, meetings, HR management, emergency response and shared instruction.

Crews participated in refresher training that included topics such as SCBA quarterlies, wet hose evolutions and EMS ongoing education. One member attended an advanced pump class.

Five NWFR recruits are attending the 2015 Fall Whatcom County Recruit Academy (WCRA). There are thirty-five (35) recruits signed up to participate in the 2015 academy. The live fire portion of the academy will be held in Sedro-Woolley and Maple Ridge. The recruits have recently completed their hazmat materials awareness class and will be beginning hands on training this weekend.

The training division continues to meet monthly with other training officers from around the county to discuss training as a whole. The group routinely shares resources as well as curriculum to reduce costs and streamline operations.

Captain Noonchester recognized firefighter Jeffrey Schwab and Tender support member Dale Rutgers for completing the most training hours during the month of August.

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

Chief Hollander thanked all those who assisted and participated in the 9-11 Memorial Ride and Peace Arch Ceremony. Five guests of honor from New York and New Jersey attended the event to represent their fallen comrades and all those who perished on September 11, 2001. The group arrived a few days prior to the event and received extensive tours on both sides of the border. Proceeds from the event will benefit the Honour House Society.

Honour House is an organization that provides temporary housing for Canadian Forces, Veterans, Emergency Services Personnel and their families while they

travel to receive medical care and treatment in the Vancouver area. Commissioner Berkeley noted that Honour House “*knows no borders*” and has extended their services to North Whatcom Fire and Rescue as well as area Police and Border Patrol.

Following a post incident meeting the 9-11 Committee will begin planning next year’s event.

Chief Hollander noted that the pre-construction on the renovations for the Blaine School District and construction on the Blaine public works building addition has begun.

The Loomis Trail train crossing is now open and the Dakota Creek project remains on schedule.

Burlington Northern Sante Fe (BNSF) continues in their efforts to close the road at Valley View and Arnie permanently. Many agencies including NWFR are opposing the closure. Chief Hollander will keep the Board posted as information becomes available.

Chief Hollander attended all three (3) Technical Review Committee (TRC) meetings during the month of August.

Chief Hollander recently met with the Whatcom County Planning department to continue work on the draft capital facilities plan. The group outlined a twenty year (20) facilities and apparatus replacement plan. The group will meet again in October to work on a financial plan. Chief Hollander will keep the Board up to date with their progress.

The district completed eight inspections during the month of August.

Chief Hollander reviewed recent apparatus and facility improvements:

- The district annual pump testing is in progress.
- New members are being trained to respond with Rehab 70.
- Rehab 70 has been having some mechanical issues with the charging system.
- The new command vehicle has been delivered and is in the process of be accessorized before being put into service.
- The new exhaust removal system was installed at Delta Station 68 on August 1. The district was able to utilize left over FEMA monies to update the exhaust fittings at Laurel Station 69. Issues with the control mechanisms will be repaired by the factory.
- The roof repairs at Custer Station 64 have been placed on hold.
- The water heater at Birch Bay Station 63 was replaced due to leaking issues. The leak was discovered during a scheduled L&I inspection.

- The stove top purchased for Birch Bay Station 63 recently cracked and was replaced under warranty.
- The dishwasher at Blaine Station 61 has been replaced.

Chief Hollander announced that the computer that manages the door locks and security gates for Britton Loop Station 12 has failed and cannot be repaired. District 4 Board members have tasked Chief Hollander with investigating various options for a long term solution. Chief Hollander will keep the Board updated as more information becomes available.

The district is working with the City of Lynden Fire Department to add additional in-vehicle multi-channel repeaters to first out apparatus. Chief Hollander noted that the additional equipment will be purchased by the City of Lynden which is being funded by the new freezer plant being constructed in Lynden's area.

Chief Hollander presented the district August computer activities courtesy of the Tech Help report.

FINANCE

- **Fund Balances:** Benita Williams, Business Manager provided information regarding the District's current fund balances.
- **September Vouchers:**
 - MOTION:** Vice-Chairman Whitney moved to approve the September NWFR Employees Direct Deposit Payroll Vouchers #761-817 in the amount of \$275,783.51. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McPhail approved 5-0.
 - MOTION:** Commissioner McPhail moved to approve the September Volunteer Direct Deposit Payroll Vouchers #728-760 in the amount of \$8,249.37. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Whitney and approved 5-0.
 - MOTION:** Commissioner Bosman moved to approve the September Non-Direct Deposit Payroll Vouchers #29-31 in the amount of \$215.97. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Whitney and approved 5-0.
 - MOTION:** Vice-Chairman Whitney moved to approve the September Benefits Vouchers #106-118 in the amount of \$125,330.21. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McPhail and approved 5-0.
 - MOTION:** Commissioner McPhail moved to approve the September Monthly Expenditure Vouchers #1515-1681 in the amount of \$47,672.20. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bosman and approved 5-0.

MOTION: Commissioner McPhail moved to approve the September Capital Projects Apparatus Voucher #1682 in the amount of \$34,080.93. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Whitney and approved 5-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- **Custer Station 64:** There are no new updates on Custer Station 64. There has been some increased interest however; no serious offers have been forthcoming. It was agreed to not repair the roof at this time.
- **Long Term Strategic Planning:** Chief Pernet reminded the Board that the upcoming Long Term Strategic Planning Session is scheduled for Saturday, September 19 and will be held at Britton Loop Station 12. Stakeholders from across the district, representing various positions have been invited to assist with the planning process. Once complete the plan will be submitted to the Board for approval.
- **Mitigation Fees:** The district has been collecting mitigation fees since February 2011. Since part of the mitigation funds need to be spent by the district prior to February 2016, Chairman Salter suggested that all the mitigation funds be utilized for payment on the engine loans. Chief Hollander noted that mitigation fees cannot be used for the replacement of existing vehicles. Ladder 63 was originally purchased as a requirement for growth in the district's capital facilities plan and mitigation fees can be utilized. Chief Pernet will work with Finance to determine when the Ladder 63 payment is due and the amount of mitigation fees that will be utilized.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Employee Agreement for Chief Pernet:**

MOTION: Commissioner Bosman moved to approve the Employee Agreement for Chief Pernet. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Whitney and approved 5-0.

- **Participation in Administration Fitness Workouts:** The Board expressed no issues with Commissioner Bosman resuming participating in weekly fitness workouts with the administration staff.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- None

CORRESPONDENCE

- Bellingham Herald article re: Whatcom County fire departments assist with Newhalem fire
- From Red Cross re: Facility / shelter use

- Bellingham Herald article re: Custer fire
- Northern Light article re: New fire chief
- CBS News Radio re: 9-11 Peace Arch Memorial Service
- The Responder: District newsletter, September issue

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Since both districts met in June, it was decided to cancel the upcoming joint NWFR / D4 meeting scheduled for Thursday, October 15. The NWFR Board of Fire Commissioners will meet as their regularly scheduled Board meeting on that date. Both groups will decide on a joint meeting date to be held in early 2016.
- Washington Fire Commissions 2015 Conference – Thursday, October 22 – Saturday, October 24.
- Pumpkin Party – Britton Loop Station 12 – Monday, October 26 – 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
- Zumba with Firemen (non-district *fundraiser for Eastern WA fires*) – Britton Loop Station 12 – Saturday, September 26 – 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- Custer Station 64 Update

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Salter recessed the meeting for an Executive Session, per RCW42.30.110(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; “and;*

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 8:10 p.m. for approximately thirty minutes. District 4 Fire Commissioner Andrews and Chief Pernet remained for the executive session.

MEETING RECONVENED

Chairman Salter called the regular meeting back into open session at 8:30 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 8:45 p.m. The motion was seconded by Chairman Bill Salter and approved 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted by:



Jennie Sand, Recording Secretary

ATTEST:



Bill Salter, Chairman




Dean Whitney, Vice-Chairman



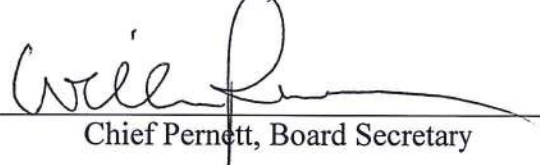
Larry McPhail, Commissioner



Rich Bosman, Commissioner



Dean Berkeley, Commissioner



Chief Pernet, Board Secretary