

**Whatcom County Fire District #21
Station 61 – Blaine
9408 Odell Street, Blaine WA 98230
7:00 pm
December 21, 2017
Fire Commissioners Meeting**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bosman called the Whatcom County Fire District #21 of Fire Commissioners meeting for December 21, 2017 to order at 7:01 p.m. at Station 61 – 9408 Odell Street, Blaine, WA 98230.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

Attendees: Chairman Rich Bosman, Commissioners Dean Berkeley, John Crawford and Bruce Ansell; Fire Chief William Pernet; Assistant Chief Joe Noonchester; Division Chief Henry Hollander; Attorney Rich Davis.

Commissioner McPhail was excused from this meeting.

FIRE COMMISSIONER OATH OF OFFICE

Chief Pernet conducted the swearing-in of Fire Commissioners Bruce Ansell and Rich Bosman.

FIREFIGHTER OATH OF OFFICE

Chief Pernet conducted the swearing-in of volunteer firefighters Ian Kjera, Kyle Wheeler and tender support volunteer Mike Peetoom.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

RECESS INTO PUBLIC HEARING

- Following a two minute break Chairman Bosman opened the public hearing at 7:12 p.m. to hear comments for the proposed Resolution 2017-09 Adopting the Tax Revenues and Budget for 2018.

Chief Pernet noted that the Board had participated in a 2018 budget study session on Saturday, November 11. The only small change from that meeting was that some overtime monies has been reallocated to the prevention fund.

Chief Pernet provided a 2018 budget presentation which included the district's shared vision and budget philosophy:

- Fiscal responsibility to our taxpayers
- Allocation of funds linked to the strategic plan
- Continue to streamline processes

- Improve on existing and search for new, innovative and responsible revenue streams

Chief Pernet provided information on funding looking forward:

- Property values on the rise
- New construction increased over last few years
- District debt payments potentially paid off early (2018)
- District 4 EMS / Annexations agreements
- Transport revenues increasing
- Grant funding opportunities

Chief Pernet noted the 2018 areas of focus as a result of the strategic planning process:

- Reducing response times
- Recruitment and retention of full time and volunteer firefighters
- Starting a volunteer resident program at Semiahmoo Station 62
- Maintaining constant staffing levels
- Keeping healthcare affordable
- Keeping up with operational and capital items, expenses and needs
- Maintaining competitive wages and benefits
- Initiating additional fire prevention programs
- Staying connected to our community
- Continued relationship building with internal and external customers

Chief Pernet pointed out possible fiscal challenges including:

- Property tax statutory limitations
- Expenses outpacing revenues (hard to predict healthcare, insurance, personnel, Labor and Industries)
- Debt payments (future)
- Operational / capital needs

Chief Pernet reviewed the six year healthcare comparison, emphasizing the current 2017 costs. Chief Pernet noted that with our current self-funded plan, the district is responsible for the first \$50,000 of each claim. Reinsurance then picks up the difference and those monies are then deposited back in the district's accounts as unanticipated revenue.

The district will continue to go out for bid each year to review both self-funded and traditional plans. The health care committee will continue to make informed recommendations to the fire chief.

Commissioner Berkeley questioned if the district, being a public agency, needs to utilize Washington State L&I or can choose to be self-insured which may or may not be a cost savings to the district. Attorney Rich Davis noted he is not familiar with that type of self-insurance and all the fire agencies he has been involved with utilize L&I.

Chief Pernet noted that based on typical L&I claims the district would most likely not see huge cost savings by switching to a self-insured plan. Chief Pernet announced that

the district will only see a slight increase for L&I in 2018. The district has also taken advantage of L&I's state work program which pays sixty percent of an employee's salary provided they qualify and take advantage of the light duty program.

Chief Pernet reviewed the district's long term debt call volumes, revenues, fund balances and expenditures by division.

Budgeted expenses:

○ Legislative / Admin	\$757,330
○ Operations	\$5,898,263
○ Training	\$234,854
○ Fire Prevention / Pub Ed	\$9,664
○ Facilities	\$350,987
○ Vehicle Maintenance	\$427,777
○ Bond Payments	\$240,700
○ Capital	\$148,500

PUBLIC HEARING STATEMENT

- None

RECONVENE INTO REGULAR MEETING

- Chairman Bosman reconvened the regular meeting at 7:45 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Resolution 2017-09 Adopting the Tax Revenues and Budget for 2018:**

MOTION: Commissioner Berkeley moved to approve Resolution 2017-09 Adopting the Tax Revenues and Budget for 2018. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crawford and approved 4-0.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

1. Meeting Minutes
 - a) November 11, 2017 – Budget Work Session
 - b) November 16, 2017 – Public Hearing
2. Staff Reports - Chiefs / Operations / Training / Technical Support
3. Financial Report
 - a) Total Revenue –November \$490,016.86
 - b) Total Expenditures –December \$713,361.05
4. Voucher / Payroll / Benefits
 - a) NWFR Employees Direct Deposit Payroll # 895-957: \$275,185.75
 - b) Volunteer Direct Deposit Payroll # 958-974: \$2,274.55
 - c) Non Direct Deposit # 16: \$95.89
 - d) Benefits Vouchers# 124-134: \$244,485.53
 - e) Monthly Expenditure Vouchers #1984-2181: \$166,597.47

- f) Capital Projects Facilities #2182-2184 :\$23,445.56
- g) Capital Projects Apparatus #2185: \$1,276.30

Chief Pernet noted that the November payroll report was inadvertently included in the packet rather than the December report. Some additional misprints were also pointed out.

MOTION: Commissioner Crawford moved to approve the Consent Agenda with the corrections. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ansell and approved 4-0.

NW FIRE COMMISSIONER MONTHLY REPORTS

- Nothing to report

IAFF LOCAL 106 MONTHLY REPORT

- Nothing to report

LEGAL ISSUES

- Nothing to report

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- **Washington State Rating Bureau (WSRB):** Chief Pernet noted that last year the district received a preliminary rerate from the WSRB which was not favorable to the district. It was discovered that WSRB was utilizing outdated or incorrect information. Both agencies have been working together for the past twelve months to gather and provide accurate information including a district improvement plan.

Chief Noonchester announced that the new information received from WSRB points to the City of Blaine, District #4 and NWFR's rates remaining the same.

Chief Pernet noted that the district continues to plan and build upon current operations, ultimately passing savings on to customers whenever possible.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- None

NEW BUSINESS

- **Resolution 2017-10 2018 Meeting Schedule:** The Board discussed moving the monthly meeting times. Presently, monthly Board meetings are scheduled for the third Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at Odell Station 61. Chief Pernet noted that one benefit of moving the time from the evening to the afternoon is that staff can attend meetings during their normal working hours. Commissioner Berkeley voiced his concern regarding how the change could affect community members who may wish to attend. Chief Pernet noted that

based on past public attendance he doesn't believe the change will have any impact.

Attorney Rich Davis noted that he would not have any issues with the change in time provided he has advanced notification.

Commissioner Ansell suggested that if there was a contentious item on the agenda or public hearing that may generate a lot of interest, an evening meeting could be arranged. Additional meetings or time changes may be scheduled as special meetings prior however, the Board could not take final action on items not previously posted on the agenda.

Chief Pernet further noted that meetings may be recorded and/or streamed in the future.

The Board made the decision to change the time of the meetings from 7:00 to 1:00 p.m. beginning January 18, 2018.

MOTION: Chairman Bosman moved to approve Resolution 2017-10 2018 Meeting Schedule with the time change adjustment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Berkeley and approved 4-0.

- **Board Self-Evaluation:** Chairman Bosman noted that the Board is committed to being more professional and efficient moving forward. The Board had agreed to assess themselves at the end of each calendar year beginning in 2016. Chairman Bosman requested comments from the staff as well as the Board regarding suggestions for improvement in the future.

In addition, Chief Pernet asked if there was anything he or the staff could do to assist the Board members more efficiently. Chairman Bosman stated that he is appreciative of receiving the monthly Board packets ahead of time for review.

Commissioner Ansell reiterated the importance of reviewing the Board packets including the consent agenda prior to the meeting. Minor issues can be resolved through email prior to the meeting.

Chairman Bosman intends to review the consent agenda in more depth in 2018.

There was discussion regarding the continual issues with the Surface laptops. Chief Pernet noted that currently Vice-Chairman McPhail is testing an I Pad. All the feedback received from Vice-Chairman McPhail thus far has been positive. It was decided that as the Surface laptops quit operating properly, they will be replaced with tablets. The Surfaces will be repurposed by the district.

Commissioner Ansell commented that there remains a considerable amount of work to do with regards to the strategic plan. With growth not slowing down, the

district needs to figure out how to come together and begin to move the strategic plan forward.

- **Fire Commissioner Representation at External Meetings:**

Chairman Bosman reminded the Board that in an effort to save time and money, they had made the decision to appoint Board members to attend certain external meetings.

Commissioner Crawford agreed to attend the Whatcom County Fire Commissioners Association in place of Vice-Chairman McPhail. No other changes were noted.

- Whatcom County Fire Commissioners Association – Commissioner Crawford
 - 7:00 p.m. 2nd Wednesday every other month at Britton Loop Station 12
 - Birch Bay Chamber of Commerce Luncheon– Commissioner Ansell
 - 11:30 a.m. 3rd Thursday of each month at various locations
 - Blaine City Council – Commissioner Ansell
 - 6:00 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Monday each month at Blaine City Hall
- **District #4 and NWFR Annual Joint Meeting:** Chief Pernet reminded the Board that District #4 and NWFR typically have a first quarter joint meeting in April to discuss any contractual issues. No issues were noted.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Northern Light Article re: Thanksgiving meals
- Northern Light Article re: Noah’s March
- Northern Light Article re: Chuckanut Bay Foods to open facility in Blaine
- Andy and Cherie Webster re: Thank you for service
- The Responder: District newsletter, December issue

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **January 18 Board Meeting Attendance Query:** All Board members present indicated they will be attending the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Chuck Shipp; Sweet Rd. Blaine: Chuck Shipp wanted to take the opportunity to address the correspondence from Andy and Cherie Webster. Both expressed their gratitude after Lieutenant Ahrehnolz, firefighters Jeff Haley and Zak Balonick completed roofing their shed following Andy Webster’s fall and subsequent hospital transport. Chuck Shipp appreciates that the chiefs and commission allow and even endorse members to provide that exemplary customer service that sometimes goes above and beyond the norm.

Chuck further noted that some members do live where they work and are very invested in their community. These deeds echo the department values and have grown out of our leadership.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- Washington State Rating Bureau (WSRB)
- Board officer elections

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- Chairman Bosman recessed the meeting for an Executive Session, *RCW 42.30.140(4)(a) "Collective bargaining sessions with employee organizations, including contract negotiations, grievance meetings, and discussions relating to the interpretation or application of a labor agreement; or (b) that 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 proposals made in the negotiations or proceedings while in progress."*

at 8:15 p.m. for approximately twenty minutes until approximately 8:35 p.m. Division Chief Henry Hollander, Attorney Rich Davis and District 4 Fire Commissioner Harry Andrews remained for the executive session. Action will not be taken as a result of the executive session.

MEETING RECONVENED

- Chairman Bosman called the regular meeting back into open session at 8:35 p.m.

SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: There being no further business Commissioner Ansell moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:46 p.m. The motion was seconded by Chairman Bosman and approved 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jennie Sand, Recording Secretary

ATTEST:

Rich Bosman, Chairman

Dean Berkeley, Commissioner

John Crawford, Commissioner

Bruce Ansell, Commissioner

Chief Pernet, Board Secretary