

**Whatcom County Fire District #21
Station 61 – Blaine
9408 Odell Street, Blaine WA 98230
1:00 pm
January 18, 2018
Regular Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bosman called the regular Whatcom County Fire District #21 Board of Fire Commissioners meeting for January 18, 2018 to order at 1:05 p.m. at Station 61 – 9408 Odell Street, Blaine, WA 98230.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

Attendees: Chairman Rich Bosman; Vice-Chairman Larry McPhail; Commissioners John Crawford and Bruce Ansell; Fire Chief William Pernet; Assistant Chief Joe Noonchester; Division Chief Henry Hollander.

Commissioner Dean Berkeley was excused from this meeting.

AWARDS

- Chief Pernet recognized the following members:
- Volunteer of the Year – Paul VanDyken
- Firefighter of the Year – John Geleynse
- Employee of the Year – John Swobody
- Chief Award – Jon Ahrenholz, Zak Balonick, Jeff Haley

RECESS

Chairman Bosman recessed the meeting at 1:14 p.m. for ten minutes to allow members to be acknowledged.

Chairman Bosman called the meeting back to order at 1:26 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Mike Peetoom, (Director) Custer, WA: Mike Peetoom, Director of Birch Bay Chamber of Commerce along with Yvonne Lindquist (secretary) and Patricia Applegate (event coordinator), presented North Whatcom Fire and Rescue with a plaque and thanked them for their assistance during the annual Polar Bear Plunge and additional ongoing support.

Commissioner Ansell noted that the relationship between the district and the Chamber is important and he will continue to act as the district representative and contact person at future Birch Bay Chamber meetings. He encouraged the group to direct any district questions, comments or concerns to him during future Birch Bay Chamber meetings.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

1. Meeting Minutes
 - a) December 21, 2017 – Public Hearing
2. Staff Reports - Chiefs / Operations / Training / Technical Support
3. Financial Report / Revenue
 - a) Total Revenue – December \$73,972.06
 - b) Total Expenditures – January \$555,593.17
4. Voucher / Payroll / Benefits
 - a) NWFR Employees Direct Deposit Payroll #1-61: \$273,714.95
 - b) Volunteer Direct Deposit Payroll #62-77: \$1,434.32
 - c) Non-Direct Payroll #1-2: \$4,097.47
 - d) Benefits Voucher # 01-11: \$178,138.45
 - e) Monthly Expenditure Vouchers #01-171: \$97,242.00
 - f) Capital Projects #172: \$965.98

Commissioner Ansell requested additional information regarding an upcoming radio communications meeting at the Governor’s office. Chief Pernet explained that the Whatcom County Fire Agency Radio System (FARS) committee that controls radio hardware communications, is made of local fire district representatives who all pay a fee to assist with radio upkeep and maintenance. The FARS committee recently formed a subcommittee to look into funding to assist with upgrading all area radio sites to simulcasting. Simulcasting allows radios to broadcast concurrently and is very expensive. Chief Noonchester is part of the subcommittee and has already met with the county executive to enlighten him on area radio concerns. Both Chiefs Pernet and Noonchester plan on attending the meeting to update the governor’s staff with similar information and request funding support. In addition, the City of Bellingham is applying for a joint regional grant (AFG) for similar funding.

Originally Semiahmoo Station 62 was built with monies from the Semiahmoo Association. Commissioner Ansell wondered if it would be prudent for the district to approach the Semiahmoo Association and/or neighboring contractors and developers to

assist with the cost or provide supplies for the future roof replacement of Semiahmoo Station 62. Chief Hollander will investigate and report back to the Board.

Commissioner Ansell inquired if the Board would like additional information regarding the new Tegriss system. Tegriss is a building inspection notification system, specifically in the City of Blaine area, that is free to the district and paid for by the vendors. At this time the district has four hundred and sixty three active customers who have been uploaded to a software program that automatically notifies them when various types of inspections are due. The district has access to view updated information via the web. Chief Hollander will invite the owner of Tegriss to a future Board meeting to provide a presentation.

MOTION: Vice-Chairman McPhail moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ansell and approved 4-0.

NW FIRE COMMISSIONER MONTHLY REPORTS

Whatcom County Fire Commissioners Association: Commissioner Crawford reported that the upcoming Legislative Day will be held on Thursday, January 25 in Olympia at the Capitol Campus. This annual event provides an excellent opportunity for members of the Washington Fire Commissioner's and Washington Fire Chief's Associations to discuss issues with the legislators that directly impact the fire service.

Birch Bay Chamber of Commerce: Commissioner Ansell noted that the Birch Bay Chamber of Commerce is made up of a nice representation of local businesses in the Birch Bay and the surrounding area. A recent presentation provided information regarding the Port of Bellingham and their upcoming projects regarding waterfront development. Commissioner Ansell will continue to monitor the meetings and attend when applicable.

Blaine City Council: Chief Hollander noted that the City of Blaine has elected a new mayor along with three new council members. Commissioner Ansell noted that he will most likely attend the upcoming meeting scheduled for Monday, January 22. Chief Hollander routinely attends the Blaine City Council meetings.

IAFF LOCAL 106 MONTHLY REPORT

- None

LEGAL ISSUES

- None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- **Washington Survey and Rating Bureau:** Chief Pernet announced that the district has made contact with the WSRB over the past week. The regrade is complete however, it must be reviewed and approved by the supervisor before the report is officially released. Chief Pernet will keep the Board updated on any new information.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Fire Commissioner Guidelines:** The Board spent some time reviewing the adopted Fire Commissioner Guidelines.

7.0 Board of Chair and Vice Chair

7.3.3 If the Vice Chair is unable to serve as the Presiding Officer in the absence of the Chair, the Board members present at a meeting shall select a Presiding Officer Pro-Tempore for that meeting.

7.3.3.1 The Presiding Officer Pro-Tempore shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the Board Chair for the meeting in these situations.

Chairman Bosman reiterated that he needs to be notified a couple days in advance when any Board member expects to be absent during an upcoming meeting. If adequate time is not provided, the Board could end up without a quorum. The Board agreed to send an email to Commissioner Berkeley reminding him to notify Chairman Bosman regarding absences at least two days in advance.

Commissioner Ansell requested clarification regarding commissioners on outside committees representing the district. Attorney Rich Davis noted that non Board members of a committee can offer opinions and advice however only fire commissioners have voting authority at actual Board meetings. Chief Pernet noted that so far in his experience, these committees formed by the presiding Chairperson, have yet to take place in this district.

8.0 Commissioner Committees

The Chair creates and dissolves committees of the Board. Representative committees are committees formed to represent the District at external groups, meetings, or organizations. Ad hoc committees are committees formed to address limited, temporary issues. Committees consist of no more than two commissioners. The Chair appoints and removes the membership of the committees, including the chair of the committee. Committee membership is generally reviewed at the first meeting of each calendar year.

Committees consist of no more than two commissioners. Only commissioners are voting members of committees. The Fire Chief and the District Staff may consult and advise the committees, but do not have a vote in the committees. Committees may not take official action on behalf of the Board in authorizing the expenditure or non-expenditure of funds or by instituting new District policies. Board action may only occur at Board meetings.

Chairman Bosman reminded the commissioners that they must go through the Chair (chain of command) to request information from staff members, including the fire chief.

Board Relationship with Staff

9.4 The Board may request information from the Fire Chief, District staff, the District attorney, or any consultant to the District. The Chair may request information from the Fire Chief, District staff, the District attorney, or any consultant to the District. Individual Commissioners may request information only from the Fire Chief, and then only if the Chair pre-approves of the request. If the Chair denies the information request of an individual commissioner and the individual commissioner disagrees with the Chair's decision, then the individual commissioner may bring the information request to the next regular or special Board meeting for the Board to decide the matter. Individual Commissioners shall not request information directly from District staff, the District attorney, or any consultant to the District. The Fire Chief shall determine the manner in which responses are made to information requests.

- **Ground Emergency Medical Transportation program:** Chief Pernet provided information regarding the Ground Emergency Medical Transportation (GEMT) Program.

Chief Pernet noted that this is a voluntary Certified Public Expenditure based program that provides supplemental cost based payments to eligible providers that render GEMT services to Medicaid enrollees. For qualifying agencies, the supplemental payments cover the funding gap between a provider's actual costs per GEMT transport and the allowable amount received from Medicaid and any other sources of reimbursement. Chief Pernet noted that the district could recoup up to \$1,700 per transport on Medicaid calls.

Chief Pernet reviewed the steps that will be needed in order for the district to become a GEMT member including signing an agreement, completing a feasibility study as well as an extremely detailed annual cost report spreadsheet (\$30,000 completed by PCG). Chief Pernet noted that he will investigate the cost

benefit to the district before any decision is made. District 4 may also participate in the cost sharing if the district moves forward.

Commissioner Ansell requested clarification regarding whether once the district realizes the actual costs of a transport and begins charging the state and federal government accordingly, won't the district also have to bill all users (residents) equally? Chief Pernet stated that he does not believe it will be an issue, however he will investigate prior to moving forward. In addition, Chief Pernet noted that the district may be due for an increase in basic life support (BLS) services.

Attorney Rich Davis noted that uninsured portions of an EMS bill can still be waived by the district if a specific process is followed.

MOTION: Commissioner Ansell moved to authorize Chief Pernet to submit the annual Ground Emergency Medical Transportation (GEMT) participation agreement. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crawford and approved 4-0.

- **Inter-local Agreement for First Response Emergency Medical Services:** Chief Pernet provided some history regarding the original Inter-Local Agreement for First Response Emergency Medical Services signed by all the fire districts and cities within Whatcom County. The fire districts agreed to provide basic life support transport services in the county while the County through an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) levy, agreed to pay all fire district dispatch fees.

When the recent ALS/ EMS levy passed, part of the agreement was to utilize a portion of the EMS levy funds to assist with dispatching fees and electronic patient care medical reporting county wide. The proposed agreement addresses both areas. It is expected that all fire agencies will sign the agreement however, if one agency decides to not sign, the agreement will not be nullified.

MOTION: Commissioner Crawford motioned to approve the Inter-local Agreement for First Response Emergency Medical Services. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman McPhail and approved 4-0.

- **2018 Administration and Support Services Wage Proposal:** Chief Pernet presented a 2018 administration and support services wage proposal complete with comparables. The wage increase had been discussed during a previous budget study session. Chief Pernet noted that historically all non-represented personnel wage increases mirror the labor group's however, no retro pay is provided, thus allowing the admin group to slip further behind the comparables.

Chief Pernet noted that with this proposal, all positions will see either a five or ten percent increase this year dependent upon the comps. The hope is to bring all positions closer within the next year. Chief Pernet noted that the comparables utilized takes in to account the districts' size, positions, budgets, call volumes and assessed evaluations. The total cost for the 2018 non-represented wage increase is \$41,305 which was not included in the 2018 budget however, monies are available. Chief Pernet noted that if the district doesn't keep wages competitive, we may eventually lose great employees.

The Board agreed to have further discussion during the executive session per RCW 42.30.110(g), before a final decision is approved.

- **Board Officer Elections:** The Board completed their yearly officer elections.

MOTION: Vice-Chairman McPhail motioned to keep the current Chairman (Bosman) Board Officer for 2018. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ansell and approved 4-0.

MOTION: Vice-Chairman McPhail nominated Commissioner Ansell for the position of Vice-Chairman for 2018. The motion was seconded by Chairman Bosman and approved 4-0.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- **0100.0003.00 Fire Commissioner Guidelines:** Chief Pernet noted that the only revision to the Fire Commissioner Guidelines policy is the Board meeting time change from 7:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

MOTION: Chairman Bosman moved to approve 0100.0003.00 Fire Commissioner Guidelines as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ansell and approved 4-0.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Community Assistance Program re: Thanksgiving Baskets

- Jean Cartwright re: Thank you for service and donation
- Bill and Christine Hunt re: Thank you for service
- Jan Brown re: Thank you for service
- Northern Light article re: Year in review
- From Jean Cartwright re: Thank you for service
- From Doug Kyle re: Thank you for service
- The Responder: District newsletter, January issue

Commissioner Ansell requested information regarding the amount of yearly donations collected by the district and how those funds are allocated. Chief Pernet noted that an average of \$500 is collected and that unless a donation has been specifically earmarked for a certain area or purpose, all donations are deposited as unexpected revenues. Commissioner Ansell asked if those monies could be ear marked in the future for specific areas such as employee recognition. Chief Pernet noted that the district is closely governed by the auditor’s office and he will make an inquiry.

Chief Pernet further noted that donations can be made out directly to the volunteer association or union benevolent fund.

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.” and;*
 per *RCW 42.30.110(g) “to evaluate the qualifications of an applicant for public employment or to review the performance of a public employee.”*

at 2:43 p.m. until approximately 3:10 p.m. Assistant Chief Joe Noonchester, Division Chief Henry Hollander, Attorney Rich Davis and District 4 Fire Commissioner Harry Andrews remained for the executive session. Action may be taken as a result of the executive session.

Assistant Chief Joe Noonchester and Division Chief Henry Hollander left the executive session at 2:57 p.m.

MEETING RECONVENED

Chairman Bosman called the regular meeting back into open session at 3:10 p.m.

- **2018 Administration and Support Services Wage Proposal cont.:**

MOTION: Vice-Chairman McPhail moved to approve the 2018 Administrative and Support Services wage proposal as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ansell and approved 4-0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **2018 Fire Commissioner Training:** Chief Pernet reviewed some upcoming fire commissioner training. All Board members responded favorably to attending an in-house fire commissioner training in March by the Chmelik and Sitkin. The District #4 Board members may also participate in the training. Chief Pernet and Attorney Rich Davis will discuss ideas before bringing options back to the Board.
- **February Board Meeting Attendance Query:** All Commissioners present are expected to attend the meeting with the exception of Commissioner Crawford who remains unsure. It is not known if Commissioner Berkeley will be able to attend.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- Washington Survey and Rating Bureau
- Semiahmoo Station 62 Roof
- Tegriss Presentation

SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: There being no further business Commissioner Ansell moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:35 p.m. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman McPhail and approved 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jennie Sand, Recording Secretary

ATTEST:

Rich Bosman, Chairman

Larry McPhail, Vice-Chairman

John Crawford, Commissioner

Bruce Ansell, Commissioner

Chief Pernet, Board Secretary