

**Whatcom County Fire District #21  
Station 61 – Blaine  
9408 Odell Street, Blaine WA 98230  
1:00 pm  
August 16, 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 August 16, 2018 to order at 1:04 p.m. at Station 61 – 9408 Odell Street, Blaine, WA 98230.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ROLL CALL**

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

- None

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

1. Meeting Minutes
  - a) July 19, 2018
2. Staff Reports – Chiefs / Operations / Training / Technical Support
3. Financial Report / Revenue
  - a) Total Revenue – July \$546,296.41
  - b) Total Expenditures – August \$559,929.43
4. Voucher / Payroll / Benefits
  - a) NWFR Employees Direct Deposit Payroll: \$310,607.52
  - b) Non-Direct Payroll (July): \$4,586.60
  - c) Non-Direct Payroll: \$170.39
  - d) Benefits Voucher: \$178,036.80
  - e) Monthly Expenditure Vouchers: \$55,056.69
  - f) Capital Projects Voucher: \$5,074.03
  - g) Capital Projects Facilities: \$4,619.75
  - h) Capital Projects Apparatus: \$1,777.65

**MOTION:** Commissioner McPhail moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crawford and approved 5-0.

## **NW FIRE COMMISSIONER MONTHLY REPORTS**

- **Blaine City Council:** Monday, August 13. Chief Hollander reported that the Blaine City Council voted to adopt the district's capital mitigation fee plan as a straight impact fees for all new construction, effective August 1. This means that City of Blaine will collect impact fees and forward them to the district. The City will also charge the developer a processing fee.

Chief Pernet recognized Chief Hollander for his continued effort on this project.

Vice-Chairman Ansell requested information on the specific timeline on when mitigation fees must be spent and for what purpose. Chief Hollander stated the monies must be spent on new growth within a five year time limit. In addition, Chief Hollander noted that if the timeline is exceeded, those funds must be paid back to the developer, with interest. Chief Pernet plans on meeting with the attorney to strategize on the best way to utilize those funds within the law.

## **IAFF LOCAL 106 MONTHLY REPORT**

- None

## **LEGAL ISSUES**

- Attorney Rich Davis mentioned that the Attorney General issued an informal opinion regarding purchasing and public works (52.14.110). Fire Districts no longer need to award bids based solely on price. Other considerations include company reputation and warranty, allowing for more flexibility. Some district policies may need to be updated to reflect the changes in the near future.

Chief Pernet noted that the current ambulance request for proposal (RFP) has also been adjusted to reflect that best value and bids will be assigned percentages based on a matrix.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- None

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Northwood Store – Lane Brennick:** Chairman Bosman noted included in the Board packet was correspondence from Lane Brennick. As owner of the Northwood Store he has proposed an egress entrance on the east side of the Northwood Station, allowing customers easier access to their store.

During a visit to the Northwood Station<sup>72</sup> last month, Chief Pernet noticed that a path had been carved from the store to the front of Northwood Station apron. He notified Chairman Bosman who then contracted Lane Brennick. Mr. Brennick explained that the contractor had mistakenly carved the path. Chief Pernet is doubtful that their proposal will impact the station or operations at this time however, potential future issues remain unclear.

Since the perpetual easement proposal was received so close to the meeting and did not include pictures, the Board will postpone discussion until the September meeting. Pictures of the project will also be requested. The district's attorney will need time to review the proposal and add language taking into consideration things such as gifting of public funds, how to terminate if needed in the future as well as steps to be taken if the agreement is not followed. Attorney Rich Davis further suggested that a market analysis be conducted to get a sense of the potential value of the easement.

Vice-Chairman Ansell added that he wants to ensure that the proposal does not jeopardize any future district plans for growth.

Chairman Bosman noted that the district has already approved to allow the Northwood store to utilize a portion of the Northwood Station 72 for overflow parking during special events.

- **Resolution 2018-012 Surplus Wildland Equipment:** Chief Pernet noted that the district has no use for two wildland pump tank skids that were taken off of old brush trucks. Chief Hollander noted that the equipment was originally on old Department of Natural Resource (DNR) trucks that the district was using. The trucks were eventually returned to DNR without the skids.

**MOTION:** Vice-Chairman Ansell moved to approve Resolution 2018-12 Surplus Wildland Equipment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crawford and approved 5-0.

- **District Consultant:** Chief Pernet presented information based on the last Board meeting where he was directed by the Board to research possible consultants to assist with developing the districts' long range master plan including capital facilities, capital apparatus, standards of cover and other future visionary items. Information had forwarded to the Board prior to the meeting.

Attorney Rich Davis also forwarded consultant recommendations to Chief Pernet based on past experience.

Emergency Services Consulting International (ESCI): Chief Pernet noted that ESCI is a large company that he was able to gather more information. During his recent conference in Dallas, Chief Pernet had the opportunity to talk in length to an ESCI representative regarding types of consultations offered.

If ESCI is utilized, the district would receive a discount since they are International Fire Chiefs (IFC) members and there would be an additional discount if the district joined Group Purchasing Organization (GPO) network. There would be no cost for the district to join. The GPO is a network of vendors that are already pre-approved for Request for Proposal (RFP) which includes ESCI as a vendor. The benefit being that the district can piggyback off of another agency looking to purchase the

same item and therefore not required to go out for bid. With the above discounts, the district can still expect to pay approximately \$40,000 for a long range master plan.

Citygate Associates LLC: Chief Pernet he was able to retrieve some information off of the company's website. They offer a similar service however, he has not talked directly with them at this time. Chief Pernet plans to conduct additional research into this company.

Chairman Bosman clarified that this discussion it expected to provide Chief Pernet with some direction regarding pursuing assistance for district long term planning.

Vice-Chairman Ansell reviewed the information for both companies and stated that it seems that Citygate is primarily a California based organization, while ESCI has been utilized all over WA State, specifically by both the City of Blaine and the City of Lynden. Vice-Chairman Ansell stated that he has talked with three different fire chiefs who have endorsed ESCI to conduct a comprehensive plan of a fire district. He further stated that it appears by the scope of information disseminated regarding ESCI, they are thorough and have flexible services depending on the needs of the district.

Vice-Chairman Ansell stated that one of the reasons he became a commissioner was to see a long term master plan based on the district's geographical area, equipment, apparatus, stations, along with consolidations and mergers, come to fruition. Currently there is a lack of administrative staff available to complete such a time consuming project. Vice-Chairman Ansell stated that he sees the \$40,000 cost as a good value for the product and it's time the district "pulls the trigger" and begins moving toward the future, hopefully during this next year.

Chairman Bosman stated that he is in favor of ESCI's unbiased format and thorough process, specifically their interviewing process. ESRI will interview members of the Local, firefighters, chiefs, commissioners, administration as well as the public, and will utilize that information in their design. Chairman Bosman agreed with Vice-Chairman Ansell stating that the first of the year would be a good time to move forward.

Commissioner McPhail questioned if any monies could be set aside for a project this large. Chief Pernet stated that during the upcoming 2019 budget study session, monies can be allocated for the project.

Commissioner Berkeley asked what cost over runs could be expected. Chief Pernet noted that although no formal quotes have been provided, he estimates the range to run from between \$40,000 - \$50,000 for all the components of a master plan. Ultimately the plan will provide a clearer picture of the district that will be utilized to make better decisions for the future.

Although Commissioner Berkeley is in favor of being proactive, he is not in favor of spending that kind of money and expressed his concern that the cost may increase before the plan is completed. Vice-Chairman Ansell noted that a contract could include a limit on cost overruns. Attorney Rich Davis reiterated that a contract can be negotiated not to exceed a specific cost to minimize any overrun fees.

Commissioner Crawford agreed that the district needs to move forward with a plan and after reviewing both companies he also favors ESCI.

Vice-Chairman Ansell stated that the district needs to request a formal cost estimate from both companies.

The Board directed Chief Pernet to continue to research the scope of various companies and verify costs. The cost and any additional information will be discussed during the 2019 budget study session.

## **POLICIES & PROCEDURE**

**0400.0020.00 Resident Firefighter:** Chief Pernet pointed out a typo in the policy.

*“A Resident Firefighter will work a ~~minimum~~ maximum of 6-24 or 12-12 hour Duty Shifts per month.”*

Chief Pernet stated that this language also matches the new resident firefighter manual.

The policy outlines supervision received, essential duties, responsibilities, schedules, knowledge and abilities, minimum qualifications and physical requirements. The manual also includes a resident agreement for living in Semiahmoo Station 62.

Chief Pernet announced that one resident has recently moved into the station with two more residents expected in the near future.

Commissioner Crawford requested information regarding the age requirement for residents. Chief Pernet stated that as per the districts’ insurance company, the age requirement for resident volunteers is eighteen however, the requirement for full time career members is twenty-one. With the lower age requirement, the district may be able to take advantage of students attending the Skagit Valley Fire Service Program.

Vice-Chairman Ansell questioned if the Local had reviewed the policy and if they had expressed any concerns. Chief Pernet noted that Management and Labor had met to discuss the policy and if it would affect their work. It is expected that residents will pull volunteer shifts with Birch Bay Station 63 and not affect the officer’s current duties.

Vice-Chairman Ansell questioned if residents would transport a patient so a career response would still be available. Chief Pernet noted that discussions with officers and the union clarified that residents will respond “in addition to” and then it will be up to the

officer in charge to utilize that resource as they see fit. Other decisions will be made by the operations chief. There will be no change in working conditions for the officers.

The residents currently have their EMT and will continue fire training through the Skagit Valley Fire Service Program allowing them to respond with career staff as EMTs.

Commissioner Crawford asked for information regarding the total number of residents. Chief Noonchester stated that the goal is to have a total of four residents.

Chief Pernet noted that it will be good to have a presence at the station in case of a walk in emergency and sees the program as a positive beginning to provide better coverage in the area.

**MOTION:** Vice-Chairman Ansell moved to approve Policy 0400.0020.00 Resident Firefighter with the corrections. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McPhail and approved 5-0.

**Chain of Command:** Chairman Bosman reminded Board members to set a good example and follow the chain of command when issues arise.

#### **CORRESPONDENCE**

- Bellingham Herald article re: Birch Bay grass fires
- Northern Light article re: Birch Bay grass fires
- Bellingham Herald article re: Lynden duplex fire
- Bellingham Herald article re: Samish house fire
- Mary Lou Steward re: John Swobody memorial
- Red Cross re: Thank you for storing shelter supplies
- The Responder: District newsletter, August issue
- 911 Peace Arch Memorial flyer

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**2019 Budget Study Session Dates:** It was decided that October 13 and November 19 will be scheduled to review the 2019 budget. Both dates will be held at Odell Station 61 from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Chief Pernet plans to meet with the division heads in September prior to developing the budget.

**September Board Meeting Attendance Query:** All Commissioners with the exception of Vice-Chairman Ansell are expected to attend the September 20 meeting.

**Washington Fire Commissioners Association Conference:** The 2018 WFC A Conference will be held from October 25, 2018 - October 27 in Yakima. Board members were instructed to contact Chief Pernet if they were interested in attending.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- None

**AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

- Northwood Store – Lane Brennick
- District Consultant

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Chairman Bosman recessed the meeting for an Executive Session, 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 1:59 p.m. until approximately 2:20 p.m. Assistant Chief Joe Noonchester, Division Chief Henry Hollander, Attorney Rich Davis and District 4 Fire Commissioner Mary Beth Neal remained for the executive session.

**MEETING RECONVENED**

Chairman Bosman called the regular meeting back into open session at 2:17 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 2:25 p.m. The motion was seconded by Chairman Bosman and approved 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted by:

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Jennie Sand, Recording Secretary

**ATTEST:**

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Rich Bosman, Chairman

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Bruce Ansell, Vice-Chairman

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Dean Berkeley, Commissioner

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Larry McPhail, Commissioner

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John Crawford, Commissioner

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Chief Pernet, Board Secretary