

**Whatcom County Fire District #21
Station 61 – Blaine
9408 Odell Street, Blaine WA 98230
1:00 pm
January 17, 2019
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 17, 2019 to order at 1:06 p.m. at Station 61 – 9408 Odell Street, Blaine, WA 98230.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

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

Commissioner Berkeley requested to be excused for medical reasons.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Jesse Creydt, Healthy Youth Coalition; 8027 Niska Rd., Blaine: Jesse Creydt provided information regarding the Healthy Youth Coalition in North Whatcom County. The program was started approximately one year ago in response to data collected regarding the national youth crisis. The program has recently partnered with other agencies (Blaine Police Department, Parks and Recreation, YMCA) in order to provide youths a variety of healthy lifestyle choices. Programs offered include a weekly Teen Night, Blue Beat (biking), swim lessons, Trail Blazers (running) and an upcoming safety rodeo.

Jesse Creydt invited North Whatcom Fire and Rescue to become involved in the in the coalition, specifically the safety rodeo tentatively scheduled for May 1, 2019. The district may be able to provide some bike rodeo equipment through Region 3, and possibly free bike helmets through the Safe Kids Program, the district and/or the Local 106 Benevolent Fund. The district plans to stay in touch with Jesse Creydt to offer assistance as needed.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

1. Meeting Minutes
 - a) December 20, 2018 – Public Hearing
2. Staff Reports – Chiefs / Operations / Training / Technical Support
3. Financial Report / Revenue
 - a) Total Expenditures –January \$535,236.25

4. Voucher / Payroll / Benefits
 - a) NWFR Employees Direct Deposit Payroll: \$282,952.33
 - b) Non-Direct Payroll: \$268.28
 - c) Benefits Voucher: \$169,977.10
 - d) Monthly Expenditure Vouchers: \$80,849.09
 - e) Capital Projects Voucher: \$1,189.45

Vice-Chairman Ansell requested information regarding the unreconciled 2018 year end budget statistics. Chief Noonchester stated that the main overages include overseen healthcare costs and overtime. Due to the way the county reports revenues to the district, the budget is created both on fact and speculation. The district has yet to receive the final revenues for 2018. Chief Noonchester stated that it is not uncommon for the Board to pass an amendment in the early part of the following year to reflect any changes to the final budget if needed. A budget amendment will be requested during the February 21, 2019 meeting.

Vice-Chairman Ansell requested information regarding the station fire monitoring equipment. Chief Hollander noted that the station fire monitoring equipment issues are due to aging equipment and requested approval to update the equipment at all stations. The cost per station is \$1,400. The cost for the updates were not included in the 2019 budget however, monies can be utilized out of the capital reserve funds and will be included in a future 2019 budget amendment. The Board agreed to move forward with the updates at all District 21 stations, beginning with the career stations and Semiahmoo Station 62. In addition, the Board requested that District 4 consider paying for the updates at the District 4 fire stations.

Chief Hollander agreed to discuss the cost of updating the fire monitoring equipment at North Shore Station 11, Britton Loop Station 12 and Smith Rd Station 13 during the upcoming District 4 Board meeting scheduled for Thursday, February 14, 2019.

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

NW FIRE COMMISSIONER MONTHLY REPORTS

- **Whatcom County Fire Commissioners:** Vice-Chairman Ansell provided information regarding the recent Whatcom County Fire Commissioners meeting held on Wednesday, January 9, 2019.
 - The 2019 Legislative Day is scheduled for Thursday, January 24, 2019 in Olympia. This annual event, which includes a morning workshop and noon luncheon, provides an excellent opportunity for members to discuss issues with their legislators that directly impact the fire service including state sales tax for purchasing equipment, sustainable funding, restructuring the levy lid cap, support funding, improving the volunteer pension and risk

mobilization. The agenda can be found on the Washington State Fire Commissioners website at <https://connect.computility.com/f/index.php>.

- Other discussions included signing a letter regarding the ongoing issue of firefighter exposure to hazards related to contaminated equipment picked up from the hospital.
- **Blaine City Council:** Chief Hollander announced that one of the council members has resigned with six applicants vying for the position. It is expected that one will be appointed during the next city council meeting.

Chief Hollander noted that since fire impact fees have been adopted, the district is receiving monies for many projects located in the City of Blaine including single family residences. The monies are collected by the City of Blaine and forwarded to the district in quarterly installments. As with mitigation fees, impact fees must be spent within a five year time limit.

Cross Border: Chief Noonchester attended the quarterly Cross Border meeting held on Tuesday, January 8, 2019. The meeting was well attended. Whatcom County Department of Emergency Management will be hosting a cross border railway exercise expected to be held in the Sumas area sometime in October. Agencies from both sides of the border, including North Whatcom Fire and Rescue are expected to participate in the event.

IAFF LOCAL 106 MONTHLY REPORT

- None

LEGAL ISSUES

- Attorney Rich Davis is currently reviewing the mitigation contracts and plans to provide information regarding when monies need to be spent at an upcoming meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Ambulance Bid Approval: After going out to bid twice, Chief Hollander reviewed the two Type II ambulance (van conversion) bids and discussed the ambulance committee's recommendation.

- TriVan - \$159,180 + tax (\$13,848.66) = \$173,028.66
- Braun Northwest - \$151,290 + tax (\$12,254.49) = \$163,544.49

Following the first bid and reviewing the costs, the district made the decision to remove items from the specifications and redo the process.

Even though TriVan was the higher bid, the appointed committee recommended that the Board approve their bid as presented.

It was noted that Braun Northwest did not follow all the bid specifications.

Factors considered for the committee's choice included:

- TriVan's overall construction equal or better
- Interior height 76" versus 72"
- Wall, floor and ceiling spray foam insulation (installed before electrical and plumbing)
- Coast guard approved electrical system (Blue Sea)
- Interior noise level meets National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
- Meets all Ambulance Manufacturer's Division of the NTEA performance specs
- Meets all Society of Automotive Engineers performance specs
- Solid ceiling aluminum panel versus vinyl (interior)
- One piece floor with rhino type spray treatment meets standards, formerly known as the American Society of Testing and Materials
- Local manufacturer for site visits saves money in travel and overtime and allows the district more input
- TriVan met more individual bid specs
- TriVan's Ford chassis better suited for bid
- Meets HVAC NFPA standard
- All references had only positive remarks

Braun Northwest representative Jim Young commented and requested information regarding the ambulance bid recommendation.

Ambulance committee members Shaun Ward and Elliot Courage provided additional information with regards to their recommendation.

Attorney Rich Davis noted that if one bidder does not meet the specifications, the district is well within their rights to declare the bidder unresponsive and not consider the bid, unless exceptions were submitted. Decisions must be made on the bids submitted at a given time. The district cannot meet with one bidder to negotiate changes prior to a decision. In addition, the Board is well within their rights to accept either bid or cancel and redo the process.

Chief Noonchester stated he trusts the judgement of the committee and supports their decision. Both Chairman Bosman and Vice-Chairman Ansell respect Braun Northwest and noted that even though the district has worked the company in the past and they have an impeccable history, the Board also supports the ambulance committee's recommendation.

MOTION: Chairman Bosman moved to accept the recommendation of the Ambulance Bid Committee and award the bid to TriVan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crawford and approved 3-0.

Commissioner McPhail abstained due to the fact he is acquainted with Jim Young.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Resolution 2019 -01 Surplus SCBAs:** Chief Hollander reminded the Board that the Britton Loop Station 12 fueling station was recently rebuilt with the cost being split between NWFR and District 4. This resolution is to surplus the parts that came out of the fueling station, are no longer a value to either district, but do have some value and will be sent to auction. Both districts will pass a resolution and share any proceeds collected.

MOTION: Vice-Chairman Ansell motioned to approve Resolution 2019-01 Surplus SCBAs. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McPhail and approved 4-0.

- **Regional Fire Authority (RFA) Discussion Letter with District 7:** Prior to beginning a fire chief's process, Chairman Bosman announced that approximately four weeks ago he met with one of the District 7 fire commissioners to inquire if they were interested in collaborating. As a result of the conversation, another meeting was held which included Chairman Bosman, a District 7 commissioner and the District 7 Fire Chief to discuss if joining the districts is worth pursuing. It was agreed that all parties would like to have further discussions.

One commissioner from each district met with both Labor groups to obtain their feedback. Their response was positive and all agreed the idea was worth exploring further.

The District 7 commissioners requested that the NWFR Board provide them with a formal letter requesting to continue discussions.

Chairman Bosman emphasized that not everyone is in favor of the idea however, he feels the district owes it to the taxpayers to pursue the possibility of cost savings in the future. Multiple agencies across the state are also looking at regional fire authorities.

In addition, there are implications for District 4 that will need to be considered. District 4 Fire Commissioner Mary Beth Neal is also open to further discussions.

There are many things to consider and it is expected that discussions will take some time.

Attorney Rich Davis suggested that the letter also request a regional fire authority planning committee (3 members each Board) be formed and a consultant selected to guide the Boards through the process.

Attorney Rich Davis agreed to draft the letter which will also be forwarded to the District 4 commissioners.

Chief Noonchester noted that the 2019 budget has funds earmarked for consultant fees and the fire chief recruitment process, which could be utilized for the consolidation study process.

- **Fire Chief Recruitment Process:** It was agreed to put the fire chief recruitment process on hold while the regional fire authority discussions take place.
- **Board Officer Elections:** The Board completed their yearly officer elections. Chairman Bosman noted that the district is going through so many changes at this time that he believes it would be better to keep the current officers in place.

MOTION: Vice-Chairman McPhail moved to keep the current Chairman (Bosman) and Vice-Chairman (Ansell) Board Officers for 2019. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crawford and approved 4-0.

POLICIES & PROCEDURE

- **0400.0003.00 Division Chief of Operations:** Chief Noonchester stated that even though the division chief of operations is a temporary position, it is necessary to have a job description in place prior to filling the position. The position is similar to the assistant chief of operations with the exception of the minimum qualifications. Chief Noonchester hopes to fill the position before the end of January.

Vice-Chairman Ansell reviewed the changes between the Assistant Chief of Operations and the Division Chief of Operations. Vice-Chairman Ansell questioned if the policy needs to address if / when the division chief of operations could be in charge in the fire chief or assistant chiefs' absence. Chief Noonchester stated that the written agreement will identify the division chief of operations' authority.

- 5.2.1 Serves as the Chief of Operations for all Fire District emergency operations, non-emergency operations, and assists with managing the various non-emergent support functions of the Fire District to ensure operational readiness. (removed)
- The Board requested that the word division be added to 5.3.1: Maintains the operational division annual budget that satisfies the defined level of service and appropriate federal, state, local and district requirements.
- Vice-Chairman Ansell noted that in his opinion, 5.4.6 is the most important statement in the entire policy. "Communicates information to assure all personnel are informed of decisions, actions, requirements, and status

of attaining established levels of service” Vice-Chairman Ansell further stated that whoever is chosen, needs to be able to communicate with all the personnel so that everyone in the organization is on the same page. Vice-Chairman Ansell hopes whoever is selected to the position takes the statement to heart.

MOTION: Vice-Chairman McPhail moved to approve Policy 0400.0003.00 Division Chief of Operations with the addition of the word “*division*” in 5.3.1. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McPhail and approved 4-0.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Kiro 7 News re: December windstorm
- Northern Light article re: NWFR 2018 year in review
- From Mary Beth Cassel-Tableman: Thank you for services
- Birch Bay Family Medicine re: Commissioner Berkeley’s absence
- The Responder: District newsletter, January issue

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **February Board Meeting Attendance Query:** All Commissioners in attendance with the exception of Commissioner McPhail are expected to attend the February 21 meeting.
- Chief Hollander announced that Bellingham Fire Department Fire Chief Bill Newbold will be retiring effective March 15, 2019.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- 2018 Budget Amendment
- Family Leave Act
- Division Chief Hollander’s Replacement Process
- Fire Chief Process
- Mitigation Report
- Regional Fire Authority (RFA)

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Following a five minute recess, 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 2:43 p.m. until approximately 3:00 p.m. Interim Fire Chief Joe Noonchester, Division Chief Henry Hollander and District 4 Fire Commissioner Mary Beth Neal remained for the executive session.

Chairman Bosman extended the executive session for ten minutes at 3:05.

MEETING RECONVENED

Chairman Bosman called the regular meeting back into open session at 3:16 p.m. Action will not be 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 3:27 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crawford and approved 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jennie Sand, Recording Secretary

ATTEST:

Rich Bosman, Chairman

Bruce Ansell, Vice-Chairman

Larry McPhail, Commissioner

John Crawford, Commissioner

Chief Noonchester, Board Secretary