

**Whatcom County Fire District #21
Station 61 – Blaine
9408 Odell Street, Blaine WA 98230
1:00 pm
March 21, 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 March 21, 2019 to order at 1:03 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, Dean Berkeley and John Crawford; Interim Fire Chief Joe Noonchester; Division Chiefs Henry Hollander and Jason Van der Veen; Attorney Rich Davis.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

1. Meeting Minutes
 - a) February 15, 2019 – Special
 - b) February 21, 2019
2. Staff Reports – Chiefs / Operations / Training / Technical Support
3. Financial Report / Revenue
 - a) Total Revenue –February \$100,460.76
 - b) Total Expenditures –March \$552,905.19
4. Voucher / Payroll / Benefits
 - a) NWFR Employees Direct Deposit Payroll: \$269,487.27
 - b) Non-Direct Payroll: \$110.36
 - c) Benefits Voucher: \$180,860.22
 - d) Monthly Expenditure Vouchers: \$81,797.62
 - e) Capital Facilities Voucher: \$12,627.33
 - f) Capital Projects Voucher: \$8,022.39

Vice-Chairman Ansell requested information regarding the requested five year mitigation fee spreadsheet. Chief Noonchester noted that the information has been reviewed by legal and will be forwarded to the fire commissioners prior to the next meeting.

Vice-Chairman Ansell requested information regarding pending correspondence to the district's payroll software company. Attorney Rich Davis noted that the subject will be discussed during the executive session.

Chief Hollander reminded the Board that he had requested funds (\$1,400 per station) at the January meeting to replace aging monitoring equipment at all stations. After further discussion with other vendors, the districts' current alarm monitoring communication vendor has agreed to install the new equipment at no charge (minus some minor electrical costs) to the district. The project should be completed in the next two weeks.

Vice-Chairman Ansell requested statistics regarding the district's frequency, responses and distance into the City of Bellingham from Britton Loop Station 12. Chief Van der Veen will be meeting with the City of Bellingham on April 17 to discuss the frequency and distance of auto aid responses. In addition, Vice-Chairman Ansell would like to see a before and after call volume since the auto aid agreement with the City of Bellingham.

Chief Van der Veen will add the information to his portion of the chief's report.

The district is utilizing a new reporting software and will continue to work on refining specific details of interest for the Board.

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

NW FIRE COMMISSIONER MONTHLY REPORTS

- **Blaine City Council:** Vice-Chairman Ansell noted that the City of Blaine Mayor declared a Healthcare Decisions Day proclamation on April 16. The proclamation urges citizens to recognize April 16 as an advance care planning reminder. Vice-Chairman Ansell is aware that the district routinely responds to people who do not have advance health care directives.

Vice-Chairman Ansell stated that the Lummi Nation will be taking part in a tribal canoe journey from July 24-28. Since the event takes place partially within the districts' response area (Birch Bay / Semiahmoo), it can only benefit the district to identify the route beforehand.

Vice-Chairman Ansell noted that the Hughes Avenue remodel has received funding.

Vice-Chairman Ansell stated that the City applied and will receive federal funding to rebuild the road on Semiahmoo spit.

- **Whatcom County Fire Commissioners:** Vice-Chairman Ansell provided information regarding the recent Whatcom County Fire Commissioners meeting held on Wednesday, March 13, 2019.

All the fire commissioner bills / initiatives currently before the legislature are moving forward without opposition including the state sales tax for purchasing equipment, sustainable funding, restructuring the levy lid cap, support funding, and improving the volunteer pension and risk mobilization.

Bellingham Fire Chief Bill Newbold has retired with Bill Hewett taking his place for the interim.

During the meeting South Whatcom Fire Authority Chief Ralston discussed the county-wide communication issues. It is anticipated that a county communication manager will be hired to assess and address the current communications problems, possibly taking up to three years to complete.

District 4 Fire Commissioner Mary Beth Neal attended the joint police and fire Whatcomm meeting. Commissioner Neal represented the fire service to ensure their apprehensions were heard regarding a joint dispatch.

Vice-Chairman Ansell met Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Levy Coordinator Mike Hilley. Mike Hilley stated that with additional Ground Emergency Medical Transportation (GEMT) monies, the revenue for the levy is healthy and he is looking to build reserves for the future. The six year EMS levy will end in 2021 and preparations for the new levy are beginning.

There are funds available in the Whatcom County Fire Commissioners Association for additional trainings during regular meetings. Commissioners can submit their ideas for training to the Association.

Regional Fire Authority (RFA) Meeting: Vice-Chairman Ansell recently met with South Whatcom Fire Authority Fire Chief Dave Ralston to discuss his history with RFAs. Chief Ralston noted that he will be available to answer questions as needed. Chief Ralston noted that a RFA is a long process taking up to three years to complete. Vice-Chairman Ansell noted the importance of getting a committee established who could then establish smaller groups to research specific issues.

Vice-Chairman Ansell will continue to gather additional RFA information. He also encouraged the Board to review their RFA binder to gain some background information. Attorney Rich Davis noted that some of the laws have since changed significantly, making some of the included information unsuitable however, other information remains valuable.

IAFF LOCAL 106 MONTHLY REPORT

- No report.

LEGAL ISSUES

- Rich Davis is in the midst of reviewing the District 4 three year payment mitigation agreement with the City of Bellingham regarding a recent annexation.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- **Station Alarms:** Chief Hollander noted that he has no update at this time regarding station alarms.
- **Master Plan:** Chief Noonchester reminder the Board that they had set aside funds (\$50,000) in the 2019 budget to hire a consulting firm to complete a district wide master plan. According to Vice-Chairman Ansell, the initial idea was brought up in 2016.

Chief Noonchester noted that a master plan could review district building remodels or sales, apparatus replacement and maintenance, administration relocation, RFAs, mergers and consolidations and provide direction for the future. A master plan could take approximately six months to complete.

Vice-Chairman Ansell provided reasons for the district to move forward with a master plan now, citing aging equipment and stations, increasing population, demographics and transportation issues.

Chief Hollander noted that a master plan can only benefit the district and will provide valuable information that can be brought to the table during any RFA discussions.

Attorney Rich Davis suggested asking District 7 to also contribute funds for a master plan since it would most likely include a RFA viability study.

Information was provided on two companies (Emergency Services Consulting International (ESCI) and Citygate Associates LLC) during the August 28, 2018 Board meeting.

Attorney Rich Davis suggested going through a request for qualifications (RFQ) process to compare companies before making a choice. An RFQ would include information about the company regarding who they had on staff, what they offer, how quickly the project would be completed, how they would staff the project, services provided in the past, along with a client list and similar projects completed.

The Board agreed to move forward with a district master plan. Chief Noonchester agreed to gather information from various companies for the Board to review and possibly interview.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Resolution 2019-02 Cancellation of Warrant:** Chief Noonchester provided information regarding a vendor check that was lost in the mail.

MOTION: Vice-Chairman Ansell moved to approve Resolution 2019-02 Cancellation of Warrant. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crawford and approved 5-0.

- **Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA):** Chief Van der Veen provided a history of the district SCBA acquisitions.
 - The district replaced all SCBA's with MSA model M7 SCBA's through a FEMA grant in 2008.
 - With the District 4 consolidation in 2011, additional SCBA's were added.
 - The district currently has 114 air packs.
 - District 4 air packs will become non-compliant in July 2019. (33 air packs and 64 bottles)
 - The district's MSA's will reach the end of their service life in 2023.
 - Two district grant applications (solo and regional) have been unsuccessful.

Chief Van der Veen noted that a committee (Lt. Biery, FF Sanders, FF Comp) was formed in late 2018 to do extensive research on the various SCBA options for replacement. Chief Van der Veen provided information regarding a district wide SCBA replacement plan.

Chief Noonchester noted that the funds to pay for the SCBA equipment could come from either reserves, capital projects or a combination.

Vice-Chairman Ansell requested information regarding why neither of the past grant applications were successful. Chief Noonchester stated the FEMA does not provide that information however, they do provide a seminar discussing grant denials in general. It is unclear why the grant applications were denied however, one impression is the districts' healthy cash reserve.

Lt. Biery noted that even if a purchase was made immediately, the expected delivery date wouldn't be until mid-summer. A training component would be in addition so it was not specified when the SCBA's would actually be put into service.

Vice-Chairman Ansell questioned if District 4 would be obligated to pay for a portion of the purchase. Chief Noonchester noted that he would investigate.

On behalf of the Board, Chairman Bosman gave approval to begin the process of inviting SCBA bids and investigating funding options.

Vice-Chairman Ansell thanked Lt. Biery for his hard work on the committee and his expertise on the topic. Vice-Chairman Ansell noted that the district has a lot of aging equipment and wants to ensure that the district receives “the best bang for the buck.”

POLICIES & PROCEDURE

- None

CORRESPONDENCE

- From Linda Fuhs re: Thank you for services
- From Mary Lou Steward, Cert re: Thank you for assistance
- From Kenneth Cunningham, Local 106NW re: Finances
- The Responder: District newsletter, March issue

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) Reminder:** Board members must complete their PDC by April 15, 2019.
- **Joint April Board Meeting Attendance Query:** All Commissioners are expected to attend the April 18 joint meeting.
- **City of Blaine Impact Fees:** Chief Hollander noted that the City of Blaine collects impact fees in lieu of mitigation fees for the district. For the months of January and February the city has collected a total of \$16,000. The payments are made to the district quarterly.
- **Lawn Sign:** The sign requested by the Board in recognition of Whatcom Lawns LLC for their continual upkeep of the lawns and garden, has been ordered for Wisner Lake Station 70.
- **Septic Design for Laurel Station 69:** The design for the septic system at Laurel Station 69 has been completed. The district is waiting for permit review before going out for bid on the project, hopefully in late August or September.
- **9-11 Peace Arch Memorial Committee:** The committee has been meeting in anticipation for the upcoming Peach Arch 9-11 Memorial Ceremony.
- **Healthy Youth Coalition (Talk Saves Lives):** Chief Hollander and Jennie Sand attended a suicide prevention discussion hosted by the Healthy Youth Coalition on Thursday, February 21 at Semiahmoo.

- **Teledoc:** Chief Noonchester announced that the new Teledoc program will be available to career members and administration as a healthcare supplement on April 1, 2019.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- Master Plan
- Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus
- Fire Chief Recruitment Process
- GEMT Update

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.”* And;

RCW 42.30.110(1)(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.

at 2:02 p.m. for approximately forty-five minutes until 2:45 p.m. Interim Fire Chief Joe Noonchester, Division Chiefs Henry Hollander, Jason Van der Veen, District 4 Commissioner Harry Andrews and Attorney Rich Davis remained for the executive session.

The meeting was extended for an additional fifteen minutes at 2:47 p.m.

Interim Fire Chief Joe Noonchester and Division Chiefs Henry Hollander and Jason Van der Veen were excused from the executive session at 3:00 p.m.

MEETING RECONVENED

Chairman Bosman called the regular meeting back into open session at 3:17 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 Crawford moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:17p.m. The motion was seconded by Vice- Chairman Ansell and approved 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jennie Sand, Recording Secretary

ATTEST:

Rich Bosman, Chairman

Bruce Ansell, Vice-Chairman

Larry McPhail, Commissioner

Dean Berkeley, Commissioner

John Crawford, Commissioner

Chief Noonchester, Board Secretary