

**Whatcom County Fire District #21
Station 61 – Blaine
9408 Odell Street, Blaine WA 98230
12:00 pm
December 19, 2019
Special Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bosman called the special Whatcom County Fire District #21 Board of Fire Commissioners meeting for December 19, 2019, to order at 12:04 p.m. at Station 61 – 9408 Odell Street, Blaine, WA 98230.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

Attendees: Chairman Rich Bosman; Vice-Chairman Bruce Ansell; Commissioner John Crawford; Division Chiefs Jason Van der Veen and Herschel Rostov; Attorney Richard Davis.

Commissioner McPhail was previously excused from this meeting.

Attorney Richard Davis arrived at 12:18 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

FIRE COMMISSIONER OATH OF OFFICE

Chairman Bosman conducted the swearing-in of Fire Commissioner-elect Scott Fischer who will begin his term in January, 2020.

RECESS INTO PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman Bosman opened the public hearing at 12:05 p.m. to hear comments for the proposed Resolution 2019-12 Adopting the Tax Revenues and Budget for 2020.

PUBLIC HEARING STATEMENT

Chief Van der Veen presented the proposed 2020 budget to the Board.

Highlights included:

Revenues: \$9,677,575

- Property taxes
- New Construction – not known at this time (last year's \$113,000)
- WA State Health Care Authority – GEMT \$522,875 (anticipated but not included)
- Contract fees from District 4 - \$2,120,312
- Transport Fees: NWFR - \$457,000: District 4 - \$94,000

- Reimbursement for overtime caused by paramedic schooling - \$206,000

Expenditures by Division (changes)

Legislative / Administration

- Computer software - \$60,000
 - Ongoing software maintenance and upgrades
 - LEXIPOL – company to create district policies and procedures (\$10,000)
 - New inventory and maintenance program
 - iPads to use on calls for data input
 - Inspection software for engine companies
- Salary increases including longevity and cost of living for line staff
- Professional services to help with District 4 merger and possible Dakota Bridge political action - \$55,000
- Coastal Administrative Services (CAS) administration fees – six months run over from self-funded health care plan - \$120,000

Operations

- Overtime – \$100,000
 - The four new hires will help with reducing overtime
- Medical Physicals - \$36,279.00
 - Utilize psychological testing for new candidates \$1,000 per person (local agency)
- Third-party billing - \$50,000 – Systems Design calculates reporting for the district to receive GEMT money.

Training

- Registration and tuition \$25,000 - encouraging more training

Prevention Division

- Registration and tuition - \$10,000
- Overtime - \$10,000 – Increase to allow for fire investigators and deputy fire marshal to be called in as needed.

Facilities

- Addition of a facilities manager - \$75,000 (end of first quarter) In charge of:
 - Planning
 - Public works
 - Bidding
 - Prevailing wage
 - Real estate
 - Station maintenance

Vehicle Maintenance

- Fire engine and pumper repairs - \$35,000 based on age of fleet

Capital requests

- Mapping software - \$15,000 initial
 - Pre-fire planning – web-based viewable in the field
- Forcible entry prop at Station 63 - \$8,000
- Nitric oxide systems - \$8,000 - Noninvasive pain medication to allow patients more comfort during long transports from Odell Station 61 and Birch Bay Station 63.
- Fire apparatus - \$650,000 –
- New Ambulance (2) - \$450,000
- Self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) - \$650,000
 - 65 Scott air packs
 - Buy one bottle receive one free
 - Lifetime warranty

Revenues vs Expenditures

2020 anticipated revenue - \$9,677,325

2020 anticipated expenditures - \$8,896,548

2020 possible investment opportunity - \$780,777

Debt payments

2020 – District 4 last payment - \$217,140

2020 – District 21- no debt

There was no public comment.

RECONVENE INTO REGULAR MEETING

Chairman Bosman closed the public hearing and reconvened the regular meeting at 12:53 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Resolution 2019-12 Adopting Tax Revenues and Budget for 2020:**

MOTION: Vice-Chairman Ansell moved to approve Resolution 2019-12 Adopting Tax Revenues and Budget for 2020. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crawford and approved 3-0.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

1. Meeting Minutes
 - a) November 9, 2019 – Special
 - b) November 21, 2019 – Public Hearing
 - c) December 6, 2019 – Special
2. Staff Reports – Chiefs / Operations / Training / Technical Support
3. Financial Report / Revenue

- a) Total Revenue – November \$533,890.92
- b) Total Expenditures – December \$822,743.49
- 4. Voucher / Payroll / Benefits
 - a) NWFR Employees Direct Deposit Payroll: \$306,069.42
 - b) Non-Direct Payroll Voucher: \$37,458.83
 - c) Benefits Voucher: \$283,997.30
 - d) Monthly Expenditure Vouchers: \$286,910.82
 - e) Capital Projects Apparatus: \$52,340.73 (shop truck chassis)
 - f) Capital Projects Apparatus (2): \$175,171.14 (Trivan aid car)
 - g) Capital Projects Apparatus (3): \$2,251.38 (striping for aid car)

MOTION: Commissioner Crawford moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Ansell and approved 3-0.

NW FIRE COMMISSIONER MONTHLY REPORTS

- **First-In Training and Education (FITE) Program:** Commissioner Crawford provided information on the FITE program which provides an opportunity to high school students who may want to experience and possibly pursue a career in either the fire, emergency medicine or the military service. There are currently eighteen students enrolled in the program from both Meridian and Bellingham high schools. The students spend half their days training every Thursday and Friday on the Britton Loop Station 12 training grounds. They are looking forward to continuing to work with the district in 2020.
- **Bomberos Unidos Non-Profit:** Commissioner Crawford provided information regarding a non-profit organization seeking the donation of a surplus ambulance for the small town of Jalisco, Mexico. Attorney Richard Davis suggested that the district draft a resolution donating the ambulance.
- **Washington Fire Commissioners Association:** Legislative Day is on Tuesday, January 28, in the State Legislative Building in Olympia.
- **Retired Fire Chief Dave Ralston Meeting:** Vice-Chairman Ansell recently met with retired Fire Chief Dave Ralston regarding the possibility of reimbursing him for consulting with the district and assisting with creating a district financial plan. Attorney Richard Davis noted that a contract can be created to allow him to be compensated as an independent contractor, being mindful to follow the Public Employee’s Retirement System (PERs) retirement regulations. Chief Van der Veen and Business Manager Benita Williams will explore the best way to proceed.

- **Retired Fire Chief Andy Hail Meeting:** Vice-Chairman Ansell and specific members of the district and labor, recently met with retired Deputy Fire Chief Andy Hail from Spokane regarding his potential interest in working with the district in the future. If hired, the district will also need to be mindful of the Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System (LEOFF) regulations.
- **Whatcom County Library Trustee Meeting:** Vice-Chairman Ansell provided information regarding the impacts to the district of an added library taxing district. A library tax takes precedence over fire districts and could lower how much tax the district can collect. The deadline for moving forward with the library taxing district is March, 2020. Vice-Chairman Ansell will continue to attend the meetings and provide updates.

RECESS

Chairman Bosman recessed the meeting for a short break at 1:25 p.m.

MEETING RECONVENED

Chairman Bosman called the regular meeting back into open session at 1:30 p.m.

IAFF LOCAL 106 MONTHLY REPORT

- None

LEGAL ISSUES

- Nothing to report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- **Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA):** The Board directed Chief Van der Veen to begin the process of purchasing Scott SCBAs as approved in the 2020 budget.
- **Emergency Services Consulting International (ESCI) Master Plan:** The district has received a copy of the master plan drafted by ESCI, for review. It is expected that a formal presentation will be conducted possibly at a Board work session in March, 2020. Chief Van der Veen will discuss the request with ESCI.

Chairman Bosman directed the Board to review section one however, he requested that special attention be given to section two (recommended strategies) before the March presentation.

- **Whatcom County Paramedic Contract:** Chief Van der Veen provided a copy of the draft paramedic contract. Attorney Richard Davis will review the draft contract and make recommendations if needed. It was noted that the final contract will be backdated to January 1, 2020, prior to when the students begin paramedic

schooling. Chief Van der Veen will provide an update during the next Board meeting.

- **Interlocal Agreement with the City of Blaine for Fire Marshal Services:** Chief Rostov provided information regarding the progress of the interlocal agreement with the City of Blaine for fire marshal services. The City completed the fire code adoption and gave the authority to the district to issue code permits. The next step will be to adopt the district's permit fees that will be run through the City and then dispersed to the district. The topic will be discussed and possibly approved during the City's January 13, 2020 council meeting.

The last piece includes a January, 2020 meeting between the departments to discuss and work out the finer details before having the attorneys review the contract.

More information will be provided during the next Board meeting.

- **Interlocal Agreement with Fire District 4:** Chief Van der Veen announced that the District 4 Board members have signed the petition for a merger with District 21, setting the merger process in motion. Attorney Richard Davis noted that there is no required timeframe in which District 21 needs to act. At some point, the Board will need to sign a resolution for the merger and then District 4 will call for an election. The resolution will include the election date.

There was a discussion regarding hiring a consultant to assist with the process. The Board directed Chief Van der Veen to contact consultant Karen Reid to discuss fees, timeline options and concerns. Attorney Richard Davis noted that it is common for the merging districts to share the cost. More information will be presented during the next meeting.

Attorney Richard Davis noted that he has been in contact with the Department of Revenue to discuss options for the District 4 EMS levy. They stated that the permanent levy would survive and may be applied to the entire merged district. The attorney plans to meet with the new assessor to discuss the issue and verify the Department of Revenue's conclusion. On the other hand, District 4 could decide to not collect the levy in the future.

Attorney Richard Davis noted that District 4 Board may want to consider raising their levy before proceeding with the merger to be more in line with District 21's levy rate. The attorney agreed to provide additional levy information in the future.

The Board has much to consider including election dates, costs, and levy information before moving forward.

- **New Ambulance Purchase:** Chief Van der Veen noted that the new Trivan ambulance is now in service and is currently housed at Birch Bay Station 63. This apparatus was approved and partially funded two years ago utilizing the capital projects resources.
- **Bellingham Ladder Truck Swap:** Chief Van der Veen continues to move forward with the ladder truck swap with the Bellingham Fire Department. The shops from both districts are coordinating a time to meet and make the exchange.
- **Tender 61 (AP205):** Chief Van der Veen provided information regarding a recent tender accident. Although the district is waiting on the adjuster for final determination, it is expected that the apparatus will not be worth repairing. Chief Van der Veen will investigate the district's apparatus replacement insurance policy.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Resolution 2019-13 Meeting Dates (2020):** The Board will continue to meet on the third Thursday of each month at 1:00 p.m. at Odell Station 61.

MOTION: Vice-Chairman Ansell moved to approve the Resolution 2019-13 Meeting Dates (2020). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crawford and approved 3-0.

- **Resolution 2019-014 Surplus Vehicles:** Chief Van der Veen provided information regarding the four surplus vehicles. None of the vehicles have been utilized in a long time.

1998 Ford Super Duty Med Tec
Ambulance
Vin: IFDXE40F1WHC13198
License Number: 79613C
AP111

1998 Ford Super Duty Med Tec
Ambulance
Vin: IFDXE40F3WHC13199
License Number: 79614C
AP112

1992 Ford Super Duty Mobile Medic
Ambulance
Vin: IFDKE30M4NHB65276
License Number: 92138C
AP104

1994 Chevrolet 4X4 Ambulance
Vin: IGBJK34F5RE189289
License Number: 73337C
AP106

MOTION: Chairman Bosman motioned to approve Resolution 2019-14 Surplus Vehicles. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Ansell and approved 3-0.

Chief Van der Veen and Attorney Richard Davis will investigate the best way to proceed with possibly donating one of the vehicles.

- **Resolution 2019-15 Cancellation of Warrant:** Chief Van der Veen noted that a vendor billed the district twice for the same service.

MOTION: Vice- Chairman Ansell and moved to approve the Resolution 2019-15 Cancellation of Warrant. The motion was seconded by Chairman Bosman and approved 3-0.

- **Dakota Creek Bridge:** Chief Van der Veen provided information regarding the Dakota Creek Bridge weight restrictions and its impacts to the district's response times.

At this time, due to weight limitations, only aid and command units may cross the bridge, affecting district responses. It was noted that the bridge has not been slated for repairs for the next twenty years.

Both parties discussed getting commissioners, labor and administration involved to both shed light on the issue and put pressure on the Washington Department of Transportation as well as city, county and state officials to come up with a plan to rectify the safety concern.

It was agreed that it may also be prudent to provide public outreach regarding the impacts on the community.

Tender volunteer Mike Peetoom offered to contact the bridge inspector to set up a meeting with Chief Van der Veen.

- **Fire Code Adoption:** Chief Rostov provided an update regarding the state fire code adoption. Every three years, cities and counties are required to adopt the most current state fire code. It is expected that the new state fire code will be adopted in July, 2020. Both cities and counties will adopt the state fire code adding their own modifications specific to their boundaries. Chief Rostov will be involved in the coding process for the City of Blaine. He intends to address any shortcomings and modify any codes as needed before their fire code adoption.

Chief Rostov noted that the majority of the district falls under the rules designed by the Whatcom County Fire Marshal's Office, who tends to be more lenient with their code adoption. Chief Rostov plans to work with the Whatcom County Fire Chiefs Association to address and give recommendations regarding the Whatcom County fire code requirements.

In addition, Chief Rostov provided information regarding how the new fire code addresses the lack of food truck regulations and the probable pushback of food truck vendors on the legislative level in the future.

Chief Rostov will keep the Board updated as information becomes available.

POLICIES & PROCEDURE

- None

CORRESPONDENCE

- From Matthew Chu re: Thank you for CPR Training
- From Birch Bay Preschool re: Thank you for fire station visit
- To Kevin Taylor: Thank you for your services with the collective bargaining contract
- Northern Light letter to the editor re: Assistance with Thanksgiving Basket Program
- Northern Light article re: CPR classes
- The Responder: District newsletter, December issue

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **January Board Meeting Attendance Query:** All Commissioners in attendance with the exception of Vice-Chairman Ansell are expected to attend the January 16 meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- Board Officer Elections
- 2019 Budget Amendment (possible)
- Whatcom County Paramedic Contract
- Interlocal Agreement with the City of Blaine for Fire Marshal Services
- Merger with Fire District 4
- Bellingham Ladder Truck Swap
- Tender 61 AP205
- Dakota Creek Bridge

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 2:04 p.m. until approximately 2:30 p.m. Division Chiefs Van der Veen and Rostov, along with District 4 Fire Commissioner Harry Andrews remained for the executive session. Action is not expected to be taken.

MEETING RECONVENED

Chairman Bosman called the regular meeting back into open session at 2:46 p.m. Action will not be taken as a result of the executive session.

SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: There being no further business Vice-Chairman Ansell moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:57 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crawford and approved 3-0.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jennie Sand, Board Secretary

ATTEST:

Rich Bosman, Chairman

Bruce Ansell, Vice-Chairman

John Crawford, Commissioner

Jason Van der Veen, Division Chief