

**Whatcom County Fire District #21
via Zoom Meeting
1:00 pm
June 18, 2020
Regular Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Ansell called the regular Whatcom County Fire District #21 Board of Fire Commissioners meeting for June 18, 2020, to order at 1:03 p.m. via Zoom Meeting.

ROLL CALL

Attendees: Chairman Bruce Ansell; Vice-Chairman Rich Bosman; Commissioners Larry McPhail, John Crawford, and Scott Fischer; Fire Chief Jason Van der Veen; Division Chief Herschel Rostov.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Due to Governor Inslee's Proclamation 20-28 issued during the evening of March 24, District 21 was prohibited from providing a location for the public to attend this meeting. Members of the public were able to hear the entire meeting via Zoom Meeting, except for executive session, but were not be allowed to speak or provide public comment.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

1. Meeting Minutes
 - a) May 21, 2020
2. Staff Reports – Chiefs / Operations / Training / Technical Support
3. Financial Report
 - a) Total Revenue – May \$1,330,594.69
 - b) Total Expenditures – June \$620,378.47
4. Voucher / Payroll / Benefits
 - a) NWFR Employees Direct Deposit Payroll: \$303,212.19
 - b) Benefits Voucher: \$200,745.39
 - c) Monthly Expenditure Vouchers: \$65,234.99
 - d) Capital Projects Facilities Voucher (May): \$10,339.92
 - e) Capital Projects Facilities Voucher: \$326.10
 - f) Capital Projects Voucher: \$37,664.94
 - g) Capital Projects Apparatus Voucher: \$2,854.94

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

NW FIRE COMMISSIONER MONTHLY REPORTS

Upcoming D4 and Local 106NW Meeting: Chairman Ansell announced that he has been invited to meet with District 4 Chairman Hansen and Local 106NW representatives Kenneth Cunningham and Robert Glorioso on June 23, 2020 to discuss potential future job implications and providing premium service to the community moving forward. The discussion may include dropping the current interlocal agreement (ILA) issues and focusing on a regional fire authority (RFA).

An RFA could be added to a ballot as early as August 2021.

Board Chairman and Fire Chief Weekly Meetings: Chairman Ansell continues to meet with Chief Van der Veen and the admin staff on a regular basis.

IAFF LOCAL 106NW REPORT

No report.

LEGAL ISSUES

Nothing to report. Governor Inslee's Proclamation 20-28 has been extended to July 1, 2020, allowing retired SWFA Fire Chief Ralston to continue mentoring Chief Van der Veen without impacting his PERS retirement.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Dakota Creek Bridge: Commissioner Crawford provided information regarding the Dakota Creek Bridge weight limitations. Currently, only aid units can navigate the bridge without crossing the weight limit threshold. Commissioner Crawford has spoken with several individuals at the state level and the district may be able to apply for overweight permits from six months to one year for pertinent apparatus. The information will be forwarded to admin for further investigation.

Northwood Station 72 Technology Upgrade: Chief Van der Veen noted that the upgrades to Northwood Station 72 should be completed and ready for use by July 1, 2020.

City of Blaine Fire Marshal Services: Chief Rostov noted the City of Blaine's attorney made slight contract modifications that were passed by the City Council. The contract may be completed and ready for approval during the July 16, 2020 meeting.

Whatcom County Paramedic Training Interlocal Agreement: Chief Van der Veen noted that the interlocal agreement is currently being reviewed by the district's attorney and the City of Bellingham. The County has completed their review. The agreement will be forwarded to Board members for final review and approval once the City of Bellingham and legal have completed their assessment.

The paramedic students have returned to their program and it is expected that their training will be extended through the end of the year.

NEW BUSINESS

2018-2019 Audit: Chairman Ansell provided information regarding the 2018-2019 audit which is currently underway. Both Chairman Ansell and Chief Van der Veen have completed separate phone conferences with the auditor.

The June Board Packet included letters from the auditor explaining the scope and transparency of the audit. Some topics the auditor may be focusing on include concerns regarding multiple administration changes, a technology breach and outside check fraud that finance was able to curtail immediately. The audit is expected to be very detailed and Chief Van der Veen welcomes the opportunity for the entire admin staff to learn as a group moving forward.

2019 Budget Amendment: Chief Van der Veen provided information regarding the proposed budget amendment. Both Chairman Ansell and Vice-Chairman Bosman reviewed the amendment and are confident the district did not spend more than what was collected.

Overages occurred in three areas including:

- Overtime – the district is focusing on retaining members
- Ground Emergency Medical Transportation (GEMT) upfront costs (\$245,000) that ultimately resulted in additional revenue of \$1.1 million.
- Rising self-insured healthcare costs – moved to a traditional plan

In addition, it appears that not all revenue was reported by previous chiefs during the initial budget development, making it appear that the district overspent in 2019. Chief Van der Veen is and will continue to be transparent with his budget approach.

Both Chairman Ansell and Vice-Chair Bosman requested that a separate line item be added to track GEMT revenues. GEMT monies are not guaranteed and will hopefully continue for an additional three to five years. The funds will be utilized for district emergency medical services including transports.

Both Chief Van der Veen and Chairman Ansell expressed their concern regarding potential delayed property tax payments in the future due to COVID-19.

MOTION: Commissioner McPhail moved to approve the 2019 Budget Amendment as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Bosman and approved 5-0.

Resolution 2020-12 Surplus Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA):

Chief Van der Veen provided information regarding the arrival of new SCBAs. The older SCBAs have been taken out of service, and with three years remaining on their shelf life, are expected to be sold for additional revenue in the future.

MOTION: Commissioner Crawford moved to approve Resolution 2020-12 Surplus SCBAs. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McPhail and approved 5-0.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Chief Van der Veen noted that the district continues to work with Lexipol to update and renumber district policies per the past audit recommendation. Chief Van der Veen introduced the following draft policies for Board review. Any concerns or questions can be directed to Chief Van der Veen over the next month.

- 212 Asset Management
- 1001 Performance Evaluations – (need evaluation attachment; Chief is working evaluation with Labor and will email addendum to Board)
- 1002 Promotions
- 1003 Position Descriptions
- 1004 Classification Specifications
- 1012 Discriminatory Harassment
- 1024 Lactation Breaks
- 1025 Smoking and Tobacco Use
- 1038 Family and Medical Leave
- 1039 Military Leave

The draft policies have also been forwarded to Labor for input. Lexipole will assist with training members on understanding the policies once approved.

Since a number of the draft policies are focused on state and federal mandates, which cannot be altered, Chief Van der Veen requested that the Board focus on the asset, performance, and discriminatory harassment policies.

CORRESPONDENCE

- From District 4 Board of Fire Commissioners re: Interlocal Agreement concerns
- Beth Cassel-Tableman re: Thank you for services
- Lyda Marshall re: Thank you for services
- The Responder: District newsletter, June issue

ANNOUNCEMENTS

July Regular Board Meeting Attendance Query: All Commissioners are expected to attend the July 16 meeting which will either be held at Odell Station 61 or via Zoom Meeting.

Fire Commissioner Resignation: Commissioner McPhail announced that he will be retiring his Commission effective July 4, 2020.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- Whatcom County Paramedic Training Interlocal Agreement
- City of Blaine Fire Marshal Services
- Dakota Creek Bridge
- Draft Policy Review
- 2018-2019 Audit
- Missing Commissioner Laptop

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Ansell 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 1:51 p.m. for approximately fifteen minutes. Chief Rostov remained for the executive session. Action is not expected to be taken.

Discussion will include input for Chief Van der Veen’s six-month evaluation which is expected to be completed in early July. Chairman Ansell will schedule a date and time for the evaluation.

MEETING RECONVENED

Chairman Ansell called the regular meeting back into open session at 2:16 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 Fischer moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:16 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McPhail and approved 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jennie Sand, Board Secretary

ATTEST:

Bruce Ansell, Chairman

Rich Bosman, Vice-Chairman

Larry McPhail, Commissioner

John Crawford, Commissioner

Scott Fischer, Commissioner

Jason Van der Veen, Fire Chief