

**Whatcom County Fire District #21
via Zoom Meeting
10:30 am
July 23, 2020
Special Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Ansell called the special Whatcom County Fire District #21 Board of Fire Commissioners meeting for July 23, 2020, to order at 10:30 a.m. via Zoom Meeting.

ROLL CALL

Attendees: Chairman Bruce Ansell; Vice-Chairman Rich Bosman, Commissioners, John Crawford, and Scott Fischer; Fire Chief Jason Van der Veen; Attorney Richard Davis; District #4 Chairman Dave Hanson; District #4 Attorneys Joseph and Eric Quinn.

PUBLIC COMMENT

District #4 Correspondence

District #4 Chairman Dave Hanson; 3786 Greenville Ct, Bellingham, WA 98226 re District #4 correspondence: District #4 Chairman Hanson responded to concerns raised relating to correspondence regarding the current District #4 and District #21 interlocal agreement (ILA). District #4 Chairman Hanson noted that District #4's intent to terminate the current ILA is solely to move forward with a forming a Regional Fire Authority (RFA) Planning Committee. A new ILA would bridge the gap between the current ILA termination and RFA. In addition, the new ILA would be utilized if an RFA does not come to fruition.

District #4 Attorney Joseph Quinn; 7403 Lakewood Drive West, Suite #11 Lakewood, WA 98499 re District #4 correspondence: District #4's attorney Joseph Quinn noted that both districts will continue to work together as they have in the past. The specific issues raised with the current ILA were done so at the request of the District #21 Board. He further noted that most of the new ILA deals primarily with the required legalize.

The ultimate goal of both Boards and the attorneys is to move forward with an RFA Planning Committee.

Chairman Ansell stated that District #4 recently held a special meeting to discuss the issues around their recent correspondence to the District #21 Board and to pass an RFA Planning Committee resolution. In addition, Chairman Ansell acknowledged District #4's concern regarding the finance aspect of the current ILA, specifically regarding the 25% payment due in October. Chairman Ansell has assured the District #4 Board that regardless, they will continue to provide services to District #4's response area.

Chief Van der Veen stated that the prime focus moving forward will continue to be service delivery to our customers.

Commissioner Crawford extended an invitation to meet with Chairman Hanson at a later date to discuss any additional concerns.

Chief Van der Veen reiterated that the current ILA will stay in effect until a new one is approved by both Boards.

District #4 Chairman Hanson and Attorneys Quinn & Quinn left the meeting at 10:40 a.m.

SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

Whatcom County Paramedic Training Interlocal Agreement (ILA): Chairman Ansell requested information regarding the reimbursement for wages for district personnel who take part in paramedic training.

Attorney Richard Davis has reviewed the agreement and noted that the County “*shall reimburse NWRFR upon receipt of eligible costs associated with the Paramedic Training Program*”, of up to a total of \$103,000 of payroll costs per student (County pays actual costs).

This agreement is effective from January 1, 2020 through the remainder of the current paramedic class.

Additional agreements for future paramedic training can be renegotiated dependent on any wage scale increases.

MOTION: Vice-Chairman Bosman moved to authorize Chief Van der Veen to sign the Whatcom County Paramedic Training Interlocal Agreement as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crawford and approved 4-0.

City of Bellingham Paramedic Training Interlocal Agreement (ILA): This agreement focuses on participation in the program and the eventual shift in employment from the district to the City of Bellingham.

There was discussion regarding the agreement.

- The original concept was to give district employees the opportunity to become paramedics within Whatcom County, while remaining employees of North Whatcom Fire and Rescue. This agreement specifically states that paramedics will become employees of the City of Bellingham once their training is complete.
- Because of timing issues, the district had moved forward with enrolling two members into the paramedic program before a formal agreement was finalized and approved. The district has learned a valuable lesson and will be more diligent regarding moving forward prior to having a contract in place.

Chief Van der Veen took partial responsibility regarding the eventual loss of two district employees to the City of Bellingham as paramedics. Chief Van der Veen sought to provide members the opportunity to take part in the paramedic program. The hope is that the Labor group (Local 106) will provide a pathway for past employees who become paramedics to return to the district perhaps in a leadership role following their paramedic career. Those potential leaders could play a positive role within the district in the future.

Chairman Ansell expressed his concerns regarding certain sections of the agreement.

- Section 3 Selection Subject to Available FTE's and an Established Process: Selection process requirements too vague.
- Section 4 Employment of Trainees: Need reference to Whatcom County ILA regarding wage reimbursement.
- Section 9 Insurance: Requested explanation regarding liability insurance. Attorney Richard Davis explained that each agency has insurance that covers their members as well as any agency owned apparatus utilized in the training program.
- Section 7 Transfer of Sick and Vacation Leave: There was discussion regarding the district providing monies attached to any remaining sick and vacation time for those paramedics completing the program who then become City of Bellingham employees. The check would be written to the City of Bellingham not the former employees and would be an additional cost to the district.

Chairman Ansell noted that currently when an employee leaves the district due to retirement, they are entitled to a vacation leave payout and a tiered sick leave payout based on the current collective bargaining agreement (CBA).

17.3.8 Vacation

In the event of separation of employment for any reason, an employee shall be compensated for accrued vacation hours, which have not been used at their regular rate of pay at separation.

21.9 Sick Leave Payout

These hours will be computed at the employee's regular rate of pay.

<i>Sick Leave Balance</i>	<i>% Paid</i>
<i>1-500 hrs.</i>	<i>25%</i>
<i>501-1000 hrs.</i>	<i>50%</i>
<i>> 1000 hrs.</i>	<i>75%</i>

Payment for fifty percent (50%) of accrued unused sick leave in the event of the death of an employee shall be made to the personal representative of the estate of the deceased employee, if one exists. If no probate proceeding is conducted, payment shall be made in accordance with the laws of the State of Washington.

Attorney Richard Davis noted that this will not be a concern as long as the district continues to be reimbursed by the County.

More discussion and further edits to the City of Bellingham interlocal agreement are expected.

Division Chief/Fire Marshal Resignation: Chief Van der Veen provided information regarding Division Chief Rostov's resignation which was effective July 16, 2020. A complete City of Blaine fire marshal's job analysis is expected in the near future. In the interim, retired Division Chief / Fire Marshal Henry Hollander has offered his assistance as needed. In addition, Chief Van der Veen plans to meet with the County and City of Bellingham Fire Marshal's office for additional assistance.

Chief Van der Veen continues to work with the City of Lynden Fire Department Chiefs to cover both districts as battalion chiefs, after hours.

Chief Van der Veen further pointed out that until the district has a clear path, long term district planning will remain on hold.

Staff Training: Commissioner Crawford requested information regarding district wide diversity and harassment training.

Chief Van der Veen noted that both trainings along with workplace expectations will be completed by various methods and at all levels before the end of the year.

Resolution 2020-13 Regional Fire Protection Service Authority (RFA) Planning Committee: Chairman Ansell reminded the Board that they have received correspondence from the District #4 Board expressing their interest in forming an RFA planning committee.

Attorney Richard Davis noted that the District #4 interlocal agreement is a separate issue and the Board can choose to move forward with forming an RFA planning committee. The RFA resolution is nonbinding. The districts may be able to put the RFA on the August 2021 ballot.

The Board selected Chairman Ansell, and Commissioners Crawford and Fischer to serve on the RFA planning committee. Vice-Chairman Bosman will be utilized as an alternate as needed.

MOTION: Commissioner Fischer moved to approve Resolution 2020-13 Regional Fire Authority Planning Committee with Chairman Ansell and Commissioners Crawford and Fischer as committee members for the district. Vice-Chairman Bosman will serve as the alternate. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crawford and approved 4-0.

Next steps include:

- setting up an initial meeting to set up meeting dates,
- public notification, special meeting notification
- hire outside facilitator (to be determined)

Resolution 2018-11 Fire Chief Financial Authority Addendum: There was discussion regarding amending language in Resolution 2018-11 and Policy 0100.0004.00 Delegation of Fire Chief Authority allowing the fire chief to approve policies that have no financial impact to the district. The fire chief will continue to keep the Board informed of all policy updates.

Resolution 2020-14 Fire Chief Financial Authority: The policy number and date was corrected.

MOTION: Commissioner Fischer moved to approve 2020-14 Fire Chief Authority. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crawford and approved 4-0.

Policy 0100.0004.00 Delegation of Fire Chief Authority: Chairman Ansell noted the addition of 2.8 Personnel Policies. *“The fire chief has the authority, with Commission approval, to adopt any personnel policies which do not have a financial impact on the district.”*

The fire chief will continue to forward all policies to the Board for their input.

MOTION: Commissioner Crawford moved to approve and Policy 0100.0004.00 Delegation of Fire Chief Authority. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fischer and approved 4-0.

SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: There being no further business Chairman Ansell moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:45 a.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fischer and approved 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jennie Sand, Board Secretary

ATTEST:

Bruce Ansell, Chairman

Rich Bosman, Vice-Chair

John Crawford, Commissioner

Scott Fischer, Commissioner

Jason Van der Veen, Fire Chief