

**Whatcom County Fire District #21
via Zoom Meeting
1:00 pm
August 20, 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 August 20, 2020, to order at 1:04 p.m. via Zoom Meeting.

ROLL CALL

Attendees: Chairman Bruce Ansell; Commissioners John Crawford, and Scott Fischer; Fire Chief Jason Van der Veen; Attorney Richard Davis; Henry Hollander.

Vice-Chairman Bosman logged on at 1:14 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Due to Governor Inslee's Proclamation 20-28 issued during the evening of March 24, and extended until September 1, 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 allowed to speak or provide public comment.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

1. Meeting Minutes
 - a) July 16, 2020
 - b) July 23, 2020 – special
2. Staff Reports – Chiefs / Operations / Training / Technical Support
3. Financial Report
 - a) Total Revenue – July \$128,196.41
 - b) Total Expenditures –August \$696,776.80
4. Voucher / Payroll / Benefits
 - a) NWFR Employees Direct Deposit Payroll: \$333,334.29
 - b) Payroll Taxes Voucher: \$72,832.56
 - c) Benefits Voucher: \$201,332.81
 - d) Monthly Expenditure Voucher: \$89,277.11
5. Policies and Procedures
 - a) 212 Asset Management
 - b) 1001 Performance Evaluations
 - c) 1002 Promotions
 - d) 1003 Position Descriptions
 - e) 1004 Classification Specifications
 - f) 1012 Discriminatory Harassment

- g) 1024 Lactation Breaks
- h) 1025 Smoking and Tobacco Use
- i) 1038 Family and Medical Leave
- j) 1039 Military Leave

Chairman Ansell and Attorney Rich Davis raised some questions regarding policies 1001 Performance Evaluations and 1038 Family and Medical Leave.

The Board agreed to pull the two policies from the consent agenda for further review by the Fire Chief.

Chairman Ansell commented on the additional attorney (Quinn and Quinn) fees incurred by District #4. Chairman Ansell questioned the intent of portions of the current Interlocal Agreement between the two agencies regarding legal fees. He stated that the intent was not for both agencies to hire separate attorneys without some sort of parameters. Chairman Ansell noted that the legal fees will need to be monitored closely. The hope is that forming a regional fire authority (RFA) will eliminate the need for multiple attorneys.

MOTION: Commissioner Fischer moved to approve the Consent Agenda with the deletion of policies 1001 and 1038. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crawford and approved 4-0.

FIRE MARSHAL REPORT

With the resignation of Fire Marshal Rostov, the district currently has a fire marshal position opening. Former Fire Marshal Henry Hollander has temporarily stepped into the position and provided information regarding his current fire marshal responsibilities:

- Mentoring Lt. Joel Nielsen to take over some of the fire marshal responsibilities and procedures as deputy fire marshal.
- Work through the backlog of inspections. There are currently 153 inspections that need to be reviewed.
- Working Tuesdays and Thursdays, four to six hours over the next month or two to get caught up before tapering off.

Henry Hollander offered his help as long as there is a need for his services. Chairman Ansell thanked Henry Hollander for his expertise and for getting the program back on track.

Henry Hollander left the meeting at 1:17 p.m.

NW FIRE COMMISSIONER MONTHLY REPORTS

Paramedic Program Interlocal Agreement: Chairman Ansell along with Chief Van der Veen recently met with Bellingham Fire Chief Hewitt to discuss some ambiguous language in the draft paramedic agreement as well as sick and vacation time payout negotiated between the Local and the City of Bellingham without the district's input or agreement. Chairman Ansell noted that the sick time payout portion of the agreement is

not consistent with the current collective bargaining agreement the district has with their members.

Chairman Ansell noted that the three officials participated in a great discussion.

All three concurred that the County may agree to include the sick time payout in addition to their original agreement to reimburse the district any overtime incurred up to \$103,000 each, while the two members complete the paramedic training program. There is currently a verbal agreement with the County but nothing has been put in writing nor signed. This will allow the two former district employees to become City of Bellingham Paramedic employees with a full complement of sick and vacation leave.

It was agreed that in the future an agreement needs to be negotiated and signed before members take part in the paramedic program.

Weekly Meeting with Chief Van der Veen: Chairman Ansell continues to meet on a regular basis with Chief Van der Veen to keep up to date with what is going on in the district.

Potential Interim Fire Commissioner Candidate: Chairman Ansell recently met with a potential fire commissioner candidate. Unfortunately, family issues prevent him from continuing in the process.

IAFF LOCAL 106NW REPORT

No report.

LEGAL ISSUES

Richard Davis expects Governor Inslee's Proclamation 20-28 issued during the evening of March 24, and prolonged until at least September 1, prohibiting District 21 from providing a location for the public to attend commissioner meetings, to be extended on a monthly basis, for the foreseeable future.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2018-2019 Audit: Chief Van der Veen noted that the audit is nearing completion. There remain some questions regarding capital bunker gear purchases and utilizing another agency's bid process.

Dakota Creek Bridge: Chief Van der Veen has received overweight permits for all three Crimsons allowing them to utilize the bridge during emergency responses. Neither the ladder truck nor the tender was approved. The permits must be applied for on a yearly basis.

The Board thanked Commissioner Crawford for his efforts to get movement on this issue.

City of Blaine Fire Marshal Services Interlocal Agreement: Chief Van der Veen noted that a draft agreement will be distributed to the Board for review and added to the September agenda.

In addition, Chief Van der Veen noted that the Blaine Police Department was made aware of some ordinance issues and he is currently investigating.

Whatcom County Paramedic Training Interlocal Agreement: Chief Van der Veen provided information regarding the Whatcom County Paramedic Interlocal Agreement. There was previous discussion regarding the addition of sick and vacation leave payouts. Chief Van der Veen will distribute the final document for review once it is received.

The original agreement was signed during the July 23, 2020, special meeting.

City of Bellingham Paramedic Training Interlocal Agreement: Chief Van der Veen provided an update regarding the City of Bellingham Paramedic Training Interlocal Agreement. Language issues are being addressed and the final document will be sent to the Board for review once received.

MOTION: Commissioner Crawford moved to authorize Chief Van der Veen to sign the City of Bellingham Paramedic Training Interlocal Agreement. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fischer and approved 4-0.

Interim Fire Commissioner Interest: Chairman Ansell noted that a commissioner interest inquiry was posted on the district's website, Facebook page and in local papers. The deadline to apply is August 28, 2020, which will be followed by an application review and interview process. October 4, 2020, is the deadline for the Board to appoint a replacement.

At this time the district has received three letters and two inquiries.

A special meeting for the interview process is expected to be conducted in early September. All Board members expressed an interest in attending.

Regional Fire Authority (RFA) Committee: Chairman Ansell noted that the RFA committee members were previously selected and include Chairman Ansell and Commissioners Crawford and Fischer. Vice-Chairman Bosman will be the alternate. District #4 Board members include Chairman Hanson and Commissioners Andrews and Chamberlain.

The first meeting will take place on Wednesday, August 26, 2020, at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom Meeting. Chief Van der Veen will send out the invite along with the State Fire Commissioners RFA meeting checklist.

Board Secretaries Jennie Sand and Kris Parks were also invited.

The initial meeting will include discussion regarding meeting procedures, appointing a chair, meeting date and times, and if a consultant will be retained. All meetings are special open public meetings and are expected to be conducted via Zoom Meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution 2020-15 Cancellation of Warrants: Chief Van der Veen provided information regarding the three canceled warrants.

Chairman Ansell noted that district checks have been lost in the mail on a regular basis. The finance department is investigating setting up an electronic payment system in the near future. Vice-Chairman Bosman, who is also a business owner, offered his assistance if needed.

MOTION: Commissioner Fischer moved to approve Resolution 2020-15 Cancellation of Warrants. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Bosman and approved 4-0.

Resolution 2020-16 Surplus Equipment: Chief Van der Veen provided information regarding the surplus equipment. The equipment will most likely be sold at auction in the near future.

1987 Chevrolet / Reading service truck
VIN #1GBHV33N9HS115892
NWFRS Asset number AP305
License Number C-67285

1988 Pierce Arrow
VIN #1P9CAD1DXJA040177
NWFRS Asset number AP504
License Number 92130C

1976 Vanpelt/ LTI Ladder truck
VIN #15790
NWFRS Asset number AP401
License Number 47621C

1989 WS. Darley/Duplex
VIN #1D91P11E1K1008036
NWFRS Asset number AP509
License Number 13445C

MOTION: Commissioner Crawford moved to approve Resolution 2020-16 Surplus Equipment. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Bosman and approved 4-0.

Commissioner Crawford will speak with the Whatcom County Search and Rescue department regarding possibly donating a rescue vehicle to add to their fleet.

Attorney Richard Davis noted that a resolution must be passed concluding that the vehicle has no positive market value and will be donated to a government entity.

CORRESPONDENCE

- District 4 re: GEMT reimbursement revenue
- Fire Chief re: GEMT reimbursement revenue response
- Ferndale News article re: Structure fire at Greenacres Memorial Park
- Northern Light article re: Fire Commissioner interest
- The Responder: District newsletter, August issue

GEMT Correspondence: Chairman Ansell noted that the district's attorney's office has reviewed the GEMT correspondence. It was eluded that District #4's Board received an additional letter from their attorney, which was not shared with the district.

Chief Van der Veen is expected to be working with District #4 Board Secretary Kris Parks to review their letter and further refine District #4's expectations.

Further discussion is expected during the executive session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

September Regular Board Meeting Attendance Query: All Commissioners are expected to attend the September 17 meeting which will either be held at Odell Station 61 or via Zoom Meeting.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- Fire Commissioner Appointment – Oath of office
- 2018-2019 Audit
- City of Blaine Fire Marshal Services
- City of Bellingham Paramedic Training Interlocal Agreement
- Whatcom County Paramedic Training Interlocal Agreement
- RFA Committee Report
- Surplus Donation if necessary
- Missing Commissioner Laptop
 - After multiple attempts to recover the laptop, it was decided to notify law enforcement and report the property as stolen. Chief Van der Veen will notify the auditor's office as well as the sheriff's department.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Ansell recessed the meeting for an Executive Session, per *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 1:55 p.m. for approximately fifteen minutes until 2:10 p.m. Chief Van der Veen and Attorney Richard Davis remained for the executive session. Action is not expected to be taken.

MEETING RECONVENED

Chairman Ansell called the regular meeting back into open session at 2:07 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 2:08 p.m. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Bosman 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