

**Whatcom County Fire District #21
via Zoom Meeting
1:00 pm
October 15, 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 October 15, 2020, to order at 1:07 p.m. via Zoom Meeting.

ROLL CALL

Attendees: Chairman Bruce Ansell; Vice-Chairman Rich Bosman; Commissioners Scott Fischer, and Kimberly Calman-McMurray; Fire Chief Jason Van der Veen; Henry Hollander.

Commissioner John Crawford was excused from the meeting.

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 the executive session, but were not allowed to speak or provide public comment.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

1. Meeting Minutes
 - a) September 17, 2020
2. Staff Reports – Chiefs / Operations / Training / Technical Support
3. Financial Report
 - a) Total Revenue – September \$233,509.88
 - b) Total Expenditures – October \$721,057.70
4. Voucher / Payroll / Benefits
 - a) NWFR Employees Direct Deposit Payroll: \$326,265.09
 - b) Payroll Taxes Voucher: \$68,689.07
 - c) Benefits Voucher: \$269,999.90
 - d) Monthly Expenditure Voucher: \$57,821.96
 - e) Capital Projects Facilities Voucher: \$1,281.68

Vice-Chairman Bosman requested to remove The Muljat Group Inc. (\$950.00) from the monthly expenditure voucher. The invoice was for an appraisal of office space rental opportunities at the District 4 Britton Loop Station 12 admin building.

Chief Van der Veen that he understands the Board's concern. The Muljat report was requested during a time of conflict between the Boards that now seems to be subsiding.

At this time the Boards are on a good path and moving forward positively with Regional Fire Authority (RFA) discussions.

Currently, the Bellingham Fire Department is considering renting some of the Britton Loop Station 12 offices for training purposes.

Chief Van der Veen requested that the invoice be paid now, with the understanding that he will officially seek reimbursement from the District 4 Board.

The Board agreed that it is not fair to make the vendor wait for payment for services any longer although Vice-Chairman Bosman noted that he does not believe the district is responsible for the invoice.

Chairman Ansell noted his concern regarding the lack of clear definition regarding which district pays for what bills. The Board does not want to have to scour the District 4 bills to ensure that District 21 would have incurred those expenses or if they had been preapproved by the Fire Chief.

It was agreed that the interlocal agreement is vague. The current interlocal agreement does say that District 4 will pay twenty-five percent of the overall operating budget, which is used to pay operating expenses to run the overall district. Substantial expenses will be negotiated between both Boards.

Chairman Ansell is hopeful that with the forward movement of the RFA, these types of issues will disappear.

Chairman Ansell directed Chief Van der Veen to seek reimbursement from District 4 for the invoice in question and to discuss the financial process. Chief Van der Veen will report back during the next meeting.

MOTION: Commissioner Fischer moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Chairman Ansell and approved 4-0.

NW FIRE COMMISSIONER MONTHLY REPORTS

Whatcom County Fire Commissioners Meeting: Commissioner Crawford forwarded the September meeting notes to the Board members.

9-11 Dispatch Board Meeting: It was agreed to have Commissioner McMurray attend the 9-11 Dispatch Board Meetings as the alternate if Commissioner Crawford is unavailable.

Blaine City Council Meetings: Henry Hollander announced that the Blaine City Council meetings will be resuming, every other Monday. As interim Fire Marshal, Henry Hollander plans to attend those meetings along with Deputy Fire Marshal Joel Nielsen.

IAFF LOCAL 106NW REPORT

The Local 106 NW members will be assisting with the Community Assistance Thanksgiving Baskets Program on November 24, 2020. Due to Covid-19, it is expected that Local 106NW members will have limited interaction with the public.

LEGAL ISSUES

No report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2018-2019 Audit: Chief Van der Veen stated that the audit is nearing completion. An exit interview is expected in the near future. Vice-Chairman Bosman thanked the admin staff for assisting with the audit process.

Whatcom County Paramedic Training Interlocal Agreement: Chief Van der Veen stated that the Whatcom County Paramedic Interlocal Agreement is moving forward. The overtime and sick leave reimbursement for the two district members is in progress.

City of Bellingham Paramedic Training Interlocal Agreement: Chief Van der Veen noted that once the Whatcom County Paramedic Training Interlocal Agreement includes the language regarding the sick leave payout, this agreement will also be signed.

NEW BUSINESS

Regional Fire Authority (RFA): Chairman Ansell noted that several documents have been forwarded to the Board regarding the RFA discussions. All but one Board member is a part of the RFA Planning Committee.

The Planning Committee as a whole has agreed to ensure that the Boards are apprised of their progress throughout the process.

The Committee has been working on the following documents:

- **Draft Communications Plan Review:** RFA communications and message for the public.
- **Website Language:** Disseminating RFA information to educate the public via both district websites and newsletter.
- **Expenditure Plan:** All RFA associated costs will be split equally (50-50) between the two districts.
- **Financial Forecast Review Committee:** McMurray agreed to be part of the financial committee with Financial Analyst Bill Cushman, Chairman Ansell, Chief Van der Veen and admin staff as needed. It is expected that the group will look at a seven-year forecast and utilize the district's Emergency Services

Consulting International (ESCI) plan. It was also requested that Henry Hollander review the document when completed.

This valuable information will be utilized to make informed assumptions regarding the districts' future property tax growth rate. Chairman Ansell will meet with Chief Van der Veen to come up with a plan as to how to best divide the workload.

Chairman Ansell noted that the hope is to get the RFA on the August 2021 ballot, with the new taxing structure beginning January 1, 2022.

Chairman Ansell requested that any comments or concerns regarding any of the documents be forwarded to him and RFA Vice-Chairman Fischer.

Washington Fire Commissioners Association (WFCA) Webinar Series: Chairman Ansell inquired to see if there was any interest in attending any of the upcoming webinars offered by the WFCA.

Commissioner McMurray is interested in attending the webinar on PTSD. Other series include Peer Support and 2020 Legal issues.

Jennie Sand will register those interested in attending any of the webinars.

FIRE MARSHAL REPORT

Henry Hollander continues to act as the interim fire marshal. He noted that he has worked through the backlog of fire marshal responsibilities. Henry Hollander is currently working with new developers who are in the permitting stages within the Semiahmoo, Central Guide Meridian area and the City of Blaine.

Henry Hollander continues to mentor Lt. Joel Nielsen to take over some of the fire marshal responsibilities and procedures as the deputy fire marshal. The goal is to have him proficient by January.

The district has collected approximately \$19,000 in mitigation fees during the past two months.

Henry Hollander continues to work Tuesdays and Thursdays. Chairman Ansell thanked Henry Hollander for his expertise and for getting the program back on track.

Henry Hollander is also working as a COVID 19 quarantine coordinator for the Department of Emergency Management (DEM). He oversees the Motel 6 quarantine facility. Chief Van der Veen announced that Henry Hollander in need of a vehicle to transport those in quarantine to and from appointments. He has requested to utilize the district passenger van. Only two hotel staff members will drive the vehicle for official business. The passenger van will be returned in the same condition it was received.

Before there is any forward movement, Chief Van der Veen will investigate insurance, liability and draft a written contract to ensure there is no liability to the district.

Henry Hollander left the meeting at 1:49 p.m.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Washington State Health Care Authority re: 2018 Ground Emergency Medical Transports (GEMT) Final Settlement
- From Moi Castellon; Bomberos Unidos re: Surplus engine donation
- From Barrie Williams re: Thank-you for service
- From Carla Reed re: Thank-you for service
- From Barbara Montayo re: Thank you for service
- From Angela Girad re: Henry Hollander thank you for participation in the 9-11 Memorial Ride and Remembrance Ceremony
- Northern Light article re: Housing projects
- Northern Light article re: National Night Out
- Bellingham Herald article re: Housing projects
- Lynden Tribune: Fire Commissioner and Fire Chief interviews
- The Responder: District newsletter, October issue

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Snure Seminar webinar registration: October 21, 2020: All Commissioners have been registered to attend the laws update webinar and/or will have access to the recording.

November Regular Board Meeting Attendance Query: All Commissioners present are expected to attend the November 19 meeting which will either be held at Odell Station 61 or via Zoom Meeting.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- City of Blaine Fire Marshal Interlocal Agreement
- 2018-2019 Audit – exit audit
- City of Bellingham Paramedic Training Interlocal Agreement
- Whatcom County Paramedic Training Interlocal Agreement
- RFA Committee Update

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: There being no further business Commissioner Fischer moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:53 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

Scott Fischer, Commissioner

Kimberly McMurray, Commissioner

Jason Van der Veen, Fire Chief