

**Whatcom County Fire District #21
via Zoom Webinar
1:00 pm
November 17, 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 November 17, 2020, to order at 1:05 p.m. via Zoom Webinar.

ROLL CALL

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

Commissioner Crawford was excused from the meeting due to his work schedule.

RECESS INTO PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman Ansell opened the public hearing at 1:06 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING STATEMENT

The public hearing is specific to allowing the District to increase its budget by up to one percent from the highest lawful levy since 1985, identifying substantial need and levy certification. Comments will be restricted to these topics. The Board will not be responding to questions or challenges. Each participant will be provided a maximum of 5 minutes to comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kathy Berg – 7585 Sterling Ave. Birch Bay: Kathy Berg requested a brief explanation of the purpose of the resolutions.

Chief Van der Veen explained that since the District did not hit the allowable one percent maximum increase in the levy rate, Resolution 2020-19 Substantial Need is required by the assessor's office to fulfill the gap allowed under RCW 84.55.010.

Chairman Ansell stated that normally the District is entitled to the one percent, however, because the assessed values went up, the levy rate decreased from \$1.43 to \$1.14. The total additional amount of money to be collected (one percent) is almost \$63,000.00. Chairman Ansell noted that the one percent amount will not cover the wage increases, nor the majority of the additional expenses related to the COVID pandemic. A portion of the additional expenses has been reimbursed through a grant however, not all the significant incurred expenses have been covered during this pandemic.

Attorney Richard Davis clarified that the substantial need resolution is not directly tied to assessed values. The total dollar levy is equal to the assessed values, times the levy rate. A price deflator is calculated each year which happens to be less than one percent this year. If the District's jurisdiction is over 10,000 in population the substantial needs resolution must be passed so that the total dollar levy for the year goes up by one percent. Richard Davis noted that it is very common for agencies to pass a substantial needs resolution in order to receive the entire one percent.

Chairman Ansell stated that Resolution 2020-20 is a required formality and used as a placeholder for the District to take the one percent increase. The District will be entitled to collect the additional money in 2021.

The Levy Certification authorizes the Fire Chief to sign and send the District's levy certification for 2021, back to the County.

RECONVENE INTO SPECIAL MEETING

Chairman Ansell closed the public hearing and reconvened the regular meeting at 1:13 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution 2020-19 Substantial Need:

MOTION: Commissioner Fischer moved to approve Resolution 2020-19 Substantial Need. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Bosman and approved 4-0.

Resolution 2020-20 Allowing the District to Increase Its Budget by Up to One Percent:

MOTION: Vice-Chairman Bosman moved to approve Resolution 2020-20 Allowing the District to Increase Its Budget by Up to One Percent. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McMurray and approved 4-0.

2021 Levy Certification: Chairman Ansell noted that the regular levy that was determined following a meeting with the County, is \$6,435,311.14. The refund levy amount is \$10,894.89, which is the difference between what the County predicted the District's regular levy to be in 2020 and what actually resulted.

MOTION: Commissioner McMurray moved to authorize Chief Van der Veen to sign the 2021 Levy Certification and submit the paperwork to the Whatcom County Assessor's Office. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Bosman and approved 4-0.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: There being no further business Commissioner Fischer moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:19 p.m. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Bosman and approved 5-0.

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