

**Whatcom County Fire District #21
via Zoom Meeting
1:00 pm
February 18, 2021
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 February 18, 2021, to order at 1:07 p.m. via Zoom Meeting.

ROLL CALL

Attendees: Chairman Bruce Ansell; Vice-Chairman Rich Bosman; Commissioners John Crawford, Scott Fischer, and Kimberly McMurray; Fire Chief Jason Van der Veen; Division Chief Shaun Ward.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

NEW BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

1. Meeting Minutes
 - a) January 21, 2021
2. Staff Reports – Chiefs / Operations / Training / Technical Support
3. Financial Report
 - a) Total Revenues – December \$167,685.40
 - b) Total Revenues - January \$131,237.97
 - c) Total Expenditures – February \$785,176.91
4. Voucher / Payroll / Benefits
 - a) NWFR Employees Direct Deposit Payroll: \$341,861.33
 - b) Payroll Taxes Voucher: \$71,725.70
 - c) Benefits Voucher: \$219,977.17
 - d) Monthly Expenditure Voucher: \$129,118.50
 - e) Consulting Expense Voucher: \$2,568.75
 - f) Capital Projects: \$19,925.46

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

NW FIRE COMMISSIONER MONTHLY REPORTS

Commissioner Crawford noted that the 9-11 Board meeting has been postponed until sometime in March.

A meet and greet will be scheduled in the near future with County Councilman Tyler Berg and 9-11 Dispatch to learn about Prospect.

IAFF LOCAL 106NW MONTHLY REPORT

Chairman Ansell announced that Local 106NW members Kenneth Cunningham and Danny Jensen have been elected to the Local 106 E-Board. Although they intend to remain somewhat involved in Local 106NW, members Scott Brown and Chris Hollander will be taking over those positions. Chairman Ansell expects to meet with the new representatives on March 15, 2021.

LEGAL ISSUES

Richard Davis has reviewed and made edits to the fire chief's contract. Further discussion is expected during the executive session.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

City of Blaine Fire Marshal Interlocal Agreement:

Chief Van der Veen has instructed Deputy Fire Marshal Joel Nielsen to contact the City of Blaine regarding the changes to the fire marshal's contract. Chief Van der Veen has further refined the scope of the agreement to better fit with the deputy fire marshal's role. An update is expected during the next meeting.

2018-2019 Audit:

Chairman Ansell announced that the 2018-2019 audit is complete. An exit interview was held on January 25, 2021, via Zoom.

Chief Van der Veen noted that the audit took longer than normal due to many factors including the pandemic and multiple chief turnovers. In addition, Chief Van der Veen specifically requested that the auditor be very thorough and provide detailed information throughout the process.

The auditors were pleased with the financials. The district did receive a management letter regarding:

1. Better tracking with the exit process, specifically when someone leaves who is in an executive or administration level.
2. Vacation accrual. The district was already in the process of resolving the issue which was identified during the last audit. The auditors were included in the process and are pleased with the result.
3. Updating the purchasing policy.

Chief Van der Veen noted that there is a hyperlink on the district's website guiding anyone interested to the auditor's report.

Chairman Ansell thanked Chief Van der Veen and his administration staff for their efforts during the time-consuming audit process.

Regional Fire Authority (RFA): Chairman Ansell noted that the RFA meeting scheduled for Thursday, February 4, 2021 had been canceled. The Committee is waiting on additional financial information which will be ready for the upcoming special meeting scheduled for Thursday, February 25, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. The Boards from both districts are expected to meet at Britton Loop Station 12, following all mandatory social guidelines. The remaining participants will attend via Zoom. The public will also be able to view the meeting via Zoom.

Discussions will include staffing models and future financial scenarios based in part on the Emergency Services Consulting International's (ESCI) report recommendations and the fire chief's aspirations to move forward as an organization.

Chairman Ansell recommended the Boards review the report prior to the meeting.

Due to technical difficulties, Commissioner McMurray left the meeting at 1:22 p.m.

A Regional Fire Authority Open House Zoom meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 18, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. and Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. Consultants Karen Reed and Heather Logan are assisting Chief Van der Veen with preparing the presentation.

Chairman Ansell noted that social media messages have been sent out and additional information is available to forward to specific groups upon request.

Assistant Chief Process: Chief Van der Veen provided information on the progress of the permanent assistant chief process. Chief Van der Veen is working with human resources to develop the posting for the position. The position will be open to both internal and external (local and regional) candidates.

Facilities: Chief Van der Veen recently met with the district safety committee to identify the immediate facility needs of the district.

Those safety issues identified include exterior lighting at multiple stations and a water leak at Wisner Lake Station 70. The district is compiling bids for the exterior lighting project. The water leak has been resolved. Other issues are being identified and dealt with in order of importance. It is expected that local contractors will be utilized as needed, following the bid rule process.

Commissioner McMurray returned to the meeting at 1:26 p.m.

Fire Chief Quarterly Review: Chairman Ansell noted that the fire chief's quarterly review has been completed. Due to the pandemic, Chairman Ansell noted that it was not

possible for Chief Van der Veen to complete the education requirements at this time. The chief continues to work on district-wide performance evaluations.

NEW BUSINESS

Train Delay: Commissioner Crawford requested that this topic, which had been spurred by the recent Custer train derailment, be removed from the agenda since it has already been resolved.

Member Appreciation:

Chief Van der Veen recognized members who have gone above and beyond their normal daily functions. Their letters (Kelly Freeman, Lt. Blake Scott, and FF Steve Latham) have been included in the Board packet.

As discussed during the previous meeting, appreciation letters will be sent out to all members on behalf of the Board noting their efforts during the past year, despite the pandemic. Chairman Ansell will be adding a personal note to each letter.

Resolution 2021-01 Surplus Equipment: Chief Van der Veen provided information regarding the surplus office equipment. As the district continues to reduce costs where needed, a decision was made to utilize Oasis/Tech Help to lease printers which will include maintenance and ink.

Brother DCP 811ODN
Multi-function printer

Brother MFC-L5700DW
Multi-function printer

Brother MFC-L2710DW
Multi-function printer

Brother 2840 (2)
Fax machine

MOTION: Commissioner Crawford moved to approve Resolution 2021-01 Surplus Equipment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fischer and approved 5-0.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Community Assistance Program re: Thank you for assistance with the Community Toy Store
- BNSF re: Appreciation Custer train derailment
- Gail Tupper Mitchel re: Thank you for services
- Member Appreciation Letter
- Lieutenant Blake Scott Appreciation
- Firefighter Steve Latham Appreciation
- Kelly Freeman Appreciation
- Lieutenant Mike Nelson re: Thanksgiving Program Appreciation
- Northern Light article re: New Members
- Northern Light article re: Potential fire district annexation

- Blaine Food Bank re: Thank you for donation
- The Responder: District newsletter, February issue

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **February Special Board Meeting:** A special joint work session meeting with District #4 will be held on Thursday, February 25, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. to discuss RFA future financial scenarios.
- **March Board Meeting Attendance Query:** All Commissioners present are expected to attend the March 18, 2021 meeting via Zoom Meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- City of Blaine Fire Marshal Interlocal Agreement
- RFA Planning Committee Update
- Assistant Chief Process
- Facilities Update

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 1:38 p.m. for approximately fifteen minutes until 1:53 p.m. Action may be taken.

Chief Van der Veen remained for the executive session until 1:44 p.m.

MEETING RECONVENED

Chairman Ansell called the regular meeting back into open session at 1:55 p.m. Action will be taken.

Chairman Ansell recently met with Attorney Richard Davis to update a portion of Chief Van der Veen’s employee contract language. The revised employment agreement was discussed during the executive session.

MOTION: Vice-Chairman Bosman moved to approve the revised fire chief’s employment agreement. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fischer and approved 5-0.

SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: There being no further business Chairman Ansell moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:56 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fischer and approved 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jennie Sand, Board Secretary

ATTEST:

Bruce Ansell, Chairman

Rich Bosman, Vice-Chairman

John Crawford, Commissioner

Scott Fischer, Commissioner

Kimberly McMurray, Commissioner

Jason Van der Veen, Fire Chief