

**Whatcom County Fire District #21
via Zoom Meeting
1:00 pm
June 17, 2021
Regular of Fire Commissioners Meeting**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Ansell called the regular Whatcom County Fire District #21 of Fire Commissioners meeting for June 17, 2021, to order at 1:01 p.m. via Zoom Meeting.

ROLL CALL

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

Other: Consultants Kris Faucett and Heather Logan; Local 106NW Representative Scott Brown.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

May 20, 2021

1. Meeting Minutes
 - a) April 15, 2021
 - b) April 27, 2021 – special
 - c) May 12, 2021 - special
2. Staff Reports – Chiefs / Operations / Training / Technical Support
3. Financial Report
 - a) Total Revenues – April \$3,646,081.29
 - b) Total Expenditures – May \$807,249.31
4. Voucher / Payroll / Benefits
 - a) NWFR Employees Direct Deposit Payroll: \$337,814.08
 - b) Payroll Taxes Voucher: \$71,309.83
 - c) Benefits Voucher: \$216,933.60
 - d) Monthly Expenditure Voucher: \$94,704.21
 - e) Special Voucher: \$7,980.00
 - f) Capital Projects Apparatus: \$78,507.59

MOTION: Commissioner Fischer moved to approve the May 20, 2021, Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McMurray and approved 5-0.

June 17, 2021

5. Meeting Minutes
 - a) May 20, 2021
6. Staff Reports – Chiefs / Operations / Training / Technical Support
7. Financial Report
 - a) Total Revenues – May \$1,194,840.71
 - b) Total Expenditures – June \$784,539.11
8. Voucher / Payroll / Benefits
 - a) NWFR Employees Direct Deposit Payroll: \$322,452.13
 - b) Payroll Taxes Voucher: \$70,127.94
 - c) Benefits Voucher: \$216,152.16
 - d) Monthly Expenditure Voucher: \$115,680.17
 - e) Capital Projects Apparatus: \$50,126.71

MOTION: Commissioner Crawford moved to approve the June 17, 2021, Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fischer and approved 5-0.

NW FIRE COMMISSIONER MONTHLY REPORTS

Commissioner Crawford continues his participation on the 9-11 Advisory Board sub-committee. The sub-committee has been tasked with investigating whether the consolidation of the dispatch center is the best solution for everyone involved.

A few Bellingham City Council members and the City of Lynden Mayor are currently visiting both dispatch centers to gain a better understanding of how they operate and if there is a benefit to merging. The group will meet again in two weeks. Commissioner Crawford will continue to keep everyone up to date. It is expected that a decision may be made by the end of September.

Chairman Ansell and Chief Van der Veen recently met with District 4 Chairman Lann. There was a tentative agreed to meet at least once a month to maintain their positive relationship. There will be no forward movement on either the interlocal agreement or the regional fire authority until both districts' levy lid lifts are passed in August and new District 4 commissioners take office in January 2022.

Chairman Ansell and Chief Van der Veen recently met with the city of Blaine manager, mayor, and mayor pro tem. This meeting provided the City of Blaine officials with information on the levy lid lift and to discuss any feedback. Chairman Ansell noted that it was a positive meeting. The officials suggested that Chief Van der Veen attend the Blaine City Council meeting on June 28, 2021, to provide any additional levy information.

Chief Van der Veen and possibly Chairman Ansell will be meeting later today via Zoom with the Birch Bay Chamber of Commerce.

LEGAL ISSUES

None.

IAFF LOCAL 106NW MONTHLY REPORT

Local 106NW Representative Scott Brown noted that the local is in the process of making signs to promote the levy lid lifts in multiple agencies. It is anticipated that the head Local 106 group will also run advertisements in the newspaper showing their support.

Scott Brown noted that the labor group is pleased that discussions will be resuming with District 4 regarding a future regional fire authority.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Resolution 2021-04 Levy Lid Lift: Chairman Ansell noted that the deadline to submit a second levy lid lift resolution for the November ballot in case the first one is unsuccessful, is on the same day as the August election (Aug. 3). The resolution can be withdrawn if unnecessary.

MOTION: Commissioner McMurray moved to approve Resolution 2021-04 Levy Lid Lift. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fischer and approved 5-0.

Levy Lid Lift Communications Update: Consultants Kris Faucett and Heather Logan reviewed their levy timeline, pointing out ways that the District 21 property owners and community groups are being provided the necessary information and opportunities to discuss, ask questions, and express concerns regarding the levy lid lift.

Information has been provided on the District's website, newsletters, informational handouts, and fast facts. A reader board will be located strategically within the community and a mailer will be sent out to the residents at approximately the same time as the election ballots are received. A video is also in the initial stages that will be able to be shared via social media and on websites.

A slide presentation has been developed for Chief Van der Veen to utilize during various community group meetings and two upcoming public outreach Zoom meetings. The presentations walk through different issues surrounding the levy lid lift.

It is important to note that district members can educate however, they cannot advocate for the levy lid lift. The union has no such constraints.

Chief Van der Veen recently completed a radio (Buzz Pod) interview for the Birch Bay community, which is expected to air the first week in July. The information will also be provided to the District and distributed to a greater extent.

Kris Faucett stressed the importance of the Board to assist with identifying other groups no matter how large or small. Groups may allow levy lid lift information to be added to their particular newsletters. Board members may speak with groups equipped with the

levy “five facts” and point them to the website for additional information. Both consultants offered to tailor information to specific groups as needed.

Division Chief Ward suggested adding information to community value packs (coupons) that are sent out periodically. Since the District has not provided information to value packs in the past, the district’s attorney would need to make the decision if that would be allowable. It was noted that the District is only allowed to provide levy lid lift information, disseminated to the public, as had been done in the past.

The District has utilized local newspapers for public outreach and a couple of levy lid lift articles have been reported. Non-district members can write to the editor in support of the levy lid lift.

Facilities Update: Chief Van der Veen noted that it has been difficult to attain three bids for painting specific station bay doors. The district’s attorney will be notified regarding how to proceed if three bids are not obtained.

The District is also seeking bids for the much-needed HVAC upgrades at Birch Bay Station 63.

Both Chairman Ansell and Chief Van der Veen were contacted by a concerned citizen regarding the condition of Semiahmoo in general, including Semiahmoo Station 62. Some areas of concern included the condition of the station exterior (painting), parking lot, driveway, door rot, unsafe stairwell, grimy gutters, and lawn maintenance.

A lawn maintenance company is expected to meet with the District next week regarding the Semiahmoo Station 62’s grounds need.

Upon the successful approval of the levy lid lift, the District intends to staff a peak response unit at Semiahmoo Station 62.

The Board agreed that the station has been neglected for a variety of reasons, which they desire to rectify in the near future. Chairman Ansell offered to coordinate a volunteer work party to spruce up the station and complete minor routine maintenance after the July 4th holiday. Local 106NW Representative Scott Brown will provide the union members with the Semiahmoo station beautification information.

NEW BUSINESS

Law Enforcement Response: Information was discussed regarding the anticipated upcoming changes to law enforcement response that may impact how the District responds to certain types of emergencies including welfare checks and calls that included some form of domestic violence. The bills signed by Governor Jay Inslee will deter law enforcement from responding to calls that do not involve a direct crime from one person to another and when the presence of law enforcement may escalate a situation. The changes are expected to take place on July 25, 2021. It is anticipated that those types of calls will be passed directly to emergency medical services, making it riskier for crews.

At this time there is no plan, clear guidelines, or training for emergency responders to respond to those kinds of calls.

Chiefs Van der Veen and Hewitt have asked to be included in any upcoming discussions with law enforcement regarding concerns/issues responding to these types of calls.

The Board suggested that if crews are uneasy or feel unsafe, they could contact Dispatch to have the patient come outside for assistance.

It is expected that this topic will be ongoing until a standard practice has been established and approved.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

CORRESPONDENCE

- Northern Light article re: Levy lid lift
- Northern Light article re: Boat fire
- Northern Light article re: Promotion
- Northern Light article re: Levy lid lift
- Northern Light article re: Structure fire
- Lynden Tribune re: Levy Lid Lift
- Whatcom News article re: Structure fire
- The Responder: District newsletter, June issue

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chief Van der Veen announced that all members have completed their annual sexual harassment and diversity training and employee performance evaluations are in progress.

July Meeting Attendance Query: All Commissioners present are expected to attend the July 15, 2021, meeting. Dependent on the continuation of the governor's proclamation and upgrades to the Odell Station 61 training room, the meeting may be held in person.

Retirement: Chairman Ansell recognized Commissioner Crawford for his recent retirement. Commissioner Crawford has completed thirty years of service as a fire firefighter at the Port of Bellingham Airport.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- Levy Lid Lift
- Law Enforcement response
- Facilities
- City of Blaine Fire Marshal Interlocal Agreement - (*tabled*)
- Assistant Chief Process (*tabled until Aug.*)

SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: There being no further business Commissioner Fischer moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:56 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-Chairman

John Crawford, Commissioner

Scott Fischer, Commissioner

Kimberly McMurray, Commissioner

Jason Van der Veen, Fire Chief