

**Whatcom County Fire District #21
Station 61 – Blaine
9408 Odell Street, Blaine WA 98230
1:00 pm
July 15, 2021
Regular Fire Commissioners Meeting**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Ansell called the regular Whatcom County Fire District #21 of Fire Commissioners meeting for July 15, 2021, to order at 1:33 p.m. at Station 61 – 9408 Odell Street, Blaine, WA 98230 and via Zoom Meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

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

Other: Consultant Heather Logan; Local 106NW Representative Scott Brown.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

1. Meeting Minutes
 - a) June 17, 2021
2. Staff Reports – Chiefs / Operations / Training / Technical Support
3. Financial Report
 - a) Total Revenues – June \$309,702.38
 - b) Total Expenditures – July \$1,536,018.47
4. Voucher / Payroll / Benefits
 - a) NWFR Employees Direct Deposit Payroll: \$359,559.27
 - b) Payroll Taxes Voucher: \$80,539.34
 - c) Benefits Voucher: \$291,760.76
 - d) Monthly Expenditure Voucher: \$98,585.74
 - e) Capital Projects: \$4,891.50
 - f) Capital Projects Apparatus: \$700,681.86

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

Chairman Ansell pointed out the considerable expense of the mandatory sprinkler analysis review at Birch Bay Station 63, which is completed every five years.

NW FIRE COMMISSIONER MONTHLY REPORTS

Commissioner Crawford continues his participation on the sub-committee for the 9-11 Advisory Board. The sub-committee has been tasked with investigating whether the consolidation of the dispatch center is the best solution for everyone involved. There has been no change, and meetings are ongoing.

Commissioner Crawford attended the All-County Fire Commissioners Meeting on Wednesday, July 14, 2021. Dialogue included anticipated topics for the upcoming Fire Commissioners' Convention scheduled for October and the upcoming changes to law enforcement response.

LEGAL ISSUES

None

IAFF LOCAL 106NW MONTHLY REPORT

Local 106NW Representative Scott Brown noted that the labor group remains focused on promoting the levy lid lift. They have put out signs in the area, paid for an advertisement in the Northern Light, and handed out pamphlets. They are also investigating neighborhood door knocking as it relates to Covid-19 and flag-waving a couple of days prior to the election. Scott Brown stressed their determination to get the levy lid lift passed in August.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Levy Lid Lift Communications Update: Chief Van der Veen and Chairman Ansell attended the Birch Bay Chamber luncheon, where they provided levy lid lift information and answered questions regarding what the fire department does, how many firefighters are stationed at Birch Bay Station 63, what happens when the train blocks their response route, cost of fire engines and ladder truck requirements. It is crucial that levy lid lift information and justification are provided to the community prior to the election.

Community member Kathy Berg suggested that the answers to the above questions be included in upcoming discussions with the community.

Consultant Heather Logan provided an update regarding public outreach.

- The voter's pamphlet has been delivered.
- A mailer will be distributed to all voting citizens within North Whatcom Fire and Rescue's response area within the next few days.
- Information continues to be added to the website and the District's Facebook page.
- Members are handing out informational-only cards to the public.
- The reader board at Birch Bay Station 63 is being utilized to share levy information only.

- Advertisements in local area papers regarding public outreach on Thursday, July 15, 2011, at 3:00 p.m. and Tuesday, July 20, 2021, at 7:00 p.m.

Community member Kathy Berg requested some informational cards to distribute in the Birch Bay area.

Pro and Con Committee: Chairman Ansell noted that if the levy lid lift is unsuccessful, the District plans to make the request again during the November election. Since the deadline to submit a new levy lid lift resolution is August 3, 2021, the resolution must be approved and submitted prior to knowing the August election outcome. The resolution can be rescinded if the August levy lid lift passes.

The former pro committee has agreed to submit a pro statement for the November (August 9, 2021, deadline) election if needed.

Chairman Ansell requested that any community members watching this meeting in person and via Zoom interested in being on either committee and writing a pro or con statement for a potential November levy lid lift ballot measure are urged to contact Chief Van der Veen.

A press release asking for pro and con committees has also been disseminated and uploaded to the District's website on Thursday, July 15, 2021.

Facilities Update: During the last meeting, Chairman Ansell offered to coordinate a volunteer work party to spruce up Semiahmoo Station 62 and complete minor routine maintenance after the July 4 holiday. Local 106NW Representative Scott Brown also agreed to provide union members with the Semiahmoo beautification information.

Chairman Ansell noted that this would be an excellent opportunity to show the community that the District intends to utilize the station if the levy passes to house a peak response unit.

Some of the crews from Birch Bay Station 63 have already mowed the grounds and completed some initial cleanup. Chairman Ansell expressed his appreciation to Captain Ahrenholz and firefighters Troy Freeman, Evan Maack, Rob Mulrooney, and Kaleb Bruch for the enormous work completed.

The work party will be held at Semiahmoo Station 62 on Saturday, July 17, 2021, at 9:00 a.m.

Division Chief Ward continues to receive bids and will coordinate other facility projects such as painting bay doors and overseeing HVAC bids at Birch Bay Station 63.

Law Enforcement Response:

Division Chief Ward attended a recent county operations meeting where upcoming changes to law enforcement responses were discussed. Types of calls that may be

affected include certain types of welfare checks and mental health issues. Chairman Ansell stated that mental health issues continue to be a massive issue around the country, and it will take a coordinated effort to address and ensure that everyone is on the same page. The commissioner's group agreed to support and start the process of forming a county critical response team made up of a firefighter, officer, and public assistance employee. The City of Bellingham already has a critical response team made up of EMTs, and a social worker that will utilize a suburban to respond to those types of Bellingham Fire Department (BFD) calls ahead of an aid unit.

House Bill 1054, limits how law enforcement can respond, takes effect on July 25, 2021, however, it has already greatly affected various agencies, increasing the risk to our EMTs.

Commissioner Crawford noted that there is expected to be a change in how Dispatch routes and labels calls with no law enforcement response. If warranted, EMTs will be able to justify why law enforcement is necessary on a particular call (imminent threat).

Vice-Chairman Bosman hopes that personnel know they are not required to go into a residence if it looks risky and to not endanger themselves. Chief Van der Veen expects that B-76 will prescreen those calls to minimize the crews' potential for a severe outcome.

NEW BUSINESS

None

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

None

CORRESPONDENCE

- Whatcom County Fire Marshal's Office re: Stage 2 burn ban
- Press Release re: Proposition 2021-3 Virtual Meeting
- Proposition 2021-3 Mailer
- Northern Light letter to the editor re: Levy lid lift
- Bellingham Fire Department re: Thank you for assistance on the captain's assessment center
- Health Care Authority re: GEMT funds
- Bellingham Herald article re: Fourth of July celebrations
- The Responder: District newsletter, July issue

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice-Chairman Bosman noted that burn ban signs had been put up around the county. Chairman Ansell pointed out that at this time, Birch Bay beach fires are illegal.

August Meeting Attendance Query: All Commissioners present, with the exception of Vice-Chairman Bosman, are expected to attend the August 19, 2021, meeting.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- Levy Lid Lift post-election report
- Law Enforcement response
- Facilities Update
- 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 Crawford moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:04 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