



REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING



via Zoom Meeting
3:00 p.m.
August 26, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

Fire Chief Jason Van der Veen called the Regional Fire Authority Committee Meeting for August 26, 2020, to order at 3:05 p.m. via Zoom Meeting.

ATTENDEES

Committee Members

District #21 (NWFR) Chairman Bruce Ansell; Commissioners John Crawford, and Scott Fischer.

District #4 Commissioners Harry Andrews and Mark Chamberlain.

Guests

Fire Chief Jason Van der Veen, NWFR Board Secretary Jennie Sand and District #4 Board Secretary Kris Parks.

District #4 Chairman Dave Hanson was not in attendance due to a conflicting meeting.

OPEN STATEMENT

Chief Van der Veen welcomed everyone to the first special regional fire authority planning committee meeting and reviewed the agenda. Chief Van der Veen noted that he had sent out some additional documents to review prior to the meeting. Another topic will be to determine tasks to be completed by either the committee or staff prior to the next meeting.

ELECTIONS

Chair: Commissioner Crawford noted that as a temporary commissioner, Commissioner Chamberlain will be a neutral chair who will be able to see both sides of the issue. In addition, Commissioner Chamberlain has had previous experience with both the City of Bellingham and Fire District #8 boards.

MOTION: Commissioner Crawford moved to approve Commissioner Chamberlain as the Chair of the regional fire authority committee. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Andrews and approved 5-0.

Commissioner Chamberlain accepted the role of chair of the regional fire authority committee and added that due to his previous board experience and temporary position as

a commissioner with no emotional ties to the position, he will be able to remain neutral with no emotional ties.

Chairman Ansell agreed, noting that keeping the chairs of both boards out of the position is a wise choice.

Vice-Chair:

MOTION: Commissioner Ansell moved to approve Commissioner Fischer as Vice-Chair of the regional fire authority committee. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crawford and approved 5-0.

Commissioner Fischer accepted the role of Vice-Chair for the regional fire authority committee.

APPOINT SECRETARY/TRANSCRIBER

There was discussion regarding which board secretary will take the official notes of the regional fire authority committee meeting notes.

MOTION: Chairman Chamberlain moved to approve Jennie Sand as the transcriber who will take the official notes for the regional fire authority meetings. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fischer and approved 5-0.

Commissioner Ansell noted that since District #21 Board Secretary Jennie Sand is not also in an administrator role as is the District #4 Board Secretary, it makes sense to have her take the official notes for the committee.

Jennie Sand accepted the role of transcriber.

PLAN / TIMELINE / MEETING SCHEDULE

Chief Van der Veen noted that he had sent out a copy of a draft regional fire authority work plan retrieved from the Washington State Fire Chiefs website. The document includes a process and timeline. Chief Van der Veen made minor updates to the timeline for the committee. The goal for completing the development of the vision, communications and financial plan is September 2020.

Tasks to work on next include the development of the regional fire authority's vision statement and a communication plan. Chief Van der Veen stressed that communication to the public and the employees will prove to be a vital piece of the plan.

Chairman Chamberlain noted that staff can work on a RFA vision statement and then submit ideas to the board at the next meeting.

Commissioner Crawford suggested to invite a labor representative to attend all upcoming meetings. Chairman Chamberlain will contact the labor group.

It was noted that there are no restrictions regarding who can attend the meetings or provide information. Only the six board members can vote and create subcommittees.

MOTION: Commissioner Crawford approved inviting a labor representative to attend all future regional fire authority committee meetings. The motion was seconded by Chairman Chamberlain and approved 5-0.

CONSULTANT DISCUSSION

The group discussed hiring a consultant to assist with the process. Chief Van der Veen noted that there are funds set aside in the District #21 budget for consulting services.

Chief Van der Veen sent out a copy of Consultant Karen Reed's resume to the committee prior to the meeting. She has come highly recommended and has vast knowledge and experience with regional fire authorities. Chief Van der Veen will contact Karen Reed to investigate her schedule, timeline and estimated costs. Her fee is \$210.00 per hour. With the current Covid-19 restrictions, there will be no travel time costs. Chief Van der Veen will report the information back to the committee before a decision is made via email.

Recently retired South Whatcom Fire Authority (SWFA) Fire Chief Dave Ralston has firsthand knowledge and experience of forming a fire authority. Since he is receiving retirement, it may prove complicated to compensate him as a consultant for this process. He may be able to be utilized in a limited capacity as the need arises.

Commissioner Crawford requested that Chief Van der Veen investigate who consulted with SWFA during their RFA process.

RULES AND PROCESS

Chief Van der Veen proposed that committee follow the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 52.26 as it pertains to an RFA formation and governance rules. Chief Van der Veen will send out the link to the RCW which includes the formation, taxing and additional statutes for review.

The remainder of the process will be created once a consultant has been retained.

In addition, once the consultant decision is made, the meeting schedule can also be established.

Commissioner Ansell suggested that the committee follow the Roberts Rules of Order which is a procedure that governs most organizations with board of directors.

REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY NAME

Chief Van der Veen recently met with District #4 Chairman Dave Hanson regarding a potential name for the district. Since it will be quite an expense to rebrand the entire entity, it was suggested that the newly formed group become North Whatcom Regional Fire Authority. Both District #21 and District #4 will cease to exist.

MOTION: Commissioner Ansell moved to approve North Whatcom Regional Fire Authority as the name of the regional fire authority. The motion was seconded by Chairman Chamberlain and approved 5-0.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

- Meeting Schedule
- Official Consultant Decision
- Vision Statement
- Communication Plan

ADJOURNMENT


MOTION: There being no further business Chairman Chamberlain moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:39 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Andrews and approved 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted by:



Jennie Sand, Recording Secretary

ATTEST:



Mark Chamberlain, Chairman