

**Whatcom County Fire District #21
Station 61 – Blaine
9408 Odell Street, Blaine WA 98230
1:00 pm
January 16, 2020
Regular Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bosman called the regular Whatcom County Fire District #21 Board of Fire Commissioners meeting for January 16, 2020, to order at 1:03 p.m. at Station 61 – 9408 Odell Street, Blaine, WA 98230.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

Attendees: Chairman Rich Bosman; Commissioners Larry McPhail, John Crawford, and Scott Fischer; Acting Fire Chief Jason Van der Veen; Chief Division, Herschel Rostov and Ray Davidson.

Vice-Chairman Bruce Ansell was previously excused from this meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

NEW BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

1. Meeting Minutes
 - a) December 19, 2019 – Special
2. Staff Reports – Chiefs / Operations / Training / Technical Support
3. Financial Report
 - a) Total Expenditures – January \$798,684.70
4. Voucher / Payroll / Benefits
 - a) NWFR Employees Direct Deposit Payroll: \$335,652.64
 - b) Non Direct Deposit: \$11,385.64
 - c) Benefits Voucher: \$211,680.83
 - d) Monthly Expenditure Vouchers: \$219,966.17

The district has not yet received the Whatcom County Treasurer's report from December, therefore, the reconciled information is not included in the January Board packet.

MOTION: Commissioner Crawford moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McPhail and approved 4-0.

NW FIRE COMMISSIONER MONTHLY REPORTS

- **Whatcom County Fire Commissioners Meeting:** Commissioners Crawford and Fischer attended the January 8, 2020 meeting. New fire commissioners in Whatcom County were introduced. The group discussed updating their rules, regulations and elections for various boards. Commissioner Crawford was elected to sit on the Whatcom County 9-11 Advisory Board.

Commissioner Fischer agreed to attend the Whatcom County Fire Commissioners meeting in Commissioner Crawford's absence when needed.

- **Fire Chief Salary Data:** Commissioner McPhail mentioned that Alvarado Fire Department, which is approximately the size of Bellingham, is currently seeking a fire chief. The salary for the position is from \$168,000-\$198,000. The salary range provides the Board with additional information with regards to what other fire departments are paying for fire chief services.

IAFF LOCAL 106 MONTHLY REPORT

- None

LEGAL ISSUES

- Attorney Richard Davis was unable to attend this meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- **Merger with Fire District 4:** Chief Van der Veen provided information regarding election consultant Karen Reed. A copy of her biography and resume was handed out to the Board. Attorney Richard Davis highly recommended Karen Reed.

Karen Reed has participated in many mergers and regional fire authorities, however, no fire district to district mergers. She did note that it would be interesting to figure out what this type of merger may look like. She further noted that her fee is expensive and suggests a minimum of two meetings per month minimum, for the development of the process.

Karen Reed advised the district to postpone putting a merger request on the ballot until 2021, since there is so much that would need to be considered including confirming how the District 4 EMS levy rate would work, the overall levy rate and how to best educate the taxpayers. In addition, it would also depend on what other measures are on the ballot as to which election (spring or primary) would be more favorable.

It would also benefit the district to hire a professional who could craft a message that would be dispersed to the community. Chief Van der Veen noted that there is money in the budget to follow this route if the Board agrees.

Commissioner Crawford recommended that Chief Van der Veen talk with District 4 Commissioner Anna Melillo, whose department where she is employed, has recently gone through a merger and utilized Liz Loomis's services with crafting the message that was sent out to the public.

Chief Van der Veen recommended inviting Karen Reed to attend a future meeting to present various options and provide the district with an estimate for her services. Chairman Bosman expressed his concern regarding the timeframe and further stated that if the Board makes the decision to proceed, he wants the process to be done correctly. Ultimately it will be District 4's decision as to whether or not to proceed.

It is expected that the District 4 Commissioners will broach the subject during the next meeting scheduled for Friday, January 17, 2020.

- **Bellingham Ladder and Truck Swap:** Bellingham Assistant Chief Dave Parker and Chief Van der Veen continue to move forward with the ladder and engine truck swap. The shops from both districts have recently met to inspect both apparatus. The City of Bellingham attorney will draft the first agreement.

Chief Davidson and lead mechanic Elliot agreed that Bellingham's ladder has low miles, a complement of ground ladders and is expected to replace Ladder 61. It was noted that Bellingham's ladder truck is not equipped with a water pump. The district will look at which parts on Ladder 61 can be swapped out and how the district will utilize Bellingham's ladder truck.

- **Tender 61 (AP205):** Chief Van der Veen provided information regarding the insurance appraiser's estimate (\$30,000) to repair Tender 61, which was involved in a non-injury accident last month. Chief Van der Veen recommended that since this is the oldest tender, that the district surplus the apparatus and utilize the monies (\$29,781) in the future for a new tender. The Board agreed.

Chairman Bosman suggested that the tender group be contacted to be able to contribute their ideas prior to moving forward with a tender purchase.

- **Dakota Creek Bridge:** Chief Van der Veen provided information regarding his meeting with state Representative Luanne Van Werven in late December to discuss the impacts of the Dakota Creek Bridge weight restrictions (15 tons). Chief Rostov also attended the meeting.

The chiefs provided Luanne Van Werven with some mapping and educated her on how the limitations affect district response time. The delayed response affects many areas but specifically the Semiahmoo Station 62 area. Those response times can be even longer if there is an added train delay. Luanne Van Werven has agreed to start the political process in Olympia once she is settled in her new role. Further meetings are expected to be scheduled later this month. The Blaine City Council has also been provided with the decreased response information.

In the meantime, the district plans to redo the response run cards and plans with regards to fire response are currently being solidified.

Chairman Bosman noted that the district may need to develop specific talking points so all district members provide a consistent response.

- **City of Blaine Fire Code Adoption and Fire Marshal Services:** Chief Rostov provided an update regarding the permit fee adoption and fire marshal services. The fee adoption was not discussed during the recent City Council's meeting, however the topic is expected to be on the January 27, 2020, agenda.

In addition, the revised draft contract to provide fire marshal services will be addressed with the city manager and a response is expected sometime next week. Their revised copy will be sent to the districts' attorney for further review.

Chief Rostov will keep the Board updated as information becomes available.

- **Whatcom County Paramedic Contract:** Chief Van der Veen noted that last month he received a draft paramedic contract from EMS Manager Mike Hilley that he forwarded to the district's attorney Richard Davis for review. After some modifications were made it was returned to the Whatcom County Council and accepted. With one piece left to be added, it is expected that the contract will be submitted for approval during the February 20, 2020 Board meeting.

Chief Van der Veen reiterated that the final contract will be backdated to January 1, 2020.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Missing Commissioner Laptop:** There was a discussion regarding the Surface Pro commissioner laptop that has yet to be returned to the district from former Commissioner Dean Berkeley. The purchase price of the laptop was approximately \$1,000 of taxpayer money.

Commissioner McPhail offered to contact Mr. Berkeley and give him the opportunity to return the district's laptop. If unsuccessful, the authorities will be contacted to retrieve the item.

A follow-up is expected during the next meeting.

- **Board Officer Elections:** The Board completed their yearly officer elections.

MOTION: Commissioner Crawford moved to elect current Vice-Chairman Ansell as Board Chair. The motion was seconded by Chairman Bosman and approved 4-0.

MOTION: Commissioner McPhail moved to elect current Chairman Bosman as Vice-Chair. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fischer and approved 4-0.

POLICIES & PROCEDURE

- None

CORRESPONDENCE

- From Katrina Williams: Thank you for services
- From Nancy Totten: Thank you for services
- From Community Assistance Program: Thank you for helping with the Thanksgiving Baskets
- Northern Light article re: NWFR year in review
- The Responder: District newsletter, January issue

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **February Board Meeting Attendance Query:** All Commissioners with the exception of Vice-Chairman Ansell, are expected to attend the February 20 meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- Bellingham Ladder Truck Swap
- Tender 61 AP205
- City of Blaine Fire Marshal Services
- Missing Commissioner Computer

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Bosman 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 1:45 p.m. until approximately 2:10 p.m. Acting Fire Chief Van der Veen, Division Chief Rostov and District 4 Fire Commissioner Harry Andrews remained for the executive session. Action is not expected to be taken.

Acting Fire Chief Van der Veen and Division Chief Rostov were excused from the executive session at 2:11 p.m.

MEETING RECONVENED

Chairman Bosman called the regular meeting back into open session at 2:20 p.m. Action will not be taken as a result of the executive session.

SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: There being no further business Commissioner McPhail moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:57 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crawford and approved 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jennie Sand, Board Secretary

ATTEST:

Rich Bosman, Chairman

Larry McPhail, Commissioner

John Crawford, Commissioner

Scott Fischer, Commissioner

Jason Van der Veen, Acting Fire Chief