

OFFICER'S MEETING
Thursday, April 4, 2019
Station 61 – Blaine

Attendees: Chiefs Noonchester, Hollander and Van der Veen; Captains Jorgensen, Ahrenholz and Davidson.

FIRE CHIEF

Fire Marshal

Chief Noonchester noted that a conditional offer has been presented to Fire Marshal Herschel Rostov from Mercer Island. Pending his upcoming pre-employment screening, his projected start date is May 1. Herschel Rostov will bring a lot of prevention experience to the department.

A meet and greet to introduce Chief Rostov to both district members as well as the community will be scheduled at Odell Station 61 in the near future.

It is expected that Chief Rostov will become part of the B76 duty rotation in June, following some additional training and area familiarization.

Joint Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting

A joint Fire Commissioner Meeting with North Whatcom Fire and Rescue (NWFR) and District 4 will be held on Thursday, April 18 at 1:00 p.m. at Odell Station 61.

Chief Noonchester will provide a presentation regarding the current inter local agreement for fire and emergency services between the two districts. A discussion following will include the recent District 4 annexation, the proposed three year mitigation agreement between District 4 and the City of Bellingham for lost revenue due to the annexation, and options for the future.

NWFR Master Plan

The NWFR Board of Fire Commissioners gave their approval to develop a master plan in 2019. The district is in the process of hiring a consultant to complete the task. The master plan will include evaluating a continued consolidation with District 4, other potential mergers and consolidations, as well as station and apparatus placement. Ultimately the district expects to create efficiencies.

CrewSense

Admin stated that the payroll portion of CrewSense is improving and less errors are being noted by Finance. It remains an ongoing process.

It was noted that Finance and Captains are not looking at the same views in CrewSense during the payroll audit, which continues to cause issues. Chief Hollander and Van der Veen will work on ensuring that both the captain and finance's computer screens have the same views.

Volunteer timesheets may also be utilized on CrewSense in the near future, alleviating other issues.

Lieutenant Promotional

Chief Van der Veen announced that FF Blake Scott will be promoted to lieutenant and FF Shipp will be an acting lieutenant effective April 10.

Chief Van der Veen explained that since his division chief position is temporary, the lieutenant filling his position will also be temporary and not considered a vacancy. Admin is following the current labor contract agreement regarding vacancies.

Chief Van der Veen handed out the updated shift schedule. Changes included:

Mike Ross – Station 63

Scott Brown – Station 12

Zack Scott – Station 62

Delanie Warne – Station 12

Since Laurel Station 69 is centrally located and has less collateral duties, it is expected that the majority of overtimes will be done there.

It is unsure how long these moves will last however, Chief Van der Veen noted that the schedule can be revisited if needed.

Lateral Firefighter Posting

The current lateral firefighter posting will close on Monday, April 8. At this time there have been no applicants. Everett and Snohomish 1 are also advertising for lateral hires. Admin is hopeful that applications will be submitted soon however, if no applications are received the district may revert to Plan B.

Plan B may consist of opening the position up to those individuals with FF1, FF2, Hazmat and current EMT certification.

Since North Bend is closed for the foreseeable future, admin discussed holding a district month long academy at Britton Loop Station 12 for individuals hired using Plan B. Trainers / instructors would be dedicated to the academy (not on shift) and would utilize overtime. Cpt. Jorgensen is working on a potential schedule and addressing concerns / logistics. Cpt. Davidson is also interested in assisting with the academy.

If there are no new hires, mandatory overtime may need to be utilized more often.

Cpt. Jorgensen noted that laterals will receive three weeks of in-house extensive training. Anyone interested in assisting with the training (off duty overtime) are encouraged to contact him. The training will be a good opportunity to mold lateral firefighters specifically to North Whatcom.

Currently there are three open positions. Originally the district was looking to hire two however, Chief Noonchester is considering hiring three, especially since other departments are also in the process of hiring laterals.

John Swobody Ribbon Ceremony

Chief Noonchester provided information regarding the Washington State Fallen Firefighter Memorial Ribbon Ceremony, in which John Swobody will be a recipient.

The ribbon will be hung at Odell Station 61 for a designated amount of time. The ribbon will be picked up in a special ceremony on Friday, May 31 at 11:00 a.m. by a motorcycle procession and escorted to Olympia where it will also be displayed. The ribbon will become part of their permanent display.

Admin will work with the union to finalize all of the details regarding this event. Members will be kept informed.

OPERATIONS

Apparatus Discussion

Tender 72 is not running and is too expensive to repair. All the gear has been stripped from the apparatus and it is currently parked at Wisner Lake Station 70.

Tender 6102 will undergo cylinder head replacement. There was discussion regarding moving the apparatus to either Northwood Station 72 or Laurel Station 69. No decision was made.

There was discussion regarding the condition of Engine 62. Some items have been repaired however, it was unclear if some leaks persist. Chief Van der Veen will check with the shop.

Bellingham Fire Department (BFD) Response / Auto Aid

Currently, when the district responds into the City of Bellingham there may be no backup, leaving the district vulnerable. Chief Van der Veen recently met with BFD Chief Hewitt and Assistant Chief Comfort regarding potential new fire blocks, specifically around Laurel Station 69 and Britton Loop Station 12. The changes will layer certain areas (choke points) with a heavier response from BFD. It was noted that other districts may need to give permission for the changes since it may also affect their responses into our area (D7). No changes have been made at this time.

In addition, Chief Van der Veen enlightened both Chiefs Hewitt and Comfort regarding the impacts to the district of responding into the City of Bellingham.

Chief Noonchester noted that the City of Bellingham has agreed to pay mitigation for the next three years due to the recent annexation in the District 4's area, to compensate for lost revenue. Currently, the district continues to respond in the annexed area. Once the three years has ended, the City of Bellingham will need to figure out how to cover their annexed areas.

Collateral Duties

The group reviewed the partially updated collateral duties list. All the changes have not yet been finalized. Chief Van der Veen requested input from the captains.

There was additional dialogue regarding making collateral duties meaningful to those assigned. Cpt. Ahrenholz noted that some duties have a bigger impact than others on daily schedules.

Station Assignments were also discussed. The Wiser Lake Station 70 grounds are being maintained by an outside agency at no cost to the district. Laurel Station 69 will maintain Northwood Station 72.

As Chief Hollander nears his retirement date, some of his current duties may also become collateral duties. The district may hire someone on a part time basis in the future to assume some of the facility maintenance duties. This will most likely be decided following the completion of the district master plan.

Once Chief Hollander retires, all facility or apparatus emergencies should be routed through Chiefs Noonchester or Van der Veen until further notice.

Further discussion is expected.

SPECIAL SERVICES

Capital Projects

Chief Hollander hopes to complete all approved capital projects prior to his retirement the end of May.

Officer Cell Phones

New officer cell phones have been ordered. All the new phones will be able to share incident and training pictures.

Chuckanut Bay Cheesecake Factory

The relocated Chuckanut Bay Cheesecake Factory in Blaine is open and a mitigation agreement with the district has been signed and required payment made.

Laurel Station 69 Septic

The new septic system will be installed mid to late summer.

Station Signs

Station signs have been repaired and erected at Laurel Station 69 and Northwood Station 72.

The sign at Odell Station 61 is in the process of being re-installed.

Pagers and Portable Radios

Lt Hofstad is in the process of taking over as the primary lead of pagers and portable radios. There remain a few issues to work out.

Computer Conversion

Two district computers remain in need of the new Windows 10 update.

Internet

An updated internet network switch is in progress. The change will allow each station to remain independent of one another, which is especially beneficial if one station loses internet capability.

It is expected that Laurel Station 69 may lose internet for approximately fifteen minutes during the final switch.

New Ambulance

The district has ordered a new ambulance through TriVan. The expected delivery date is sometime in August.

TRAINING

First Quarter Training

Cpt. Jorgensen reviewed the first quarter training participation.

Teen Screen

The district participated in a Teen Screen at the Blaine High School on Thursday, March 21. The event had record breaking attendance with approximately 260 participants. Eight to ten students were identified as having some type of cardiac issue.

Driving Under the Influence (DUI)/ Distracted Driving Drill

Cpt. Jorgensen continues to work on organizing a distracted driving drill at the Blaine School District in 2019. The district will need member assistance.

Lift Assists

Cpt. Jorgensen noted that Dr. Wayne / Junk has requested that during lift assists, crews are mindful to check vitals along with assistance, essentially making the call a BLS non-transport. Thorough documentation regarding the incident was also requested.

Cpt. Davidson agreed to create and distribute district guidelines for lift assists.

Repeat Response to 2800 Mt. Baker Highway

Recently Cpt. Jorgensen sent out an email regarding frequent responses to a patient located on the Mt. Baker Highway. Cpt. Jorgensen requested that he be notified any time the district responds to that location.

The County is currently working on some assistance for the individual.

ResQHub

There was discussion regarding the ResQHub reports. Cpt. Jorgensen noted that it will take a good year to fine tune the program. The goal is to have all districts utilizing ResQHub to become more consistent with each other.

It was noted that some categories need additional and more specific categories (driver operator/hose lay). Please direct any needed changes or issues to the training division.

Second Quarter

Cpt. Jorgensen reviewed the second quarter training which will include strategy and tactics, extraction and wildland training. The training division has also acquired a good size house that will be utilized for strategy and tactics.

Personal Floatation Device (PFD)

All the orange PFD's have been put into service. While the size will not accommodate all patients, Cpt. Jorgensen noted that they will fit the majority. One PFD needs to be located on each first out aid unit. Chief Van der Veen noted that PFDs will be utilized and put on the appropriate apparatus.

For safety, crews should be utilizing their blue PFDs on calls when within ten feet of a body of water.

Larger crew PFDs are being constructed and a sample will be sent to the district in the near future for review.

Whatcom Falls Park

Lt Esser has received information from BFD regarding responses to Whatcom Falls Park as a first responding unit. The information also includes maps. Lt Esser will disseminate the information.

Snip It Trainings

New "toilet training" will be distributed to the stations on a regular basis. These trainings are not intended for the public.

EMS Online

Members are encourage to complete their EMS online training in a reasonable timeline. It was noted that the training has a two year retention period and can be archived making some of education materials difficult to retrieve.

Nitrous Oxide Pilot Program

A pilot program utilizing the use of nitrous oxide is underway. Once it receives approval from the State, the program may be expanded.

The cost of the program may be up to \$4,000 per vehicle however, it will help the district to "better serve the public".

A Shift

There was discussion regarding the ride a long program. It was agreed that Cpt. Jorgensen will schedule all ride along requests. In addition, Cpt. Jorgensen will update the current ride a long guidelines and waiver forms.

B Shift

Cpt. Davidson noted that eight out of a total fifteen best practices have been completed. Captains continue to make progress. A June 1 goal date for a final review is anticipated.

There was discussion regarding how to let dispatch know when the district is utilizing Ladder 63 in lieu of Engine 63. It was agreed the importance of identifying the actual apparatus being utilized. Other potential issues were also discussed. Cpt. Davidson noted that when he takes the Ladder he notifies dispatch in the office before he heads out to the rig, allowing Dispatch time to switch to the L63 MDC.

C Shift

Not represented.

D Shift

Not represented.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

During the recent Whatcom County Fire Chiefs Meeting, EMS Director Mike Hilley requested a county head count of those interested in participating in an upcoming paramedic program. Issues concerning the group include labor issues and how district paramedics would be integrated into the system. The group agreed that at least twelve district members may be interested in the program. Chief Hollander will pass along the information to Mike Hilley.

A Bellingham Technical Paramedic two year program will begin in September.

Jennie Sand requested that pictures taken by the captains of members during training, be forwarded to her for use in the newsletter, website and annual report.

Chief Hollander noted that Chief Van der Veen is doing a good job in his new position, bringing a different perspective to administration.

One commissioner position for both District 21 and District 4 are up for re-election. Candidate information is available on the district websites as well as social media.

As the interim fire chief, Chief Noonchester is having a good experience thus far.

With wildfire season fast approaching, Chief Van der Veen suggested responding with an engine and brush truck on all outside fires. The captains agreed to pass along the direction to all company officers.

Next Meeting: Thursday, May 2

All Officer Meeting: Thursday, June 6