

CAPTAIN'S MEETING
Thursday, November 4, 2021
Birch Bay Station 63

Attendees: Fire Chief Van der Veen; Division Chief Ward; Captains Ahrenholz, McPhail, Schmidt, and Smith.

FIRE CHIEF

Levy Lid Lift

There was discussion surrounding the possible variables that may have been factors regarding why the levy lid lift did not pass.

The Union did a fantastic job of getting information out to the community.

Chief Van der Veen expressed his concern regarding a possible drop in morale. Chief Van der Veen stated that the levy failure was in no way a reflection of the members. In addition, he stressed the district has a balanced budget, and the day-to-day operations remain intact. No members will lose their job, nor will stations be browned down as a result.

The district is not expected to hire new firefighters in the foreseeable future. The Board and admin staff will take a strategic look at funding going forward.

The two Boards continue to work towards extending the contract for services for another year while effort are expected to resume on the RFA in the near future. It is expected that District 4 will be able to balance their budget with some cutbacks and fund their contract with the district.

Since there are signs that some members are beginning to suffer from "compassion fatigue, Chief Van der Veen directed captains to keep an eye on their crews and steer them towards appropriate resources as needed.

Performance Evaluations

The company officers should be wrapping up their evaluations on their charges.

Probationary Members

The four probationary firefighters have completed their six-month evaluation. They are aware of what they need to work on for their upcoming final.

Noah Silverman graduated from the North Bend Fire Academy on Thursday, November 4. He will be placed on B Shift Station 12 as a fourth while he acclimates himself to the district. It is expected that FF Ebner will relocate to B Shift Station 61, and Noah will become a permanent member of B Shift Station 12.

Lateral hire Firefighter Kat Stewart attended the last portion of the North Bend Academy to get her FFII certificate. After one week at the academy, she was awarded the "Bull Dog" honor along with high praise.

Call Back Directive/Policy

The captains and Chiefs will continue to revise the call-back directive/policy.

OPERATIONS

Facility and Apparatus Maintenance

Birch Bay Station 63 Roof repair: The roof will need to be replaced in the future. In the interim, some repairs will be made as soon as possible. An annual maintenance contract will also be necessary to ensure the roof remains safe.

Birch Bay Station 63 training and hose tower: An inspection was included in the packet. There are cracks in the structure, both internal and external. The stairs have already been replaced. The district is completing a benefits cost analysis regarding making repairs or tearing the structure down completely. Other considerations will need to be made, including mitigating any hazardous materials and whether the demo will compromise the remaining station structure.

At this time crews can utilize the tower for training.

Outdoor Lighting: Outdoor lighting is being addressed at Stations 61,65, 62, and 68.

Hose: Work continues on a hose manual. Chief Ward will work with the hose group and the captains before the manual is disseminated.

New Engine: It is expected that the new engine will be in service on Friday, November 5. The engine will be located at Laurel Station 69. The St 69 brush rig will be relocated to Northwood Station 72.

SHIFTS

AShift

Policies

Chief Ahrenholz noted that many of the districts' policies are out of date and need updating. Although admin has been working with Lexipol to update policies and ensure that they meet state and federal requirements, it remains a slow and tedious process.

Captain Ahrenholz agreed to send some of the more time-sensitive policies to Kelly for critical review.

Ladder Testing

Ladder testing has been completed on the east side. All ladders stored at Wisner Lake Station 70 are out of service, failed, and/or slated for surplus.

There was discussion regarding the hose budget for 2022 and what will be ordered.

BShift

Fire Extinguishers

The fire extinguisher testing is complete. The spare extinguishers will be relocated to Birch Bay Station 63. A cost analysis will be completed on multiple fire extinguisher testing vendors.

CShift

Debit Days

Chief Van der Veen directed the captains to assign all debit days, taking into account the members' wants, wishes, and desires.

Kelly requested that the vacation days be sent to her as soon as possible so she could input them into the master calendar.

The captains will input and keep debit days up to date on the master calendar. Kelly noted that the master calendar is used in conjunction with other programs for vacation and debit days for checks and balances making it crucial that changes and/or updates are made consistently.

Operative IQ Daily Apparatus Checks

A concern was brought forth regarding the inconsistencies between the inventory and placement of inventory on rigs.

Chief Ward will work to recruit the firefighter who brought up the concerns to assist with Operative IQ.

District Hose Needs

There was discussion regarding the hose needs of the district. Captains continue to work on a hose lay manual with accompanying videos and instructions. There was discussion regarding utilizing the old Station 69 engine at multiple stations for experimenting with different hose groupings before it is put into reserve status. It was noted that the timetable for the engine usage needs to follow a strict time limit.

Lack of Law Enforcement Response

With law enforcement no longer responding to specific calls, there was discussion regarding assisting patients who do not necessarily need or want BLS aid.

There was discussion regarding locating additional training to understand and better assist those patients with altered mental status, including Alzheimer's and dementia. Additional training in de-escalation was also mentioned. Chief Ward will investigate.

Chief Van der Veen recently met with Assistant Chief Carlson (District 1) to provide input regarding the fire service response in the future and how that might appear. Both will work with the Whatcom County Fire Chief's Association to determine how the group will respond to these types of calls and how the increase (20%) in call volume will be funded.

Money may be available through Whatcom County EMS to fund this project. At this time, the Whatcom County EMS Council has no plan.

Next Meeting: Thursday, December 2, 2021