

**OFFICER'S MEETING**  
**Thursday, March 7, 2019**  
**Station 61 – Blaine**

Attendees: Chiefs Noonchester, Hollander and Van der Veen; Captains Jorgensen, Ahrenholz, Davidson and Ward; Lieutenants Biery, Hoftstad, McPhail, Nelson, Riehl, ASmith and LSmith.

**FIRE CHIEF**

Chief Noonchester welcomed Jason Van der Veen to his first officer meeting as the division chief of operations.

**Regional Fire Authority (RFA) Update**

Chief Noonchester informed the group that the NWFR Board of Fire Commissioners recently sent a formal letter to District 7 and District 4 to open up RFA discussions. At this time District 7 is focusing their efforts into passing a bond in August, however they are open to beginning discussions following the election. In the interim, District 7 suggested that joint training and possible auto aid between the districts be explored.

The NWFR Board will be forming a small informal commissioner committee to learn more about RFAs such as how taxes are collected and feasibility. In the future, if discussions move forward, it is expected that a more formal committee will be formed, possibly consisting of additional Board members from each district as well as members of the labor groups.

The ultimate goal is to benefit the taxpayers of all the districts involved.

**Fire Chief Recruitment Update**

Due to the possibility of a future RFA, the NWFR Board of Fire Commissioners have put the fire chief recruitment process on hold. As the interim, Chief Noonchester continues to meet regularly with the Board Chair to keep him up to date on district business.

**Master Plan Update**

The NWFR Board of Fire Commissioners agreed to update the district master plan during 2019. The study will ultimately be utilized for many data driven decisions. The plan to move forward has been deferred until the districts get further along with RFA discussions.

**Administrative Staff Changes**

Chief Noonchester reviewed the changes to administration at the Britton Loop Station 12 admin office.

- Division Chief of Operations – Jason Van der Veen – 455
- Front Office - Human Resources – Kelly Freeman – 452
- Jennie Sand – back office – 454
- Training – Captain Jorgensen / Marcia Dickinson – Building D - 492 - 491

## **Teladoc**

Chief Noonchester reviewed the new Teladoc program that all members and their dependents will have access to effective April 1, 2019. A recent email was sent out explaining the program. The program can be used for minor illnesses such as colds, ear infections, etc., in lieu of an office visit. There will no cost to the members as the district will be paying the user fees.

## **Interim Fire Chief Goals and Objectives**

As the interim fire chief, Chief Noonchester is in a new position and surrounded by supportive team members. He assured officers that he is committed to doing the right thing for the district and supporting its members. Chief Noonchester invited members to chat with him if any questions arise.

## **OPERATIONS**

Chief Van der Veen thanked everyone for their continued patience. His goal is to support members which will enable them to get out the door with confidence. Chief Van der Veen appreciates everyone's hard work, especially with the recent volume increase.

## **Address Verification**

With the recent auto aid between Bellingham Fire Department (BFD) and NWFR, Chief Van der Veen suggested that members double check addresses on the MDC or in map books, prior to responding to a call. Some addresses sound alike or in the case of the Lake Whatcom Treatment Center, have multiple locations.

## **Rumors re Accident**

Chief Van der Veen reviewed a recent minor accident involving one of the members. Per district policy and the current CBA, the member underwent drug/alcohol testing and was sent home on paid administrative leave. This action was done to protect the member (stress) as well as the district (liability), not because the member was suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The member returned to work before the drug testing results were concluded.

Chief Van der Veen will work with Cpt. Jorgensen to release a white paper regarding accident protocol in the future.

All apparatus have a zipper pouch that contains an insurance card, vehicle registration and accident forms.

All members including tender operators must carry a valid driver's license when driving district apparatus.

Cpt. Jorgensen noted that as each member completes their EVIP refresher training, laminated cards will be issued as required by the state. One of the requirements is to have this card on you at all times. It may also be possible to upload CDL exempt information onto district iPads.

There was further discussion regarding carrying a copy of drivers licenses in apparatus. Cpt. Davidson agreed to check with law enforcement. Administration will be notified regarding his findings and the information will be disseminated.

### **Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Process**

The SCBA committee (Davidson, Biery, Sanders, Veen) has recommended that the district purchase Scott SCBAs. The committee will provide a presentation to the NWFR Board of Fire Commissioners during an upcoming meeting.

Lt. Biery noted that there may be a short time where some stations will have two different SCBA models. During that time, members will also have two styles of masks.

The Delta tenders will be carry two SCBAs on their rigs while tender 63 will receive a full complement.

### **Training with BFD**

Chief Van der Veen encouraged all shifts at Laurel Station 69 and Britton Loop Station 12 to reach out to Engine 6 and Engine 4 for a meet and greet. Meetings can also be used for developing relationships, walk throughs at various target hazards and other training issues. The onus is on the company officers to begin the process, with the goal of making operations smoother for everyone involved.

It was noted that the BFD ladder does not carry large diameter hose (LDH) nor do they possess pumping capabilities.

Chief Van der Veen noted that even though the automatic aid has been discussed and planned in depth prior, some things were not anticipated. Chief Van der Veen continues to work on acquiring BFD Knox keys and additional map books.

Cpt. Jorgensen anticipates more formalized MCO drills with BFD in the future however, for the time being, Chief Noonchester suggested contacting engine companies on a local level to discuss station specific matters. It was also noted that BFD cannot take their apparatus out of their response area.

Lt. Hofstad noted that he recently reached out to his counterpart at BFD, who had no idea regarding scheduling meetings between the shifts. The BFD officer noted that the direction must come from their administration.

### **Dispatch – Auto Aid – Run Cards**

Chief Van der Veen noted that he had recently met with Prospect with regards to run cards and block files. He noted that changes will be coming in the near future. Another meeting is scheduled for the week of March 11. One of the modifications may take some of the load off of Britton Loop Station 12. Chief Van der Veen asked for patience while he works on this complex issue.

## **Vacation Payouts / Overpayment**

Chief Van der Veen and Kelly Freeman have met with all but one individual regarding vacation overpayments. Kelly Freeman has done an amazing job of researching historical vacation data. If anyone has questions regarding their vacation days please contact Kelly Freeman directly.

Once the audit is complete, Chief Van der Veen and Kelly have agreed to meet with anyone wanting to discuss how vacation hours were calculated. The district intends to be completely transparent with the process.

## **Tender Group**

It was suggested that the tender group be requested earlier rather than later.

Chief Noonchester has offered the use of the tender group to both Ferndale and Everson. Chief Van der Veen will also broach the subject at an upcoming County Operations meeting.

Dale Rutgers requested that volunteer Mike Peetoom be allowed to pick up and drop off Tender 63 to be utilized during Monday night trainings at Delta Station 69.

## **SPECIAL SERVICES**

### **Image Trend Update**

Chief Hollander noted that the district has been utilizing Image Trend for the past two months with most shifts adapting to the system well. iPads are working and information can be uploaded to the cloud for paramedics to retrieve and download.

Only the captains and above ranks have permissions to enable a call is “ready for billing”. This is a county wide setting that cannot be modified. Once “ready for billing” is activated the call is sent immediately to Systems Design for billing, making it difficult to change call information or correct errors if necessary. Chief Hollander agreed to check on adding a delay and inquire about the timeline, however he warned that the “ready for billing” should not be activated until the captains are sure the call is complete.

It was noted that there are non-sequential calls due to errors and dispatched calls that became non calls. These calls cannot be expunged.

At times there is no Image Trend connectivity, making it difficult to transfer data (in real time) to the iPad tablets. There was additional discussion regarding adding additional data plans to tablets in the future. Chief Hollander noted that any potential options would be a cost to the district, including adding hot spots on officer’s phones. Chief Hollander agreed to investigate and discuss his findings at an upcoming captain’s meeting.

Chief Hollander continues to work on the inspection and occupancy modules. Chief Hollander provided a brief overview of the inspection and occupancy modules. He encouraged members to become familiar with the modules.

Once the new fire marshal is brought on, it is expected that he/she will focus on the system in greater detail.

As of now, new inspections within the City of Blaine will need to be added to Image Trend including contact, building and occupancy information. Pre fire plans can also be added in the near future. Once data is added, crews will be able to access the information through MDCs. Chief Hollander will be available to assist with adding information as needed.

There was discussion regarding the role of the City of Blaine fire marshal in the county. At this time the fire marshal only has jurisdiction within the City of Blaine however, with changes expected in the county, it is unclear what will happen in the future.

Chief Hollander is setting up the fire marshal's office at Odell Station 61.

### **Employee Status Changes**

Chief Noonchester announced that personnel data (address, emergency contact, phone numbers) have been uploaded to Image Trend. Any future personnel changes (marital, birth, address, bank) need to be routed through Kelly. Kelly will disperse the information as necessary.

### **Mobile Phone Alert App**

Currently most members take advantage of PulsePoint. Chief Hollander noted that a new application (IamResponding) paid for by FARS will be released within the next six weeks. Members were encouraged to check out the program that is currently only available for viewing.

“IamResponding.com's patented\* system provides supplemental dispatch notifications directly to your mobile devices and lets you know immediately who is responding to your calls and dispatches, where they are responding, and when they will be responding. This saves critical time, and reduces response times, for fire departments, EMS agencies, SAR and technical rescue teams, and any other incident response teams when responding to emergencies. IamResponding is 100% web-based - there is no software to download or configure.”

Chief Hollander noted that responding members can alert the battalion chief when they are responding (on my way), prior to arriving at the station. This application may be able to take the place of pagers in the future.

Chief Hollander agreed to discuss the program at a future tender group meeting.

### **Septic System Update**

The septic system update at Laurel Station 69 has been approved by the NWFR Board of Fire Commissioners and will be implemented during the second half of the summer.

### **Ambulance Committee**

The ambulance bid was awarded to TriVan. The ambulance has been ordered with an anticipated delivery date sometime in August. It is unclear at this time where the ambulance will be housed.

### **Fire Engine Spec Committee**

A fire engine spec committee will be assembled by both Chief Van der Veen and Cpt. Davidson. Any suggestions or input regarding a new fire engine can be forwarded to either Chief Van der Veen or Cpt. Davidson.

### **CrewSense**

Volunteers receiving a stipend but not participating in that day's shift, should be added under special assignments.

Chief Hollander noted that the total numbers in the shift trade section is not correct. Captains or the operations chief can make a new entry, with an explanation in the note section, to correct any errors.

Three way trades cannot be tracked in CrewSense and interferes with payroll.

Chief Noonchester stated that once the vacation audit is complete, the accrual numbers including vacation and sick leave, will be inputted into CrewSense and able to be reviewed by each member on their smart phone. Step up increases will also be added. Chief Noonchester is beta testing his own data on this program at this time.

### **Callbacks**

It is vital that member contact information (phone numbers and carriers) be correct in Alertsense for callbacks. Chief Hollander plans on having Alertsense send quarterly updates to members in the near future to ensure the information is current.

## **TRAINING**

### **BFD Training**

Cpt. Jorgensen meets regularly with the BFD training department. He offered to coordinate trainings between BFD and NWFR and alert both Britton Loop Station 12 and Laurel Station 69 crews when upcoming BFD pre assignments are held that may be beneficial.

### **Lieutenant Testing**

The lieutenant written test has been completed. Five members will be moving forward in the process. The assessment center will be held on Monday, March 25, 2019.

### **Lateral Firefighter Hiring**

The lateral firefighter announcement will be posted on Monday, March 11, 2019. It is expected that the new hires will complete an in-house academy. More information is expected in the near future. Anyone wanting to assist with the assessment center on April 11 or the 2-3 week academy should contact Cpt. Jorgensen.

### **Volunteers**

Two volunteers will be finishing EMT class while two others are ready to begin pulling shifts in the near future. Cpt. Jorgensen will coordinate their shift work with Chief Van der Veen.

### **Medic New Equipment**

Some but not all the medic units have purchased new bag valve masks (BVMs) equipment. The purchase has yet to be approved by the state. With no agreement between District 7 and BFD, the district has not pursued purchasing the new equipment. Cpt. Jorgensen will keep the district up to date with any new information.

In the future, BLS protocols may include the use of nitrous oxide. Due in part to the cost, the district does not plan to carry nitrous oxide in the near future however, members will still need to know the process to be able to assist when necessary.

### **Teen Screen**

The district will be participating in a Teen Screen at the Blaine High School on Thursday, March 21. During a Teen Screen at the Ferndale School District in 2018, seven students were identified as having possible cardiac issues and were sent for more in-depth testing.

### **Driving Under the Influence (DUI)/ Distracted Driving Drill**

Cpt. Jorgensen continues to work on organizing a DUI / extracted driving drill at the Blaine School District in 2019.

### **Out of Office**

Cpt. Jorgensen will out of the office the week of March 11 – 15. He will be attending a training at the National Fire Academy. He will be available through email.

### **A Shift**

Send all NWRC referral paperwork to Chief Van der Veen.

Cpt. Ahrenholz suggested incorporating Ladder 63 into training on a regular basis.

In addition, he noted his concern regarding changing how the station responds (splits crew) when a probationary firefighter who is not yet allowed to drive, is on shift. Cpt. Ahrenholz suggested thinking about adding driver training earlier in the probationary year. Cpt. Jorgensen noted that he will be requesting input from officers regarding the probationary year and making modifications to improve the program for the future.

### **B Shift**

Cpt. Davidson reiterated that crews would like training on the Birch Bay Station 63 snow plow to alleviate the pressure on maintenance during snow storms.

There was also discussion regarding staffing a roving 4 X 4 truck to assist during bad weather, difficult calls and when other district apparatus get stuck. The truck could contain sand, shovels and chains. More discussion including practicality, criteria and where the truck would be housed is expected.

Cpt. Davidson suggested that an out of service banner be placed on any apparatus driven by the maintenance department to ensure the public knows that the particular apparatus cannot respond to an emergency.

Lt. Riehl suggesting adding a policy enabling crews to tag occupancies within the City of Blaine whose automatic fire alarms (AFAs) are activated but the district cannot make contact with the owner/occupant. The tagging will alert the owner/occupant that the fire district responded to a recent AFA. The information could also be referred to the fire marshal for follow-up. More discussion is expected.

### **C Shift**

Nothing to report.

### **D Shift**

A shift needs to be fit tested.

Chief Noonchester thanked Lt. Biery for his work on the SCBA committee. The recommendations will be presented to the NWFR Board of Fire Commissioners during an upcoming meeting.

Chief Van der Veen asked that crews work with Lt. Biery during flow testing. With a three staff minimum per station, it is more difficult for Lt. Biery's crew to move around the district to pick up and drop off equipment.

Cpt. Ward noted that there are still thermal imaging cameras (TICs) moving around the district for evaluation. Once new TICs are purchased, the old ones will be brought before the NWFR Board of Fire Commissioners for surplus.

A set of elevator keys will be placed on Ladder 63.

Manifolds will be placed at both Birch Bay Station 63 and Delta Station 68.

Cpt. Ward continues to work on purchasing additional LED lighting.

### **GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Lt. LSmith alerted the group that recently a City of Blaine employee brought a sand truck just outside the city limits to assist the crews. Chief Hollander agreed to pass the information along during the next City of Blaine Council meeting.

Dale Rutgers requested information regarding the district's intentions for getting rid of old apparatus currently parked behind Birch Bay Station 63. Chief Van der Veen will investigate which apparatus is no longer of any use to the district.

Next Meeting: Thursday, June 6 (All Officer)