

OFFICER'S MEETING
Thursday, April 13, 2017
Station 61 – Blaine

Attendees: Chief Pernet, Chief Hollander, Chief Noonchester, Training Captain Jorgensen, Captains Johnson and Ward, Lieutenants Ahrenholz, Biery, Esser, McPhail, Nelson, Nielsen, Page, Riehl, ASmith, LSmith, and Zylstra.

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION / POLITICAL UPDATE

Chief Pernet announced that the young autistic man Jake, who has been helping at Blaine Station 61, stopped by with his mother to present certificates to Lieutenant Jon Ahrenholz, his crew and the fire chief. Chief Pernet commended the crews for spending time with members of the community.

Chief Pernet reiterated his appreciation of all those who continue to work hard on behalf of their district as well as their community.

Rumors

Chief Pernet invited officers to bring forth any rumors they may have heard for clarification.

Political Update

Chief Pernet noted that three NWFR and one D#4 fire commissioner positions are up for re-election. The three NWFR fire commissioners will be running for re-election however, D#4 fire commissioner Steve Ness, will not be running.

The Bellingham Fire Department and D#4 continue to work on an auto aid agreement. SWFA have also been participating in discussions. The goal is to have full auto aid between multiple agencies in the future. Chief Pernet will keep everyone apprised of the progress.

An inter-local agreement has been drafted that will reimburse any lost revenue to D#4 along with other districts who also have an EMS levy. The Whatcom County Council will be meeting to approve the agreement on Tuesday, April 18. D#4 will also need to approve the agreement at an upcoming fire commissioner meeting. The agreement will last for the remainder of the D#4 EMS six year levy.

Contract Negotiations

Contract negotiations are ongoing. Both sides have met for mediation and two more mediation sessions have been scheduled in May.

New Hire Process

Chief Pernet announced that two potential candidates off the current hiring list were offered conditional offers however, both accepted positions with the Bellingham Fire Department. A new hiring process is expected to be initiated in June and the district has reserved space in the upcoming State Fire Academy scheduled for August. The district is expected to hire two to three firefighters.

Strategic Planning

Chief Pernet announced that the district will be focusing on moving the strategic planning committees forward. Committees can expect additional conversations with the district regarding their progress.

Washington Survey and Rating (WSRB)

The district continues to await the results of the WSRB.

Joint NWFR and D#4 Fire Commissioner Meeting

Due to scheduling conflicts, the joint NWFR and D#4 Fire Commissioner Meeting has been rescheduled from April 20 to May 18. Both districts are expected to discuss the current inter-local agreement and how they see themselves moving forward.

FACILITIES / MAINTANENCE / LOGISTICS

Washer Extractors / Drying Cabinets

Chief Hollander noted that the district had advertised for a Request for Proposal (RFP) for multiple washer extractors and drying cabinets. Three bids were received and the district will be reviewing them to ensure they meet the criteria prior to submitting a recommendation to the Board for approval.

It is expected that the washers will be preprogrammed with manufacturer instructions for ease of operation.

Upcoming County Fire Chief Retirements

Chief Hollander noted that Fire Chief Baar (LFD) will be retiring the end of April and Fire Chief Russell (FFD) will be retiring the end of June.

Recent Fire Save

Chief Hollander commended staff on a fire that took place in the City of Blaine on Wednesday, April 12 at Justesen Industries. With an estimated two and one half million dollar potential loss, it was a great save with everyone working together well.

System Design Alarm System

Chief Hollander noted that burglar alarm systems remain in place at Delta Station 68 and Haynie Station 65. Chief Hollander has updated the emergency contact numbers so when a burglar alarm is activated, the captains will be notified first, then if necessary, Chief Hollander, Chief Noonchester and Chief Pernet.

Versaterm Update

After twenty eight years with the same system, the new Versaterm system has a “go live” date of April 18. Over the past few months the system has gone through exhaustive testing. The system consists of four components including an MDT for mobile apparatus, a remote CAD for admin work stations, a CAD monitor on station computers, and mobile apps for cell phones (information only). The PowerPoint training has been placed on the district website under

training for review. It is expected that the crossing staffing option will be utilized in the near future. Once Versaterm is up and running the district plans to meet with Prospect to discuss response changes including not toning out unmanned volunteer stations.

Upcoming Planning Projects

Chief Hollander reviewed the numerous building projects anticipated around the district.

District Pagers

There was discussion regarding the continual issues with district pagers and station tones. Lieutenant McPhail agreed to submit an email to Chief Hollander regarding the issues at Laurel Station 69. Chief Hollander continues to investigate any pager complaints.

Laurel Station 69 Generator

Chief Hollander is beginning the process of acquiring a new generator for Laurel Station 69.

Blaine Station 61 Dryer

Blaine Station 61 has acquired a new dryer.

Emergency Station Phones

New emergency phones are being installed outside all NWFR stations as suggested by the WSRB. The phones automatically dial 9-1-1 and dispatch will be aware of the caller's location. The phone at Birch Bay Station 63 has already been utilized by a community member for an emergency. The project is expected to be completed in May.

Pager / House Tones

Chiefs Noonchester and Hollander continue to troubleshoot the pager and house tone issues at both Blaine Station 61 and Birch Bay Station 63. Northwest Communications and Prospect are assisting with the investigation. Test pagers will be handed out to the officers who will be expected to log calls at those stations for the next two weeks. A second set of pagers will be handed out at a later date and calls will be logged to determine tower strength.

If applicable, new antennas may be placed on stations to alleviate at least some of the issues.

Brush 68

The LFD routinely borrows Brush 68. There was discussion regarding permanently moving Brush 68 to Britton Loop Station 12 since it mirrors the other district brush trucks. Brush 12 could then be relocated to Delta Station 68 where LFD could still borrow the apparatus as needed. Chief Noonchester will explore any ramifications of the request.

SAFETY

Apparatus Operations – (units not used as frequently)

Chief Noonchester noted that all apparatus needs to be checked on a regular basis regardless of how often they are utilized. In addition, crews are expected to stay proficient and train with all apparatus.

Gear Laundering

A policy is in development which will provide information on the proper care and maintenance of gear including decontamination safety. Following the process will ultimately keep members safe and healthy.

Gross Decontamination

Chief Noonchester provided a handout of firefighter skin absorption facts. A video was also shown that discussed how to decrease contamination risks:

- Limit exposure to diesel exhaust
- Wear full PPE and SCBAs during fires at ALL times
- Overhaul in SCBAs
- Use proper decon methods
- Rehydrate and enter rehab after fires
- Bag PPE after fires
- Clean/decontaminate gear including helmets and gloves properly

Additional information can be found at www.wscff.org

There was additional discussion regarding having access to another set of gear when the initial set is being cleaned and taking showers as soon as possible after returning to the station. The installation of washer / extractors and drying cabinets at career stations will alleviate the additional time it takes to launder and dry gear. Chief Noonchester will continue to work on solutions.

It will be up to the D#4 fire commissioners to approve the purchase of a washer / extractor at Britton Loop Station 12.

Portable Radio Usage (on scene)

It is expected that working portable radios will be accessible at all fire and emergency medical calls.

There was discussion regarding switching radio frequencies from Fire 2 and 5 to Fire 3 on the fire ground for better communication and clarity.

Injury Reporting

All injuries need to be reported through the chain of command within twenty-four hours.

- Firefighter to lieutenant
- Lieutenant to captain
- Captain to Chiefs
- Chiefs will contact the Health and Wellness Coordinator

OPERATIONS

Post Incident Analysis (PIA) – After Action Reports (Geodesic house fire)

Chief Noonchester noted the valuable information gathered during the recent post incident analysis's (PIA) following the Geodesic house fire. The after action plan was shared district wide via email.

Best Practices Station Representatives

Chief Noonchester announced that a committee, including station representatives, has been formed to review the draft best practices document. Station representatives include Captain Davidson (63), Lieutenant Riehl (69), Lieutenant Stefen Paige (12) and Lieutenant Ahrenhoz (61). The group plans to meet the end of April to begin reviewing the document.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Policies

Chief Noonchester, Captain Davidson, Lieutenant Nelson, Firefighter Ross and Firefighter Cunningham are working on finalizing a PPE policy. Directives will also be introduced for additional direction, and can be adjusted in the future as needed.

Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)

With SCBAs nearing their life-span (D#4 – 2018), the district plans to submit for an SCBA grant in 2017. The cost to replace SCBAs is substantial.

Mock DUI Drill

Lieutenant McPhail reported on a mock DUI drill held at Blaine High School on Wednesday, April 12. Approximately 600 students were in attendance. The event is usually held on a four year time line. Lieutenant McPhail commended Lieutenant Leslee Smith on her "mouflage". It was further noted that the school proved to be difficult to work with and in the future it may resonate better with students to provide a distracted driver scenario. The district also provides mock DUIs to Meridian High School on a similar timeline.

Pictures for the event have been placed on the server.

Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) Response

Chief Noonchester reiterated that all AFAs are treated as a fire until proven otherwise. That is to say that all AFAs are investigated, regardless of whether the incident is code greened by the alarm company.

Whatcom County Technical Rescue Capabilities

Chief Noonchester reviewed the Whatcom County Technical Rescue capabilities which include, swift water, high angle and confined space rescue. The all-volunteer group has approximately a 45-60 minutes response time to our area. The group is part of the Whatcom County Sherriff's Department and can be requested through Dispatch.

In addition, the Border Patrol also has a Special Operations Team that can assist with high angle rescue, scuba recovery, ground search and rescue, tracking, trailing and human remains canine

tracking and swift water rescue. A small team of 10 - 12 can be deployed and arrive within 1 - 1 1/2 hours.

Captain Jorgensen noted that he will work on providing training to allow members to provide assistance during those critical moments until those special teams arrive.

Cross Border Group

Chief Noonchester provided information regarding a relatively newly formed group, consisting of law enforcement and emergency responders from both sides of the border who meet quarterly to build relationships and share resources.

Currently there is an agreement in place at the Point Roberts border allowing emergency responders to cross borders as needed with minimal delay. A “go bag” has been placed at the border to allow either fire department to assist one another during a structure fire.

Chief Noonchester presented a “go bag” which consisted of a portable radio, charger, map books, hydrant adaptor, emergency contacts and radio frequencies. A “go bag” is expected be placed at the Blaine border and the Blaine Station 61 crews will be responsible for routinely checking the “go bag”. Bags will also be placed at both the Lynden and Sumas borders in the future. Chief Noonchester will keep the group apprised of any developments.

In addition, it is expected that a “meet and greet” will take place in the near future between the various fire agencies on both sides of the border.

Collateral Duties Review

The group agreed to review and update the current collateral duties list. It was noted that some members have labor intensive duties while others have no assignments.

There was discussion regarding having volunteers take responsibility for some of the volunteer station upkeep. Another suggestion was to have those agencies who utilize volunteer stations on a regular basis (K-9, sheriffs, etc.) to follow the facility rental cleanup checklist to minimize some of the disarray. Any ideas or suggestions can be forwarded to Chief Noonchester for further discussion at upcoming meetings.

Succession Planning

There was a discussion about the history of the district and how officers are preparing themselves and other members to advance following retirements and other movement within the district.

Officers are able to provide education, experiences and mentorship to those who aspire to advance. Evaluations also play an important role in guiding members. Captains are now able to move between stations, checking in with lieutenants in person, offering additional mentoring.

There was discussion if the district would use the Washington State Firefighters apprenticeship program as a standard in the future. It is expected that the district will adopt standards after additional programs have been investigated.

NEW TOOLS IN TOOL BOX

Plug n Dike / Chemical Pads - Captain Ward presented a hazmat bag that will be utilized on apparatus to contain spills. The bag will be put into service after all members have completed the required training.

Hot-Sticks – The hot-sticks have been removed from Engine 63 and will not be utilized.

Hydrant Bag – Captain Ward presented a hydrant bag prototype by Contera that can be utilized on the hose bed. The bag contains hydrant tools and fittings. A second prototype will be reviewed by training before a decision about the district's use will be made.

Rescue Pump – There was discussion about the rescue pump. It was agreed that the pump is very labor intensive.

Sort, Assess, Lifesaving, Interventions, Treatment (SALT) Triage – Upcoming training has been scheduled for April 24- 27.

New Driver / Operators – All five probationary firefighters have completed the driver operator training. They were provided a lot of information and will need additional practice to become comfortable with their skills and abilities. Officers requested copies of their training to know what the training consisted of and what they can expect from the new driver operators. The new driver operators have additional skill sheets that will need to be signed off by their officers.

TRAINING

Kinder Morgen Training

Chief Hollander along with C and B Shift from Britton Loop Station 12 and Laurel Station 69 recently attended a pipeline training. There was discussion regarding additional training in the future.

Probationary Firefighter Evaluations

The probationary firefighter evaluations will be concluded in April.

BLS Evaluators

There was discussion regarding whether the district requires all district BLS evaluators to get recertified. The Training division noted that evaluators are not required to take part in the upcoming May class even though their evaluator status may expire. The district is hopeful they can offer BLS evaluator classes in the future.

In the past, BLS evaluators were required to take the annual updates and the district paid overtime to those who attended. The district is investigating alternatives for both prioritizing training for those whose certification is expiring as well as funding.

Officer Development

Captain Jorgensen is posting training opportunities on the district's Extranet under training. It is anticipated that officer development opportunities will be broached during these monthly meetings.

Officer Development Scenario Training

An officer development training will take place on Thursday, April 27 at 10:00 a.m. at the Lynden Annex.

Multi Company Officer Training (MCO)

Additional MCO training with other agencies is expected in the future.

Monthly Hours Report

Captain Jorgensen noted that the officers are doing a good job of documenting training. Fitness training will be relocated to another area in FireHouse in the near future.

Second Quarterlies

Captain Jorgensen noted that there were additional classes added to the second quarterlies.

Tender 61 / 63 Training

Blaine Station 61 and Birch Bay Station 63 continue to take part in tender training.

Training Calendar

The training calendar is being posted on the extranet under training. Captain Jorgensen will continue to input training information / opportunities on the district website.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

After some investigation, Lieutenant Nelson reported that he found fitted earplugs available for approximately \$150 per pair. The price will drop the more pairs are ordered. It was not known if insurance will cover the cost. Chief Noonchester will discuss material with Lieutenant Nelson.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 4