

OFFICER'S MEETING
Thursday, May 4, 2017
Station 61 – Blaine

Attendees: Chief Pernet, Chief Hollander, Chief Noonchester, Training Captain Jorgensen, Captains Davidson, Johnson, Schmidt and Ward, Lieutenants Ahrenholz, Biery, Esser, Nelson, Nielsen, Paige, Riehl, ASmith, LSmith, and Van der Veen.

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION / POLITICAL UPDATE

EMS Levy Inter-Local Agreement

Chief Pernet announced that the proposed inter-local agreement that will reimburse any lost EMS levy revenue to D#4 has been approved by both the Whatcom County Council and D#4 Fire Commissioners. The agreement will last for the remainder of the six year county wide EMS levy. D#4 has received their first payment.

Joint Fire Commissioner Meeting

The joint D#4 and NWFR Fire Commissioner Meeting was rescheduled for Thursday, May 18, 2017. Both Boards will discuss the inter-local contract for services agreement and the direction they want to go moving forward.

Area Chief Retirements

Lynden Fire Chief Baar retired on April 28, 2017. Robert Spinner has been promoted to the position of fire chief.

D#7 Fire Chief Russell will retire in June, 2017. Larry Hoffman will be promoted to fire chief, Dean Crosswhite to assistant chief and Justin Iverson to training chief.

Northwood Land Purchase

A small strip of the Northwood Station 72 land has been purchased by the neighboring Northwood Market for parking. The decision was made by the NWFR Board following an in-depth exploration regarding financial and operational impacts to the district. The Northwood store will install curbing to clearly mark their parking lot.

Firefighter Vacancies

The district is moving forward with a process to fill three firefighter vacancies by July 1, 2017. The district plans to utilize a testing company to conduct the written test and CPAT. It is anticipated that any newly hired firefighters will take part in the state academy in August.

Future Volunteer Program Changes

The district is in the process of making additional changes to the current volunteer program. Integrating volunteers into specific shifts to allow for more in-depth training and better retention has proved successful. In the future, the district would like to bolster the volunteer program and build a resident / sleeper program at Semiahmoo Station 62. The district may also partner with the Lynden Fire Department to develop joint volunteer staffing at Northwood Station 72. At the present time, concepts remain in the planning stages.

Chiefs met with the tender operators on Monday, May 1, 2017 at Delta Station 68. There is a concern that tender operators are not receiving all pertinent district information. Two of the volunteer officers (Rutgers and King) have been invited to attend the monthly officer meetings and copies of the meeting notes will be provided.

Healthcare and Budget Planning 2018

The Board will be participating in upcoming budget study sessions to assist with the 2018 budget. Chief Pernet also plans to gather various healthcare quotes early prior to making any 2018 healthcare cost decisions.

Strategic Planning

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

AFG Grant

The district has applied for an AFG grant to upgrade apparatus computer monitors. Awards are slowly being announced and the district remains hopeful that they will receive a grant. Regardless, the district will begin to replace monitors as necessary.

Washer Extractors and Drying Cabinets

Chiefs Pernet and Hollander provided an update on the approved purchase of washer extractors and drying cabinets. One bid was approved during the April NWFR Board meeting. It is expected that the merchandise will be delivered in five to six weeks. In the interim, installation modifications will be completed and once installed, training will focus on the washers. The entire project is expected to be completed in eight weeks.

SAFETY

Labor and Industries (L&I) Injury Claims

Chief Pernet noted that the 2017 district L&I claims have surpassed the 2016 claims by as much as fifty percent. Chief Pernet stressed for officers to practice safety awareness and ensure that crews are utilizing hearing and eye protections diligently.

Scene Safety – Motor Vehicle Accident (MVA)

Chief Noonchester reiterated that there are various scenarios and dynamics that could transpire during a MVA. Officers need to continually look out for crews as well as bystanders. It is not uncommon for secondary accidents to take place due to distractions caused by the first incident.

FACILITIES / MAINTANENCE / LOGISTICS

Versaterm Update

The new Versaterm system has been installed. Although the software switch was seamless, other programming issues continue to be explored. Chief Hollander asked members to be patient and flexible as issues are broached.

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 cross staffing function can be utilized but a call must be made to Prospect regarding which station / apparatus is cross staffed. It was unclear how often Prospect needs to be notified.

Members can only be logged on to one apparatus.

Another concern is discerning who is being dispatched and who is responding to a call. Chief Pernet noted that by choosing all on the status button, it may alleviate the issue.

Although the PowerPoint training has been placed on the district website under training for review, there was a request for additional follow up training.

Narrow Banding Issues

Missing tones have been attributed to the narrow banding switch. Currently Odell Station 61 and Birch Bay Station 63 are utilizing the Sumas repeater in lieu of the H St. repeater. With the weaker signal, any disruption can interrupt the radio frequency. The issue is being addressed.

Radio issues on the fire ground can be improved by requesting a switch to a simplex channel (VFire 3). Dispatch will verify that all those involved in the call have made the switch.

Long term, the County is considering switching radio frequencies to Simulcasting. At this time there is no funding for the expensive venture.

Lost Tortoise

Be on the lookout for a lost tortoise last seen on Henley Rd. in Birch Bay.

Ladder 61 (AP401)

Repairs to L61 have been completed. UL testing, required every five years, has uncovered minor issues that need to be addressed. It is estimated that L61 will be repaired and put back into service in one to two weeks.

Emergency Station Phones

Emergency phones continue to be installed outside all NWFR stations as suggested by the Washington Surveying and Rating Bureau (WSRB). The phones automatically dial 9-1-1 and dispatch will be aware of the caller's location. The project is expected to be completed sometime in May.

Natural Gas Issues

Recently there have been complaints regarding natural gas or sewer odors at various stations. After some investigation, it was discovered that the smells were caused by dry traps. Chief Hollander encouraged crews to turn on faucets and flush toilets regularly at volunteer stations which should eliminate the problem.

Haynie Station 65 Abandoned Vehicle

The abandoned car at Haynie Station 65 has been towed.

Maberry Annual Walk Thru and Emergency Response Binders

The chiefs and crews recently participated in the annual walk-thru of the Maberry Packing plant. Emergency Response Plan binders have been created and will be located in all career engines, Delta Station 68 and the Lynden Fire Department. A pdf version will be uploaded into Versaterm under pre-fire plans in the future.

Emergency Sirens

Emergency sirens have been placed in Blaine and Birch Bay. The sirens will be tested on the first Monday of each month at noon.

Firehouse Update

Currently there is an issue with Versaterm transferring incident information into Firehouse. Firehouse is not allowing Versaterm to update incident information after the initial upload. As a result, crews are required to enter most of the incident's critical information, including response times into Firehouse manually. It is crucial that accurate response times (minutes / seconds) are inputted so the district's response time data remains accurate. Chiefs are hopeful that a solution will be discovered in the near future.

Chief Hollander will provide step by step instructions including screen shots, on how to add accurate response times (minutes / seconds).

OPERATIONS

Reserve Units

New RFLs have been submitted to Prospect so unmanned volunteer apparatus will no longer be toned. Unmanned apparatus have been put on reserve status. Officers can call Prospect to request additional units if none are dispatched but required.

Best Practices

A committee consisting of Chief Noonchester, Captain Davidson, Lieutenant Riehl, Lieutenant Paige and Lieutenant Ahrenholz have met to begin the process of reviewing the draft best practices document. It is expected that the group will continue work on the document through the end of the year.

Move-Ups

It is expected that captains will have discussions with their lieutenants regarding the process of move-ups to cover other areas of the district as needed. It is important that lieutenants at each station are aware of what is happening in other areas of the district to stay abreast of when they may need to relocate apparatus and crews.

Collateral Duties

Chief Noonchester will email a copy of the updated collateral duties list in the near future. The list will incorporate the five newest firefighters. Some duties have been changed to correspond with station changes.

Shift Assignments

After meeting with officers and crews, Chief Noonchester sent out an updated shift assignment list. Those affected members are in the process of relocating.

New Firefighter Probation

The five new firefighters have successfully completed their one year probation. Congratulations Jeff Haley, David Hancock, Zach Scott, Haley Urling-Ehinger and Levi Wigg.

Member Career Paths

Chief Noonchester announced that any members wanting to explore next steps for career advancement, are encouraged to contact the training division or chiefs.

Station Responsibilities

Following a recent meeting, volunteers at Delta Station 68 and Haynie Station 65 have agreed to take over the task of mowing lawns at their respective stations. Chief Hollander will ensure they have the proper equipment and monitor their progress. Career crews will continue with their other outlying station duties.

Summer Months Approaching

With summer months approaching, it is imperative that crews move forward with urban interface and wildland training. Crews need to spend time with brush rig familiarization and to ensure they have the appropriate gear. Chief Noonchester reiterated that it is important to keep hydrated in the warmer weather.

Brush 68 (AP805)

Last month 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 Lynden Fire Department could still borrow the apparatus when needed. No decision has been made at this time.

Scheduling Effort

Chief Noonchester thanked the captains for their continual efforts to manage the daily schedule, staying within the district's staffing plan.

There was a discussion regarding whether captains can pre-schedule known overtime due to vacations and extended sick leave to allow for enhanced scheduling. Although the district remains in charge of overtime scheduling, captains will be allowed to pre-schedule overtime when beneficial.

NEW TOOLS IN TOOL BOX

Hazmat Kit – Hazmat response bags have been placed in all career engines.

Sort, Assess, Lifesaving Interventions, Treatment / Transport (SALT) TRIAGE – Training has been completed thanks in part to Lieutenant Adam Smith. It is anticipated that two kits will be placed behind the backboard in each aid unit on Saturday, May 6, 2017. Tags still need to be ordered to remain consistent with all agencies.

New Driver / Operators – Officers need to ensure the new drivers are consistently practicing their newly acquired pump and driving skills. The new driver operators have additional skill sheets available on the extranet that will need to be signed off by their officers.

Lieutenant Leslee Smith offered to share a west side road course that officers can use with first year firefighters for road and area familiarization. Driving logs available on the server, will document mileage and driving time. Captain Jorgensen noted that driving time information should also be documented in the note section of Firehouse.

TRAINING

Laurel Station 69 & Britton Loop 12 Station Swap

Crews at Laurel Station 69 and Britton Loop Station 12 will be swapping stations on a monthly basis to allow Station 69 additional training ground use. An email detailing the schedule was recently sent out.

End of Month Training Hours

Fitness hours have been relocated causing a noticeable dip in the current training hours. The hours are expected to even out during the next couple of months.

Rescue Pump Knee Pads

Knee pads (2 sets) are to be used for elevation as needed when utilizing the rescue pump. At this time only one set of knee pads have been added to apparatus. Training will send out an email discussing the knee pad justification.

There was additional discussion regarding issues with the rescue pump including not leaving the pump connected to the BVM (*battery can go dead*) and using 10's before the 16's. Please forward any concerns or issues to Captain Jorgensen.

ER Procedure Update

The hospital has requested the following information be included when transferring patients:

- When admitting a trauma or potential trauma patient to rooms 1-4, utilize the white board and include the time of injury, lowest blood pressure and the officer contact information prior to releasing patient care.
- When arriving with a stroke patient, announce in an audible voice to all “code strike arrival”.

- During motor vehicle accidents, take pictures of vehicle and patient location with the officer cell phone. *(does not interfere with district policy)*

There was additional discussion regarding the difference between trauma code criteria between the hospital and the district. Captain Jorgensen will investigate.

Quarterly Spreadsheet

Captain Jorgensen provided officers with the updated quarterly spreadsheet.

Training Calendar

An updated training calendar will be circulated in the near future. Trainings will be added to the Google calendar and reminder emails sent out.

Monthly First Due Building Scenarios

Building scenario trainings will be more consistent in the future.

Hazmat Decon Training

Expect additional hazmat decon training in the near future.

Officer Development Training

Captain Davidson provided safety protocol information and materials to promote in-depth safety conversations between crews.

SHIFTS

A Shift – Captain Johnson noted that 2017 hose, ladder, nozzle & appliance testing information will be provided in the near future. The district has procured their own ladder testing equipment, allowing for more flexibility. A Shift continues work on improving documentation, eliminating hard copies and lowering the impact on other areas of the district by working around PFAs and coordinating with both the shop and training division. Any suggestions for additional improvement can be forwarded to A Shift. Chief Hollander noted that all documentation must be entered into Firehouse in a timely manner for auditing purposes.

B Shift – Bunker gear will be relocated from Britton Loop Station 12 to Birch Bay Station 63, upstairs in the mezzanine where outdated public education material is currently stored. Relevant public education materials will be sent to Odell Station 61.

C Shift – Nothing to report.

D Shift – Engine 12 (AP517) has been realigned to closely match all Crimson engines.

A notice will be sent out including pictures to show where extrication equipment will be bolted in the future.

There is a change with the nozzles in the current hotel packs. Captain Ward recommended that a chief's low flow nozzle be utilized in lieu of the current nozzle.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

The Bellingham fire Department is moving around apparatus. Chief Noonchester will send out an email highlighting the changes.

Next Meeting: Thursday, June 1