

OFFICER'S MEETING
Thursday, August 3, 2017
Station 61 – Blaine

Attendees: Chief Pernet, Chief Noonchester, Training Captain Jorgensen, Captains Davidson, Johnson and Ward, Lieutenants Ahrenholz, Biery, Esser, McPhail, Paige, LSmith and Zylstra, Volunteer Support Rutgers.

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Career Recruit Firefighters

The new career recruit firefighters (Zackary Balonick, Steven Latham, Sean Roberts) provided brief introductions. The new FTEs will spend a couple days with Captain Jorgensen prior to the start of the North Bend Academy scheduled for Thursday, August 10. Captain Jorgensen will keep everyone up to date with their progress.

Lynden Fire Department

Chief Pernet extended his appreciation to the officers and crews for their assistance during Chief Spinner's passing including, covering Lynden Fire Department's shifts, as well as their involvement in the processional and memorial ceremony. Chief Pernet noted that Chief Spinner was a good friend and he will be missed. In addition, Chief Pernet advised officers to watch over those crew members who responded to the initial call in case additional support is required.

Chief Pernet's Upcoming Absence

The chiefs will continue to remain in close contact regarding district business as Chief Pernet anticipates additional absences. A leave plan shuffling responsibilities has been created and will be shared if/when the need arises. Chief Pernet has no doubt that the district will continue to run smoothly.

Rumors

Lieutenant McPhail questioned whether Britton Loop Station 12 is going to be staffed with a permanent crew of three in the near future. Chief Pernet stated that the City of Bellingham, NWFR as a representative of District #4, along with Labor, continue to meet to discuss a future automatic aid agreement which may include staffing adjustments.

Chief Pernet noted that like all North Whatcom Fire and Rescue employees, he also pays for his family's medical insurance.

FIRE CHIEF

Annexation Update

The district continues to meet with the City of Bellingham to develop a draft inter-local agreement regarding District #4's current and future annexations.

Battalion 76 (B76)

B76 continues to share duty rotations between NWFR chief officers. Although they are not typically toned out for every call, they do monitor calls and can always be added 24/7 if the officer deems appropriate.

Manure Digester

There was discussion regarding a recent appliance fire call that was not dispatched appropriately. It should have been a full apparatus response in lieu of a single engine.

Concerned citizens continue to mistake the plume from the manure digester located at Bob Hall and Loomis Trail Rd as a structure fire. Lieutenant VanderVeen suggested that a joint press release may alleviate some concern and educate citizens regarding the digester. The suggestion will be taken under advisement.

Lynden Fire Department

The district will continue to assist the Lynden Fire Department as needed as they continue to move forward following the loss of Chief Spinner. Chief Baar has agreed to come out of retirement until a new chief is hired. Chief Baar will not be responding outside the City of Lynden but will assist with department operations. The district and the Lynden Fire Department will continue to work under their current response agreement.

The Lynden City Manager has expressed his gratitude to the district for all the assistance during the recent tragedy.

Contract Negotiations

The district is in the process of rescheduling a mediation session with Local 106 NW and the state mediator.

Capital Items 2018

Finance will be sending out capital request forms in the near future. The requests must be submitted to Chief Pernet by September 1.

Budget 2018

The group discussed the typical budget timeline which begins in August with brainstorming and goal setting. In September, meetings and budget study sessions ensue while revenues can only be estimated. A final budget session will be held in November with the final approval by the Fire Commissioners anticipated for the third week in December. The County's numbers aren't published until January. Chief Pernet stated that he budgets conservatively and likes to have monies in reserve to be utilized if the economy has a downward trend.

Captain Ward questioned if there was a plan to begin replacing older aid units, tenders and engines. Chief Pernet noted that Chief Hollander continues to work an updated apparatus replacement/refurbishing plan.

Tender 68 (AP204)

Dale Rutgers noted that the backup camera in Tender 68 has been installed and is working well. The tender has yet to be updated with a new GPS unit.

Upcoming Fire Commissioner Elections

Three of the five NWFR Fire Commissioners will be running for re-election. All but one position is running unopposed.

SAFETY

Hearing Conservation

Chief Noonchester noted that the hearing conservation policy was approved during the recent NWFR Fire Commissioner Meeting. "Light duty" Lieutenant ASmith has ensured that each station has received the proper signage and ear plugs as governed by OSHA.

Chief Noonchester urged company officers to ensure that firefighters wear the proper hearing protection as needed, adhering to the recently approved policy.

Dale Rutgers questioned if the district has any plans to compensate either career or volunteers who have experienced hearing loss most likely due to firefighting hazards. Chief Pernet noted that any member who believes they have a work related injury are encouraged to seek medical attention. Career firefighters do have their hearing monitored from the start of their career which can support future L&I claims. It is anticipated that volunteers will have more in-depth physicals in the future that will also monitor hearing loss. More investigation is needed to determine what if any compensation or eligibilities are provided to long time volunteers who believe they have suffered hearing loss due to volunteering for the district.

Lieutenant Paige requested headsets for Tender 12 (AP207) for noise reduction.

Safety Data Sheets (SDS) Update

"Light duty" Firefighter Ball and Lieutenant ASmith have been working on updating the current safety data sheets. Currently there are 127 potentially hazardous products utilized district wide. The updated data base is available on the district server at S:\SDS. Training will be forthcoming.

Upcoming procedures will ensure SDS are updated anytime the districts introduces a new product. Any unmarked products will need to be labeled correctly.

Chief Hollander will need to be contacted regarding any unused/outdated contaminates located at the stations after they have been confirmed as unusable by either Firefighter Ball or Lieutenant ASmith. A standard inventory list regarding what is stocked at each station will be assembled.

Activities in the Heat

Chief Noonchester advised officers to keep an eye on their crews as well as patients for exposure and heat exhaustion during these warm months.

Birch Bay Station 63 Bunk Concerns

Captain Johnson is working with Chief Noonchester on future modifications to eliminate the issue of short bunks for taller firefighters. Chief Noonchester noted that he will be getting input from all the captains.

LOGISTICS

Crewsense

Crewsense is up and running. All pertinent district information can be added to the activity / notes section on a daily basis, eliminating the need for the Daily Operations Plan. It was noted that Google calendar works well with Crewsense.

All light duty personnel will be scheduled and entered into Crewsense, and Fire Manager by Chief Noonchester. In addition, Chief Noonchester and the Health and Wellness Coordinator will complete all light duty timesheets.

Only direct supervisors should be approving leave requests. If officers receive time off requests from individuals they do not supervise please contact Chief Noonchester.

It was noted that some volunteers either do not know how to request shifts using Crewsense or are not aware of the switch from Fire Manager. Some volunteers may not have updated their email address following a change which could explain why they never received the pertinent information.

In addition, the City of Bellingham, District #7 and NWFR have made the decision to switch to Image Trend software in the near future. The remaining fire districts have all agreed to follow suit. The Operations committee continue to meet to draft an inter-local agreement regarding the use of Image Trend.

The ultimate goal is to have all programs work seamlessly with other systems including Crewsense, Versaterm, scheduling, electronic patient care reporting, RMS and payroll.

Dispatch / Radio Issues

There continues to be transitional issues with the switch to Versaterm. Additional work is ongoing regarding NWFR mapping, block files and station orders. Chief Noonchester requested patience and to notify him with any concerns. Chief Pernet will continue to report the issues to the County.

There was discussion regarding the reoccurring communication issues with dispatch and district radios. Radio issues are still intermittent at most stations including Delta Station 68 and analysis is ongoing. Long term, the County is working toward simulcasting all frequencies in the future. At this time there is no funding for the expensive venture.

Lieutenant LSmith agreed to send out an email to officers notifying them of the Plectron breaker issues at Odell Station 61.

LCD Screens

There was discussion regarding replacing the leaking LCD screens on apparatus. While the district continues to wait on word from their AFG grant submission, broken MDCs will be replaced as needed. If the grant is not approved, the district will look for a financially fiscal way to eventually replace all MDCs.

OPERATIONS

Scheduling – Vacation-Debit Days Chief Noonchester encouraged everyone to think about upcoming vacation picks for 2018. Chief Noonchester will assign all debit days as per the current contract. Vacation for debit days can be utilized after the debit days have been assigned and approved by Chief Noonchester.

Working Out of Class Lieutenant (WOCL) at Birch Bay Station 63

Working Out of Class Lieutenants will not be able to work as officers at Birch Bay Station 63.

Preventative Maintenance on Front Line Apparatus

The group discussed allowing Laurel Station 69 to utilize Engine 63 (AP512) in lieu of Engine 13 (AP511) when their engine is receiving maintenance. A concern was raised regarding Birch Bay Station 63's ability to respond to structure fires with L63 (AP402) in some areas. It was noted that Engine 13 (AP511) has been back fitted to better resemble the other engines. It was decided that short term (hours/day), Engine 63 (AP512) could be utilized, however long term, Laurel Station 69 will continue to utilize Engine 13 (AP511).

Ladder / Hose / Nozzle and Appliance / Pump Testing

Testing is going well. Chief Noonchester commended the crews for their hard work and flexibility during the recent testing. Crews are dealing with issues as they arise including labeling hose and stamping appliances. An inventory list has been created on Google Docs. There will be no testing the week of the fair and completion is expected by September 7.

Northwest Washington Fair Demo Derby Participation

Historically, the district has assisted with coverage for the Demo Derby free of charge. Last year the organization made a donation to the district for their assistance. This year the Fair has subcontracted with an outside agency to oversee the Demo Derby. It was noted that they do wish our participation however, the district has not yet been contacted. Chiefs Pernet and Noonchester will update everyone once they have been provided additional information. The Demo Derby is scheduled for Monday, August 14.

Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) Policy and Directives

All the washers/extractors and dryers have been installed at career stations. The electronic soap feed remains in progress. The district continues to work on a Health and Safety initiatives which will include a personal protective policy that will address gross decontamination. Training will ensue in the near future.

Crews will continue to utilize the regular washer and dyers for house laundry.

AFG Fema Grants, Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)

Chief Pernet noted that the district plans to apply for an AFG grant in the near future to replace the SCBAs that are nearing their shelf life. Further committee discussion is expected.

NEW TOOLS IN TOOL BOX

Rescue Tools – Captain Ward noted that each station has been provided containers of mixed fuel and separate additive containers for small tools and equipment. An error on the procedure has been rectified and resent. Containers will also be deposited at Delta Station 68.

Dale Rutgers noted that the Delta Station 68 gas card is not working. Chief Noonchester will investigate.

Holmatro Extrication Tools – Captain Ward noted that the next set of Holmatro rescue tools has been placed on Engine 61 (AP513). There is a slight difference in the cutter tool.

TRAINING

Training Prop Repairs

Captain Jorgensen commended Firefighter Comp for taking the lead in rebuilding the vent prop.

A Denver prop at Odell Station 61 needs to be relocated. The prop cannot be stored outside in the elements. It may be possible to store it at Birch Bay Station 63 dependent and whether it can be housed inside.

Odell Station 61 may obtain a prop in the future.

PulsePoint

PulsePoint is a pre-arrival smartphone app designed to support public safety agencies working to improve cardiac arrest survival rates through improved bystander performance and active citizenship. Captain Jorgensen noted that PulsePoint is experiencing issues with making alerts in commercial structures. It is anticipated that it will be repaired in the near future.

Whatcom County Recruit Academy (WCRA) Update

The WCRA will begin the last week of August. It is anticipated that there will be thirty-five to forty participants with up to five NWFR volunteer recruits. Firefighter Kenneth Cunningham acting as a company officer and Volunteer Tommy McAuliffe, will be representing the district. The district continues to seek participants to act as instructors at varying times during the academy.

Tender Operator

One tender operator applicant is working his way through the process. The district hopes to generate an effective training plan for tender operators in the future. It is unsure which station this tender operator will respond to when needed.

Live Fire Training

Live Fire training is scheduled for the week of August 14. The district will be participating in joint training with the Bellingham Fire Department with one and one half hour rotations. A schedule will be circulated in the near future.

Harassment / Diversity Training

Harassment and Diversity training must be completed by Monday, August 28. All completed certificates should be sent to the training division.

Football Helmet Removal Training

Helmet Removal training should be completed as soon as possible so equipment can returned to schools prior to the start of their football season.

C-Collar Update

Captain Jorgensen shared information regarding Dr. Wayne's recommendation to utilize horse collars with vacu splints in lieu of c-collars. Chief Pernet noted that the district will require something more official (protocol) in writing prior to moving forward with the request. Captain Jorgensen will try to obtain more information as well as documentation. It was noted that other districts are adhering to Dr. Wayne's request.

Officer Development

Lieutenant McPhail led the group through a discussion regarding accountability.

Accountability: the quality or state of being accountable; *especially*; an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or account for one's actions

Accountability is a two-way street: Officers are accountable for watching over firefighters and firefighters must be responsible to those in charge.

Everyone at the emergency scene is responsible for a real accountability system. There was further discussion regarding to whom we are accountable, accountability on the fire ground and fitness accountability.

Lieutenant McPhail provided a handout of five tests to measure fire ground fitness consisting of functional mobility, power, muscular strength/endurance, core strength and aerobic endurance.

Chief Noonchester noted that sometimes officers need to have those uncomfortable conversations to bring forth beneficial lifestyle changes.

SHIFTS

A Shift – Nothing to report.

B Shift – Nothing to report.

C Shift – SCBAs have all been calibrated. All testing equipment has been sent for recalibration. Next year the district will focus on hydro testing cylinders.

Lieutenant Biery requested that a fax machine be installed on the firefighter side of Britton Loop Station 12 for hospital faxes. A request has been send to the facilities division and will be investigated.

D Shift – Lieutenant Paige questioned why those requesting to be called for overtime while on a scheduled vacation days are not being notified. Crewsense should portray their availability in the near future.

Lieutenant Paige proposed that the two and a half rear bed on Engine 12 (AP517) move to a bulk bed (50 ft. with nozzle attached). Chief Noonchester noted that a decision will be sent out district wide.

Tender Group – Dale Rutgers noted that there continues to be issues with faxing training documentation and timesheets from Delta Station 68 to other stations. The matter will be investigated.

Approximately five tender group members have not been participating in Monday night training. The training division will follow up with those individuals.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Chief Noonchester

Next Meeting: Thursday, September 7