

OFFICER'S MEETING
Thursday, October 4, 2018
Station 61 – Blaine

Attendees: Chiefs Pernet, Noonchester and Hollander; Captains Ahrenholz, Davidson, Schmidt and Ward; Lieutenants Biery, Esser, Hofstad, McPhail, Nielsen, Paige, Riehl, ASmith, Van der Veen and Zylstra.

FIRE CHIEF WILLIAM PERNETT

Auto Aid

Chief Pernet noted that NWFR (D4 / D21) and the City of Bellingham continue to work on formalizing an auto aid agreement. The agreement will need to be approved by the City Council as well as the fire commissioners and it expected to begin January 1, 2019. Once approved, the closest station will be dispatched to respond to an incident. In the future, once an automatic vehicle locator (AVL) is operational, the closest apparatus will be dispatched.

Changes to the current station orders and response packages are still under consideration. Ladder 5 will also be utilized as a ladder response.

Terms of the agreement include “like for like” resources including personal, staffing of units and training. Other concerns identified include who would be billed for out of district transports and the recourse if a station is not staffed with three.

It is expected that the district and Bellingham Fire Department will train together more in the future.

2019 Staffing

Chief Pernet announced that beginning January 1, 2019, the minimum staffing for the district will increase from ten to twelve. The desire is to have all career stations staffed with three, twenty-four hours per day.

All in all, the decision to increase staffing will be a positive change. Additional information is expected in the near future.

Chief Pernet noted that outside of the auto aid agreement, District 4 and the City of Bellingham are negotiating a mitigation agreement for the upcoming annexation of the area west of Britton Loop. The district will continue to respond to the area and the City of Bellingham will reimburse District 4 for the lost revenue.

Lieutenant Paige noted that he had heard from a concerned citizen regarding coverage on Ruston Way once the annexation goes through. Chief Pernet noted that the dispatch to the area will not change.

Annual Medical Physicals

Chief Pernet noted that the district is considering changing how annual medical physicals are completed. Currently, Kelly schedules member's physicals while on duty dropping the station

coverage from three to two. Other options include scheduling the individual appointments off duty and paying overtime or putting a station “out of service” and having an entire shift complete their annual physicals concurrently.

EMS/ALS Medic 5

Chief Pernet noted that the district has voiced their interest to EMS Manager Mike Hilley and the Fire Chief Technical Advisory Board (TAB) representative regarding participating in a future medic program. Chief Pernet stated that the district is capable of administering a medic program and he intends to be part of the conversation.

Budget Process

The district is in the midst of finalizing the 2019 budget. Chief Pernet has met with each division and a work session has been scheduled with the fire commissioners for Thursday, October 18 and an additional one may also be arranged.

At this time the district is reviewing capital items including a septic redesign at Laurel Station 69 and healthcare plan proposals. The Board of Fire Commissioners is also considering hiring a consultant to assist in developing the district’s long rang master plan including capital facilities, capital apparatus, standards of cover and other future visionary items.

The district is governed by a one percent yearly increase and even though the trend remains positive Chief Pernet noted that he will continue to budget conservatively in order to weather any storm.

Ground Emergency Medical Transport (GEMT) Update

The State of Washington’s Ground Emergency Medical Transportation (GEMT) Program is a federally approved program that allows providers the opportunity to collect additional federal funding for medical transportation services provided to Medicaid-eligible recipients. The district was able to submit for retroactive reimbursement for a portion of 2017. Those funds are expected any time. A bigger portion of the 2018 Medicaid-eligible transports will be reimbursed but it is unknown when those funds will be refunded.

Lynden Fire Chief

Chiefs Pernet, Noonchester and Hollander recently met with the new City of Lynden Fire Chief, Mark Billmire. It is expected that once acclimated Chief Billmire will be included in the B76 rotation.

OPERATIONS

2019 Planning / Vacations

Chief Noonchester reminded the group that the district will be requesting the 2019 vacation picks in the near future.

Response Plan in Process

Chief Noonchester reminded the group about a response plan exercise completed during a past officer meeting. A draft response plan has been reviewed by the captains and is expected to

streamline and create uniformity to district responses. The plan will be disseminated through a directive once complete.

Lieutenant Adam Smith suggested that Chief Noonchester take into consideration that when probationary firefighters are on duty and unable to drive, it affects how the crew can respond.

Division Chief Rob Wilson

Chief Noonchester has been meeting regularly with Division Chief of Dispatch Rob Wilson to identify communication issues and concerns.

Concerns include pagers that do not broadcast properly and responding apparatus not able to hear on scene reports being broadcasted from Fire 3. It was noted that even though size ups are common practice, they are not always repeated by Dispatch.

There was discussion and agreement to have “in transit” apparatus stay on Fire 2 and switch to Fire 3 on scene if determined by the on scene commander.

An additional suggestion was made to have dispatchers participate in district discussion and training regarding the use of mobile and portables.

The district will continue to work with Dispatch to improve communications.

New Recruits

The five recruits are currently attending the Washington State Academy and have represented the district well. One minor injury was documented and the recruit firefighter has been released for duty. The recruits are excited to begin shift work and Chief Noonchester noted that it is up to all of us to ensure they are successful. In addition, Chief Noonchester noted his appreciation to those who have taken the time to help the recruits on the weekends.

Once the academy is completed the captains will be an integral part of integrating the five new recruits into the district. It is expected that all the recruits will be moving stations throughout their probationary year. Since the recruits will be rotating through the stations, Captain Ahrenholz recommended having Laurel Station 69 at the end of the rotation due to its unique tender dependency response on fires. No decisions on a rotation timeline has been determined.

The recruits will also be utilizing a thumb drive in lieu of the cumbersome training binders.

The group discussed ways to improve the probationary recruits’ training by providing EVIP and driver training earlier in the year. Other suggestions for improvement included utilizing the two week training period for FireHouse and CAD training.

The captains will meet with Chief Noonchester following the meeting to discuss information regarding the upcoming recruit firefighter’s probationary year.

Crewsense

Payroll is in the process of beta testing the payroll module of Crewsense. Glitches identified include documenting small amounts of overtime for officer meetings. Solutions include adding the additional time to the miscellaneous section or having Crewsense customize another section.

Captains have also recently been given access to run reports which will enable them to identify inconsistencies. Corrections will need to be completed prior to payroll running their Crewsense reports.

It is expected that more bugs will need to be worked out.

Engine 61 (AP513)

Engine 61 is currently out of service as work continues on the generator and replacing lights with LEDs. It is expected to be put back in service today however, pole lights and LEDs still need to be added to the brow lights.

FACILITIES

Ambulance Bids

The ambulance bids have been received and will be evaluated in the near future.

Extractor at Birch Bay Station 63

The extractor at Birch Bay Station 63 is expected to be back in service today.

Cell Tower

Chief Hollander noted that since no one cell tower can provide district / county wide coverage, it is expected that Whatcom County will switch to simulcasting sometime in the future. In the interim, the Harvey Road repeater will be relocated to the J tower by the end of the year. It is anticipated that the higher J tower will provide better reception.

The county has hired a full time communications manager that will handle both law and fire communications, taking the place of FARS and the City of Bellingham programs. The new platform is expected to begin January 1, 2019.

MDC Versaterm

Versaterm is utilized by all Whatcom County fire departments. It includes an alpha numeric paging component (free of charge) which will be utilized in the near future.

Chief Hollander noted that any MDC operating through Windows 10 has crashed during weekly Tech Help updates. Chief Hollander noted that the issues are being addressed and he will send out an email when the issues have been repaired.

There was consensus to request Tech Help to switch their weekly computer upgrade times from Tuesday evenings to noon. There was also a request to have Tech Help contact the MDC user when completing major on screen tasks.

Officer Computer Upgrades

Successful officer computer upgrades have been completed at Laurel Station 69 and Birch Bay Station 63.

Image Trend

The countywide program is up and running. Emergency Programming Computer Reporting (EPCR) training is expected sometime in November which will encompass adding patient information to iPads. In December, all patient information will need to be inputted into both FireHouse and Image Trend by each member for five calls. Once each member has inputted the required number of calls the district will be ready for the January 1, 2019 phase one switch. Phase one includes the addition of all staff, apparatus and station information. Phase two will be inputted sometime after January.

It was noted that a new manager overseeing the Geographical Information System (GIS) section of the program will ensure that all county and city streets and addresses are inputted as necessary.

The program is cloud based and will be available at any work station or mobile.

Odell Station 61 Floors and Lockers

Carpet floors will be replaced on Monday, October 8, 2018. Bedroom lockers will also be replaced sometime in the near future.

Smith Road Station 13

Replacement of the roof will commence on Monday, October 8, 2018.

Audit Inventory Numbers

The district will be audited beginning mid-October and random inventory inspections are expected. Chief Hollander requested that all district equipment (computers, monitors, printers, etc.) be checked for asset number stickers. Please contact Chief Hollander if you find an item without an inventory sticker.

Remotes for Semiahmoo

There was discussion regarding having apparatus contain remotes for access to the Semiahmoo gates in lieu of fire lock box keys. Currently the Blaine police officers utilize the remotes however, they do not need to keep the gates open until all apparatus needed has arrived and/or left the scene. It was agreed that with the number of gated communities remotes would be too confusing and hard to manage if apparatus was relocated. The fire lock box system will not be changed.

It was noted that Opticom sensors cannot be utilized in the Semiahmoo Resort Association. In addition, E12 (AP517) does not have Opticom sensors.

Portable Radio Addresses

Although portable radios can transfer digital codes and do contain an emergency button, most district radios are not programmed correctly, nor are they identified as NWFR units or stations. There was discussion regarding programming radios and assigning them to members or stations and having a cache of additional batteries. There may be an adequate number of radios to assign to each career member however, more would be needed for the volunteer members. It was suggested that old District 4 radios be put on all tenders. It was agreed there are many logistical issues including cross staffing.

In the future the district wishes to be able to have members log on to Versaterm with both their radio and BY numbers. It was agreed to upgrade all radios and portables to be a minimum of district and station specific.

Lieutenant Hofstad noted that the county operations manual contains the procedure for both dispatchers and firefighters for requesting and responding to medical assistance and law enforcement requests.

Fire Lock Box Installations

Fire lock boxes have been installed at Starbucks (front door) and Rawganique (west door) in Blaine.

Impact Fees

The City of Blaine passed an ordinance requiring all new building permits to pay an impact fee to the fire district. The City of Blaine will collect the fees for the district at no charge. The developer will be responsible for any collection fees.

Volunteer Station Upkeep

There was discussion regarding which career station is in charge of upkeep at which volunteer station. Delta Station 68 is maintained by the tender group. Volunteers Sabrina Ooms and Lane Renskers are in charge of maintaining Haynie Station 65. The Northwood Store will take over the grounds maintenance at Northwood Station 72.

The captains will investigate and compile a current list of crews responsible for each volunteer station.

TRAINING

Captain Jorgensen did not attend the meeting however, he provided information to be passed on the group.

Quarterly Training

3rd Quarter is due and 4th Quarter packets have been distributed.

This will be the last quarter for the packets. The district will be moving to a new training program the first of the year which will make training documentation easier. The program is expected to keep track of all certifications. A NWFR training library will also be established. More information is expected in the near future.

ResQHub, a user friendly standalone training for record keeping and Image Trend training is expected towards the end of the year.

Live Fire Training

Live Fire is scheduled for October 22-25. Captain Jorgensen will be asking for assistance as crews are rotated through the training. The working incident training may take up to two and one half hours to complete. Captain Davidson will be assisting and the chief officers may also be participating in MCO live fire training.

The district may seek additional outside coverage during the training.

Whatcom County Recruit Academy (WCRA)

Jeff Haley will be stepping down as the WCRA Company Officer and to keep consistency, the NWFR Recruits will be mixed into other companies for the remainder of the Academy.

Two NWFR recruits are currently EMTs and will begin to shift work following graduation, while two will be enrolled in the spring EMT class. Captain Jorgensen thanked everyone for their patience and assistance with the WCRA. If any issues arise from these changes, please call or text Captain Jorgensen.

Patient Transports

Keep up the great work as you transport patients into the emergency room (ER). NWFR has received amazing feedback from the hospital staff about professionalism upon entry into the ER, transferring patient care and providing the proper information necessary. Please review the email that was sent in regards to this and continue to communicate with Captain Jorgensen with any issues or concerns arise.

Britton Loop Station 12 Training Grounds

There will be a lot of live fire trainings both this and next month involving NWFR, D5 and the WCRA. Please keep the dedicated dumpster near the burn room and free of miscellaneous debris. The dumpster is used to clean out the burn room after live fire has occurred.

A Shift

Hose testing is complete, records have been entered into FireHouse and there remain only a few loose ends to complete. Discarded or damaged hose will be surplus. Everyone agreed that the process went much smoother.

The group discussed building additional pony sections for each first out engine.

Chief Noonchester noted that anytime hose is stored differently on apparatus, it could affect how it is winterized.

CrewSense will be utilized to unofficially track trades beginning in 2019. Since CrewSense will need to be reset, Chief Hollander will send out a reminder alerting staff to check on the status of their personal trades.

B Shift

Captain Ahrenholz requested to be notified when any hose loads including fittings are broken. The district continues to strive to keep all hose lays on all rigs identical and eliminate any guess work. Laurel Station 69 hose loads match however, they have added forestry loads to be used in the summer for wildland fires. A permanent position will be added on Laurel Station apparatus for forestry loads. It was suggested and agreed that additional forestry hose (150 'of 1 ½" rubber) be placed on other apparatus. Chief Noonchester will get training involved in the process.

Captain Davidson noted they are attempting to clean up the area around Birch Bay Station 63. Since storage is at a premium, it was suggested that the district add some conex boxes, possibly on cement blocks to house certain objects. Chief Noonchester will discuss the suggestion with facilities before options are discussed.

It is expected that a bunker gear representative will be sizing for turnout acquisitions at Birch Bay Station 63 in the near future.

Since the brush rigs were utilized a lot this summer, it was suggested that they be inspected to ensure they include the appropriate compliments. Wildland clothing should also be examined. If anything is missing please contact Captain Ward. It was further suggested that Dri-Eze be added to the winterizing process.

C Shift

A Shift Lieutenant Zylstra is in charge of ladder testing.

Captain Ahrenholz is in charge of nozzle and appliance testing.

Lieutenant ASmith noted that when Odell Station 61 assists with transports for Point Roberts District 5, they can be out of service for up to two and one half hours. Currently there are three places the two districts can meet however, they typically meet at checkpoint Bravo. Chief Noonchester will review the mutual aid agreement prior to meeting with District 5 Fire Chief Carleton.

D Shift

Captain Ward noted that there have been no reported issues with the newly implemented medical procedure.

The Stokes Program is being tested at Birch Bay Station 63. The rescue basket and lid have been placed on Engine 63. The rescue basket is attached to the lid by rubber straps. Ladder 63 also has a rescue basket. There is a plan to add a rescue basket and lid to both Engines 61 and 69. Due to storage challenges the Engine 12 rescue basket and lid addition remains on hold.

Due to the non-hydrated area around the Laurel Station 69 response area, Lieutenant Riehl questioned if dry suction should be purchased and where it should be mounted. There was consensus that dry suction should be purchased. Chief Noonchester will work with Captain Ward

to investigate prices for the 2019 budget and the best place to mount. They will also review new specs in NFPA.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Lieutenant Esser thanked members for their condolences for the loss of his mother and for everyone's support during this difficult time.

Next Meeting: Thursday, January 3