

# Whatcom County Fire District 4

## Meeting Minutes of the Board of Commissioners

### February 12, 2014

The regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners was held on the above date at the district office. Those who attended were as follows: Commissioners Mary Beth Neal, Harry Andrews and Steve Ness; Fire Chief Ron Anderson, Board Secretary Kris Parks, Division Chief Henry Hollander and Captain Joe Noonchester.

Commissioner Andrews called the meeting to order at 12:09 p.m.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

#### **BOARD ACTION**

##### Meeting Minutes

Approval of Minutes of the January 15, 2014 Regular Meeting.

Commissioner Neal moved to approve the meeting minutes. Commissioner Ness seconded; motion passed.

#### **MONTHLY REPORTS**

##### Finance

Chief Anderson provided information on the financial statements and the voucher.

Approval of the payroll voucher: Commissioner Ness moved to approve the payroll voucher.

Commissioner Neal seconded; motion passed.

##### Chief's Report

Chief Anderson provided information on the chief's report which included the response activity from January, the dollar loss activity and response times.

##### Labor Negotiations

Labor negotiations have now wrapped up and the contract has been approved by the Union. The District 21 Commissioners will be asked at their meeting to approve the new 2014-2017 Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). This is a 3-year contract with a 1-year opener for wages and Article 20.8 (VEBA) only. Thanks to Commissioner Bosman for serving on the negotiation team, his experience and expertise were greatly appreciated.

### FEMA Grants

No new information to report on our SAFER or Fire Act Grant; we are still in a holding pattern as FEMA reviews the applications and announces the awardees.

### Sale of the Lynden and Custer Fire Stations

Last month we updated the Board on a perspective buyer for the Lynden Station. After touring the building for a second time and reviewing it with his contractor the client is concerned that there is not enough parking available at the site for their needs. Chief Anderson will keep the Board posted as more information becomes available.

### County Adoption of the Fire Code

The Whatcom County Council is getting ready to adopt the 2012 Edition of the International Fire Code (IFC). When they adopt this code they have the option of adopting the code with modifications or with or without the appendices. The water supply and access roads requirements are contained in these appendices. As it currently stands the Council is looking at lowering the water flow requirements at the request of one of County Council members that believes the requirements are too high and has arbitrarily proposed reducing the water flow requirements. As you can imagine we are fundamentally opposed to this reduction as water is our primary means of fire suppression and we simply cannot do our job without adequate water supplies being available. Chief Anderson will keep the Board posted as to the outcome of the County Council's decision.

### **Operations Division Report**

Chief Anderson provided information on the operations division report which included the department staffing, time-off statistics for January and information on:

#### Division Chief of Operations Search

We have advertised the position with the Western Fire Chief's Association on their Daily Dispatch website. This is an on-line website viewed by thousands of Fire Professionals on a daily basis. In addition we asked the Washington Fire Commissioners and the Idaho Fire Chief's Association to post this position on their respective websites. We have received nine (9) applications to date with an expected closing date of February 28<sup>th</sup>. A search committee consisting of representatives from the Commissioners, Union, Volunteers and Management will review the applications prior to narrowing the field to a handful of finalists for the interview and assessment lab process.

#### 2014 Electronic Time Cards

Starting this year NWFR is going to utilize electronic time cards. A lot of work has been accomplished with development and a procedure for all members to follow. The hope is that the new time card will make the payroll process less time consuming. Lt. Doug Clark and FF Tom Kettman have been working with fire manager software programmers developing our new time card system.

#### Personnel

Unfortunately we have seen several of our personnel injure themselves while off duty recently. Lt. VanderVeen has been working light-duty since January 13<sup>th</sup> and is making good progress towards his recovery, it is anticipated he will return to shift work within the next month barring any complications. While these injuries are taking a toll on our budget in terms of added overtime expense we are using these individuals to assist with other projects that we are shorthanded with to the extent possible given their injuries.

### Significant Fires or EMS Events

- 1/08/2014 200 Block of Pollman Circle. Responded to a single story residential structure fire. 3-Engines, 1-Water Tender, 3-Command Officers, 17-Personnel total, Mutual Aid from the City of Lynden. Dollar Loss of \$50,000 Value of \$183,544.
- 1/15/2014 Responded to a Mutual Aid request from the City of Lynden for a structure fire involving a multi-unit apartment building in 1600 Block of Liberty St. 3-Engines, 1-Ladder Truck, 3-Command Officers, 12-Personnel total.
- 1/31/2014 Structure Fire 6400 Block of Old Guide Road. A large shed type structure fully involved on arrival. The contents included multiple large heating oil tanks filled with heating oil and used motor oil. 4-Engines, 2-Water Tenders, 3-Command Officers, 1-Fire Investigator, 16-Personnel total. Mutual Aid received from both the City of Lynden and District 7.

### Training Division Report

Captain Noonchester presented the training division report.

The report included the staff productivity, the crew training for January and the following information:

North Whatcom Fire and Rescue has had a good month in training. The crew completed 376 hours of training which includes career and volunteer firefighters, EMTs and tender operators. 52 of those hours were EMS related (indoors), too cold outside for flowing water!

Also in January, NWFR hosted B76 training to all of the chief officers that rotate into that role. The training consisted of incident simulations in a classroom and a discussion session on the implementation of the new WAC 296-305 Firefighter Safety Standards. This session also provided the chiefs an opportunity to share ideas on topics such as incident command, staffing and how to best cover the fire district and the City of Lynden during emergency incidents. The dialog serves as a great avenue for implementation of better ways to provide good customer service.

The department conducted a live fire training day on February 1st. An old house was donated to NWFR to train in and ultimately burn. During this event we were able to introduce several of our newest volunteer firefighters to offensive fire attack tactics. We demonstrated interior fires over 10 times that day were able to combine our new firefighters with the career staff for some very real and beneficial evolutions. The day ended with complete demolition of the structure. The property owner was extremely thankful and proud to have donated this building to us.

The department will schedule an oral board in the next few weeks for new volunteer interviews.

### Technical Services & Maintenance Division Report

Division Chief Hollander presented the technical services & maintenance division report.

#### Fire Marshal

The department continues to work with the Semiahmoo Marina with the goal of providing an approved fire standpipe system. As of this date the City of Blaine has determined that the marina is not required to provide potable water to the boat owners. On February 7<sup>th</sup> we sent, by certified mail, a letter informing Semiahmoo Marina of the districts position regarding their Fire Code Violations. The letter will require

them to maintain a “Fire Watch” as defined in the International Fire Code (IFC) along with some other detailed requirements.

Whatcom County has contacted the fire district and requested that we work with them in developing an updated capital facilities plan (CFP) in a format that would meet both the needs of the fire district and the needs of the county for the purpose of Growth Management Act (GMA) planning. The end goal would be to docket a comprehensive plan amendment to incorporate several updated Fire District capital facility plans, including NWFR, into the County Comp Plan. The plan is to develop a draft District CFPs by summer of 2014, have County Planning Commission hearings next summer or fall, and County Council adoption in early 2015. On January 21<sup>st</sup> we had our last scheduled meeting and are working thru our current stations, apparatus, and began discussions on response standards. Currently the fire districts response standards are slightly different than the adopted county standards.

The department handled three TRC or Pre TRC meetings in the month of January.

### Inspections

Engine Company Inspections have been completed in January.

### Apparatus

All apparatus are currently on scheduled maintenance, there are no breakdowns to report. The shop truck had the transmission replaced this week.

### Facilities

Station 63 (Birch Bay): The stair treads in the training tower are scheduled to be replaced during the month of February. This is a capital project carry-over from the 2013 budget.

Station 71 (Lynden) and 72 (Northwood) were in need of 5 year maintenance checks on the fire suppression system. This work is now complete.

Station 69 (Laurel): With the moving of full time crews to the Laurel station the facilities fire code classification has changed from a “B” occupancy to a “R-1” occupancy. This change requires an upgrade to the Fire and Smoke alarm system. This work has been completed. We will also be installing a required kitchen electric power solenoid to turn off the stove and electrical outlets automatically when the station gets toned out for an incident along with an overhead radio system, this work should be completed in the month of February.

### IT / Communication's

There continues to be slow progress to report on the Harvey Rd. repeater site. We have met with the City of Blaine Public Safety Chief, Mike Haslip and the Blaine Public Works Director, Ravyn Whitewolf. At this point the city has agreed in writing to give FARS the ability to install hard wire telephone lines thru their unused conduit to test the new repeater system. If the tests are successful, FARS will need to find a long term solution for telephone lines from the road to the radio container.

### Food Bank

We received 2,342 lbs in food bank donations over the holidays.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### Transport Fees

Chief Anderson handed out information on the current transport fees and asked the Board to increase the transport fees. A resolution establishing fees for providing basic life support ambulance services will be presented soon.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### Monday Night Meeting

On February 10<sup>th</sup> volunteers from all groups attended the meeting. The group is planning to dissolve all current district associations and create one new association with a new name. Full time firefighters are encouraged to join.

Next Board Meeting: March 20th at 7:00 p.m. at Station 61, 9408 Odell Rd. in Blaine.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:33 p.m.

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Harry Andrews, Chair

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Kris Parks, Board Secretary

## **Motions and Directives:**

### Meeting Minutes

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