

**Whatcom County Fire District #4
via Zoom Meeting
4142 Britton Loop, Bellingham, WA 98226
12:00 p.m.
September 18, 2023
Regular Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Cooley called the regular Whatcom County Fire District #4 Board of Fire Commissioners meeting for September 18, 2023, to order at 12:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Attendees: Chairman Steve Cooley; Vice-Chairman Tim Johnson; Fire Commissioner Mark Lann; Fire Chief Jason Van der Veen.

With the rescission of Proclamation 20-28, the District continues to do its best to provide accommodations to the public. A direct link allowing the public to participate in the meeting during the public comment section was included on the meeting agenda and posted on the District's website.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

1. Meeting Minutes
 - a) August 14, 2023 – regular
2. Staff Reports – Chief / Operations / Training / Technical Support
3. Financial Report
 - a) Expense Fund Revenue – August \$20,591.89
 - b) Total Expenditures – September \$628,589.75
4. Voucher / Payroll / Benefits
 - a) Monthly Expenditure Payroll Voucher: \$640.00
 - b) Monthly Expenditure Voucher: \$627,229.75

MOTION: Commissioner Lann moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Johnson and approved 3-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Contract for Services Extension and Northern Heights Annexation Update: Chief Van der Veen and Chairman Cooley provided information regarding the recent contract for services extension meeting they and District 21 Chairman Ansell attended. It was agreed to extend the 2024 contract for services for one year and review other options after future City of Bellingham annexations and their potential ramifications have been revealed.

Chief Van der Veen reported on a recent annexation meeting he attended between the Northern Heights community members and developers, which the District was only made aware of through a concerned citizen.

The meeting was hosted by Geyer & Associates, working on behalf of three property owners in the proposed annexation area. The area in question has been in the urban growth area for some time, and the parcels that make up the Northern Heights area have had city water and sewer services since they were developed. As this area has been in the pathway of annexation since development, water, and sewer services were extended in exchange for “no protest” annexation agreements. The proposed annexation is reported to have 65%+ of parcels with no protest agreements, making annexation a foregone conclusion.

Chief Van der Veen is working with the county assessor’s office to determine the loss of AV and tax revenue that the annexation will have on District 4. Chief Van der Veen plans to present the loss during a County Review Board meeting so they can make an informed decision on the annexation proposal.

The annexation is estimated to take 24-36 months to complete. Due to the potential ramifications, including the possible annexation of the Tweed Twenty area, Chief Van der Veen has asked the attorneys from both districts to analyze the situation before any decisions or options are considered.

A meeting between both Board Chairs, attorneys, Chief Van der Veen, and the City of Bellingham to discuss annexation impacts and mitigation of both districts is expected in the near future. More discussions are expected during an upcoming joint budget study session with District 21.

Chairman Cooley noted that the District will continue utilizing Liz Loomis Public Affairs, who has agreed to assist with sending a message to the constituents regarding this recent information and how it may impact the levy lid lift and District 4’s future.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution 2023-03 Cancellation of Warrant: Chief Van der Veen noted that the County requires any checks not cashed within one year of the issue date to be canceled and will be re-issued if necessary.

MOTION: Vice-Chairman Johnson moved to approve Resolution 2023-03 Cancellation of Warrant as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lann and approved 3-0.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Geyer and Associates re: Northern Heights annexation information
- Washington State Auditor re: 2024 billing rates

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **October Board Meeting Attendance Query:** All Commissioners present are expected to attend the October 16 meeting via Zoom.

- Commissioner Lann attended a client appreciation event sponsored by Liz Loomis Public Affairs.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING

- Contract for Services Extension
- Northern Heights Annexation
- Commissioner Indebted Bond Presentation

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: There being no further business, Chairman Cooley moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:27 p.m. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Johnson and approved 3-0.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jennie Sand, Board Secretary

ATTEST:

Steve Cooley, Chairman

Tim Johnson, Vice-Chairman

Mark Lann, Commissioner

Jason Van der Veen, Fire Chief