

**Whatcom County Fire District #4
via Zoom Meeting
4142 Britton Loop, Bellingham, WA 98230
12:00 p.m.
December 11, 2023**

Public Hearing and Regular Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

Due to technical difficulties, Chairman Cooley called the regular Whatcom County Fire District #4 Board of Fire Commissioners meeting for December 11, 2023, to order at 12:07 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 HEARING 2024 BUDGET

Chairman Cooley opened the public hearing at 12:08 p.m.

Chief Van der Veen reviewed the draft 2024 budget for both Fire and EMS.

Revenue

Chief Van der Veen reviewed the EMS and Fire Property tax Levy Resolutions.

EMS Tax Revenue - \$418,533

Fire Tax Revenue - \$3,748,171

A significant increase in the fire tax is due to the levy lid lift approved in August.

Other revenue includes past taxes, forest excise, leasehold excise, Whatcom County EMS Levy reimbursement, intergovernmental service, investment interest, and facility rental fees.

2024 Total Anticipated Revenue: \$4,389,704.

Interest Investment Reserve Fund

Chief Van der Veen anticipates that \$15,000 will be deposited into the reserve fund in 2024.

Expenditures

Chief Van der Veen reviewed the projected expenditures for 2024, including commissioner salaries, commissioner apparel, small tools, accounting services, election costs, property fees, legal services, audit fees, professional services, advertising, insurance, professional organizational services, registration, and contract for services.

Chief Van der Veen noted that professional services will remain higher since the district will continue to retain Liz Loomis Public Affairs to assist with getting district information out to the constituents.

The contract for services payment to North Whatcom Fire and Rescue (NWFR) is \$2,509,267.00, which reflects the increased salaries and benefits, the addition of a battalion chief supervisor for each shift, and an administrative support staff position mid-year.

Total Anticipated Expenditures: \$2,610,804.00

Chief Van der Veen reviewed the revenue vs expenditures. The \$1,795,000 surplus for reserves will allow the district to complete the Britton Loop Station 12 exterior repairs and an engine replacement.

Chief Van der Veen explained that the state requires the district to submit the overall anticipated budget in November even though the final numbers are not received until after the November meeting.

Commissioner Lann questioned if there would be an effect on the district's revenue if the county decided to utilize more EMS funds than expected. Chief Van der Veen noted that there would be no effect on the district in 2024, although there could be an impact on the 2025 revenue budget under intergovernmental service revenue.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The public hearing was specific to the 2024 budget. Comments will be restricted to these topics. There were no public comments.

Chairman Cooley closed the public hearing at 12:27 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING

Resolution 2023-05 Adopting the 2024 Budget for EMS: Chief Van der Veen reviewed the resolution. Chairman Cooley read a portion of the resolution. Vice-Chairman Johnson pointed out a transposed number on the EMS Levy Resolution. The resolution will be corrected before signatures are obtained.

MOTION: Commissioner Lann moved to approve Resolution 2023-05, Adopting the 2024 Budget for EMS with the corrected amount of \$418,532.74. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Johnson and approved 3-0.

Resolution 2023-06 Adopting the 2024 Budget for Fire: Chief Van der Veen reviewed the resolution. Chairman Cooley read a portion of the resolution.

MOTION: Vice-Chairman Johnson moved to approve Resolution 2023-06, Adopting the 2024 Budget for Fire as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lann and approved 3-0.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

1. Meeting Minutes
 - a) November 16, 2023 – public hearing
 - b) November 18, 2023 – budget work session
2. Staff Reports – Chief / Operations / Training / Technical Support
3. Financial Report
 - a) Expense Fund Revenue – November \$114,255.82
 - b) Total Expenditures – December \$623,023.10
4. Voucher / Payroll / Benefits
 - a) Monthly Expenditure Payroll Voucher: \$640.00
 - b) Monthly Expenditure Voucher: \$622,423.10

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

Chief Van der Veen noted that the chief's report was not included in the consent agenda and is expected to be sent out at a later date.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Contract for Services Extension Amendment: Chief Van der Veen noted that the contract for services with District 21 is a year-long document that can be extended in twelve-month extensions. Both attorneys have reviewed the contract and no concerns or issues were discovered. Chairman Cooley read a portion of the contract extension amendment. The Board agreed that both board chairs would sign the document. The District 21 Board will review the contract during their December 21 meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Interlocal Agreement for First Response Emergency Medical Services Amendment: Chief Van der Veen provided information regarding the amendment. The agreement updated the dates, reimbursement schedule, and amounts allocated to each district for EMS services. The attorney for the district has reviewed the amendment. Chairman Cooley read a portion of the agreement.

The district is approved to receive up to \$55,807.18 for EMS services.

MOTION: Vice-Chairman Johnson moved to approve the Interlocal Agreement for First Response Emergency Medical Services Amendment as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lann and approved 3-0.

Resolution 2024-01 - Establishing the 2024 Meeting Dates (Draft): Chief Van der Veen presented the draft 2024 meeting dates for consideration. Moving three meetings to Tuesdays was proposed, as those regular Monday dates are holidays.

Chief Van der Veen reiterated that the dates are set due to the county deadlines and to align with District 21's meeting dates.

Chief Van der Veen disclosed that the state is encouraging Boards to return to in-person meetings.

Chief Van der Veen noted that if the Board would like to meet in person, the District 21 Board has offered the use of Odell Station 61 in Blaine. The Board agreed that they would rather meet at Britton Loop Station 12 to allow for better constituent participation.

Chief Van der Veen will investigate if the meeting room at Britton Loop Station 12 will be available on the proposed dates and at which times.

The proposed dates are as follows;

January 16	July 15
February 12	August 12
March 18	September 16
April 15	October 15
May 13	November 12
June 17	December 16

County Council Resolution AB2023-791: The Board and Chief Van der Veen attended the special joint Whatcom County Fire Chiefs and Commissioner’s Association meeting on December 8, 2023. Commissioner Lann and Chief Van der Veen also attended the Whatcom County Council meeting on Monday, December 5, 2023.

The proposed Whatcom County Council resolution would fund a study to investigate the benefits of consolidating all fire and EMS services in Whatcom County.

The Whatcom County Fire Chiefs and Commissioners recently participated in a joint meeting to discuss the proposed resolution. Various fire commissioner spokespeople voiced the groups' concerns during the Whatcom County Council work session and subsequent meetings. Ultimately, the resolution was passed, and the county will be moving forward with a study expected to take 18-24 months to complete.

The Board will continue to follow and track the study's progress.

The Board suggested drafting a joint letter with the District 21 Chair to the council reaffirming what was stated at the County Council meeting and requesting to be included and consulted throughout the process. Chairman Cooley will contact Chairman Ansell and may have a letter for review at the next meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Legislative Day

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **January Board Meeting Attendance Query:** All Commissioners present, with the exception of Vice-Chairman Johnson, are expected to attend the January 16 meeting via Zoom.

Board Officer Election Nominations: The Board discussed the upcoming January board officer elections. Commissioner Lann nominated Steve Cooley for Board Chair and Tim Johnson as Vice-Chair.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

- Board Officer Elections
- 2024 Meeting Dates
- County Council Resolution AB2023-791

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: There being no further business, Chairman Lann moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:03 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner 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