

**Whatcom County Fire District #4  
Whatcom County Fire District #21  
Station 61 – Blaine  
9408 Odell Street, Blaine WA 98230  
9:00 am  
December 3, 2016  
Special Fire Commissioners Meeting – Budget Study Session**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Whatcom County Fire District # 21 Chairman Bosman called the special meeting for December 3, 2016 to order at 9:03 a.m. at Station 61 – 9408 Odell Street, Blaine, WA 98230.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ROLL CALL**

District #4 Attendees: Chairman Harry Andrews; Commissioner Mary Beth Neal.

District #21 Attendees: Chairman Rich Bosman; Vice-Chairman Larry McPhail, Commissioners Dean Berkeley, John Crawford and Bruce Ansell ; Fire Chief William Pernet; Division Chief Henry Hollander; Business Manager Benita Williams; Training Captain Joe Noonchester and Lead Mechanic Elliot Courage.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

- None

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Chairman Bosman recessed the meeting for an Executive Session, per RCW 42.30.110(g) “*to evaluate the qualifications of an applicant for public employment or to review the performance of a public employee.*” at 9:09 a.m. for approximately twenty minutes. Chief Pernet, Chief Hollander and District 4 Fire Commissioners Andrews and Neal remained for the executive session.

Chairman Bosman extended the executive session for fifteen minutes.

**MEETING RECONVENED**

Chairman Bosman called the regular meeting back into open session at 9:45 a.m. No action was taken as a result of the executive session.

Chairman Bosman closed the special meeting and opened the 2017 budget workshop at 9:45 a.m.

Commissioner Ansell was excused from the meeting at 9:45 a.m.

## **2017 BUDGET WORK SESSION**

Chief Pernet noted that the purpose of this study session is to build upon the last work session and to educate and provide opportunities for discussion regarding the 2017 budget. Chief Pernet provided a budget overview for both districts, which included recent challenges, potential solutions, revenues and expenditure information along with bond and capital requests. Division heads were in attendance to answer any questions and provide additional information if needed. Chief Pernet noted that no actions will be taken during the work session.

Chief Pernet reviewed the district's current self-funded health care plan and the proposed renewal rates from Coastal Administrative Services. The renewal rates are considerably more than what was expected. Chief Pernet reviewed some potential solutions that may help lower costs in the future. The level of benefits for the employees and dependents cannot change unless it is negotiated through the collective bargaining agreement. The district and the union are currently in negotiations for a new three year contract to begin in 2017. In the meantime, past health care savings in the health care reserve fund along with monies from the sale of Custer Station 64 may be used to supplement the plan.

A fifteen minute break was taken at 10:00 a.m.

Chief Pernet reviewed the draft budget updates and changes for 2017:

### Administrative/Legislation

- Legal fees increased – over budget in 2016 – (legal information, contracts, HR assistance)
- Public records request has been added to recoup for larger requests
- Switched cellular phones and internet hot spots from Sprint to Verizon for additional savings
- No cost for district newsletter (paperless)
- Election costs increased – three commissioner positions are up for election in 2017

A thirty minute lunch break was taken at 12:05 p.m.

Commissioner Berkeley was excused from the meeting at 12:15 p.m.

### Operations

- Addition of a volunteer coordinator per the district strategic plan (in lieu of volunteer battalion chief )
- Reduced volunteer firefighter stipends to more accurate amount (can be changed to fit volunteer program as needed)
- Medical and dental costs were lower in 2016 due to positions not filled (will be adjusted as needed)
- Work physicals will be paid by the district directly (not through insurance)
- District mapping (not budgeted this year)
- Ladder testing equipment (was borrowing equipment in the past)
- County EMS levy may pick up dispatch fees
- SCBA maintenance and testing (46 air packs to be overhauled)
  - Focusing on receiving a grant to replace air packs in future

### Public Education

- Increased public education materials (goal to distribute more public education information in 2017)
- CPR cards issued for completion of monthly community CPR classes
- Annual bicycle rodeo (not accomplished in 2016)

### Training

- Reduction in operational supplies
- Reduction in instructors (district utilizing instructors from within the organization)
- Increase in propane (even with the conversion of the training tower to wood, the district still uses propane for lighting fires and the smaller props)
- Reduction in North Bend Academy (fewer number of new hires anticipated in 2017)
- Yearly registration and tuition may be split amongst all members to utilize in the future
- State continues to partially reimburse the district for volunteer EMT and recruit academy training

### Facilities

- Reduction phone / internet / fax / cable (pogo contract)
- Contracted with a pest control company to provide regular service for prevention

### Fleet

- Computer software and MDC wireless connection costs moved to admin section
- Increased welding supplies
- The district may surplus unused apparatus in the future

### 2017 Capital Purchases (\$132,000)

- Laurel Station 69 generator
- Replace admin command response vehicle (high mileage)
- SCBA rebuild for compliancy
- Rescue extrication equipment to update current first out engines

The NWFR 2017 budget will be presented for approval during the regularly scheduled NWFR Fire Commissioner meeting on Thursday, December 15 meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** There being no further business Commissioner Crawford moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:32 p.m. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman McPhail and approved 3-0.

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Harry Andrews, Chair

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Kris Parks, Board Secretary