

Whatcom County Fire District 4

Meeting Minutes of the Board of Commissioners

July 15, 2015

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; Interim Fire Chief William Pernet, Board Secretary Kris Parks, Division Chief Henry Hollander and Captain Joe Noonchester.

Commissioner Andrews called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Larry Helm, a District # 4 resident, addressed concerns regarding the response time for a fire that happened on July 5th at 3307 Agate Bay Lane. Chief Pernet will provide him with the incident report and information. Mr. Helm also asked about the number of volunteers the department has especially at Station 11. Commissioner Ness, Chief Pernet and Captain Noonchester gave him an update on the current situation with the department volunteers.

BOARD ACTION

Meeting Minutes

Approval of Minutes of the June 09, 2015 Meeting.

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

MONTHLY REPORTS

Finance

Chief Pernet provided information on the financial statements and Financial Officer Kris Parks provided info on the payroll and expense vouchers.

Approval of the payroll voucher: Commissioner Ness moved to approve the payroll voucher. Commissioner Neal seconded; motion passed.

Approval of the expense vouchers: Commissioner Ness moved to approve the expense vouchers. Commissioner Andrews seconded; motion passed.

Chief's Report

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

Personnel:

Sam Bowman is a new volunteer that comes to the department from Lummi Island having graduated from the 2014 Whatcom County Recruit Academy.

Rehab Vehicle:

Rehab 70 will be housed at station 70. Once volunteers are trained they will staff the unit for response when paged out by request of the incident commander.

Mitigation Agreements:

NWFR has entered into two mitigation agreements with developers to collect mitigation fees associated with their projects. The projects are Smith Ridge Estates (Smith Rd) and North Shore (Alderson/Blaine Rd).

Chief Process:

A job posting for Fire Chief has been added to the Washington Fire Chiefs website and the Daily Dispatch classified section. The deadline for application, resume, and cover letter is July 31. This is an ongoing process.

Operations Division Report

Chief Pernet provided information on the operations division report which included the department time-off statistics, June staffing, overtime hours and volunteer shift hours for June and information on:

June Crew Activities

Commercial Inspections
Volunteer Training
Tender Operations
Air Management
Tractor Pull Standby
Hands Across the Border

June Meetings Attended

Exit Interviews
Border Chiefs
Board Meetings
County Ops
Labor/Management
Officer Meeting

Operations Projects

MCS Development
Safety Committee
Personnel Issues
Life Safety Rope
Annual Appraisals
Burn Tower

Calls of Interest:

On the early afternoon of June 5 NWFR, Lynden, and Ferndale crews responded to a reported structure fire on Woodland Dr. Upon arrival units found a fully involved residential house fire. All residents were accounted for and a defensive operation ensured knocking down the fire in about 60 minutes. Crews remained on scene until about 8 pm working on extensive overhaul. Crews were able to salvage the residents hope chest which had undamaged valuables inside. The fire resulted in loss valued at \$230,000. The fire is under investigation.

On June 13 NWFR and mutual aid units from Lynden, Ferndale, Bellingham, and District 1 responded to a reported barn fire on East Pole Rd.

Enroute units could see a large black header of smoke in the area. B75 on scene reported three large barns involved with fire and called for second and third alarms along with the NWFR tender group. The fire was a defensive fire and pumpers were placed for best access. A NWFR call back for personnel took place to staff extra equipment at stations. After about 30 minutes the fire in all three structures was knocked down. Extensive overhaul took place and could only be completely accomplished once two track hoes were put into operation so crews could access burning debris under the metal roofing. Units involved in the operation were, Command officers: B75, B76, C7103, Engines: E75, L75, E69, E61, E81, E43, E12, E81, E6, Support: Rehab 43, Air 43, Tenders: T82, T43, T63, T91, T65, T68, T6802, and T12. The cause of the fire is under investigation and the fire loss of the structures and the contents amounted to \$380,000.

June was also very busy with other challenging calls. Crews responded to several high profile calls including a man crushed by a beam in Blaine; vehicle versus pedestrians that resulted in fatalities and injuries to local students; a three alarm fire for a home at Lake Samish, and a man who drove his truck off the Blaine Pier.

Training Division Report

Captain Noonchester presented the training division report.

The report included the staff productivity, the career and volunteer firefighter training for June and the following information:

North Whatcom's firefighters have completed 839 hours of training for the month of June. This is a great effort by our crews considering that June is a short month and the calls for service have been frequent. Thank you to all of our crews working hard to be the best.

In June, North Whatcom Fire conducted its annual AIR MANAGEMENT COURSE. This event was designed to assist our firefighters in recognizing their usage of breathable air during moderate fire ground activities. This hands-on evolution consisted of basic firefighter skills like; extending a charged hose line, forcing a door, moving through a smoke-filled maze and climbing ladder 63 extended to 85 feet. We have put this event on now for several years and I have seen great improvements in most of our people. All have gained a better understanding of their team's ability to work in full combat gear conditions.

The department also had the opportunity to see the inside of Enfield Farms on Birch Bay Lynden Road. The owners of the berry processing plant invited NWFR and The City of Lynden to walk-through their buildings to gain a better understanding of the fire suppression and anhydrous ammonia systems and learn about their employee schedules and occupancies. This was valuable time for us. It makes us better prepared for emergencies at their facility.

Captain Noonchester informed the Board that the department has 5-6 new volunteers for the Fall Fire Academy.

Outstanding effort in June goes to:

- FF Jeff Haley
- Lt. Leslee Smith

Technical Services & Maintenance Division Report

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

Progress continues on working with the County on our section of the Capital Facility Plan.

The Blaine boathouse ordinance has been approved unanimously by the Blaine City Council.

The new official Ballot Drop Box has been installed at station 63.

The department has signed mitigation agreements with two new developments this month (North Shore and Smith Ridge Estates).

Planning meetings for the annual 911 Memorial Ride and Ceremony are under way and early indicators are that there will be a very large contingent from the Canadian side this year.

Inspections completed by occupancy report:

There were a total of 19 inspections completed for the Month of June.

Apparatus:

The donated ambulance from BP is now outfitted as a rehab unit for the district. It will be called Rehab-70 and is ready to be deployed. We currently have 6 volunteers to respond when requested and developed a text page out system thru prospect to notify them.

We have completed and received the renewal for all of our transport ambulances from the DOH. This licensing process is renewed every two years.

Facilities:

The new exhaust system for station 68 is on order and the equipment is scheduled to ship on July 6. Once the equipment arrives the factory will send out their installer to complete the installation.

Station 64 (Custer): I will be looking for direction regarding the roof repairs for the Custer Station.

IT:

The fire commissioner laptops were distributed at the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Long Term Strategic Planning:

Commissioner Ness informed that the future goal for fire departments should be a Regional Fire Authority. However this needs to be a natural movement with all officials on board or it will fail.

At present we should aim attention on combined training and building relationships with other departments. Our current focus should be on the relationship between District # 4 and NWFR.

Chief Pernet recommended to the Boards that there should be no decisions made on changes between District # 4 and NWFR at the moment. He would like to discuss the future goals of both departments at the annual retreat. The Commissioners agreed with Chief Pernet.

Burn Tower:

Captain Noonchester provided information on the options for the burn tower. He will collect further quotes which he should be able to present at the August board meeting.

Trickle Creek Annexation:

Chief Pernet informed the Board that he will keep them updated on the annexation process.

The Chief emailed an article on healthcare/insurance plans to the Board for information.

Next Board Meeting: August 12th at 12:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:27 p.m.

Harry Andrews, Chair

Kris Parks, Board Secretary

Motions and Directives:

Meeting Minutes

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Vouchers

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Commissioner Neal seconded; motion passed.

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