

**Whatcom County Fire District #4
via Zoom Meeting
4142 Britton Loop, Bellingham, WA 98226
12:00 p.m.
January 16, 2023
Regular Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting**

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chairman Cooley called the regular Whatcom County Fire District #4 Board of Fire Commissioners meeting for January 16, 2023, to order at 12:03 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Attendees: Vice-Chairman Steve Cooley; Fire Commissioner Tim Johnson; Fire Chief Jason Van der Veen; Division Chief Jon Ahrenholz.

It was reported that Chairman Mark Lann would be arriving late.

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) December 12, 2022 – public hearing
2. Staff Reports – Chief / Operations / Training / Technical Support
3. Financial Report
 - a) Expense Fund Revenue – December \$47,837.41
 - b) Total Expenditures – January \$3,304.00
4. Voucher / Payroll / Benefits
 - a) Monthly Expenditure Payroll Voucher: \$384.00
 - b) Monthly Expenditure Voucher: \$2,920.00

MOTION: Commissioner Johnson moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Cooley and approved 2-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Liz Loomis Public Affairs Kick-Off Meeting: Chief Van der Veen and Vice-Chairman Cooley provided information regarding the communications planning meeting held on Thursday, January 12, 2023.

Chief Van der Veen noted that the meeting focused on dividing up the work to be done. Liz Loomis outlined her outreach plan, which consisted of direct communications from the Board members to the constituents in the form of a letter.

Liz Loomis requested specific information to assist with presenting a professional-looking outreach letter. The group reviewed and provided edits to the draft correspondence.

Vice-Chairman Cooley requested that the letter include an overview of the district's current situation and the Board's overview of the intended message.

The Board will be given the opportunity to review and have final approval before it is distributed.

Commissioner Johnson noted that he had listened to the audio recording of the meeting and was impressed by what he heard.

Chairman Lann joined the meeting at 12:10 p.m.

There was a discussion about whether the next Liz Loomis meeting could be posted as a special meeting so all commissioners could attend. The meeting, which will be held Thursday, February 9, at 11:00 a.m., will be posted as a work session.

NEW BUSINESS

Board Officer Elections: The Board completed yearly officer elections per the Fire Commissioner Guidelines.

MOTION: Chairman Lann moved to elect current Vice-Chairman Cooley to serve as Board Chair and current Commissioner Tim Johnson as Vice-Chairman effective immediately. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Johnson and approved 3-0.

Chief Van der Veen formerly acknowledged Chairman Lann for his time served as the Board Chair. He thanked him for his leadership, stability, and vision during a turbulent time. Chairman Lann's ability to step in was an essential piece of the change that needed to happen to the district.

Division Chief of Operations: Chief Van der Veen introduced Division Chief of Operations Jon Ahrenholz, who was promoted in November 2022. Chief Ahrenholz has a long history with District 4. He was a captain with District 4 when the consolidation was formed between the two agencies in July 2011. Chief Ahrenholz also lives in the District 4 response area. Chief Ahrenholz brings a unique perspective that will benefit the leadership team of both districts.

Chief Ahrenholz noted that he began as a District 4 volunteer in 1997; was hired as a captain in 2007; moved to lieutenant following the consolidation; and was promoted to captain in 2018.

Chief Ahrenholz is excited about his new position. He offered to answer questions and provide information, as requested, regarding the history of District 4.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Email from Gerald Kuhns, Whatcom County Finance re: December month-end reports
- Washington Fire Commissioners and Washington State Fire Chiefs re: Legislative Day

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **District 4 Response Letter to District 21:** Chief Van der Veen noted that the District 21 Board was pleased with the District 4 response letter regarding the contract for services agreement.
- **February Board Meeting Attendance Query:** All Commissioners present are expected to attend the February 13 meeting via Zoom.
- **Personnel action sheet from 2022:** Chief Van der Veen noted that the County requested that the Board sign a personnel action sheet for a former District 4 employee.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

- Liz Loomis Public Affairs Update

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: There being no further business, Chairman Lann moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:25 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