

**Whatcom County Fire District #4
via Zoom Meeting
4142 Britton Loop, Bellingham, WA 98226
12:00 p.m.
April 17, 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 April 17, 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; Consultant Liz Loomis.

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) March 13, 2023 – regular
2. Staff Reports – Chief / Operations / Training / Technical Support
3. Financial Report
 - a) Expense Fund Revenue – March \$96,898.29
 - b) Total Expenditures – April \$636,300.85
4. Voucher / Payroll / Benefits
 - a) Monthly Expenditure Payroll Voucher: \$512.00
 - b) Monthly Expenditure Voucher: \$635,788.85

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

Consultant Liz Loomis Levy Update: Liz Loomis provided information regarding the projected levy lid increase amount discussed during the communications planning meeting on Friday, April 7, 2023.

The group is reviewing two potential levy amounts based on the operations budget and the district's capital needs. In addition, long-term, the group is looking at either forming and funding a Regional Fire Authority (RFA) or merging with North Whatcom Fire and Rescue

(NWFR). Prior to either of the two outcomes coming to fruition, the district will need to reach parity with NWFR's levy while at the same time providing education to the constituents regarding the long-term plan.

It was noted that there are different laws regarding forming new entities (RFA or merger), which the board will need to consider in the future.

The two levy lid amounts discussed were (\$.84 and \$1.15). While Liz Loomis favors the \$.84, Chief Van der Veen favors the \$1.15. It was decided to discuss both amounts during an open public hearing scheduled for Monday, May 1, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. at the district office. Following the discussion and after answering any public questions, the Board will approve a final levy increase amount to be put on the August ballot. The deadline to submit a ballot measure is May 12, 2023.

Chief Van der Veen noted that both districts had put much effort, time, and money into the RFA process, which was agreed to be the ultimate best path forward. The hope is to have the RFA come to fruition once the levy rates are at parity.

Liz Loomis also discussed the possibility of requesting a merger of District 4 into NWFR, which would only require a vote by District 4 constituents.

Either way, the goal is to consolidate both fire districts and secure enough money to save both lives and property.

Chairman Cooley thanked Liz Loomis for her feedback which the Board will take into consideration.

Liz Loomis left the meeting at 12:12 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

Public Hearing: A public hearing will be scheduled for Monday, May 1, 2023, at 7:00 p.m., to be held in person at Britton Loop Station 12 and via Zoom. All Commissioners are expected to attend the meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Lynden Tribune article re: WCFD4 March meetings
- Cascadia Daily News article re: WCFD4 March meetings
- Lynden Tribune article re: WCFD4 and NWFR partnership

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **May Board Meeting Attendance Query:** All Commissioners are expected to attend the May 15 meeting via Zoom. The other commissioners plan to attend.

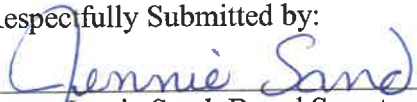
AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING

- Liz Loomis Public Affairs Communications Meeting Update (May 4)
- WCFD 4 Plan B

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