



Central Whidbey Island Fire & Rescue North Whidbey Fire and Rescue

CWIFR Station 53
1164 Race Road
Coupeville, WA 98239
(360) 678-3602
www.cwfire.org

NWFR Administration
770 NE Midway Boulevard
Oak Harbor, WA 98227
(260) 675-1131
www.nwfr.org



DRAFT

Central Whidbey Island Fire & Rescue and North Whidbey Fire Rescue Joint Board of Fire Commissioners Special Meeting Minutes

June 6, 2019
9:00 AM

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Hutchison called the meeting to order at 9:01am. Also, in attendance were Commissioner Messner, Commissioner Engle, Chairman Lamont, Commissioner Goen, Commissioner Koorn, Chief Hartin, BC Swiger, Secretary Harpe, Larry Morse, Chris Geiger, James Meek, Jim Huff, Jen Porter, Zack Greenberg, Daniel Horton, Cliff Horr, Teresa Jenkins, Jimmy Zimmerman, Lyle Zimmerman, Secretary Torgerson

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVAL/CORRECTIONS OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

None

OLD BUSINESS

Establishing future negotiations with Whidbey Island Hospital District (DBA WhidbeyHealth) regarding the BLS Inter-Local Agreement

- Chief Hartin summarized the negotiations that went back and forth with WhidbeyHealth (WH), Central Whidbey Island Fire Rescue, and North Whidbey Fire Rescue. Chairman Hutchinson, Chairman Lamont, and Chief Hartin collaborated and wrote a letter to WH May 30, 2019, explaining to the medical program director Mr. Meyers the challenges they are facing with what WH wants out of this contract revision. Both Central Whidbey Island Fire and Rescue (CWIFR) and North Whidbey Fire and Rescue (NWFR) were oppose to having the medical program director use their Emergency Medical Service (EMS) ambulances at his own discretion. Both districts felt that WH's proposition would not benefit their members or the community they serve. Chief Hartin, understands that there are obstacles they all are facing however, this would be a time to discuss them and find a solution that would benefit all parties involved. He has been researching other districts that are in the same type of situation and he has found that San Juan

county in conjunction with other fire districts are consolidating their EMS with Fire response into one organization and they are getting great results. There may be many challenges initially but there is opportunity for great long-term results.

- June 3, 2019 NWFR and CWIFR received a letter from the medical program director Mr. Meyers that said, that it was unfortunate that the Districts were not on board and willing to come to terms with him having total control of the program. WH is considering ending the contract completely and alternately renting space in both the NWFR and CWIFR facilities for their employees and ambulances instead of coming to terms with a new contract. Chief Hartin sent Mr. Meyers an email asking if his intent when sending the letter on June 3 with the option of renting instead of negotiating the contract, be him giving NWFR and CWIFR 120-day notice to end the contract with WH? As a result, in the email Mr. Meyers said it would be best to start the 120-day notice, however he understands the impact and would like the contract to end December 31, 2019.
- Commissioner Engle reiterated WH wanted to rent space in their facilities instead, however all commissioners and Chief Hartin agreed that they do not have the space to rent living spaces and ambulance space to WH. CWIFR is expanding and starting construction soon and they don't have space available to rent out to WH. There is no doubt that both Districts will be in a hardship and will suffer by this change. Loss of the interlocal agreement to staff the BLS ambulances and replacement with an agreement providing payment of \$0.035/\$1000 Assessed Valuation will result in CWIFR will loosing approximately \$134,000 in revenue and NWFR loosing approximately \$326,000 in revenue. Based on loss of this revenue, CWIFR will likely eliminate 6 part time employees and the position of Deputy Fire Chief. This will reduce on-duty staffing and increase response times. The contract has been in place for ten years and has helped the community; it is unfortunate that we cannot come up with an agreement. Everyone understands WH needs to lower cost but it is also costly for both Fire District in the long run. The Boards do not understand how WH is going to save money without a contract with them. However, the main goal of both the fire districts and the hospital should be to serve the public.
- Chief Hartin also pointed out that the dynamics between their members and WH employees would suffer. It is our responsibility to make sure our members feel welcomed and comfortable. Having WH employees in our living space may create unwelcoming environment for our volunteers. Human perspective will come to play while renting to WH because of how different both sides operate. It will definitely impact morale and the environment of the Fire Districts.
- Commissioner Hutchinson was concerned about the perception of the public concerning the Fire Districts. It is essential to show the public we did our best to negotiate with them. Chief Hartin stated CWIFR is still committed and will provide excellent service to the public. After December 31, 2019 there may be some tension between the staff of WhidbeyHealth and the fire districts but we will rise to the challenge and continue to interact in a professional manner.
- Commissioner Messner stated we should be prepared and research real estate and how much can we ask when renting space in our facilities in order to get a clear picture and if that would be a possibility. Chief Hartin stated he had some experience in this type of

situation and it can get complicated. There may be challenges like maintenance, living spaces, and just the human aspect of it can be difficult. It possesses challenges that can be good or bad. Commissioner Hutchison asked Chairman Lamont if WH had mentioned anything about renting spaces at their facilities? Chairman Lamont said he had not received any inquiries from Mr. Meyers about this topic.

- Chief Hartin stated he had written a letter to the members of CWIFR providing them with a summary of the EMS contract and where it stands today. NWFR Commissioners mentioned that they would do the same to inform the NWFR members and the community.
- Commissioner Koorn stated that there may be some hope in negotiating the contract with WH and that there should be one last attempt to negotiate with WH. Commissioner Messner wants the public to be aware of what is going on and hear both sides of the story. All board members agreed. Chief Hartin will set up a date and time where everyone can gather together in an open public meeting and talk about what is happening with the WH contract negotiations, what will happen and how we plan to move forward as a community and as a Fire District. Station 53 is the proposed location for the next special meeting at the end of June.

GOOD OF THE ORDER/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next Regular Board Meetings

- Central Whidbey Island Fire & Rescue
June 13, 2019
Location: Station 53
1164 Race Road
Coupeville, WA
- North Whidbey Fire Rescue
June 11, 2019
Time: 6:30 pm
Location: Administration suite 201
770 NE Midway Blvd
Oak Harbor, WA 98277

ADJOURN MEETING

- There being no further business and by mutual consent, the Special Meeting of the Boards adjourned at 9:30am

Attest



Board Secretary/Accounting Manager
Monica Torgerson

