



## NORTH WHIDBEY FIRE AND RESCUE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Station 25, 2720 Heller Rd., Oak Harbor, WA

Phone: 360-675-1131 Email: [Admin@nwfr.org](mailto:Admin@nwfr.org)

### Minutes

March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023

6:30 p.m.

*Approved April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023*

**Call to Order:** Chairman Marvin Koorn called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Also in attendance: Commissioner TJ Lamont, Commissioner Gerald Smith, Interim Fire Chief Chris Swiger, Battalion Chief Dan Horton, and Secretary Natasha Spydell.

#### **Additions to the agenda**

None

#### **Swear In**

None

#### **Public Comment**

A public comment was made by Frank Mueller in reference to response times. Mr. Mueller expressed his concerns for Island County properties and reported that response numbers are not what they used to be. He stated the fire response is not as good.

Chairman Koorn stated the district is aware of the issue and is actively recruiting volunteers and applying for grants.

Mr. Mueller questioned if the district asks for mutual aid when duty shift coverage and personnel shortages arise.

Chief Swiger stated the district works with the United States Navy Fire Department and the Oak Harbor City Fire Department asking for mutual aid assistance when needed.

A public comment was made by Sunny Fitzgerald as a Citizen for Safe & Humane Fireworks in support of Island County Commissioner Melanie Bacon.

Joni Panciera made a public comment saying she was here to support the Citizens for Safe & Humane Fireworks initiative as well.

Jackie Lasater made a public comment stating the group was here to introduce themselves to the fire district. She stated they had already met with South Whidbey and Camano Island fire districts to present their initiative to their boards. She stated the primary focus of the initiative is environmental and public safety concerns.



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A public comment was made by Island County Commissioner Melanie Bacon. Commissioner Bacon appreciated the topic being on the agenda. She stated the Board of Island County Commissioners are seeking input from local fire districts to see if fireworks, and fireworks safety is a concern.

Commissioner Bacon stated it was reported that Island County had the most fireworks related fires in Washington State per capita. She has concerns about Island County becoming a fireworks destination place for surrounding areas where fireworks are prohibited.

Chairman Koorn stated the board would like to set up a special meeting where the committee could share their presentation. Chairman Koorn asked if the data had a breakdown of where the fires caused by fireworks were.

Commissioner Bacon stated not that she had seen.

Chairman Koorn asked what days are best for Commissioner Bacon for a special meeting.

Commissioner Bacon stated Thursday and Friday mornings are best, and she would be out of town the last week of March.

Chairman Koorn thanked Commissioner Bacon for being at the meeting and sharing her concerns.

Chairman Koorn asked the group to leave their information with Secretary Spydell and the board will set a date to meet again.

**Consent Agenda:** Minutes: Regular Meeting, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and Special Meeting, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Vouchers for payment approval or denial for the month of February 2023, and Treasurer's Reports approval for the month of January 2023.

*General Batch #05G for Vouchers 230202001-230202011 dated 02/01/2023 in the amount of \$6,148.05.*

*Payroll Batch #05B for Vouchers 230201001-230201008 and EFT dated 02/01/2023 in the amount of \$26,177.41.*

*General Batch #06G for Vouchers 230203001-230203015 dated 02/08/2023 in the amount of \$9,149.17.*

*General Batch #07G for Vouchers 230204001-230204021 dated 02/15/2023 in the amount of \$34,657.08.*

*General Batch #08G for Vouchers 230205001-230205019 dated 02/22/2023 in the amount of \$34,183.66.*

*Payroll Batch #0224P for Transactions 217-290 dated 02/24/2023 in the amount of \$55,439.02.*

Chairman Koorn asked if there were any questions on the consent agenda.

No questions or comments were presented.

Commissioner Lamont motioned to approve the consent agenda; motion seconded by Commissioner Smith.

**Motion approved unanimously.**

### **Correspondence**

Chairman Koorn stated this topic was already discussed during public comment and the board would meet at a special meeting to discuss the email regarding the fireworks initiative.



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### **Personnel**

Chief Swiger stated the board had already approved the hiring of Benjamin Bauer and Joseph Henigsmith, but their start dates were added to the agenda. Chief Swiger stated that volunteer Magdaline Fink applied for a part-time firefighter position and needs board approval.

Commissioner Smith motioned to approve hiring Magdaline Fink as part-time firefighter, motion seconded by Commissioner Lamont.

**Motion approved unanimously.**

### **Unfinished Business:**

#### **Budget**

Chairman Koorn asked if there were any questions on the budget.

Commissioner Smith stated the diesel and gasoline expenses had not changed since the previous month.

Chief Swiger stated paying the bill was delayed due to an accounting error by the vendor.

Chairman Koorn stated the equipment repair and maintenance seems high for being this early in the year.

Chief Swiger stated he would look into the expenses.

Chairman Koorn asked why contract services was so high already.

Chief Swiger stated it was due to the change to First Due.

Commissioner Smith asked why there was an Operations Travel expense this year.

Chief Swiger stated that the expense was from the Sutphen trip last Fall, but because the Visa credit card it was charged to has had a negative balance since then, the BARS code was not expensed until now.

Commissioner Smith stated that the Appreciation Dinner stayed under budget.

No other questions or comments were made.

#### **Training Officer**

Chief Swiger stated there has not been any movement on the Training Officer position. He stated it is remaining on the agenda until a decision is finalized.

#### **Appreciation Dinner**

Chairman Koorn stated he appreciated all the information on the Appreciation Dinner that shows the breakdown of the associated costs.

#### **Station 23 and 24 Expenses**



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Commissioner Smith asked why there was such a big difference in the telephone and internet bills for the stations. He stated that Station 23 costs were \$1000.00 more than Station 24 for the year, but they should be the same in theory.

Chief Swiger stated it might be due to the contract when the service began, but he will verify.

### **New Radio Expenses Overview**

Chairman Koorn asked if there were any questions for the radio expenses overview.

No questions or comments were presented.

### **Borgman Estate**

Secretary Spydell stated that the contributions made to the district that did not have specific requests attached to them all funnel into the district's unreserved cash balance at the end of the year. She stated if the board wanted to track donations and contributions closely, the revenues could be assigned different BARS codes such as Committed Cash and Investments or Assigned Cash and Investments. Secretary Spydell explained the difference between the two is the level of approval required to spend the funds.

### **Van Dam Property**

Chairman Koorn stated currently there was nothing more to discuss on the property. Chairman Koorn asked if Commissioner Lamont had any update on another property.

Commissioner Lamont stated no one seems to know who owns the property. Commissioner Lamont explained it is reported that the property taxes are paid by the Department of Natural Resources, but it is unclear who owns the property. A recommendation has been made to go directly to the title company to get information on the property ownership. Commissioner Lamont stated the Island County Treasurer's Office said it would take some time before they could find out the information. Commissioner Bacon suggested that Commissioner Lamont contact the County Treasurer's office to see if this is even on his radar because a new Treasurer was elected. She stated the new Treasurer is Tony Lam.

Commissioner Lamont thanked Commissioner Bacon for the information and stated he would contact County Treasurer Lam.

### **New Business:**

#### **Resolutions**

#### **531 – Appoint Investment Officer and Alternate Investment Officer**

Chairman Koorn asked Secretary Spydell if the county stated why they wanted this updated annually now.

Secretary Spydell stated it is because there is a new Treasurer in office, and it is his request.



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Commissioner Lamont motioned to approve Resolution 531; motion seconded by Commissioner Smith.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

### **Policy Updates**

Chairman Koorn stated he would like to table updating the policies until the next board meeting.

Chairman Koorn stated he feels there are some areas on the standards for dress policy that could cause some issues if not stated more specifically. Chairman Koorn stated the conduct policy had some incorrect numbering and some things were missing. Chairman Koorn stated the performance review policy was good, but he would like it to be discussed further.

Commissioner Smith stated he liked the performance review policy as written.

Commissioner Lamont stated the performance review policy was good but needed some clarifying and specifications in areas.

Chairman Koorn stated he would like to meet with Chief Swiger to go over the policies to be on the agenda for approval at the next board meeting.

### **Apparatus Tires**

Chief Swiger directed the board to the supporting documents provided regarding the purchase of tires for the operations vehicles. Chief Swiger made the recommendation of not buying all new tires at once, as some are still good until 2024. Chief Swiger provided pictures of the current state of vehicle tires and recommended purchasing new tires for Engine 25, front tires for Tender 21 and 27, rear tires on Engine 26, and all four tires on Engine 24 because they are out of date. Chief Swiger stated the cost of this purchase would be approximately \$13,000.

Commissioner Lamont stated the cost is better than the initial \$22,000 discussed for new tires previously.

Chairman Koorn stated that changing tires based on their age and not their condition is frustrating.

Chairman Koorn asked if the new tires will have a ten-year expiration.

Chief Swiger confirmed.

Commissioner Lamont motioned to approve the new tire purchases; motion seconded by Commissioner Smith.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

### **Visa Credit Cards**

#### **i. Names on Cards**

Chief Swiger stated for easier tracking purposes and auditing purposes he would like the district to have cardholder custody names placed on the credit cards. Chief Swiger stated personnel have had issues making purchases at some local businesses because names are not on the credit cards as well.



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Chief Horton stated he had to talk to the postmaster just to buy stamps because his name was not on the card.

Chairman Koorn asked how many credit cards the district would have, and how many would have names.

Chief Swiger stated three cards would have names, and there would be a fourth credit card kept at the administrative building for personnel to check-out and use as needed upon approval.

Commissioner Lamont stated he had discussed the topic with Secretary Spydell previously and it would be easier to track, reconcile, and record.

Chairman Koorn stated he does not feel there is a difference with tracking and reconciling if there is a purchase order made that is approved then the Visa bill should correspond.

Commissioner Smith stated he likes the idea of having names on the cards and can see the benefit.

Commissioner Smith asked what the cards are primarily used for.

Chief Swiger stated certain monthly payments to vendors require a card on file because they do not invoice. Chief Swiger stated the other credit cards purchases are for travel and Home Depot purchases.

Chairman Koorn stated if we put names on the credit cards, it will not help the tracking on the one office card still.

Commissioner Lamont asked if Lt. Reinstra must come to office to checkout a credit card every time he needs to make a purchase with one.

Chief Swiger confirmed.

Commissioner Smith stated he personally likes the idea of having names on the credit cards.

Commissioner Lamont stated he would make a motion to approve the names on the credit cards if Chief Swiger lists whose names are going on the cards.

Chairman Koorn asked Chief Swiger who needs a credit card.

Chief Swiger stated himself, Chief Horton, Lt. Reinstra with a small limit, and a North Whidbey Fire and Rescue card to be kept at headquarters.

Commissioner Lamont motioned to approve putting names on Visa credit cards; motion seconded by Commissioner Smith.

**Motion Carried Unanimously.**

### ii. **Fraudulent Charges**

Secretary Spydell stated there were some fraudulent charges on the Visa 1 bill. She stated there were international charges that were setup as reoccurring monthly payments. Secretary Spydell stated the card has been cancelled, and a new card has been issued and received by the district.

### **DRS Update**

Chief Swiger stated there was a former employee who the district was attempting to recover some DRS funds from. Two previous attempts to contact the individual by certified mail were unsuccessful. Secretary Spydell asked the board how they would like to proceed, if at all.



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Chairman Koorn stated he would like to continue the push for recovering the funds. Secretary Spydell asked if the board would be interested in taking it to small claims. Chairman Koorn stated yes if it is necessary to recover the funds.

### **Fire Chief Report**

Chief Swiger publicly thanked Administrative Assistant Laura Titherington for her hard work planning the Firefighter Appreciation Dinner. Chief Swiger shared a report showing call volume and double-tapped calls to inform the board on what kind of reporting is available in the new software program First Due.

Commissioner Smith asked if there were still calls going to three and four tones.

Chief Swiger confirmed, stating it is a problem for EMS calls, but volunteers are starting to respond more.

Commissioner Smith asked if the district has been hesitant to call for mutual aid.

Chairman Koorn stated the hospital is still responding, we are secondary.

Commissioner Smith stated he understands that, but asked if calls are going to third and fourth tones, is the district asking for assistance. Commissioner Smith asked if ALS is always responding to medical calls with us, stating there are a lot of lift assist calls.

Chief Swiger stated if it is a lift assist from vehicle to structure, it requires the fire department, not EMS. Chief Swiger stated if there is a fall in the home, and the person is over 75 years old, it is an automatic call to ALS.

Chairman Koorn asked if there were any other questions.

No other questions or comments were presented.

### **Operations Chief Report**

Chief Horton did not have anything to report.

### **Battalion Chief Report**

No Report.

**At 7:13pm Chairman Koorn called the meeting into Executive Session from 7:15pm until 7:45pm.**

### **Executive Session:**

#### **a. RCW 42.30.140(4)(a)**

Collective bargaining sessions with employee organizations, including contract negotiations, grievance meetings, and discussions relating to the interpretation or application of a labor agreement; or (b) that portion of a meeting during which the governing body is planning or adopting the strategy or position to be taken by the governing body during the course of any



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collective bargaining, professional negotiations, or grievance or mediation proceedings, or reviewing the proposals made in the negotiations or proceedings while in progress.

**b. RCW 42.30.110(1)(g)**

To evaluate the qualifications of an applicant for public employment or to review the performance of a public employee.

**At 7:45pm Chairman Koorn extended the executive session until 8:35pm. Chairman Koorn called the meeting out of executive session at 8:35pm. No decisions were made.**

### **Good of the Order**

Chairman Koorn asked Commissioner Lamont and Commissioner Smith to check their calendars to discuss a date to have a special meeting with the Citizens for Safe & Humane Fireworks.

The board agreed on a tentative date of April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 09:00 and asked Secretary Spydell to confirm with the fireworks initiative members to see if they are available.

Secretary Spydell agreed to contact the members to confirm.

Commissioner Smith asked Chief Swiger if he could get a report for how many fires caused by fireworks the district has responded to in the last two years.

Chief Swiger stated it is on his list.

### **Adjourn Meeting**

Chairman Koorn asked if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Smith motioned to adjourn the meeting; motion seconded by Commissioner Lamont.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

Meeting Adjourned at 8:43pm.

Attest:

Natasha Spydell  
Board Secretary/Accounting Manager