



## NORTH WHIDBEY FIRE AND RESCUE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Station 25, 2720 Heller St., Oak Harbor, WA  
Phone: 360-675-1131 Email: [Admin@nwfr.org](mailto:Admin@nwfr.org)

### Special Meeting Minutes

March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025

9:00 a.m.

**Location:** 770 NE Midway Blvd  
Oak Harbor, WA

*Approved April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025*

**Call to Order:** Chairman Marvin Koorn called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Also in attendance: Commissioner Gerald Smith, Commissioner Robert Miller, Chief Chris Swiger, Chief Ray Merrill, Chief Dan Horton and Secretary Natasha Spydell.

#### **Policy 153 – Cadet Program**

The board reviewed the changes that were made as previously requested.

Commissioner Smith motioned to approve Policy 153; motion seconded by Commissioner Miller.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

#### **Policy 135 – Class A & B Uniforms**

Chairman Koorn stated Section 13 was added to the policy to address the replacement and repair of uniforms.

Chairman Koorn stated officers will not be the ones approving uniform replacements/repairs.

Chief Swiger stated it could be worded as a recommendation from a station officer to a chief officer and the chief officer will approve, then notify the quartermaster.

The commissioners approved the change.

Secretary Spydell stated 1.1.1 and 1.1.3 state *one* Class A uniform will be purchased by the district and asked if there should be different requirements for replacing Class A vs. Class B uniforms.

Commissioner Smith suggested adding *...uniforms purchased by the district will be replaced for the following...*

Chairman Koorn asked if the district is only replacing what it purchases or what anyone purchases.

Chief Swiger stated he does not want members representing the district in uniforms that do not fit or are worn.

Chairman Koorn stated 1.1.1 and 1.1.3 should be changed from *one* to *a* Class A uniform.

Commissioner Smith suggested postponing the policy until the next meeting in order to review it further.

Commissioner Miller agreed and stated he would like it to be divided into Class A and Class B.

Chairman Koorn asked staff to make the appropriate changes as already requested by the board and table the rest of the discussion and approval until the next meeting.

#### **Station 27 Building**

Chief Merrill stated he received a quote with engineered plans for a steel metal 20x40 building with one garage door in the middle ranging from \$17,000 - \$22,000. He stated the cement groundwork would be around \$5k and around \$30k for a contractor to construct the structure. Including incidentals such as power, lights, propane etc. he believes the total cost would be between \$75,000 and \$80,000.

Commissioner Smith stated it costs more than he would like to spend when the district is potentially looking to build two new stations. He was looking for more of a temporary structure to get all the district vehicles covered when he initially proposed the idea.

Chairman Koorn stated he would approve the structure and could probably go without heat in the building but need the electricity.

Commissioner Miller stated he would be worried about a temporary structure and agrees vehicles need to be kept out of the weather. He stated he would rather have something that meets the district's current needs because it will be a while before there is another place to put it.

Commissioner Smith asked how many operations vehicles are currently outside.

Chief Horton stated two Toyota Rav-4s used for response are currently outside, but one is under a carport.

Chairman Koorn asked the chiefs to look into rearranging the vehicles, with a new building, so nothing is outside, and the district has the proper response vehicles available where they are needed. He stated it makes no sense to build a building but still have vehicles outside.

### **EMS License**

Chief Swiger stated he spoke to the gentleman in Lynden with an ambulance for sale. The ambulance was purchased a couple of years ago for \$12,000 and it has been sitting for a couple of years, so the batteries are dead. It is a 6.0 diesel engine with 140,000 miles and he is not sure if it has been bulletproofed. Chief Swiger stated he is waiting on the VIN number so he can look up the vehicle's records and has a time set up for Thursday to go look at the vehicle.

### **Academy**

Commissioner Smith stated he had reached out to Chief Swiger after visiting the academy on a Saturday to look into a building or container that can be used for a classroom to get recruits and instructors out of the pouring rain and possibly providing lunches on Saturdays.

Chief Merrill stated the Sherriff's building at the training center has been cleaned out and the district will be provided with a key to use as a classroom as needed.

Chief Swiger stated food would be around \$300 - \$350 dollars per day and there are 12 – 14 Saturdays left, which is around \$4,000 for food. Chief Swiger stated the recruits understand they need to bring their own food, and he has concerns about picky eaters and allergies.

Chairman Koorn stated the cost used to be included in the cost of academy and he tends to agree that lunch should be provided.

Commissioner Miller stated it should be narrowed down as to what exactly will be provided for lunches.

Commissioner Smith stated he was just suggesting soup and sandwiches.

Chairman Koorn stated the cost will be taken out of the training employees line item and can be adjusted, if necessary, with a budget amendment in June or July.

Commissioner Smith motioned to approve district provided lunches for academy recruits and instructors; motion seconded by Commissioner Miller.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

### **Firefighter/Maintenance Position**

Chief Swiger stated Lieutenant Reinstra does not go on as many calls as he initially thought and responding to calls is not detrimental to the maintenance position. He stated the position would have to be addressed with the union.

Chairman Koorn asked if the same job description would be used.

Chief Swiger stated there would be no supervision.

Chairman Koorn asked for the job description to be drafted so the district can proceed as it enters negotiations with the union.

Commissioner Smith stated he is not in favor of hiring someone for maintenance when the district already has that. He stated he would rather hire a 24-hr shift firefighter.

Chairman Koorn asked Chief Swiger to get what he wants on paper and the board can decide from there.

### **Strategic Plan**

Chairman Koorn stated he will not approve moving forward with the strategic plan proposals. He stated the comment from a reference that it could be done in-house decided it for him. He stated there are talented and experienced staff and community members who could draft something that would not be much different than what the proposals are offering.

Commissioner Smith stated at the conference in Oregon he did not find anyone who spoke positively about spending that kind of money and at least 50% of the work can be done in-house. He stated he thought he would hear something beneficial and helpful but was told to spend the money elsewhere instead.

Commissioner Miller stated with the knowledge around the table, the district can come up with a good plan for where it needs to go and how it is going to get there.

### **Apparatus Replacement**

Chief Swiger stated an apparatus list has been provided to the board that differs from last year with the removal of engine refurbishes, apart from Engine 26, which is due this year. He stated the engine was already done so that part would not need to be completed.

Lieutenant Reinstra stated he does not believe an engine refurb was done on Engine 26.

Chief Swiger stated he would like to start looking at replacing the two PUCs and would like to order another engine this year, then another one in two years. There are a lot of engines available for sale so the district would need to decide whether to price items, such as the PUCs or HME, to sell quickly, or sell for their worth. Chief Swiger stated he would like to get rid of the two command Tahoes and get two pickup trucks to replace them this year. The tubes on the boat need to be replaced and would have to be sent to California to get done.

Commissioner Smith asked if the price of the tubes was still around \$20,000 - \$30,000.

Chief Swiger confirmed.

Commissioner Smith asked if foam tubes are an option.

Chief Swiger stated he has not looked into that.

Chairman Koorn stated the total cost is \$2.6 million dollars and the district does not have it.

Chief Swiger stated that is why the PUCs and engines are staggered out and he is currently asking for one engine, two command vehicles, and one refurbish.

Chairman Koorn stated his absolutes for this year would be an ambulance, one command vehicle, one engine (new or refurbished), and boat tubes.

Chief Swiger stated the last time the tubes were inspected he was told they were in really good shape. Chief Swiger stated this year, the district has enough money to definitely buy an engine, refurbish Engine 26, and purchase two command vehicles.

Chairman Koorn stated he would have to see the numbers. If the district spends \$1.7 million dollars on vehicles, it still needs to be able to pay bills from tax time to tax time, and property has not even been discussed yet. Chairman Koorn stated it comes down to having to do a levy in order to survive and the board needs to see some definitive numbers. Chairman Koorn told Chief Swiger to talk to the chief at the McLean Rd. Fire Department in Skagit County when he goes to look at the ambulance in Lynden to see who they just purchased an engine from for around \$800,000. He stated he would like to see a plan and the district needs to start developing specifications for what it would like to do. The quick purchases would be an ambulance under \$50,000, and command vehicles. There needs to be written justification for the command vehicles and what they are being replaced with.

Commissioner Smith stated looking at the budget, the district cannot afford what the chief wants this year. He stated selling and replacing one Tahoe is fine but could probably just sell the second, as he is not in support of every chief officer driving a command vehicle home. Commissioner Smith stated the district does not need another vehicle sitting at the district office when there is already one there. He also stated that he would replace the 2003 HME before replacing any PUCs.

Chairman Koorn stated he was okay with looking into replacing one command vehicle at this point. Commissioner Smith and Commissioner Miller both agreed with a one-for-one command vehicle replacement at this time.

Commissioner Smith stated he would like to see movement on the boat tubes as well because it keeps being brought up.

Commissioner Miller stated he would like to look into putting rigid stuff in the boat tubes for more buoyancy.

Commissioner Smith stated at this time, an ambulance, boat tubes, and one command vehicle are the priorities.

Commissioner Miller added that Engine 26 refurbish is also a priority.

Chairman Koorn directed staff to start working on engine specifications as well.

**Chairman Koorn called the meeting into executive session at 10:50 a.m. until 11:15 a.m.**

**1. Executive Session:**

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

To consider the selection of a site or the acquisition of real estate by lease or purchase when public knowledge regarding such consideration would cause a likelihood of increased price.

**At 11:15 a.m. Chairman Koorn extended the executive session until 11:30 a.m.**

**At 11:30 a.m. Chairman Koorn called the meeting out of executive session. No decisions were made.**

**DOT Property**

Chairman Koorn stated Chief Swiger received a new estimate on the DOT property at \$410,000.

Commissioner Smith motioned to approve Chief Swiger contacting the state to find out the next steps for purchasing the property; motion seconded by Commissioner Miller.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**Adjourn**

Commissioner Smith motioned to adjourn the special meeting; motion seconded by Chairman Koorn.

The Special Meeting of the Board adjourned at 11:31 a.m.

Attest:



Natasha Spydell

Board Secretary/Accounting Manager