



NORTH WHIDBEY FIRE AND RESCUE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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

Phone: 360-675-1131 Email: Admin@nwfr.org

Meeting Minutes

April 8th, 2025

6:30 p.m.

Approved May 13th, 2025

Call to Order: Chairman Marvin Koorn called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Chairman Koorn declared the meeting into recess until 6:35 p.m. in order to conclude the Board of Trustees meeting. Also in attendance: Commissioner Gerald Smith, Commissioner Robert Miller, Fire Chief Chris Swiger, Deputy Fire Chief Ray Merrill, Battalion Chief Dan Horton, Battalion Chief Jobie Gause and Secretary Natasha Spydell.

Additions to the Agenda

Chairman Koorn added the *Whidbey Resource Chaplain MOU* to the agenda.

Chief Swiger asked that *Strategic Plan* be added to the agenda.

Public Comment

None

Correspondence

Secretary Spydell shared the status update from the WA State Auditor's Office.

Personnel

Gilbert, Troy – Moved from part-time per diem firefighter to volunteer firefighter.

Consent Agenda: Meeting Minutes for Regular Meeting, March 11th, 2025, and Special Meeting, March 25th, 2025, expenditure approval for the month of March 2025, and Treasurer's Report for February 2025.

General Batch #09G for Vouchers 250301001-230301016 dated 03/05/2025 in the amount of \$36,145.35.

Payroll Batch #0311OT for Transaction 372 dated 03/11/2025 in the amount of \$153.78.

Payroll Batch #0311B for EFT Transaction 375 dated 03/11/2025 in the amount of \$5.02.

General Batch #10G for Vouchers 250303001-2580303023 dated 03/12/2025 in the amount of \$16,035.83.

Payroll Batch #0325P for Transactions 402-482 dated 03/14/2025 in the amount of \$74,484.81.

Payroll Batch #11EFT for EFT Transactions 485-489 dated 03/14/2025 in the amount of \$25,909.09.

Payroll Batch #11B for Vouchers 250305001-250305005 dated 03/19/2025 in the amount of \$9,763.25.

General Batch #11G for Vouchers 250306001-250306017 dated 03/19/2025 in the amount of \$6,527.23.

General Batch #11G for EFT Transaction 496 dated 03/19/2025 in the amount of \$692.85.

General Batch #12G for Vouchers 250307001-250307027 dated 03/26/2025 in the amount of \$31,323.32.

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

Motion carried unanimously.

Unfinished Business:

Budget 2025

Chairman Koorn stated the following line-items are close to being over budget or on track to be over:

522 20 10 016 – Ops Overtime Duty Crew FT/FF

522 45 30 001 – Training Employees Supplies

522 60 30 004 – Vehicles Equipment

522 10 40 022 – Contract Services

522 50 40 010 – Building Repair/Maintenance

Chief Swiger stated the duty crew overtime was for academy training and he is watching it closely.

Commissioner Smith asked if a new line-item had been created for supplies, such as saws.

Chief Swiger stated saws should go under *522 20 30 011 – Operations Equipment*.

Chairman Koorn directed the accounting manager to review the Vehicle Equipment line item and move any items that should be expensed to Operations Equipment.

Chief Swiger stated Building Repair/Maintenance will need a budget adjustment.

Secretary Spydell stated Contract Services are paid up front, and the only outstanding payment remaining is the semi-annual payment for Vector Solutions.

Station 27 Building

Chairman Koorn asked if there were any updates.

Commissioner Smith stated he is still not in favor of building a structure at Station 27.

Chief Swiger agreed.

Chief Horton stated apparatuses were moved around and currently everything is inside apart from Aid 25, which is under a carport.

Chairman Koorn stated the district will have to spend money if it wants all vehicles inside. He stated a new station is five years away. Chairman Koorn asked if looking into a similar type of structure at Van Dam to begin replacing Station 26 is a better way to go.

Commissioner Smith stated he would be more supportive of that as long as the district has an idea of the permanent structure that would go there.

Chief Merrill stated the going rate is \$700 per square foot.

Chairman Koorn asked for the chiefs to come up with options for a structure on Van Dam property.

Commissioner Smith stated he would like to see something similar to Taylor Rd.

Chief Swiger stated the structure would need to be situated to one side or the other so there is room to add onto it. He recommended a two-stall to start, with future plans to add a training room and sleeping quarters.

Chief Merrill stated he will look into some options.

Firefighter/Maintenance Position

Chairman Koorn stated Chief Swiger was directed to work on the job description for the position so the district has an idea of what it is asking for prior to going into negotiations.

Chief Swiger stated he would work on it.

Station Maintenance List

No update.

District Goals

No update

EMS License

Chief Swiger stated he is attending the EMS meeting tomorrow where he will get an update on what the situation is with the minimum/maximum for Island County licenses.

Policy 135 – Uniform Dress Code Class A & B

Chief Horton stated he is working on it.

Policy 149 – Number of POCs and Volunteer Firefighters

Chief Swiger stated he does not think there needs to be a policy that limits the number of volunteers the district can have. He stated the limit should be budget driven and the chief should be watching the budget.

Chairman Koorn stated the policy is budget driven but run into a lot of costs such as training, pension, etc.

Commissioner Smith stated looking at the numbers, many individuals should be asked to either step up or leave.

Chairman Koorn stated looking at the current numbers, many are not firefighters and there should be a limit on the number of non-firefighters the district has.

Commissioner Smith stated the policy needs to be rewritten and the chief can write it how he sees fit and present it to the board.

Chairman Koorn agreed the policy is outdated and needs to be rewritten.

Union Contract

Chairman Koorn stated the board will set a special meeting to discuss upcoming negotiations.

DOT Property

Chief Swiger stated he had not heard back from the state.

Commissioner Smith stated he looked into timber and was told it was all marketable. He is waiting on another callback but is still in favor of moving forward on the property regardless of knowing the prices of timber.

Chairman Koorn stated he would look into gravel.

Drone Policy

Chief Swiger stated he completed an ops directive so they could start training, and he is about halfway done with the policy.

Chairman Koorn asked if the board could expect to see the draft in May or June.

Chief Swiger stated in May he would have a draft ready for the board.

Apparatus Replacement

Chief Swiger gave the board some available options and prices for a chief command vehicle. He stated going used would save the district a lot of money and he would like to stay under \$50,000. He would like to start making some calls and is asking the board for leeway to do so.

Commissioner Smith stated he has no issue with looking up to \$50,000.

Chief Swiger stated if he finds something he will call each commissioner individually, but he needs the leeway to be able to negotiate.

Chairman Koorn asked what the bid law threshold is.

Chief Swiger stated \$75,000.

Chairman Koorn asked if that is including everything on the vehicle.

Chief Swiger stated it is only for the purchase of the vehicle.

Chairman Koorn asked what the difference is if the district spends \$70,000 for a used vehicle once it is outfitted versus purchasing new at \$78,000.

Chief Swiger stated \$50,000 is on the high side and thinks he would purchase one closer to \$40,000.

Chairman Koorn stated he is okay either way, just buying used can be unknown.

Commissioner Smith motioned to approve Chief Swiger to spend up to \$50,000 for a comparable vehicle to be used as a command rig; motion seconded by Commissioner Miller.

Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Smith asked if the ambulance was coming on Thursday.

Chief Swiger confirmed and stated he found an extra radio that could be used in it as well.

Commissioner Smith asked if there was any update on pontoon replacement for the boat.

Chief Swiger stated he did not have an update.

Whidbey Chaplain Resource MOU

Chairman Koorn stated the district is supposed to be paying for support of chaplain services, but it has not been paid in a while.

Chief Swiger stated he talked to Jeff Humphrey's 2-3 weeks ago and was told if the district pays, great, if not, it's okay. Chief Swiger recommended the district pays for the services because the chaplains do a lot for the district and members.

Chairman Koorn stated the MOU needs to be updated.

Chief Swiger stated he would work on updating it.

Strategic Plan

Chief Swiger stated Chief Merrill has volunteered to step up and start working on a strategic plan using a community forum type process.

Chief Merrill stated he will have to put in more than 16 hours a week at times, but he verified with LEOFF that there is no issue. He stated there may need to be a line-item adjustment to cover the extra hours he will be working.

Commissioner Smith thanked Chief Merrill for taking on the task.

New Business:

Policy 132 – Leave of Absence

Chairman Koorn asked if there were any questions.

Commissioner Smith stated the policy discusses 180 days for the member to reapply and turn in their gear. He asked if it should be stated on the form as well.

Chairman Koorn stated for anyone gone longer than 3 months, their gear should be turned in.

Chief Swiger stated gear is kept at stations now.

Chairman Koorn stated stuff can go missing from stations. He stated if someone goes on an LOA, put their gear in a bag and leave it at the district office with their name on it. If someone is absent for more than 30 days, their gear and radio should be turned in to keep until they return.

Commissioner Smith stated the line under the fire chief signature stating all forms need to be turned into the district office was an unnecessary line and in an odd location.

Chairman Koorn asked if the board could see the final draft at the next meeting.

Chief Swiger confirmed.

Website

Chairman Koorn stated the board has been provided with some options and costs for using a website provider. He asked for confirmation that some costs can be covered using the SAFER grant.

Recruitment and Retention Coordinator Kohfield confirmed that setup costs could be covered using the grant, but the district would be responsible for covering annual costs. He stated four providers were contacted: First Arriving, Streamline, Brand G, and Venbit.

Commissioner Smith asked if admin reached out to any other districts that use these providers.

Secretary Spydell stated Chief Horton reached out to Central Whidbey and they were happy with their service provider, First Arriving.

Coordinator Kohfield stated Streamline guarantees 100% ADA compliance, and with First Arriving, an add-on would have to be purchased at \$490 annually for 100% ADA compliance.

Commissioner Smith stated he is concerned about add-ons and feels more comfortable with upfront costs that show exactly what we are getting.

Commissioner Miller asked who would be responsible for updating the website.

Coordinator Kohfield stated he believes it is best to have two administrators.

Commissioner Smith asked what services are provided for the monthly fee.

Coordinator Kohfield stated the monthly fee covers 100% support.

Commissioner Smith stated he would like to see more information on what the district would actually be getting for the money.

Commissioner Miller stated he would like something that is easy to update and less work on our admin.

Chairman Koorn asked the staff to gather more information on their top two picks to provide to the board at the next regular meeting.

Recruitment & Retention Coordinator Update

Recruitment and Retention Coordinator Chris Kohfield gave an update to the board on what he has been working on and accomplished during his first year with the district. His discussion included recruitment events, volunteer testing and manning numbers, community engagement, Skillbridge program application, and a SAFER grant amendment to move funding from tuition assistance to cover PPE and NFPA physicals for new volunteers.

Fire Chief Report

Chief Swiger stated he is working with Chief Anderson on the 800-duty program and he hopes to have something to give to the board for review by next month. He has a meeting scheduled for April 17th with Chris Tumblin from Whidbey Health to go over the contract.

Deputy Fire Chief Report

Chief Merrill went over some details of the recent structure fire on Powell Rd.

Battalion Chief of Operations/Support Report

Chief Horton went over the manning and incident response reports for the month of March. This past Sunday, a physical agility test was held and 10 people were tested, and 9 passed. There is one lateral firefighter who will be given a task book to complete once interviews and onboarding are completed. The application process for part-time firefighters has been posted and testing is scheduled for May 22nd, with chief interviews on May 23rd.

Battalion Chief of Training and Safety Report

Chief Gause stated the academy is going well. A Navy recruit was added, and a couple of district members have dropped. Burn house prep is almost complete and four people from the community have been invited to attend including a Home Depot manager, and Whidbey News Times reporter. Chief Gause stated he met with a guy who can rebuild the training center using a special coating where the walls would not need to be replaced after burns. He is putting the information together and will present it to the board once completed.

Chairman Koorn asked if lunches were being provided to academy on Saturdays and the prices.

Chief Gause confirmed lunches were being provided and he has not spent more than \$250 per day so far.

At 8:20 p.m. Chairman Koorn called the meeting into executive session until 8:30 p.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.

b. RCW 42.30.140(4)(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 collective bargaining, professional negotiations, or grievance or mediation proceedings, or reviewing the proposals made in the negotiations or proceedings while in progress.

At 8:30 p.m. Chairman Koorn called the meeting out of executive session into regular session.

No decisions were made.

Good of the Order:

Chairman Koorn stated he and Commissioner Smith recently attended the WFCA Conference where fire chief evaluations and CARES were the topics of discussion. He stated CARES is a good program but cost-wise it would not be good for the district unless it was island-wide.

Commissioner Smith stated he would be interested in looking into CARES on a local level, using a different model. He stated it is essentially a social worker that works for the fire district. Chairman Koorn stated CARES programs have been successful in cutting down routine calls and ER visits by 77%.

Commissioner Smith asked if all the Puget Sound Energy (PSE) light replacement had been completed. Chief Swiger confirmed it was completed at all the stations.

Commissioner Smith stated the board had approved Lieutenant Reinstra to do some high bay bulb replacement recently as well, but when he initially asked for the PSE lighting program to be looked into, he was told it no longer exists.

Chief Horton stated the program may not have existed at the time and PSE contacted us about it.


Adjourn Meeting

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

Motion carried unanimously.

The Regular Meeting of the Board adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Attest:



Natasha Spydell

Board Secretary/Accounting Manager