



## NORTH WHIDBEY FIRE AND RESCUE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Administration Building, 770 NE Midway Blvd. #1 Oak Harbor, WA

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

### Board of Fire Commissioners Special Minutes

July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021

9:00am

APPROVED

#### Call to Order

Chairman Lamont called the meeting to order at 9:00am in attendance were Commissioner Koorn, Commissioner Goen, Fire Chief Clark, Division Chief Swiger, Division Chief O'Connor, Battalion Chief Lacy, Admin Assistant Rico, Receptionist Engle and Secretary Torgerson.

**Resolution # 492 Surplus Property** – Chairman Lamont made a motion to approve Resolution #492 Surplus HME Engine 24. Commissioner Koorn second it and Commissioner Goen also approved it.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**Staffing** - Commissioner Koorn mentioned that he had gone to an I-Com meeting and he informed the rest of the chiefs about the new law for police use. The police department will not be going to wellness checks, suicides calls etc. Commissioner Koorn said to anticipate the district getting more calls than usual and need to start strategizing for the new developments.

Fire Chief Clark mentioned there are several people that will be going to other fire departments for employment. One of our full-time firefighters will be leaving next month. We have two part-time employees also leaving to other departments. The district will be in desperate need of filling all 20 shifts in August and moving forward. We have been using our mandatory overtime with the employees we have, however it is not a sustainable plan.

Chief Clark mentioned it is very hard to hire Firefighter right now due to so many fire departments hiring as well with better compensation. Department of Burlington, Mt Vernon, Skagit 13, Central Whidbey, South Whidbey and Anacortes.

Commissioner Koorn asked if those 20 shifts are with only one employee on shift instead of two that we normally have? Or is it because we do not have anyone that would take those shifts? Chief Clark answered with the department having only one person on duty instead of two. By the Whidbey agreement the district needs to have two FF/EMT's on shift or the district needs to take the ambulance out of service for the day.

Chief gave the Board a few options to consider:

1. Continue trying to recruit.
2. Continue mandatory employees to work overtime as many times as we need them.
3. Convert six part-time positions into 3 full-time positions with benefits.
4. Suspend the Whidbey Health contract until we can have enough employees to cover the shifts.
5. Terminate the Whidbey Health Contract.
6. Try to apply for the SAFER grant again.

Commissioner Koorn is a bit hesitant to hire 3 more full-time employees at this time. He would like to try to get a SAFER Grant.

Commissioner Goen asked how the new internship was going. Chief Clark mentioned our volunteer that is doing the internship started a day before and we are working on having the volunteer get his EMT certification by the end of the year. He is not qualified to run the ambulance.

Commissioner Koorn suggested limiting the overtime to 2-3 a month and leave the rest of the open shifts for part-time and volunteer. Also, set up a meeting with Whidbey Health and let them know our staffing issues.

**Executive Session RCW 42.30.110 (G) To** evaluate the qualifications of an applicant for public employment or to review the performance of a public employee. Chairman Lamont mentioned the board was going into executive session for 15 mins. They would be back at 10:15 am. At 10:15 the board came back from executive session. **No decisions were made.**

**Board Workshop** - Fire Chief Clark gave the board a list of questions that need to be discussed in order to improve the district and its future.

- 1) What standards and best practices are we going to follow for NWFR:
  - National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) - i.e.:
    - 1720 Organization & Deployment
    - 1500 Occupational Safety, Health & Wellness
    - 1582/1583 Occupational Medical Program - Physicals/Health-Related Fitness
  - Washington Rating Bureau (WRB)
  - Center for Fire Accreditation International (CFAI)
    - Standards of Cover
    - Full Accreditation
- 2) We currently have a WRB rating of a 5 for fire protection?
  - Cost vs. Benefit: Staffing vs. Stations or Both?
  - Would WRB rating increase in small areas give a better cost savings district -wide?
  - WRB rating and correlation to funding available from the levy
- 3) Volunteer (from home) vs. On-duty (at station) Turn-out times – i.e. how long to get the truck on the road after dispatch.
- 4) Residents' expectations?
  - Do we know what public (resident) expectations are? – Are they aware of actual deployment model and response times?
  - Are they acceptable/reasonable?
- 5) Have we identified current areas with response times exceeding 1720 given the recent consolidation of the duty crew to a single station?
- 6) Are stations in the right locations and is there sufficient manpower (volunteers) to meet our response needs in those areas?
  - GIS (computer mapping) to evaluate current and future station locations?
  - GIS equipment/software and staff capabilities for technical studies

- 7) What are the districts staffing goal (fractile response time) for a fire response?
- Does the goal account for the duty crew already being out on an ambulance call?
  - What percentage of the time do we meet that goal - NFPA, CFAI?
- 8) Station Staffing:
- Current Model – effectiveness
  - Alternate models/cost – FT, PT, Vol. duty, Resident
  - Volunteers – ability to leave work/work in district
  - Number volunteers (active) by station – complete evaluation
- 9) Current services offered by the district to the public – Continue or Change?
- Fire Suppression
  - Contracted Ambulance
  - Medical 1<sup>st</sup> Response
  - Technical Rescue (Ropes, Confined Space)
  - Haz-Mat
  - Marine Search & Rescue
  - Public Ed/Prev. – CPR, Fire Inspection
- 10) Current & History call volume (by call type)
- 2020
  - 2018
  - 2015
  - 2010
  - Staffing (duty crew, PT, FT, Volunteer) by station
  - Average call times – responses and back in service
- Is the historic data reliable?**
- 11) How does our cost of service objectively benchmark against other fire departments with similar call volumes and demographics?
- 12) Evaluation of physical resources and condition (Replacement plan):
- Fire Stations
  - District Office Building
  - Apparatus
  - Equipment
- 13) EMS: Currently- Hospital (single role) vs. option for Fire-Based (Dual Role)
- Service Delivery (ALS-vs. BLS) – multi-tiered system?
  - Staffing Impact
  - Cost to Residents

Is the current model the best option?

14) What physical and demographic changes does NWFR expect in the district in the next year, 3 years, 5 years?

The board will set up another special meeting to start going over all these questions and started strategizing the district future.

**Adjourn**

There being no further business and by mutual consent, the regular meeting of the Board adjourned at 10:45am.

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Administrative Manager/ Monica Torgerson