



Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting April 13, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Dale Putnam of District 9 Board of Fire Commissioners called the meeting to order at 1806 hours at the District's headquarters station, 125 Delphi Rd. NW, Olympia WA 98502. Commissioners Dale Putnam, Len Albert, Mark Thompson, Mark Campeau and Jason Foust, Chief Leonard Johnson, AC Chris Patti (virtual), EA Davie Kindell, Captain Jeff Novak and Board Secretary Tom McBride attended the regular meeting held in person and via the virtual Zoom platform using the link posted on the District's website.

BOARD FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

A motion was made and seconded to approve payment of invoices in the amount of \$1,680.00 for volunteer physicals; the motion carried.

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

A motion was made and seconded to add to the Agenda as an Action Item Resolution 23-583 Surplus of PPE; the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT & VISITING SPEAKERS

Brett Warwick was introduced and made remarks about his hiring as District 9's new Business Operations Director.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. *Approval of Minutes:*

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on March 13, 2023; the motion carried.

2. *Approval of Vouchers and Payroll:*

A motion was made and seconded to approve vouchers and payroll in the amounts listed below in items a through d; the motion carried.

- a. General Fund 6690 \$551,482.60;
- b. Capital Fund 6691 \$26,127.28;
- c. EMS/Apparatus Replacement Fund 6694 \$2,929.88;
- d. SORT Fund 6699 \$6,529.17.

3. *Approval of Resolution 23-586:*

A motion was made and seconded to approve Resolution 23-587 Surplus of PPE; the motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

1. *Commissioner Meeting Location Rotation*

The idea of periodically moving Commissioners' Meetings among the District 9 fire stations was raised at the last meeting. There was discussion about and support for locating a meeting annually in a different station in order to allow for more community access. A resolution to this effect will be prepared for consideration at a future Commissioners' meeting.

2. *Division Chief of Logistics*

Chief Johnson reminded the Commissioners that a notice will be published internally and externally the week of April 17 to recruit for the approved new position of Division Chief of Logistics. The Board was provided with the Job Description and background information on the position. Discussion was held.

3. *Peer Support Policy*

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Peer Support Policy; the motion carried.

The District has a strong commitment to its employees to provide a safe work environment and to promote high standards of employee physical and mental wellness. The Peer Support Program offers assistance and appropriate support resources to employees, volunteers, and family members when personal or professional issues negatively affect their work performance, family unit or self. Legal counsel has reviewed and approved the policy. It has yet to be assigned a policy number.

4. *Recognition Policy*

BOD Kindell is working on a recognition policy proposal for Board consideration. As discussed at a prior meeting, the policy is being developed following a recommendation

in the recent SAO accountability audit. The new policy will be forwarded to the Commissioners for review and comment.

NEW BUSINESS

1. *Chaplain Contract*

A motion was made and seconded to authorize the Fire Chief to execute the Agreement between the Chaplains Association Public Safety-Thurston County and the McLane Black Lake Fire Department related to chaplaincy services; the motion carried.

District 9 will enter into a contract with Thurston County Public Safety-Thurston County (CAPS-TC) for chaplaincy program services. Thurston County public safety chaplains are forming an association for organizational purposes, such as scheduling, action 911 assistance, etc. The Fire District continues to sponsor the chaplains as volunteers for their primary role. There is no financial consideration in the agreement.

2. *M&O*

A briefing on a proposed new Maintenance and Operations (M&O) levy was presented to the Board. Commissioners were presented with and reviewed the proposed resolution to renew the M&O levy for four-years starting in 2024. The resolution filing deadline for the primary election is May 12, 2023. Staff have requested to schedule a special meeting this month to consider specific financial planning information to prepare the levy resolution for approval.

The District voters previously approved a four-year maintenance and operations levy that expires in 2023. This levy would replace the expiring levy. The cost of operating a fire department that provides fire prevention, fire protection and emergency medical services continues to increase because of the ongoing need for specialized equipment, personnel training and supplies now required by state and federal regulations, as well as maintaining the level of services to meet core mission without an EMS Levy to fund operations. The District will not be able to sustain all programs at the current levels provided within the limitations of the District's regular fire property tax levy.

3. *Transport Fees*

Basic Life Support (BLS) transport fees have not changed since 2018. The District's BLS transport rate is billed below the regional average. Increasing rates has disparate impacts on different populations, e.g, those with public versus private insurance coverage. The District will collect additional local data about payments, public payment processes, and payer mixes. The Board directed the District to review its rate of BLS transports.

STAFF REPORTS

1. *Finance/Administration:*

BOD Kindell reported that the Spring Egg Dash and Safety Day held April 8 was well attended. Moving into Summer, the focus was on water safety for children. For adults the emphasis was creating defensible space and home safety inspections. The District's annual bike rodeo is scheduled for July 1 this year.

District 9 has continued its outreach to preschools regarding fire safety and prevention. After a long break due to the pandemic, District 9 visited Westwood preschool and two classes from Westside Co-Op preschool visited the fire station.

The District is working on restructuring its volunteer program. There are legal employment status and compensation issues that need to be addressed. If a volunteer works too many hours, it's possible to be characterized as an employee. So a review is underway to put policies in place that will provide more clarity and guidelines for the District's volunteer program.

The Appreciation Dinner will be held at the Olympia Golf and Country Club on April 22 at 6:00 PM.

2. *Operations:*

Operations activity for the month of March 2023 are up over March 2022 (152). There were 222 calls for the month of March 2023, composed of 87 fire and 135 EMS.

District 9 has been called upon for 56 transports in March 2023. This is a much higher rate than in past months. The District is receiving more calls than in the past, with private ambulance service unavailable and the Olympia Fire Department calling often.

Reoccupation of the remodeled portion of Station 95 is underway. All furnishings and contents have been moved back into the station and are fully set up. While setting up, there is an effort being made to create consistency among the District 9 stations. Station 95 will more clearly resemble Station 91 in terms of organization and flow.

The District's white Dodge is being sent to the contractor for installation of a light package.

There is a new set of Hurst tools that is being prepared for placement. Once the training and testing is complete, the tools will go on the vehicles.

There were three structure fires in the last month. There was the March 13 fire with difficult access, an electrical fire and the commercial fire in the Tumwater dental office.

3. *Fire Chief:*

There is one new work-related injury to report for March 2023. One employee returned at the beginning of April from a light-duty assignment for a hand injury. One temporary firefighter was injured at the scene of a structure fire.

The review of applications for the new Business Operations Director was completed on April 4. On April 10, an offer of employment was made and accepted after the Chief's interviews. The District is expected to start on-boarding the week of April 17. A complete biography and introduction will be sent Fire District wide.

New firefighter recruits continue to progress in the Academy. Recent updates from the Academy report that all three are meeting all requirements and are performing in the top of the class. Additionally, five volunteers are currently progressing through Recruit Academy. Practical testing for Firefighter 1 is on April 22-23. One recruit withdrew from continuing after receiving an offer for employment outside the state. The volunteer staff meeting is rescheduled for April 21st. EMT training is in progress with 6 total personnel in class – 4 in Thurston County Medic One Program and 2 at Centralia Community College Program.

Firefighter Dylan Case resigned his position as volunteer. He is moving out of the area and the Chief thanked him for his participation with the District. Recruitment is in progress with 4 pending applications in the system.

There have been a number of repairs and maintenance for apparatus since the last report. Major out of service issues continue related to both of the 2019 Enforcers with tire replacements. Apparatus have been inspected, alignments performed, and inspections of complete undercarriage have confirmed no issues. Driver/Operators are required to complete drive time before the apparatus will be returned to service to familiarize themselves with the handling of the apparatus with new tire configuration.

Chief Johnson was accepted into a leadership class that will take place in the first week of May 2023.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

None.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

BOD Kindell noted that following the loss of life fire in November, 2021, the District started a house safety inspection program. Smoke detectors not working is an epidemic and it will be a priority for the District. The District is looking to use grant programs and other funding to secure working smoke detectors and 9 volt batteries to residents in need. She commented that smoke detectors with 10-year batteries may provide a false sense of security as it may seem that the batteries are good for the life of the smoke detector. In reality 10-years applies to the shelf life of the unit, not the service life once installed. Commissioner Putnam noted that an easy to use wiring harness conversion kit is available for hardwired smoke detectors that need replacement.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board convened into Executive Session at 1920, for an estimated 10 minutes, to discuss collective bargaining, and announced they expected to reconvene at 1930, with no action taken.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board reconvened the regular meeting at 1930 and immediately adjourned.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS


For Thurston County Fire District 9:



Dale Putnam, Chair

Jason Foust, Commissioner

Len Albert, Commissioner



Mark Thompson, Commissioner



Mark Campeau, Commissioner



Tom McBride, Board Secretary

5/11/23

Date