



## Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting Minutes March 14, 2024

McLane Black Lake Fire Department  
Board of Fire Commissioners  
March 14, 2024

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Commissioner Dale Putnam of District 9 Board of Fire Commissioners called the meeting to order at 1800 hours. Commissioners Dale Putnam, Len Albert, Mark Thompson, Mark Campeau and Jason Foust, Chief Leonard Johnson, Assistant Chief Chris Patti, Division Chief - Logistics Josh Ambrose, Business Operations Director Brett Warwick and Board Secretary Tom McBride (virtual) attended the regular meeting held in person and via the virtual Zoom platform using the link posted on the Fire District's website.

### **BOARD FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS**

The Board for Volunteer Firefighters met prior to the Board of Commissioners meeting.

### **ADDITIONS TO AGENDA**

None. The agenda was approved as presented.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT & VISITING SPEAKERS**

None.

### **ACTION ITEMS:**

- 1. Approval of Minutes:*

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting on February 8, 2024; 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 c; the motion carried.

- a. General Fund 6690 \$643,982.91;
- b. EMS/Apparatus Replacement Fund 6694 \$65,633.47;
- c. SORT Fund 6699 \$463.20.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**1. *Coby Farnham Health Care Coverage***

Chief Johnson briefed the Board on a dispute that arose about health care coverage of an injured District Firefighter. The Fire District is working with the Washington State Fire Commission to resolve the matter.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. *Equipment Donation to out of Area Fire Departments***

Chief Johnson briefed the Board on an effort underway to donate an older Fire District ambulance categorized as surplus property to a fire department in remote Alaska. Commissioner Foust offered to work with the Fire District to assist with the legal transfer.

**STAFF REPORTS:**

**1. *Finance/Administration: Business Operations Director Brett Warwick***

Finance

- Expenditures for each fund have seen some increase. This is due mainly to costs of approximately \$15,000 associated with 2 new Firefighters. In addition, there has been some increase in costs related to higher compensation due to the new CBA, a new response vehicle, auditor expenses and vehicle maintenance.
- Despite those increases, in terms of the budget, expenses in February remained the same or below last year. A few funds experienced higher costs, such as Wildland and SORT. Moving forward, the Fire District expects to see increased wage costs due to the need for increased coverage during the wildfire season.

Major Projects/Technology

- Major projects in process include finalization and release of the Fire District's 2023 Annual Report due this summer and preparation work for the 2024 Annual Report.
- In early April administrative staff will be completing National Incident Management System training classes as part of the preparation for public information officer training classes.
- The Fire District is transitioning to a new crew shift scheduling technology platform. The 2 systems do not sync, so administrative staff have undertaken a manual review of the last few years to ensure a smooth transition. Chief Johnson added that this is a long-term problem the Fire District has worked on and software fixes may be necessary. Changes in legal authorities, such as the paid family medical leave laws, have added new challenges to the calculation of hours accrued. Chair Putnam asked about any State Auditor action on the subject. Chief Johnson explained that the Fire District's self-audits are in place, but new payroll audits have been triggered. AC Patti said Firefighter crews are also watching the numbers to help identify problems.

#### Community Outreach/Events:

- Westwood Elementary students visited Station 91 last month for a fire safety class and station tour. Firefighters Broumley and Pulse were extremely helpful. Additional school visits are ongoing.
- The Easter Egg Dash is on March 30 at Station 91. Fliers, signs and online notices will be used to promote the event.
- The Fire District's annual awards banquet will take place at the Olympia Golf and Country Club on April 27.
- The Fire District hosted the Pinning and Swearing Ceremony at Station 91 on March 5 to recognize department personnel. Thank you to everyone who attended and assisted with this celebration.

Commissioner Thompson thanked BOD Warwick for his team's self-audit work on the crew shift scheduling technology transition.

Chair Putnam asked if the Fire District's notifications to schools for student events reach the homeless population. Chief Johnson explained that the school districts are responsible for the direct communication with students and their families, and that reaching all student populations is the goal.

## **2. *Logistics: Division Chief – Logistics Josh Ambrose***

### Volunteers

- Division Chief Ambrose discussed the new volunteer Firefighters and confirmed that one volunteer, who just completed academy, will be on

military leave for an overseas deployment. Another round of volunteer applications is underway for Academy scheduled in August 2024. Commissioner Albert asked whether military medical training is applicable to any of the Firefighter training requirements for District 9. Chief Johnson explained that generally the answer is military training does not substitute for Firefighter training requirements, with rare exception for some operations skills.

- A new job description for a Volunteer Coordinator is being prepared. And work is being done to update volunteer policies and standards.

#### Facilities

- ST91: The new MAKO breathing air compressor was received and ST91's current unit was moved to ST95 to replace a failed unit. New alarm system work is also underway.
- ST96: Water leak mitigation work has been completed. Water damage was not as severe as feared. A claim has been filed with Enduris.
- ST 91/95: A contractor has been hired to maintain landscaping, pruning of trees, and removal of trees. The Fire District will continue to mow the lawn.

#### Apparatus

- There are no new out of service issues.
- E95 is close to returning to service pending resolution of proper registration in order to protect all warranty rights. The manufacturer's continued role in registration of apparatuses is in dispute.
- E91: Similar to E95, follow up confirmation of proper registration is underway. The Chief commented that registration is fixed for E91, and the Fire District is working to ensure that the manufacturer continues to follow through on its role in registering new apparatuses.
- Exhaust emissions for fire apparatuses is under review by the federal government.

#### Capital

- ST95: Design work is in process for water runoff work.
- ST91: Discussions are underway for HVAC upgrades with an exemption in place to assist with new energy code compliance requirements.

Chief Johnson explained that there is some confusion among regulators about timing of the new energy code. The Fire District is working closely with its advisors to comply with all applicable energy code requirements.

## Technology

- Implementation of the new records management system continues with ESO. The data migration continues, with all data now transferred to the ESO except for the Fire District rig checks.
- AC Patti explained that all personnel have transitioned to available RMS/Technology as of March 1, 2024. The software provides pre-fire planning and mapping information. The application is now available on all MDTs.

Chair Putnam asked about an emergency system that can accommodate changes in residences. AC Patti confirmed that is the Smart 911 system. It will not link to the Fire District's new program, but it is helpful. And the RMS/Technology system has the capability to update community building information. Good examples of the importance of building details include the Evergreen State College campus (residence locations) and personal residences in the Fire District that may have a very long driveway (where to lay the hose) or require a gate code (for access).

AC Patti emphasized that the technology also raises many challenges, such as protecting the privacy of residents. Residents in the Fire District can access and update their own information, including at the Assessor's Office. Commissioner Thompson commented that it is good to know the Firefighters can secure access to residences as necessary in response to emergencies. Commissioner Albert raised the issue of electrical fire training for Firefighters and the growing needs in terms of EVs, solar panel roofs, etc.

#### **4. Chief's Report: Chief Leonard Johnson**

### Personnel

- There are no new injuries or illnesses to report since the last report. One employee remains on time-loss for work-related shoulder injury. A second employee received modified duty since surgery and is assigned to light-duty starting March 9. A third employee is being evaluated for possible surgery due to a previous arm injury, with scheduling and restrictions being monitored.
- 2 new Firefighters (for a total of 27) were hired and are at Academy. The next Academy is scheduled for August 2024.

### Finance

- The Fire District is encouraged about the possibility of receiving a \$53,000 grant for the Special Operations Response Team State Homeland Security Program and a \$175,000 grant for AFG.
- Chief Johnson alerted the Board for information purposes only to a dispute between Thurston County and DNR about timber farming in the Capital State Forest. Opposition to timber sales could affect available revenue to local governments, including fire districts.

#### Safety and Health

- A Fire District vehicle was in a minor accident with damages estimated to be less than \$500 to a fence. That amount is less than the Fire District's insurance deductible, so it has negotiated with the property owner to settle the claim, subject to protocol review. Commissioner Albert asked if the Fire District's Engines have sensors on them. Chief Johnson confirmed that they do not.

#### **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

Commissioner Campeau reported that West Thurston Regional Fire Authority recently met with South Thurston, East Thurston and Fire District 9, and there was discussion about adding Southeast Thurston to the coalition working on BLS, ALS, RTC, and hospital wait times.

Commissioner Thompson asked if the coalition would remain branded as West Thurston and Commissioner Campeau confirmed that is the case.

Chief Putnam asked if the Washington State Patrol is part of the ESC Report and a discussion ensued.

Commissioner Thompson thanked the Fire District for helping a family member who was in a car accident.

#### **GOOD OF THE ORDER**

None.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

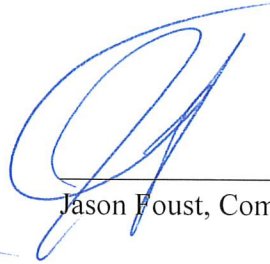
A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the Board meeting; the motion carried. The Board adjourned at 1938.

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

For Thurston County Fire District 9:



Dale Putnam, Chair



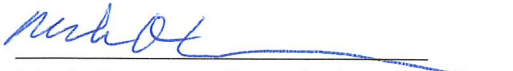
Jason Foust, Commissioner



Len Albert, Commissioner



Mark Thompson, Commissioner



Mark Campeau, Commissioner

Tom McBride, Board Secretary

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Date