

# **Whatcom County Fire District #5**

**Point Roberts Fire Department**

2030 Benson Road, Suite A  
Point Roberts, Washington, 98281

**Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners**

**October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

## **MINUTES**

### **A. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. by Commissioner Meursing.

In Attendance: Commissioner William Meursing  
Commissioner Stanley Riffle  
Commissioner Shannon Tomsen  
Chief Christopher Carleton  
Financial Manager Patty Markel (via teleconference)  
Recording Secretary Linda Hughes

Guests: Virginia Lester  
Ed Lester  
Matt Cagle  
Richard Gist  
Meg Olson  
Assistant Chief John Shields

### **B. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

### **C. BOARD ACTION**

#### **C.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Riffle moved to accept the Minutes of the Special Meeting of September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tomsen.  
**Motion passed 3-0.**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Riffle moved to accept the Minutes of the Special Meeting, Town Hall Forum, of September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tomsen. **Motion passed 3-0.**

## D. FINANCIAL MANAGER'S REPORT

### D.1 Financial Report

Financial Manager Markel provided her financial report as submitted. She described the two Financial Reports provided to the Commissioners for consideration. One set of financials includes a proposed expenditure for the purchase of SCBA units, and the second set does not include that proposed expenditure.

Chief Carleton reviewed the status of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (FEMA) noting that the formal acceptance has been received and he expects the actual funds to be received by the County within a week or two, at least within thirty days. Chief continued that FEMA does not like us holding money in our account once it is received and if the money is held over month-end and earns any interest we would be required to account for it and pay that portion back to FEMA.

Chief Carleton proposed an option to have the Commissioners approve the expenditure of the purchase of the SCBA units now, with funds to be drawn from the general reserves account now and then replenished with the FEMA funds when they are received.

Chief Carleton advised the Commissioners that the second set of financials were drafted in the event the Commissioners would not approve the expenditure for the purchase of the SCBA units at this time.

Commissioner Tomsen reminded the Chief that Commissioner Meursing has earlier expressed his concern that the District not make any purchases before the grant money was actually received in the account.

After further discussion regarding the timing of the intended purchase and the expected receipt of funds, Commissioner Meursing acknowledged Commissioner Tomsen's reminder of his concern but now feels confident in essentially loaning the funds from the general reserves account to make the purchase of the SCBA units, and confirmed he is willing to forego his initial concern to approve this expenditure at this time.

Financial Manager Markel described the process, saying that she has already provided the County with the deposit receipt so when the funds are electronically transferred to the County they will be expecting them. The County will then move the funds directly into the District general reserves account to replenish that portion of funds FEMA has granted toward the purchase of the SCBA units. She also indicated that this request is only for the production of the warrant and that she would not forward it to the Vendor until the grant funds were received and deposited to the District's account.

Financial Manager Markel then asked for a Motion to approve the district vouchers in the amount of \$185,302.06, which includes the expenditure for the SCBA units, and for a Motion to approve the payroll.

## D. 2 Approval of Fire District Vouchers

**MOTION:** Commissioner Riffle moved to accept the Vouchers in the amount of \$185,302.06 for payment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tomsen. **Motion passed 3 – 0**

## D.3 Approval of Fire District Payroll

**MOTION:** Commissioner Riffle moved that the payroll in the amount of \$17,526.50 be approved for payment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tomsen. **Motion passed 3 – 0**

## D.4 Budget Update

Financial Manager Markel indicated that 32.16% of the budget is remaining as of September 30<sup>th</sup>, with three months remaining in the year, so the district is on track to be within budget and have some carry-over funds at year end. She indicated that she and Chief Carleton have begun preparation of a preliminary 2017 budget.

All of the Commissioners commended Chief Carleton on a job well done, to keep the District Operations within budget and to manage a small carry-over of funds as well.

Financial Manager Markel said that she had spoken with the State Auditor's office earlier in the day and has been advised the District audit would likely begin in the latter part of November or early part of December.

Commissioner Meursing then asked Chief Carleton about the International Fire Chief's Conference that he attended, and whether he felt it was worthwhile.

Chief Carleton described the conference as very worthwhile, indicating that he earned his Chief Officer 2 classification at the conference and that he intended to go for his Executive Officer classification at the conference next year.

Commissioner Meursing asked about the expenses to attend the conference and Chief Carleton replied that the District had paid for his flight, hotel and the cost of attending the conference, but the Chief had paid for all other expenses, food, etc.

Commissioner Meursing asked Financial Manager Markel what the State allows for per diem expenses. She recalled that the allowable amount of \$12.50 for breakfast, \$12.50 for lunch and \$25.00 for dinner, essentially \$50.00 per diem.

Chief Carleton indicated that he was not asking for per diem.

Commissioner Meursing asked Financial Manager Markel to look into those figures and determine what the current amounts are and all Commissioners agreed that Chief Carleton should be reimbursed his allowable per diem. Commissioner Riffle indicated that provision of per diem expenses is simply good business. It was agreed that receipts are not a requirement for reimbursement for per diem.

Financial Manager Markel reported having looked up current per diem amounts during this discussion and it appears that current per diems are \$13.00 for breakfast, \$15.00 for lunch and \$23.00 for dinner, a total of \$51.00 per diem. Commissioner Meursing asked Financial Manager Markel to confirm those amounts and to reimburse Chief Carleton the allowable per diems for the days of his attendance at the I.F.C. Conference.

Commissioner Tomsen asked if per diems are allowed for all officer travel, including Assistant Chief, and Commissioner Meursing acknowledged that it is.

Discussion then turned to potential dates for a Budget Workshop meeting. A number of dates were explored and then settled on Friday, November 4<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. This will essentially be a Special Meeting.

Financial Manager Markel indicated that she would be in attendance for the workshop and again for the budget meeting in November.

## **E. CORRESPONDENCE**

Chief Carleton reported receiving a number of email responses regarding the surplus equipment, resulting in two refrigerators and a stove being removed. One refrigerator and a microwave remain in surplus to be donated to willing recipients.

## **F. CHIEF'S REPORT**

The Chief continues to remind homeowners to contact their insurance companies to seek potential savings related to the District's improved ISO rating.

The Chief also reminds homeowners about the importance of proper, legible home numbering in the event of an emergency. He also wants to ask homeowners who may call for emergency assistance when dark, to turn on their outside light to help emergency responders identify the location of the emergency. He mentioned that in Port Townsend every home has had street-side addresses implemented, an initiative that he feels may have been driven by the local fire department. He intends to ask them about that.

Chief Carleton invited everyone to attend the Fire District's annual Spooktacular on Sunday October 30<sup>th</sup> to be held at the Fire Station. There will be a haunted house, games, prizes, food and lots of fun. Of special note are the severed-finger cupcakes that Mrs. Carleton intends to produce for the event.

Chief Carleton indicated that the AFG Grant cycle is now open and he will be applying for a variety of grants for a Lifepak 15, apparatus, a training tower and a Lucas CPR device. Chief described the needs for these items, how the administration of CPR is changing throughout the County and how the newer technology can help EMT's in an emergency be more productive. He also described the current problems that engine 5802 has been experiencing, and advised the Commissioners that he would let them know if the expected repairs would be \$5,000.00 or more. He also reminded everyone that all of the apparatus is very old, the engines are from 1991 and 1994, and he intends to continue working on a number of truck grant applications.

Chief Carleton indicated the roster has not changed this month, adding that a new recruit is currently being considered for hire. He is local, 19 years old and very ambitious.

When reviewing the calls for the month, Chief Carleton mentioned that one hazmat call was to the USA gas station when one of the fuel pumps failed to shut off, spilling at least 15 liters of fuel. Chief would like there to be spill kits at every gas station in town and will ask the Fire Marshall if that is a requirement. If it is not, he will ask every station to take the precaution to have a spill kit at the ready in case of fuel spills.

Commissioner Tomsen asked if a sign extender could be added to the Burn Ban sign located at the entrance to Point Roberts, just after the border crossing, to announce special events such as the Spooktacular Halloween event. Chief Carleton indicated some difficulties he had experienced with the location of that sign in the past but agreed that advertising special events was a great idea and said he would arrange to have an A-frame type temporary sign placed up near the Burn Ban sign to announce special events. He suggested that a couple more A-frame type signs would be very useful and he intended to look into purchasing a couple more so that event invitations and other notifications could be temporarily placed around town as needed.

## **G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### G.1 Ground floor Kitchen Renovation

Chief Carleton reported that the main floor kitchen renovation was ongoing, the ceiling and walls had been painted. He said that cabinets and a new sink would soon be installed, as well as a dishwasher, a new refrigerator, stove and microwave, which had been purchased and was expected to be delivered by KP Transport next week. He also said that replacement of the floors and countertops should begin next week also.

Commissioner Meursing asked about the pass-through window to the kitchen, and Chief Carleton described the new trimming that would be added, along with a new countertop.

### G.2 Interior Painting

Commissioner Meursing asked about the status of the interior painting and Chief Carleton responded that he had not yet moved forward with that task. He expects that it will likely begin in the new year.

### G.3 Carpet Replacement

Chief Carleton said he was still procuring cost estimates for new flooring, whether Armor Tuff, carpet or other alternative, but again expected this upgrade to be carried out in the new year.

Chief Carleton indicated that the Awards Night, which had initially been scheduled for December 10<sup>th</sup> would have to be rescheduled to December 17<sup>th</sup> for a number of reasons. It will be held at the Compass Rose Bar and Grill at the Marina.

#### G.4 Insurance

Chief Carleton asked the Commissioners to write down any questions they had from their review of the insurance policy and he would forward them to Tony Kelley.

Commissioner Tomsen had a number of questions relating to the age of the district's vehicles, and the lack of under-insured coverage on vehicles. She also wanted confirmation that the \$1,200.00 increase in premiums was entirely attributable to valuation and inflation and that no extras had been added to the policy. She also wanted to know if we should make a decision on the proposed cyber-coverage that Tony Kelly had mentioned during his presentation at the September meeting.

Chief Carleton indicated that he would contact Tony Kelley about the lack of under-insured coverage, he confirmed the premium increase was due to valuation and inflation and said that he felt the District did not require cyber-attack coverage as all of the District computers are backed up to the Cloud and each station is independent, there is no main server.

Commissioner Meursing asked Chief Carleton to ensure that Tony Kelly is advised that the Commissioners need more lead time to consider and approve the annual insurance policy next year, and also made it clear that he felt the 5% increase in premiums was very high – even considering the valuation.

Commissioner Riffle indicated that Tony Kelley had mentioned the difficulty in initially assessing the value of the fire station building.

Commissioner Tomsen said that she would also like to see a Summary sheet, with line items indicating what was changing in the policy and the cost of each of those changes independently broken out, saying it would be helpful to know at a glance what we are considering rather than having to dig through the entire policy unaided.

Chief Carleton will bring these concerns and comments to Tony Kelley and ask for a summary sheet to be provided to the Commissioners for July of next year, or August at the latest, to give everyone some time to consider and discuss it.

#### **H. NEW BUSINESS**

Commissioner Riffle brought up the topic of the annual 1% levy increase, and the remaining banked capacity.

Chief Carleton indicated that an amount almost equaling 1% remains in banked capacity and mentioned that he plans to have all of the calculations available for discussion at the upcoming budget workshop.

Discussion ensued about the concepts behind utilizing banked capacity and the timing of when that banked capacity is then taken. Ultimately everyone agreed that banking an allowable levy may give taxpayers a break from raised taxes for a brief period, but that tax relief is ultimately captured in the form of higher taxes in subsequent years. Also, banking the levy rather than taking it each year ultimately reduces income and potential income to



the District which is not recoverable, therefore it would be better to take the levy every year and bank the cash. Chief Carleton reiterated that the services and administration depend on available funds and he does not want to be in a position of having to reduce services to the community.

Commissioner Riffle mentioned that the Lease of space to the Clinic is coming up for renewal soon and indicated that he would like an opportunity to review it before it is renewed. Chief Carleton indicated that there is no automatic increase in lease rate included in the Lease, but that the Commissioners do have the option to implement a CPI increase.

Commissioner Tomsen mentioned as an FYI that the proposed sign discussed at the September meeting was to be paid for by the Hospital District, not Unity Care.

## I. ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business, Commissioner Riffle moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Tomsen seconded the motion. **Motion passed 3 – 0.**

The next meeting will be a Special Meeting, a budget workshop, to be held Friday November 4<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m.

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners will be November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016, at 4:00 p.m.

  
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Commissioner William Meursing

  
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Commissioner Stanley Riffle

  
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Commissioner Shannon Tomsen

Dated November 9, 2016

Attest:   
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Recording Secretary Linda Hughes