

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

July 13th, 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: Gina Fiorillo
 Richard Foreman
 Lori Fralic
 Victor Riley
 Marg Knowles
 Jeannette Meursing
 Meg Olson
 Assistant Chief John Shields

Commissioner Meursing asked Assistant Chief Shields to confirm that the video equipment was operating before proceeding further.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

Richard Foreman, on behalf of his Maple Beach neighbors, thanked the Commissioners for managing the District in such a thoughtful and professional manner, and also Chief Carleton for the excellent attention to policing of illegal fires and the professional response to recent events.

C. BOARD ACTION

C.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 8th, 2016

Commissioner Tomsen provided an amended handout, referred to as Errors and Omissions, to be attached to the Minutes of the meeting of June 8th, confirming the changes she made to the previous version referred to as essentially her raw notes, simply to clean it up and make it sound nice.

MOTION: Commissioner Riffle moved to accept the Minutes of the June 8th, 2016 regular meeting as read, with the amended handout. 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.

D.2 Approval of Fire District Vouchers

MOTION: Commissioner Riffle moved to accept the Vouchers for June, 2016 in the amount of \$21,634.93 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 \$14,999.50 be approved for payment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tomsen. **Motion passed 3 - 0**

D.4 Budget Update

Financial Manager Markel indicated that 55.67% of the budget is remaining.

Commissioner Meursing asked Financial Manager Markel to clarify whether the budget represented six or seven months of expenditures. Financial Manager Markel confirmed that the budget is on a yearly calendar beginning in January, and therefore the current budget status represents six months of expenditures.

Commissioner Meursing asked Financial Manager Markel for her professional opinion on the financial welfare of the district at this stage in the year, and whether she felt we were on track to finish the year within budget. Financial Manager Markel responded that the district is in good financial shape being six months into the year with a little more than 55% remaining in the budget.

Commissioner Meursing indicated to the public that if we continue on this path, the district will have a small reserve of capital left over at the end of the year to roll over into the next year's budget.

Meg Olson asked what the actual budget for the year is. Chief Carleton indicated that a copy of the entire budget is available for viewing online from the Fire District website.

Commissioner Meursing asked if there were any further questions for Financial Manager Markel. Commissioner Riffle said he wanted to bring up the topic of the District's petty cash, saying that we occasionally seem to run short of funds, leaving Chief Carleton to pay for items personally and then waiting to be reimbursed by the district, and felt it was a burden the Chief should not have to bear. His question to Financial Manager Markel was whether the District is permitted to raise its petty cash reserve from the current limit of \$1,000.00. Financial Manager Markel indicated that she would have to look into limitations on petty cash, but cautioned against raising the limit too much as petty cash accounts are notoriously carefully scrutinized by the Auditors Office, and suggested that if the Commissioners were to consider raising the limit of the petty cash account that they not raise it by very much.

Commissioner Riffle asked if the petty cash is depleted mid-month, could it be replenished. Financial Manager Markel responded that could not be done without a Special Meeting.

Commissioner Riffle asked the Chief if he could continue to get by with \$1,000.00 petty cash. Chief Carleton indicated that it becomes tight now and again but he felt that \$1,000.00 was enough, adding that perhaps it could be raised to \$1,500 at some time in the future, but he would let the Commissioners know if and when that becomes a necessity.

Commissioner Riffle relayed his displeasure that a particular Vendor had to wait some time for reimbursement of her invoice, especially unfortunate considering the deep discount she had given the district on the purchase of new flower baskets, suggesting that if more funds were available in petty cash, the district could have paid the invoice right away, which would have demonstrated appreciation for the consideration the Vendor provided the District with the discounts.

Financial Manager Markel indicated that even though the petty cash limit is \$1,000.00, we normally keep the balance lower than that limited amount. She added that she would arrange for it to be topped up, for approval by the Commissioners at the August meeting.

Financial Manager Markel will be in attendance for the August meeting.

E. CORRESPONDENCE

Chief Carleton reported receiving 1 card of thanks from a member of the community.

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 reported the district has been awarded a number, indicating approval of an Assistance to Firefighters Grant (FEMA) in the amount of \$162,000 for SCBA equipment. He indicated that the current SCBA equipment of the District, is very outdated; in fact three generations old. He proceeded to give a demonstration of the equipment, pointing out the elements of the equipment, the bottle, the mask, the electronics and connectors while describing the use of the equipment when firefighters go into hazardous environments such as fires or in the presence of airborne chemicals. The Chief noted that 25 of our current bottles have reached their dispose-of date. He continued to describe the various vendors of SCBA equipment and noted that the district will likely choose Scotts manufactured equipment, one reason being that it was the same equipment used by the Delta Fire District and that would allow the members of both of our departments to interchange masks and work together in the event of an emergency. He identified that each pack costs approximately \$6,700.00 and the apparatus includes two bottles and a mask. Some other improvements in the new generation of equipment are larger bottles, giving more air time in a fire. The current bottles vibrate and sound an alert to a firefighter when the bottled air reaches 35% remaining, in order to warn them to leave the zone before exhausting their air supply. He indicated that the electronics of the new generation equipment are smarter, with chips that will enable tracking of firefighters so that in the event someone goes down, we will know exactly where they are in order to launch an efficient rescue effort.

Commissioner Meursing asked the Chief when he thought the district will receive the new SCBA packs. Chief Carleton responded that the funding needs to be in place first. He also was scheduling Scotts to come to Point Roberts and give a presentation of the proposed new equipment, to which the Chief would send invitations to the Commissioners and the media. He estimated that once the funding was in place, and the decision on which equipment to purchase made, that he expected a turnaround time of 30 – 45 days, therefore he hoped by mid-September.

Commissioner Riffle complimented Chief Carleton on his tremendous efforts toward achieving this grant, noting that it has been at least a three-year effort on his part and recognizing the Chief being very humble and deserving of our thanks for this huge achievement on behalf of the district. Chief Carleton responded that it takes a team to run the district and do what we do, turning thanks to Assistant Chief Shields for all of his efforts that help him in these achievements.

Commissioner Tomsen asked Chief Carleton if the intended purchase of 20 new packs would represent the full compliment of the district's SCBA gear. The Chief responded that no, the district has 40-45 packs, but replacing 20 of them will be a great benefit to member safety and service. He further indicated that he would seek to surplus the replaced packs and would then look to selling/donating them to countries where even this outdated technology is better than what they have, but that will be a new discussion for another time.

Jeannette Meursing asked the Chief how the air is turned on by a firefighter outfitted with such a pack. The Chief demonstrated the location of the valve on the bottom of the bottle and mimicked turning on the air as if he were wearing a pack to show where that valve is

located on the firefighter's back. He also mentioned that the bottles contain simply purified air, same as we are breathing right now; that it is a common misconception the bottles contain pure oxygen, which would be dangerous in an elevated heat situation like a fire. He added that the tanks are essentially the same as SCUBA gear, without the underwater sealant, indicating the pack will operate underwater for a brief time, and since the tank has buoyancy, if a firefighter should fall into water there is a short period of floatation which would allow a little time for an extraction rescue.

Richard Foreman asked if the Chief had looked into the supplier Draeger. Chief Carleton replied that he had looked into Draeger as a supplier but still felt that sticking with Scotts would allow inter-changeability with the Delta Fire department.

The Chief then returned to the completion of his report, as attached and scanned.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Commissioner Riffle brought up the subject tabled last month, awaiting Chief Carleton's return for his input, regarding a proposed water spigot to be installed on the west side of the building and also the planting of a small hedge or other shrubbery to hide the septic mound. He added that all three Commissioners were essentially in agreement of these two suggestions and felt they could be easily achieved and be inexpensive as well.

Commissioner Tomsen mentioned being sorry to have to renege on one part of her offer made last month, that the volunteer she named for digging in the plants had declined, but felt that another volunteer could easily be found. She also inquired about key-type faucets and said she was in favor of the spigot if a key-type was installed and the key remain with the Fire District only, suggesting that when water is legitimately needed from that spigot there would generally be someone in attendance to distribute the key.

Chief Carleton responded by advising that the plants are watered often, daily even, by the district members when they are performing other outdoor exercises, but added that if the Commissioners wanted a spigot for such watering he was in favor of it. He added that he felt the septic mounds have become so overgrown with that they almost blended into the forest behind. He added that he appreciated being asked for his opinion on these two items, but felt the decision belonged to the Commissioners alone.

Commissioner Meursing agreed that the decision for the proposed spigot was the responsibility of the Commissioners and felt it was too petty relative to Chief's duties, but was glad that the Chief diplomatically came around to support it. He added that even though the mounds have become overgrown, they remain an eyesore and felt the Commissioners should go ahead and accept Commissioner Tomsen's offer to plant shrubbery in front, and he offered to do the digging. Commissioner Riffle indicated that Bob Jewell has an auger attachment and perhaps could be asked to volunteer some time to dig in the new shrubs.

MOTION: Commissioner Tomsen moved to approve the purchase and installation on the west side of the building of a new water spigot with a removable key-type tap handle, with the stipulation that the key be retained by the Fire District at all times. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Riffle. **Motion passed 3-0.**

Commissioner Tomsen indicated that she will purchase shrubbery or hedging personally. Commissioner Meursing indicated that he would dig the holes and volunteer planting. Commissioner Riffle volunteered to take care of the installation of the spigot.

Assistant Chief John Shields mentioned that when digging to be careful of the septic lines. Commissioner Riffle indicated that it was his recollection that the relevant lines were at the back of the system, noting that he had photographs in his file and would pull those out for reference before digging.

Commissioner Riffle asked Chief Carleton if we get regular inspections on the septic system. The Chief responded that the installer has provided regular inspections of the system, noting that among the growth on the mounds, he had noticed one volunteer tree which worried him, indicating he would contact the installer to come look at the system and provide an assessment of the growth on the mound to determine whether tree removal should be considered.

Commissioner Tomsen opened a new discussion with an offer to nominate herself as liaison to the Clinic. Commissioners Riffle and Meursing are in favor of the suggestion. Commissioner Tomsen will go to the next Hospital District meeting, or talk to the Superintendent of the District, Elaine Komusi, about it.

Commissioner Meursing asked if anyone felt that other liaison positions in the community should be considered, for example, with the Water District.

Chief responded that his current relationship with the Water District is a good one, but values the concept of liaisons as they can improve relationships, adding that perhaps other liaison positions should be added to expand those positive relationships in the community, for example with the Park District.

Commissioner Riffle volunteered to be the liaison with the Water District.

Commissioner Meursing volunteered to be the liaison with the Park District, adding that he also valued the concept of liaising with community organizations as it adds another layer of openness and transparency.

Discussion ensued about other potential liaison relationships and it was agreed that the current level of outreach to local organizations is probably enough at this time, for example the Chief attends the Taxpayer meetings approximately twice a year to provide a District overview and budget update.

Commissioner Meursing suggested that the District hold a town hall type of meeting and encourage the public to attend. After some discussion of potential dates, it was agreed that September 26th be a town hall type meeting with the usual business of the District to be conducted during the regular September meeting on the 14th. Commissioner Meursing suggested that the new SCBA packs might be here by then, offering an opportunity to showcase them.

H. NEW BUSINESS

H1. Capital Expenses

Chief Carleton indicated that with the approval of the FFA grant to purchase the much-needed SCBAs, a significant amount of funds has been freed up, that was being saved in the event a grant could not be procured, and now certain other capital expenses should be considered.

Chief Carleton indicated to the Commissioners that he was seeking approval of \$60,000.00 from the reserve account to allocate toward necessary equipment needs. He itemized and discussed the details of each of those needs, starting with the need for \$8,100.00 toward the SCBAs as the \$162,000.00 grant was the net amount awarded after including the required District portion of \$8,100.00.

Additionally, he was seeking up to \$20,000.00 for 6-8 sets of new bunker gear, up to \$1,000.00 for scene lighting, up to \$5,000.00 for hoses, a multi-gas detector (being costed out now), and a nitrous oxide machine for each ambulance at a cost of \$4,200.00 each, with an estimate of total expenditures expected to be in the range of \$60,000.00.

Commissioner Riffle asked for clarification on the continued expense of nitrous oxide machines, in that they presumably require filling occasionally. Chief Carleton confirmed that the gas does get depleted with each use, and that each patient is provided a new mouthpiece. Therefore there will be an ongoing expense of gas filling and mouthpiece replacements.

The Commissioners discussed the life-saving properties of the equipment requested by the Chief and agreed they were reasonable expenditures, none of which exceeded \$20,000.00 thereby within the Chief's authority to spend without additional Commissioner involvement.

Chief Carleton reported that a Form 1199 was required to secure the funds of the grant, and that our previously submitted form required an address correction and he expected the grant to be finalized soon, confirming that he would make no expenditures toward his capital expenses request until those funds had been formally secured.

MOTION: Commissioner Riffle moved to approve Chief Carleton's request for funds of up to \$60,000.00 from reserve for certain expenditures, as contained in his letter to the Commissioners dated July 13, 2016, pending receipt of funds awarded in the FFA grant for the purchase of SCBA units. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tomsen. **Motion passed 3-0**

Chief Carleton advised that the District had recently received State recognized ILS (Intermediate Life Support) certification, an increase in status from the Basic Life Support recognition of the District.

Commissioner Riffle said that again, this amounted to another 3-year effort on the part of the Chief, for which he should be commended and thanked for his patience and dedication to pursuance of this elevated status. Chief Carleton responded that he would like to again share many thanks to Assistant Chief Shields for all his efforts in assisting with this effort.

Commissioner Meursing added that last month we had talked about establishing a forum for objective communication with the public about the activities of the District and it was generally decided that such a forum would be a good idea. No further action has been taken or is required at this time. The discussion of this topic will continue as we review options to implement such a forum.

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 Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners will be August 10th, 2016.



Commissioner William Meursing



Commissioner Stanley Riffle



Commissioner Shannon Tomsen

Dated August 10, 2016

Attest: 

Recording Secretary Linda Hughes

FINANCIAL REPORT
July 13, 2016

**WHATCOM COUNTY
FIRE DISTRICT 5**

July warrants total \$21,634.93. The total for payroll is \$14,999.50; including Chief Carleton's salary \$4,212.50 and Assistant Chief Shield's pay of \$2,750.00. There was one event for the commissioners and secretary.

The total payout for volunteers (warrants included) is \$10,677.00.

Your June financial statements are in your meeting books.

We need a motion to approve the warrants for \$21,634.93 and payroll in the amount of \$14,999.50.

Respectfully,

Patty Markel
Finance Manager

2016 Budget Remaining – 6/30/16		July Warrants – Items over \$1,000 ~	
Legislative	86.45 %		
Administrative	44.62 %	Whidbey Telecom (Tower Lease)	\$ 4,800.00
Suppression	58.05 %	National Hose Testing	\$ 2,038.75
Suppression Training	14.50 %	LN Curtis and Sons	\$ 1,313.94
Maintenance	56.45 %		
Vol. FF EMS	60.21 %	US Bancorp (Credit Card)	\$ 6,211.56
EMS Training	66.86 %	<i>Includes:</i>	
		Life Assist (Medical Supplies)	\$ 1,653.91
Total Budget Remaining:	55.67%		

Whatcom County Fire District 5

Chief Officer Report

July 2016

For June 2016

Point Of Information

1. Home owners should call their insurance company due to ISO change
2. AFG Notification SCBA funding

Apparatus

E58	No report
E5802	No report
B58	No report
U5802	No report
A58	No report
A5802	No report
C58	No report

Member Roster

45 Members (27 Canadian / 9 Point Roberts / 9 County)

- 6 Paramedics
- 16 EMTs (5 AEMT)
- 4 Ambassadors
- 36 Firefighters

Volunteer Hours 2728

Volunteer Payroll 11234

Combined Chief Hours (Chief 116.5 /// Asst. Chief 143.5) Total Chief Hours = 260

Incidents

Total Calls (10)

EMS Calls (9)

<u>Transports:</u>	Saint Joseph Hospital (1)	Bellingham FD Medic (0)
	Airlift Northwest (0)	North Whatcom Fire Rescue (0)
	No Transport (5)	Ferndale FD Medic (2)
	Home Visit (0)	

Public Service (0)

Agency Assist (0) Law Enforcement

Fire Classification (1) -- (1) Outdoor Burns - permit/illegal* (0) Smoke invest. (0) False Alarms
(0) Vehicle fire (0) Power Lines Down (0) Structure

Other (1) – Welfare Check