

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 13th, 2021

MINUTES

In Attendance via Zoom platform: Commissioner Virginia Lester
Commissioner Pat Harper
Commissioner Raye Newmen
Chief Christopher Carleton
Financial Manager Patty Markel

Also attending on Zoom: District Secretary Linda Hughes

Guests: several guests via online Zoom platform

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Commissioner Lester.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public at this time.

C. BOARD ACTION

C.1. Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 8th, 2021

MOTION: Commissioner Newmen moved to approve the Minutes of the September 8th meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Harper. **Motion passed 3-0**

D. FINANCIAL MANAGER'S REPORT

D.1 Financial Report

Financial Manager Markel presented the financial report as submitted.

D.2 Approval of Fire District Vouchers

MOTION: Commissioner Harper moved to approve the Vouchers in the amount of \$55,675.08 for payment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Newmen. **Motion passed 3-0**

D.3 Approval of Fire District Payroll

MOTION: Commissioner Harper moved that payroll in the amount of \$13,318.70 be approved for payment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Newmen. **Motion passed 3-0**

D.4 Budget Update

Financial Manager Markel reported that 36.84% of the budget remained at the end of September, compared with the September 2020 amount remaining of 41.77%.

The need for a Special Meeting for a Budget Work Session was discussed, and it was agreed that Tuesday, October 26th, 2021 at 4:00 pm would be acceptable to all who need to be in attendance.

E. CORRESPONDENCE

Chief Carleton reported that there was some correspondence this month, almost entirely inquiries about Covid testing and vaccines, with several thank you notes from members of the community.

G. CHIEF'S REPORT

Chief Carleton's Chief Officer Report was presented and submitted.

Chief reported that Covid testing continues to be conducted on Wednesdays and Sundays.

Chief reported that the Brush 58 vehicle (the one previously utilized by Assistant Chief Shields) has a steering issue, likely caused by the additional weight of the new wildland skid. He suggested that the District might need a new 3/4 ton pickup truck that can handle that weight capacity. If that were to happen, then the current Brush 58 vehicle would become a backup utility vehicle, which would also be very helpful within the District. This is just to be noted at this time for future discussion.

Commissioner Newmen commented to emphasize how valuable a reliable wildland vehicle will be to Point Roberts.

H. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

I. NEW BUSINESS

Chief reported that he believes it is time to review and re-evaluate the District's Capital Facilities Plan to determine whether we are on track with the plans made at the time the plan was developed, or whether adjustments might be necessary in the event we are falling behind or accelerating progress.

Commissioner Harper indicated that the Forest Service sometimes utilizes vehicles owned by members of the public who, by agreement, keep their vehicles in top condition for use in case of emergency, asking if the Chief had looked into this option here in Point Roberts.

Chief responded that we do have access to a variety of equipment as offered for use by local contractors. He added that the Department of Natural Resources sent two representatives to Point Roberts this year. DNR sometimes has surplus equipment and/or vehicles available and Chief will continue to look into those options as they become available.

He continued that we also have a Mutual Aid Agreement with Delta Fire in case of the need for an emergency wildland fire response, although if we use their equipment we will have to pay for it, or if available, the insurer of those responsible for the fire would have to cover those costs. He noted that we likely could not afford the cost of a several wildland fire response here in Point Roberts.

Commissioner Harper noted that property owners should be encouraged to clean up debris piles on their land, especially those that create a tinder situation at the base of large trees. Chief agreed, but noted that it can be difficult to get property owners to incur the costs of such fire prevention, but it is always worthwhile to make such suggestions when the opportunity presents itself.

Commissioner Newmen said that the extended border closure due to Covid has really exacerbated the land debris on unattended properties, and looks forward to the return of foreign property owners once the border restrictions are lifted.

Chief echoed that sentiment and truly hopes that property owners will make the trip as soon as possible to prepare their properties for the coming winter, and attend to any land debris cleanup that may already be necessary.

Chief added that he is concerned that the expected lifting of US border restrictions might not be enough to encourage property owners to come to Point Roberts, as they will still require a negative Covid test to return home to Canada. He is worried that if the visitors aren't educated on this issue, they may come unprepared and be unable to return home. He reviewed the reasons why our Covid testing program can only be done on Wednesdays and Sundays, and worries that might put some visitors in jeopardy of unexpectedly being stuck here for a few days. Chief has been in contact with Senator Patty Murray and Congresswoman Suzan DelBene about this issue, asking for their continued assistance with CBSA to encourage cross-border travel, and hopes they may be able to convince CBSA to implement a similar "local" exemption from Covid testing for visitors from Delta to come here and return home without the required Covid test, as Point Roberts residents currently enjoy for the purpose of conducting daily lifestyle errands in Delta, BC.

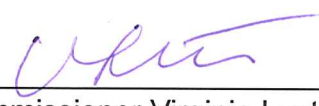
Commissioner Lester thanked Chief Carleton for the Covid testing and vaccine programs, and to all of the volunteers who have given so much of their time toward these essential programs this past year and a half.

J. ADJOURNMENT

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

The next meeting will be a Special Budget Workshop meeting on October 26th, 2021, at 4:00 pm.

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners will be November 10th, 2021, at 4:00 pm.



Commissioner Virginia Lester

Commissioner Pat Harper

Commissioner Raye Newmen

Dated November 10, 2021

Attest: 

Recording Secretary Linda Hughes