

# **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  
March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

### **MINUTES**

In Attendance via Zoom platform:

Commissioner Virginia Lester  
Commissioner Pat Harper  
Chief Christopher Carleton  
Financial Manager Patty Markel

Also attending on Zoom:

District Secretary Linda Hughes  
Assistant Chief John Shields  
Commissioner candidate Norm Katz

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. OATH OF OFFICE**

Commissioner Lester administered the Oath of Office to Norm Katz, who did solemnly swear to faithfully and impartially discharge the duties of the office.

The District Secretary will notarize the Oath when Mr. Katz returns to Point Roberts.

Mr. Katz commented that it was his honor to be here and appreciates the opportunity to work with the commissioners on behalf of the District.

Commissioner Harper responded that the commissioners appreciate having him join the board.

#### **C. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no comments from the public at this time.

## D. BOARD ACTION

### D.1. Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 9th, 2021

**MOTION:** Commissioner Harper moved to approve the Minutes of the February 9th meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lester. **Motion passed 2-0**

## E. FINANCIAL MANAGER'S REPORT

### E.1 Financial Report

Financial Manager Markel presented the financial report as submitted.

### E.2 Approval of Fire District Vouchers

As Commissioner Lester was presenting a motion, a technical difficulty interrupted the recording of the meeting for several minutes.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Lester moved to approve the Vouchers in the amount of \$22,739.57 for payment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Harper. **Motion passed 2-0**

### E.3 Approval of Fire District Payroll

**MOTION:** Commissioner Lester moved that payroll in the amount of \$15,047.21 be approved for payment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Harper. **Motion passed 2-0**

### E.4 Budget Update

Financial Manager Markel reported that 83.3% of the budget remained at the end of February, compared with the February 2021 amount remaining of 85.92%.

## F. CORRESPONDENCE

Chief Carleton reported that there continues to be quite a lot of inquiries about covid testing and vaccines, along with some notes of thanks from members of the community.

## G. CHIEF'S REPORT

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

Chief reported that 12 new hire member candidates are being considered. He will be conducting interviews over the coming weekend and then re-evaluating the candidates to fill 6 or 7 positions. He reported that the District will soon lose 3 of our members to firefighting organizations outside our community.

Chief reported that inflation has been on the rise, and it is affecting the District's purchasing power, including the cost of fuel and other necessities. He will be reviewing the trends with Financial

Manager Markel over the next while to determine whether an amendment to the budget might be in order.

Chief reported that Covid testing continues to be conducted on Wednesdays and Sundays, and has decided to reduce the testing period by one hour, to begin at 10:00 am instead of 9:00 am, which may cause some confusion as Sunday, March 13th will also be the daylight savings time change of the clocks. He also acknowledged that we may have a large influx of visitors this summer and the hours of testing will be monitored and adjusted as needed by our community.

There will be no vaccine clinics in March, and Chief will be monitoring the interest in vaccines to determine a schedule for future vaccination clinics, knowing that several people, especially the immunocompromised, will be looking to obtain another booster.

Chief reported that the Wildland Fire meeting which took place online on March 2nd was recorded and the video will be posted to the WCFD5 website, and also to the PREP website.

Chief reported that there is no news on any of the apparatus, and that he intends to stagger the scheduled vehicle maintenance throughout the year.

Chief reported an increase in burn permit requests, and expects this coming season will be much busier than the last two seasons have been, with the returning landowners. Additionally, Lighthouse Marine Park has been piling up tree debris in the Park, and have inquired about potential collaboration with the district to burn the pile, if a wood chipper can not be procured to reduce the pile to chips.

Commissioner Harper asked if the Chief felt that DNR might be amenable to providing funding for fire prevention cleanup. Chief Carleton feels that type of funding would not be available, partly because so much of Point Roberts is privately owned and fire prevention cleanup would be the responsibility of the landowners.

## **H. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

## **I. NEW BUSINESS**

### **I.1 - Point Roberts Hospital District annual rental fee**

Financial Manager Markel shared a graph of the (Seattle) Consumer Price Index and reminded the Commissioners that in recent years, they have raised the annual rent of space to the PRHD Clinic by the amount noted in the CPI. This year's CPI is 7.6%, which would result in an increase of \$1,232.69 to an annual rental fee of \$17,452.24.

Commissioner Katz inquired about the previous years' rent increases and Financial Manager Markel responded that the CPI increase has been the benchmark for annual increases in recent years, while noting that this year's CPI is indeed higher than previous years.

Commissioner Harper noted that with all things considered, the CPI rate of 7.6% is fair and the Fire District will need the funds.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Harper moved that the rental fee for the Point Roberts Hospital District be raised by 7.6% in accordance with the Consumer Price Index. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Katz. **Motion passed 3-0**

In other new business, Chief Carleton reported that he has been receiving inquiries about the district meetings returning to in-person ones and would like the commissioners to consider this question.

Commissioner Lester said that she thinks the Zoom meetings have been a positive experience, and feels that in-person meetings could resume again in the future, suggesting a target period of summer, perhaps June or September.

Commissioner Harper likes in-person meetings and feel that more people would attend in-person than do for online meetings.

Commissioner Katz agreed with Commissioner Lester that a few more months of online meetings would be the safest and then look to late summer to reinstate in-person meetings.

Commissioner Harper agreed that he was satisfied with tabling the discussion of returning to in-person meetings until June.

The District Secretary was asked to put that discussion on the Agenda for the June meeting.

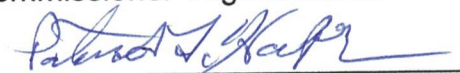
## J. ADJOURNMENT

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


The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners will be April 13th, 2022, at 4:00 pm.



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Commissioner Virginia Lester

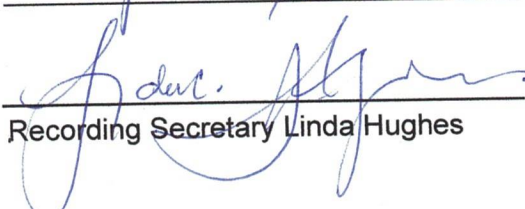


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Commissioner Pat Harper



\_\_\_\_\_  
Commissioner Norm Katz

Dated April 13 / 22

Attest:   
Recording Secretary Linda Hughes