

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
February 9th, 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

Guests:

several guests via online Zoom platform

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 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 January 12th, 2021

MOTION: Commissioner Harper moved to approve the Minutes of the January 12th meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lester. **Motion passed 2-0**

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

Chief Carleton asked for a moment to describe some of the expenses charged to the District's US Bank credit card. He advised that the Tahoe vehicle had undergone a little over \$3,300.00 in unexpected repairs, as noted in the January meeting.

Chief added that three students were enrolled in EMT training and 1 was enrolled in AEMT training. He confirmed that the EMT students were under contract to provide 1 year of service to the community and the AEMT was under contract for 1 1/2 years of service to the community.

Additionally, Chief indicated that the PSE heating bill was extraordinarily high this winter, the last bill totaling in excess of \$2,000.00.

Also, nearly \$5,400.00 was expended to High Speed Plumbing when the outflow lines from the toilets within the fire hall became blocked. He described the difficulties that he encountered when calling for a plumber to attend to the situation. As has become an unfortunate side effect of the continued cross-border restrictions recently, many contractors are no longer servicing the needs for skilled labor in Point Roberts. After many inquiries of service providers on the mainland, Chief finally found High Speed Plumbing, a family-owned business in Mount Vernon, that ultimately provided exceptional customer service to the district. However, the plumber had to be flown into Point Roberts with San Juan Air, and a District employee had to traverse the plumber's equipment through the border in a district vehicle. The plumber spent the entire day at the fire station and provided video footage of the blockages, (an inordinate amount of paper towels that should never have been flushed) and subsequently discovered that the pipes to the septic system had settled, and were no longer in an ideal position to flow freely.

Commissioner Harper asked what the follow up to the settled pipes would be. Chief replied that he had contacted the septic system installer and will update the Commissioners on potential remedies once the installer is able to come to Point Roberts to inspect and repair the grade settlement issues.

MOTION: Commissioner Harper moved to approve the Vouchers in the amount of \$32,235.51 for payment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lester. **Motion passed 2-0**

D.3 Approval of Fire District Payroll

MOTION: Commissioner Harper moved that payroll in the amount of \$15,562.21 be approved for payment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lester. **Motion passed 2-0**

D.4 Budget Update

Financial Manager Markel reported that 90.85% of the budget remained at the end of January, compared with the January 2021 amount remaining of 92.16%. Financial Manager Markel reported that \$77,826.13 remained as a carryover from the 2021 budget and was available to transfer over to the capital projects account.

MOTION: Commissioner Lester moved that carryover amount of \$77,826.13 be transferred to the capital projects account. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Harper. **Motion passed 2-0**

Financial Manager Markel requested a Motion to cancel a lost warrant, in the amount of \$1,122.82 dated December 14, 2021, payable to Saltwater Cafe that had not been received in the mail. She indicated that an Affidavit had been received attesting to the lost check.

MOTION: Commissioner Harper moved that check number 1137590, in the amount of \$1,122.82 be cancelled and replaced. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lester. **Motion passed 2-0**

E. 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.

F. 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, and he is considering reducing the testing period by one hour on each day due to diminishing attendance. He reported that the next vaccine event is scheduled for February 13th, and will include the Moderna, Pfizer and J&J vaccine options.

Chief reported that his hours of service are higher in January than usual due to the courses he is teaching, and further reports that he anticipates those hours of service to remain higher than usual for the next few months for the same reason.

G. CAPITAL FACILITIES PLAN

Chief feels that it is a good time to start looking at the Capital Facilities Plan to determine if the District is on track or lagging behind with the current plan. The plan currently projects a net zero within the budget occurring in 2028, and then it is projected to decline into a deficit.

He reported that he has recently been in discussion with the planning department of Whatcom County and learned that the formula for calculating the new construction costs is currently under revision.

Chief reported that the fire station is in need of some refurbishment, to include additional bathrooms and sleeping quarters, especially in light of the growing female member population. With this in mind, he has already begun researching potential USDA grants to help cover the costs of these necessary upgrades to the facility.

He added that the equipment bays are also in need of more space. One reason is that in keeping our vehicles stationed outdoors is impacting the District's overall score, which further impacts

insurance and other costs. The equipment bays are also in need of an exhaust flushing system, and would additionally benefit from a fire sprinkler system installation.

Commissioner Lester inquired whether the Chief had an estimate of the cost of the proposed station upgrades. Chief responded that initial calculations are at approximately 1 to 1 1/2 million dollars.

Commissioner Lester asked whether Chief Carleton had an idea of how much has been spent on Covid response. Chief estimates that about \$50,000.00 has been expended on PPE and other covid related costs. He is looking into potential grants for reimbursement of some of those costs from the Washington State Department of Emergency Management

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

H. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Lester reported that 4 resumes had been received in response to the call out to the community for a new commissioner, to fill the vacancy left due to the resignation of Commissioner Newmen last month. She indicated that 3 of the applicants were in attendance at this meeting, and noted that the 4th candidate was unavailable to attend at this meeting. She then invited each candidate to speak for 2 minutes on the merits of their application.

Savilla Kress began by saying that she has lived in Point Roberts for approximately 12 years. She enjoys volunteer work, and has volunteered at various fire district events over the years. She admitted that she doesn't have any practical fire district experience but adds that she believes herself to be unbiased and a keen learner. She feels she would be a good candidate for Commissioner.

Bill Meursing thanked the commissioners for the opportunity to speak to his application and reminded them that he has previously acted as a fire commissioner for 15 years, in Point Roberts and with the San Juan Volunteer fire department.

Dina Boykiw indicated that she too is pleased to be here and feels she would be a good candidate for fire commissioner. She has lived in Point Roberts for 18 years and has been visiting the Point since childhood. She has extensive experience in administration and has many years experience in volunteering with the Delta Recreation and the Delta Skating Club, which she currently serves on the board of directors. She is also a founding member of the Point Roberts Circle of Care.

Commissioner Lester thanked the 3 candidates for the application, and for the introductions of themselves. She indicated that the board would now enter into Executive Session, at 4:37 pm, to discuss the 4 applications, and she anticipated the board would return to the meeting in approximately 20 minutes.

Executive Session

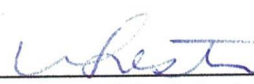
At 5:10 pm, Commissioner Lester re-called the meeting to Order.

Commissioner Lester thanked all applicants for their dedication to volunteering in our community, and for their interest in becoming a fire district commissioner. She continued that all 4 were exceptional candidates, and after considerable deliberations it had been decided to accept the application of Norm Katz to fill the vacant commissioner position.

I. ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business, Commissioner Lester moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Harper seconded the motion. **Motion passed 2 – 0.**

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners will be March 9th, 2022, at 4:00 pm.



Commissioner Virginia Lester



Commissioner Pat Harper

Dated March 9, 2022

Attest: 

Recording Secretary Linda Hughes