

Whatcom County Fire District #5

Point Roberts Fire Department

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

~~Special~~ ^{Regular} Meeting of the Board of Commissioners

November 10th, 2023

MINUTES

In Attendance: Commissioner Virginia Lester
Commissioner Norm Katz
Commissioner Pat Harper
Chief Christopher Carleton
Financial Manager Markel
District Secretary Linda Hughes

Guests: Assistant Chief Shields
All Point Bulletin, Pat Grubb
Kate Gray

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 by Commissioner Lester.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

None at this time.

C. BOARD ACTION

C.1 Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Commissioner Lester moved to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 11th, 2023 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Harper. **Motion passed 3 – 0**

MOTION: Commissioner Lester moved to approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting, Budget Work Session of November 1st, 2023 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.

Commissioner Lester inquired about some of the unusual expenses and Chief explained that \$24,597.50 was paid to Across The Street Productions for May Day Training, a firefighter safety course for 40 students as part of the Blue Card training program. Additionally, the \$2,893.97 was paid to Dewaard & Bode was for the purchase of a new washer dryer unit; the \$3,348.14 to Profire Emergency was for ongoing maintenance of two of the District's vehicles.

D.2 Approval of the Fire District Vouchers

MOTION: Commissioner Lester moved to approve the Vouchers in the amount of \$51,791.56 for payment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Katz. **Motion passed 3 – 0**

D.3 Approval of Fire District Payroll

MOTION: Commissioner Lester moved that payroll in the amount of \$20,631.46 be approved for payment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Katz. **Motion passed 3 – 0**

D.4 Budget Update

Financial Manager Markel's financial report indicates that 20.51% of the budget remained at the end of October, compared with the October 2022 amount remaining of 23.68%.

E. CORRESPONDENCE

Chief reported that numerous thank you letters had been received this month, especially related to the search operations for Mr. Ho, noting that Mr. Ho's family donated \$500 with their heartfelt thanks to this agency for the efforts made.

F. CHIEF'S REPORT

Chief Carleton submitted and reviewed his report.

Chief began by thanking this community for their support of the Levy initiative.

Chief reviewed the status of the vehicles that are currently out for maintenance servicing, noting that Brush 58 is currently out of service.

Chief reported that the Hallowe'en event was a big success, adding that over 100 people attended.

The software that tracks the number of hours of volunteers on duty is still being adjusted to the needs of this District and should be properly tracking hours by the new year.

WSRB is coming again in the New Year to evaluate the District for its rating. Chief's recent Fire Inspection Certification will have a positive impact on that rating.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Chief reviewed the revised proposed 2024 Budget. He began by reporting that the property valuations of Point Roberts are trending upward, noting that the total valuation of Point Roberts was \$935 million when the budget was initially being prepared earlier this year, but the current valuation has risen to \$1,038,090,326 (over a billion dollars).

Chief reviewed last year's income was budgeted to be \$648,449.98. With the approved levy this year, the levy income will be \$1,183,422.97. Additional income of \$19,718 will come from Hospital District rent, \$300 from Whatcom County Parks for fire protection fees, and \$4,500 from interest on investments. That other income totals \$24,518 and brings the total 2024 income to \$1,207,940.97.

Chief reviewed the entire budget by division and line items. He noted that there will be a resolution for consideration in December to raise the Commissioner meeting salary from \$128 per meeting to \$157 per meeting. Additionally, Chief will be proposing a raise in meeting salary of the Secretary from \$200 to \$250 for next year, as well as a raise to Financial Manager Markel from \$13,587/yr to \$15,000/yr.; to Assistant Chief Shields from \$41,200/yr to \$42,675; and to Chief Carleton from \$68,495/yr to \$72,000.

Chief reviewed a new expense item to implement the new ambulance policy and a welcome home program that he has been advocating for throughout the proposed levy discussions. Under these new initiatives, the district would be able to transport patients to the hospital with no cost to the patient, currently the number one factor for patient

refusal to accept ambulance transport to the hospital. Additionally, a new vehicle is being sought to implement the welcome home program, to bring patients home from the hospital. The new vehicle will need to be wheelchair accessible. Chief notes that he is hoping to implement these programs early in the new year.

Chief has increased the budget expense for firefighter suppression by \$20,000 to bring on more firefighter coverage.

An increase of \$37,000 for tools and equipment has been added to the budget to replace several emergency tools that require replacement and to invest in thermal imaging technology.

An increase of \$65,000 has been added for office, operational clothing and PPE, which Chief had referred to in his discussions of the potential levy. This increase will allow the District to invest in wildland gear, winter jackets, class B uniforms, bunker gear, and some female specific additions that are greatly needed.

An increase of \$11,000 has been added for task force nozzles on hoses. Each nozzle costs \$1,000.

Chief reported that he is still seeking grant funding for new radios, but also notes that the District will eventually really need them, with or without grant funding. The current radios are now two years out of date and are no longer serviceable. Chief is also seeking grant funding for a new ambulance. He has budgeted an increase of \$6,500 for pagers/radios.

An increase of \$6,000 to Live Fire Training, partly to cover the cost of renting live fire testing gear from the Justice Institute where the members take the training. Currently members use our own gear but then must come back to the Point and wash the 37 sets of firefighting gear. This is hard on our septic system.

Education costs have been increased by \$8,000 to help expand training to some members. Having higher trained individuals in the District is a great benefit to this community.

EMS Volunteer stipends have been increased by \$17,000, as Chief is hoping to add more paramedics or advanced EMT's.

EMT/EMS Training, including travel, has been increased by \$6,700 in the hopes of training 2 or 3 more advanced EMT's to the District.

The total revised budget for 2024 comes to \$890,380.00. Total increases to this revised budget amount to \$222,559.00, leaving \$317,560.97 to carry over to the reserve account.

Chief again reviewed that a new ambulance will soon be needed and noted that additional space may also be required. He is considering a simple pole building or a pre-fab building. The space wouldn't have any bathrooms, office space or sleeping/cooking quarters, but it would need to have an exhaust capture system.

Chief added that with the increased valuation of Point Roberts, there will be more income than anticipated which will allow the District to achieve the goals of the Capital Facilities Plan earlier rather than later. It will also allow us to open discussions with community members about future protective needs.

Commissioner Harper inquired about potential fuel storage for emergencies. Chief replied that he has been looking into that for the coming years, saying that we do have some now.

Commissioner Katz asked if the fuel pumps were operated by generator and Chief replied that they are hand-pumped but could also be operated by a generator.

Chief again reviewed the simple highlights of the proposed Budget, reiterating that the levy rate will be \$1.14 per thousand in 2024. He again reviewed receipt of other income and discussed back taxes that are received as they are collected. In 2023, \$48,000 was received in back taxes relating to taxation years 2016 through 2022. He noted that \$41,595 is current due and owing in back taxes and said that when those funds are received, they go into reserves.

H. RESOLUTION 2023-02

Financial Manager Markel advised the Commissioners that we normally pass two resolutions with the budget, but because the levy lid lift passed, we will not be passing the usual 1% resolution, but instead just certifying the 2024 Budget using the \$1.14 per thousand amount.

Commissioner Lester said that before the budget is approved, she wanted to note that Chief Carleton has not had a raise in three years, and she would like to discuss that matter in December or January. Chief replied that is not necessary at this time, as his salary usually comes under consideration mid-year.

Chief reviewed his positions with WCFD5 and WCFD7, and the various benefits received from each District. Financial Manager Markel noted that District 7 pays 100% of Chief Carleton's medical insurance, saying it amounts to approximately \$20,000.

Commissioner Lester wants to discuss Chief Carleton's salary and the District Secretary was instructed to place the matter, with an Executive Session, on the December agenda.

MOTION: Commissioner Lester moved to approve Resolution 2023-02 which includes approval of the 2024 Budget as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Katz. **Motion passed 3 – 0**

I. NEW BUSINESS

None at this time.

J. ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business, Commissioner Katz moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:31 pm. Commissioner Harper seconded the motion. **Motion passed 2 – 0.**


The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners will be December 13th, 2023, at 4:00 pm.



Commissioner Virginia Lester



Commissioner Norm Katz



Commissioner Pat Harper

Dated November 10, 2023

Attest: 
Recording Secretary Linda Hughes