

Whatcom County Fire District #5

Point Roberts Fire Department

2030 Benson Road, Suite A

Point Roberts, Washington, 98281

Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners

June 28th, 2023

MINUTES

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

Absent: Financial Manager Patty Markel

Guests: Shive Marshall
Bill Zidel

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:14 p.m. by Commissioner Lester.

B. EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO RCW 42.30.110 - Personnel Matter

Commissioner Lester announced an Executive session pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) to meet with legal counsel to discuss the legal risks of a proposed action, because public discussion of the legal risks would likely result in an adverse legal or financial consequence to the District. She noted that the Executive Session would last approximately 15 minutes, bringing the special meeting back in session at 4:30 pm. Executive session began at 4:17 pm.

At 4:31 pm, the special meeting was re-called to Order.

C. DISCUSS POTENTIAL LEVY FOR DISTRICT

Chief Carleton began by thanking everyone for their patience, and said that he believed that at the last meeting, the Commissioners had agreed to consider a potential levy lid lift for the district in the amount of \$0.45, and cease discussions of a bond at this time.

Chief Carleton displayed a new projection chart, to demonstrate approximately what a \$0.45 levy increase would cost taxpayers at various property value levels. These projections are based on current property values:

Property Value	Current cost	New annual cost	Per month
\$250,000	\$173.36	\$285.86	\$ 9.37
\$300,000	\$208.03	\$343.03	\$11.25
\$400,000	\$277.38	\$457.38	\$15.00
\$500,000	\$346.72	\$571.72	\$18.75
\$750,000	\$520.09	\$857.59	\$28.13
\$1,000,000	\$693.45	\$1,143.40	\$37.50

Bill Zidel commented that this chart was the clearest representation of the proposed costs that he had seen to date on this matter, comparing the monthly increase to a number of lattes that would number equate to.

Commissioner Lester asked Chief Carleton for a summary of the community survey results. Chief replied that there had been 234 responses so far, and displayed the survey results on the screens for everyone to see. Chief noted that there are a variety of factors to consider within the results; for instance the number of respondents that answered one of the two questions but not the other, or perhaps answered both questions, and therefore results could not be definitively ascertained. With that in mind, 73% of the respondents are in favor of an immediate levy lid lift of \$0.45, and 26% were not in favor of that approach.

The second question on the survey proposed incremental increases annually, beginning at \$0.30 or \$0.35 to the target of \$0.45. 64% were in favor of this approach, while 36% were not in favor of it.

The Commissioners discussed the survey itself, noting that the number of respondents was impressive, and that the message was helpful and very well presented. Part of the survey descriptive message included the number of emergency calls and other cost increases that the District has experienced since the last levy adjustment in 2010. Chief also noted that membership has doubled since then and several other new programs to serve the community have been added. He also reiterated the high cost of bunker gear, noting that some members have to pay for their own gear out-of-pocket as the District has limited funds available and cannot afford to outfit every volunteer with their own custom-made gear. He added that these same volunteers get paid a stipend of \$15.00 to attend emergencies and risk their lives attending a structure fire.

Chief will look into whether a deeper analysis of the raw numbers from the survey might be available.

Commissioner Harper noted that he feels the number of emergency calls is not likely to decrease with the aging population, and feels that a \$0.45 levy lid lift now is the right choice.

Chief Carleton thinks there should be at least one more special meeting before the next regular meeting of July 12th. He will email prospective dates to the Commissioners, Secretary, Financial Manager and legal counsel Brian Snure to find a date most convenient for it.

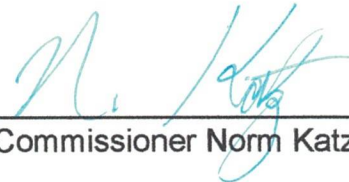
Chief noted that he is making some changes to the Capital Facilities Plan and will present those changes at the next meeting for the Commissioners' consideration, which will then be presented at the regular meeting on July 12th for potential approval.

C. ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business, Commissioner Lester moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:08 pm. Commissioner Katz seconded the motion. **Motion passed 3 – 0.**



Commissioner Virginia Lester

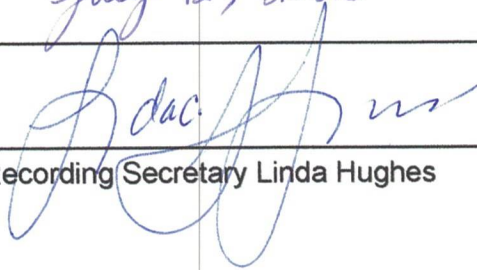


Commissioner Norm Katz



Commissioner Pat Harper

Dated July 12, 2023

Attest: 

Recording Secretary Linda Hughes