

# **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 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024

### **MINUTES**

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

Guests: All Point Bulletin, P. Grubb  
Stephen Falk  
Shauna Sylvester  
Bill Zidel

#### **A. CALL TO ORDER**

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

#### **B. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None at this time.

#### **C. BOARD ACTION**

##### **C.1 Approval of Minutes**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Harper moved to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Katz.  
**Motion passed 3 – 0**

## D. FINANCIAL MANAGER'S REPORT

### D.1 Financial Report

Financial Manager Markel presented the financial report as submitted.

Chief Carleton explained some of the unusual expenses, noting that the \$52,127.55 to Toyota is for the new Welcome Home Van. He reported that the only bid received was the one from Toyota. The vehicle is a 2024 Sienna AWD hybrid. There is room within the vehicle to transport a wheelchair but he did not requisition the installation of a wheelchair lift because it would have doubled the cost of the vehicle and adds potential challenges if that equipment should break down. Chief added that he will be seeking drivers of the van for the Welcome Home Program. All successful candidates will have to complete the District's internal driving program.

Chief noted the expense of \$1,513.85 to Katz Consulting was for the purchase of jackets.

He reported the purchase of a new industrial stove with hood for the firefighter quarters upstairs, at the cost of \$3,845.86.

Additionally, the \$1,859.94 to Bergen was for the purchase of uniforms; the \$2,226.80 to Life Assist was for medical supplies and medications; the \$5,341.46 to Andgar was for the repair of the air conditioning unit that broke down during EMT and Fire training last summer; and the \$1,800.00 to EMT & Fire Training is the cost for 1 new EMT trainee.

Chief added that he plans to apply for an RFP grant in the amount of approximately \$40,000 for mini a/c units for the upstairs quarters and also for the Clinic space.

### D.2 Approval of the Fire District Vouchers

**MOTION:** Commissioner Harper moved to approve the Vouchers in the amount of \$87,726.63 for payment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Katz. **Motion passed 3 – 0**

### D.3 Approval of Fire District Payroll

**MOTION:** Commissioner Harper moved that payroll in the amount of \$21,937.95 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 84.02% of the budget remained at the end of February, compared with the February 2023 amount remaining of 88.19%.

## **E. CORRESPONDENCE**

None to report at this time.

## **F. CHIEF'S REPORT**

Chief Carleton submitted and reviewed his report for the month of February, 2024.

Chief reported that his AFG grant applications have been submitted, one for \$290,000 for the purchase of an ambulance, and another for \$300,000 for the purchase of portable radios. He also noted that approximately \$50,000 to \$70,000 will be needed to replaced the mobile radios in the vehicles, no longer eligible for AFG grant funding.

Chief continued to report that if the grant application for a new ambulance is successful, the District will likely need a new building to house it. He is planning for a simple bare bones type pole building with electricity but no plumbing or office space. The construction of that building would be put out for bid, and Chief expects it might cost approximately \$300,000. He added that the current 1991 ambulance does not meet current safety standards.

Chief reported that the new extraction tool has been received.

Chief reported that the district now has 47 members, and received 47 calls in February.

## **G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

## **H. NEW BUSINESS**

Chief reported that he had been contacted by Shauna Sylvester and Stephen Falk regarding their intent to get a feasibility study done to determine what level of sustainable energy this community could use, noting that he supports the use of renewable energy options. He then turned the floor over to Shauna and Stephen.

Shauna indicated that she is hoping the Fire District will be part of a broad feasibility study they are hoping to conduct in Point Roberts. She noted that the WA State Department of Commerce has opened grants for de-carbonization. Her draft scope of work is to do a feasibility study on the installation of solar panels on public buildings within Point Roberts, such as the Community Center, the Water District and perhaps the Fire District and Clinic.

The cost of the feasibility study will be approximately \$130,000 to \$150,000, but not all of that needs to be raised locally, as pledges of financial commitment will be matched.



She reported that the Park District has committed \$5,000, and they have received a personal donation of \$2,000, totaling \$7,000 raised so far. She is here today requesting a letter of support from Chief Carleton and the District and hopefully a dollar pledge toward the study as well.

Commissioner Katz asked about the specifications, and Shauna replied that she can't answer that question until the feasibility study is done, which will assess electrical, locations, etc. leading into the design strategy and funding ideas. She noted that there are some possible funding sources with the recently passed Infrastructure Act and perhaps the Inflation Reduction Act also.

Shauna continued to report that the contractor for the project is Cascadia Renewables, an organization already approved by the Department of Commerce, who is sympathetic to Point Roberts ownership concerns and will be capable of maintaining and supporting the infrastructure.

Commissioner Katz asked where one could obtain further research on these types of projects and Shauna offered to provide him with more info.

Commissioner Harper asked if residences can participate and Shauna explained that she has been hosting a series of educational seminars about that and would give him more information on the next one so he could attend. She added that it is possible to tie in residences to the program later on, but today's concern is for the installation of solar panels on public buildings only. Once she has enough support for this initial project, her group will seek additional feasibility studies and apply for grants to move forward.

Commissioner Lester thanked Shauna for the seminars she has been hosting, noting that they have been very informative and helped a lot of people understand.

Stephen Falk noted that this is a multi-step process; first to do an assessment, the feasibility study and then to seek grant funding.

Commissioner Katz asked if their group was looking into photo Baltic or wind power, and Stephen replied that this group was focusing only on solar at this time.

Chief Carleton asked the Commissioners for direction on this. He offered to write the letter of support being requested, and said that he would contact Brian Snure, the District's legal counsel to get a determination on how much the District could pledge, if any at all. Chief added that he would like to match or exceed the pledge of the Park District. He added that he will also ask Mr. Snure where such pledge of funds could come from, whether it be from the operations or capital reserves accounts, and always keeping in mind the needs of the District's Capital Facilities Plan.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Katz moved to direct Chief Carleton to provide a letter of support from the Fire District, and to act as liaison with the Park District to pursue a

grant for a feasibility study to install solar and backup power on public buildings in Point Roberts. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lester. **Motion passed 3 – 0**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Lester moved to permit Chief Carleton to pledge up to \$10,000 in support of the feasibility study, once legal counsel has provided an opinion that the District may do so. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Harper. **Motion passed 3 – 0**

Thanks were offered all around for the efforts being made and the support offered.

Bill Zidel asked Chief Carleton about an ongoing landscaping project that the Park property next door to the Fire Hall, noting that quite a bit of cleanup has been done around the skate park and Baker Field. He wanted to know if the green waste should be hauled away for composting or if it could be burned, what kind of permit would be required. Chief Carleton told Bill that he would assist with that.

## I. ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business, Commissioner Harper moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:05 pm. Commissioner Katz seconded the motion. **Motion passed 3 – 0.**

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners will be April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 4:00 pm.

  
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Commissioner Virginia Lester

  
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Commissioner Norm Katz

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Commissioner Pat Harper

Dated April 10, 2024.

Attest:   
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Recording Secretary Linda Hughes