

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
October 9th, 2024

MINUTES

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

Absent: District Secretary Linda Hughes
(Minutes prepared from video recording)

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:06 pm 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 September 11th, 2024 as presented. The motion was **SECONDED** by Commissioner Katz. **MOTION PASSED:** 2-0. Commissioner Lester abstained.

D. FINANCIAL MANAGER'S REPORT

D.1 Financial Report

Financial Manager Markel presented the financial report as submitted.

Financial Manager Markel reviewed the expenses over \$1,000.00, being (1) the annual insurance renewal to McNeil & Co in the amount of \$49,503.00, (2) the cost of the radios to Motorola Solutions in the amount of \$265,202.57, partly offset by the FEMA grant funding received of \$229,733.60, leaving the difference to be covered by the District.

Chief Carleton added that the difference from the grant funding and the District's portion of just over \$35,000.00 is to be covered out of capital reserves. Chief reiterated that this grant was for the purchase of 24 new portable radios, adding that grant funding is no longer available toward the cost of mobile radios used in vehicles. Chief anticipates purchasing those needed mobile radios in the near future, advising that the invoice is being put together now, estimated to be around \$70,000.00, which will also be covered by funds from the capital reserves account.

D.2 Approval of the Fire District Vouchers

MOTION: Commissioner Harper moved to approve the Vouchers in the amount of \$335,397.79 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 \$18,613.95 be approved for payment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Katz. **Motion passed 3 – 0**

D.4 Budget Update

Financial Manager Markel noted that 33.16% of the budget remained at the end of September, compared with the September 2023 amount remaining of 27.75%. The gap is likely due to which month we pay the annual insurance premiums, which she anticipates will be closer to normal next month.

Financial Manager Markel advised that she and Chief Carleton will be meeting later this month to begin discussing the preliminary 2025 budget and what the levy numbers look like, and she would like to schedule a Special Budget Workshop with the board for Thursday, November 7th at 4:00 pm. This date was acceptable to all Commissioners and the Chief and is therefore scheduled.

E. CORRESPONDENCE

Chief Carleton reported receiving some thank you notes from the public, particularly in response to this recently published Fireside Chat.

F. CHIEF'S REPORT

Chief Carleton's presented his report for the month of September, 2024.

Chief Carleton confirmed the receipt of the funds related to the AFG grant for portable radios. Chief wants to clarify that the grant was for \$241,220.28, of which we received \$229,733.60, the difference in those amounts reflects the 5% match from the District, The total purchase of the radios, with accessories, warranties, etc., came to \$265,202.57 resulting in the amount of just over \$35,000.00 to be paid by the District from capital reserves toward this purchase. He added that the cost of grant writing services was approximately \$6,000.00 and Chief feels we received a pretty good return on that investment.

The annual Haunted House will be held on October 26th, from 1:00 to 3:00 pm and this year there will be a brand new maze. Volunteers welcome, baking treats, assisting with decorating, etc. will be appreciated.

No reports on apparatus, however our fire trucks will be going in for mandatory annual pump testing and other maintenance checkups. Engine 5803 is in now. A leak was discovered in one of the valves to the tank to pump situation, which is being fixed now. These annual checkups cost approximately \$5,000 per vehicle, so we can anticipate at least \$15,000.00 to be reflected in the November warrants.

There were a total of 35 calls for the month of September, 5 of which were EMS calls, 22 in-home checkups, 3 public service calls, and 5 fire classifications.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No unfinished business at this time.

H. NEW BUSINESS

Chief reported that the District will be hosting Solar Fest this weekend on Saturday, October 12th from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm, anticipating about 200 people will attend here at the Fire Hall. A team of volunteers has been here assessing the electrical grid and the roof to see if the building would be a plausible place to install solar panels for use

as backup energy in the event of an emergency. He added that the Fire Hall does have a large generator and he is looking into getting 250 or 500 gallon fuel storage tanks installed, one for diesel and one for regular fuel in case we ever need the generator to run longer than its current capability.

Chief also wanted to announce that the WSRB rating team recently reviewed all of our emergency services, fire suppression, personnel, water district storage capacity, hydrants, relevant continuing education, fire investigation services now able to be completed by Chief Carleton, etc., and our fire protection rating was improved to level 4 from level 5. This is a very impressive achievement that will positively impact home insurance premiums as of February 1, 2025. Chief will add this information to the District website, and publish it in another Fireside Chat article so that homeowners will know to approach their home insurance companies for a decrease in premiums.

Commissioner Lester asked about the fire inspection process and Chief described the potential for annual inspections that could be done here in the future, which ultimately may again reduce the District's ISO rating further in the next five years.

I. ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business, Commissioner Harper moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:36 pm. Commissioner Katz seconded the motion. **Motion passed 3 – 0.**

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners will be November 13th, 2024, at 4:00 pm.



Commissioner Virginia Lester



Commissioner Norm Katz

Commissioner Pat Harper

Dated November 13/24

Attest: 

Recording Secretary Linda Hughes