

**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  
October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**MINUTES**

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

Guests: Tony Kelley, Bill Skinner, Alyx Gray,  
Kate Gray, Georgina Mathey, Terry Mathey,  
Karen Kilpatrick, Rhiannon Allen, All Point  
Bulletin - P. Grubb, Yeagers, Trent Viant,  
Bill Zidel

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 4:06 p.m. by Commissioner Lester.

**B. REPLACEMENT AMBULANCE PURCHASE WITH CAPITAL RESERVES**

Commissioner Lester announced the purpose of this meeting and turned the floor over to Chief Carleton.

Chief Carleton reported that Ambulance A58 was involved in a motor vehicle collision in the early morning hours of October 11th, resulting in the loss of the ambulance, leaving our community without adequate ambulance capability.

Chief said that he has made requests to North Whatcom and Ferndale with respect to potentially borrowing one of their ambulances in the interim, but this would come with other insurance and availability challenges.

Chief then introduced the patient that was being transported at the time of the accident, who was in attendance at this meeting, Georgina Mathey.

Chief would like to broach the topic of purchasing a replacement ambulance, using funds from the District's capital reserves.

With regard to the insurance coverage on A58, the replacement value is \$165,000. The other vehicle involved in the collision is owned by Argo Services, a Canadian company. Chief has asked our insurance company to look into all types of insurance that may have been held on the vehicle and driver.

Chief reported that the process that will be followed is that the District's insurance company will settle directly with us, either for replacement value (if the vehicle is assessed to be a total write-off) or the unit will be repaired. If the cost of repairs exceeds 75% of the insured value, then it will be considered a total write off. He added that the gurney system alone is with \$15,000 to \$20,000 and if it has been damaged beyond safe repair, then that value is included in the 75% of insured value.

Commissioner Katz asked if it is possible to rent an ambulance in the interim. Chief responded that he had asked North Whatcom and Ferndale Districts for an insured loaner ambulance, adding that if no loaner is available, then we will have to transfer all patients en route to the hospital in order to return the ambulance to Point Roberts and resume coverage.

Commissioner Lester asked how NW Airlift comes into the equation. Chief replied that he has advised NW Airlift of our current situation and has asked for consideration on some possible air ambulance needs that may arise in the period we are replacing our ambulance. He said that normally, patients have to meet a level of acuity to be eligible for airlift service, but he has also requested the service for certain patients who are felons and unable to transport to the hospital via land.

Chief noted that a draft Resolution has been prepared for the Commissioners consideration, but first wanted to review the proposed vehicle purchase.

Chief described three types of ambulances. A58 was a Type 3.

The proposed new vehicle is a Type 1 ambulance, and has 4-wheel drive, which Chief feels would be desirable for snow and hills. The vehicle is made by Medix, which is a subsidiary of Hughes Fire Equipment, located in Mt. Vernon, so pretty convenient for future maintenance and repairs. This proposed vehicle would fit in our bays with the same configuration we had with A58. A Type 2 ambulance is longer and would not fit in our current bay configuration.

Commissioner Lester asked if the proposed ambulance is a new vehicle. Chief replied that it is new, off the factory floor, but is a demo model. That means it cannot be customized.

Chief showed photographs of the exterior and interior of the vehicle, describing the various safety features.

Chief then showed the proposal from Medix, indicating the cost of the vehicle is \$250,204, and once taxes are added the total purchase price is \$272,221.95, and another \$1,000 if we chose red over the white model shown in the photographs.



Chief also showed at Type 2 ambulance for comparison. He noted that it is an all wheel drive vehicle and could be a good back-up ambulance to consider when we decide to replace our 1991 model ambulance, A5802.

He noted that if the insurance company chooses to repair A58, it will have a new chassis and box, and all of the damaged components will have been repaired or replaced, including the gurney system.

Commissioner Katz asked how far into the insurance adjudication process are we at this point? Chief turned the discussion over to Tony Kelley of Kelley insurance to handle that question.

Tony Kelley thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity to address them and offered his personal sentiments to Georgina Mathey, the patient involved in the accident.

Mr. Kelley advised the he has spoken to the claims examiner and impressed the urgency of this claim upon him. That said, the appraisal can still take up to 30 days to complete. Mr. Kelley advised that in his experience, repairs to an ambulance can take 4 to 6 months to complete.

Mr. Kelley added that with regard to the Stryker gurney system in the ambulance, he felt that from its appearance in the video he saw, the gurney appeared to be impacted by the accident.

Chief noted that if Stryker decides not to send a representative to inspect the gurney, then that means they have chosen to write it off and the value of the system will then be added to the overall vehicle damage / repair assessment to determine whether the ambulance meets the 75% threshold to be considered a total write off.

Commissioner Lester asked Chief Carleton what his best-case scenario would be. Chief replied that he would like to immediately proceed with the purchase of a new ambulance and then find out in due time whether A58 will be repaired or replaced, after which the Commissioners can consider whether to replace A5802.

Chief noted that if we move forward to purchase the new ambulance, we could have it here in about two weeks. Bill Skinner has offered to fly to Syracuse, NY and drive the new ambulance back to Point Roberts. Chief added that a second person would accompany Bill Skinner if that option is exercised.

Chief added that once the ambulance gets here, it will need radios (approximate cost of \$10,000) and will need decals (as required by the State). Also Title and tags will be required, but he feels all of these ancillary costs will come from the general budget and not the capital reserve account, as regular line item maintenance costs.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Lester moved to approve Resolution 2024-01, Declaration of Emergency Waiver of Competitive Bidding Requirements, in accordance with RCW 39.04.280, for the purchase of a new demo unit ambulance, for the approximate price of \$272,221.95, with the understanding that the price may be adjusted higher or lower depending on final calculations and transport considerations. Commissioner Harper **SECONDED** the Motion. **MOTION PASSED 3-0.**

Chief added his accolades to Terry for incredible driving during the incident, and to Trent, the EMS who rapidly returned his attention to the patient, after having been tossed around the back of the ambulance. He added these members will be recognized for their efforts at this year's upcoming Volunteer Recognition Banquet.

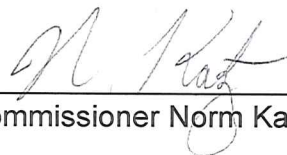
Financial Manager Markel asked Chief Carleton about the procedure for invoicing for the new ambulance. Chief replied that he would let her know, but will proceed with a purchase order for now.

**C. ADJOURNMENT**

As there was no further business, Commissioner Lester moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:58 pm. Commissioner Harper seconded the motion. **Motion passed 3 – 0.**



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Commissioner Virginia Lester



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Commissioner Norm Katz

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Commissioner Pat Harper

Dated November 13 /24

Attest: 

Recording Secretary Linda Hughes