

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
November 13th, 2024

MINUTES

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

Absent: Commissioner Pat Harper

Guests: Assistant Chief Shields
All Point Bulletin, P. Grubb
The Yeagers
Rhiannon Allen
Bill Zidel
Karen Kilpatrick

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 four sets of minutes, being the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 14th, 2024, the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 9th, 2024, the Minutes of the Special Meeting of October 16th, 2024, and the Minutes of the Special Budget Workshop Meeting of November 7th, 2024, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Katz. **Motion passed 2 – 0**

D. FINANCIAL MANAGER'S REPORT

D.1 Financial Report

Financial Manager Markel presented the financial report as submitted.

D.2 Approval of the Fire District Vouchers

MOTION: Commissioner Lester moved to approve the Vouchers in the amount of \$51,498.60 for payment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Katz. **Motion passed 2 – 0**

D.3 Approval of Fire District Payroll

MOTION: Commissioner Lester moved that payroll in the amount of \$18,239.95 be approved for payment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Katz. **Motion passed 2 – 0**

Financial Manager Markel also noted that an amendment to the October payroll and warrants is required, due to a payroll error and subtotal correction. The corrected amounts are \$21,128.95 and \$331,188.79 respectively.

MOTION: Commissioner Lester moved that the payroll and warrants for October be changed to \$21,128.95 and \$331,188.79 respectively. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Katz. **Motion passed 2 – 0**

D.4 Budget Update

Financial Manager Markel's financial report indicates that 23.1% of the budget remained at the end of October, compared with the October 2023 amount remaining of 20.51%.

Chief Carleton reviewed the expenses over \$1,000, including the \$1,701.87 to the local marketplace; \$1,684.01 in fuel expenses; \$10,000.00 to Point Roberts Park District to honor our pledge of funds toward a solar panel emergency power system; \$1,523.20 for SCBA flow testing; \$4,875.00 to King Architects for the design of a potential future out-

building for the housing of an ambulance; \$1,787.11 to Life Assist for EMS supplies; \$1,950.00 for Flow MSP; and \$7,519.83 to Pro Fire Equipment.

Commissioner Lester asked if the Chief had any updated status on the solar energy study. Chief replied that it is still under review but initial assessment of cost for solar power installed on the Fire Hall roof is approximately \$800,000.00, which system would enable about one-half day worth of power. Additionally, the batteries included with the system have an approximately life of 20 years, after which they would need to be replaced. The batteries represent approximately 2/3 of the total cost of the system. At this time the Chief feels it is not a priority for the District to pursue due to the financial constraints of the system but he will continue to study the issue for feasibility in the future.

E. CORRESPONDENCE

None to report at this time.

F. CHIEF'S REPORT

Chief reported that the portable radios purchased with AFG grant funding have been received by the District. Although the grant was awarded for up to \$260,000.00, the terms of the grant required a 5% match of funding from the district, so in fact only \$229,000.00 was awarded of that amount toward the purchase of the portable radios.

Chief will now be moving forward with the purchase of 9 mobile radios for the vehicles, which were not eligible for grant funding under the terms of this year's AFG grant parameters. The cost will be approximately \$93,000.00 and he expects to have this purchase completed soon and should be included in next month's warrants. Chief feels the District is now adequately set for radio equipment for the next 20+ years.

Chief reported on the recent Haunted House event, which he declared a great success. He noted that about 140 people attended the event. The volunteer firefighters created a whole new maze this year, and lots of fun was had by all who attended.

The ambulance involved in the motor vehicle accident has now officially been declared a total write-off by the insurance company and Chief expects to receive payment of \$165,500.00 (after the \$500 deductible is taken).

Stryker has declared that the power load gurney involved in the ambulance accident is indeed safe to remove and re-install in a new ambulance.

The check for the ambulance from the insurance company will go directly into the Capital Reserve account, to replace funds utilized to purchase the replacement ambulance. Chief reminds the Commissioners that the current backup ambulance will also need to be replaced sometime in the not-too-distant future.

Chief is anticipating that the replacement ambulance will be ready for service by January 1st if not sooner.

The District currently has 48 members, 12 of whom are Point Roberts locals.

Assistant Chief Shields and Captain Lutz recently attended the Blue Card conference in Cincinnati. Only 3 firefighters from Washington State attended. Assistant Chief Shields reported that it was a very good conference which he enjoyed attending.

There were 44 calls in the month of October.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The 2025 operational budget requires finalization, but the Commissioners need to go into Executive Session at this time to review Chief Carleton's salary before completing it.

I. EXECUTIVE SESSION

I.1. Discussion of Chief Carleton's salary

Commissioner Lester announced the commencement of an Executive Session at 4:26 pm, for the purpose of discussing Chief Carleton's salary, for an expected duration of twenty minutes, expected to return at 4:46 pm.

Commissioner Lester called the meeting back to order at 4:46 pm. She reported that discussion of Chief Carleton's salary was undertaken, and it was decided to give him a 4% increase at this time, bringing his annual salary to \$82,160.00 starting in January of 2025. She noted that the Commissioners might also review the Chief's salary again mid-year of 2025.

MOTION: Commissioner Lester moved to increase the salary of Chief Carleton by 4%, bringing his annual salary to \$82,160.00, starting in January of 2025. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Katz. **Motion passed 2 – 0**

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

G.1. Operational Budget

After amending the draft budget to reflect the increase in Chief Carleton's salary, and Financial Manager Markel's confirmation of the changes required to the FICA and Medicare benefit line items, Chief then reviewed the entire proposed budget.

Chief reviewed the process of the levy funding and noted that these budget numbers are proposed as nearly as can be predicted based on the 2023 property valuation of Point Roberts, of \$1,036,725,857.00. The actual assessed value of Point Roberts will be known at the end of this year or early in the new year.

The allowed "1% increase" will actually be 1.14% this year and, based on the 2023 assessed property value, would result in an increase of \$11,818.67. Together with other anticipated income increases, the anticipated increase in income for 2025 over 2024 is \$17,318.67, bringing the total expected income to \$1,223,704.15.

As discussed in the budget workshop, and after amendments to include the salary and benefit line item changes, the total anticipated expenses for 2025 is \$922,895.00 which would result in a remaining carry-over amount of \$300,809.15, to be added to the Capital Reserve account.

Chief noted that once the budget is approved and ratified, it will be posted to the District website for public access.

G.2. Resolution 2024-02 – Levy Certification

MOTION: Commissioner Lester moved to approve Resolution 2024-02 to authorize the Whatcom County Treasurer to sequester and deposit monies received from the 2025 levy, and to take the 1% increase to the tax levy for 2025. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Katz. **Motion passed 2 – 0**

G.3. Resolution 2024-03 – Budget Adoption

MOTION: Commissioner Lester moved to approve Resolution 2024-03 to adopt the 2025 budget attached to these Minutes as Exhibit A. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Katz. **Motion passed 2 – 0**

H. NEW BUSINESS

Chief reported that he will be applying for a couple of grants in the next round of AFG funding period to include amounts for educational costs and also for the cost of a replacement pumper vehicle, which would be approximately \$600,000.00.


J. ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business, Commissioner Lester moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:23 pm. Commissioner Katz seconded the motion. **Motion passed 2 – 0.**

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners will be December 11th, 2024, at 4:00 pm.



Commissioner Virginia Lester

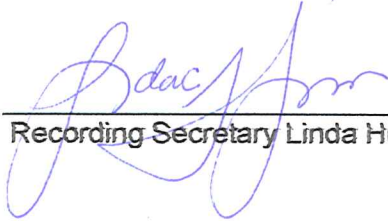


Commissioner Norm Katz

Absent

Commissioner Pat Harper

Dated December 11 / 24

Attest: 

Recording Secretary Linda Hughes