

Snohomish County Fire District #4

MEETING MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING **BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS**

DATE:	Monday, March 11, 2024
LOCATION:	Snohomish School District Administration Building - 1601 Avenue D - Board Room - Snohomish, WA

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:	EVAN MERRITT , Commissioner CRAIG ERICKSON , Commissioner BRIAN MILLS , Board Chair
STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:	Don Waller, District Secretary/Fire Chief Thad Frater, Assistant Chief Jason Hodkinson, Assistant Chief Greg Osborne, Assistant Chief

I. ROLL CALL

Chair Mills called the meeting to order at 1900 hours. All members of the Board were present.

II. FLAG SALUTE

III. ADOPT/ADJUST AGENDA

Chair Mills requested the VFW Awards be moved prior to Public Comments. He also requested the Facilities Action Items be moved to directly after the Facilities presentation by Lawhead.

IV. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Discussion: There were no comments or questions regarding the minutes of the February 12, 2024 Regular Meeting and the February 21, 2024 Special Meeting.

Action: Commissioner Erickson made a **motion** to accept both minutes as presented and the Chair declared them accepted.

V. AWARDS, RECOGNITIONS, PROMOTIONS

A. VFW Post 921: Otis Wolfe and Chris Cote presented a certificate for firefighter of the year to Sean Witherow, and a certificate for EMT of the year to Jose Islas. Chief Osborne expressed thanks to the VFW for their recognition of our personnel.

V. OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT (No comments)

VII. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Accounts Payable: The following AP Batches were presented:

02/22/2024 for \$129,968.63

03/05/2024 for \$102,091.54

B. Payroll - February 2024 Payroll of \$731,811.47 was presented.

Discussion: No discussion.

VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Lawhead Presentation on facilities – 41 and Station 43

Discussion: Frank Lawhead shared a presentation on the proposals for and progress made on the plans for Station 41 and Station 43. There was discussion about isolating access to the decontamination rooms in the Stations and the type of upkeep that would be needed on the solar array panel planned for the stations. There was a question about the accessibility to the station from the conference and exercise rooms and it was confirmed that will only be available through a coded key card. There were questions about the efficiency of the heating system. There was a question about the ease of identifying public entry points. The use of privacy fencing and signs should make access readily identifiable. The placement of the emergency 911 phone box for easy access by the public was also discussed. Design elements on Station 41 are subject to the regulations of the Pilchuck Historic District. A question about the flexibility of adjusting the number of dorm rooms for future hires was raised. Current plans will allow reconfiguration of rooms to accommodate 7 personnel plus the Battalion Chief.

IX ACTION ITEMS

A. Facilities Project

i. Station 41 options

Action: The commissioners agreed to providing seven dorm rooms, which could be accomplished without additional cost. The commissioners approved increasing the size of the conference room (~\$68,000). The commissioners agreed not to pursue bifold doors for the bays. The air gap behind the siding to extend its lifespan was also approved. Vinyl windows were approved instead of fiberglass. 16 Parking spaces behind the secured fencing were agreed to and the commissioners asked that parking spaces be wide enough to accommodate pickup trucks.

VIII. B. CAB – Community Advisory Board

Discussion: SCFD4 values the input it receives from its citizens. As part of this process the district will form a Community Advisory Board. Chief Osborne attends a monthly community coordinating meeting and the idea received positive feedback from that committee. Chair Mills mentioned

making sure input is received from the greatest range of citizens possible. Commissioner Merritt stated that social media would be a key factor in reaching people. A question was raised about the criteria for participation in the committee. Fire district 4 citizens and business owners were mentioned as important voices to have as representatives.

IX ACTION ITEMS

A. Facilities Project

ii. 3/21 Special Meeting – Public Input for Facilities

This meeting will allow for input from the public on three factors: colors of the buildings, landscaping, and location of the building that will house the 1888 steamer. Chair Mills made a **motion** to set a special meeting on March 21, 2024 at 5:45 pm at the Snohomish Public Library for public input on facility plans. Commissioner Erickson **seconded** the motion and it **passed unanimously**. Mr. Lawhead advised that input on the landscaping will only increase the funds needed for that project. The chair called for a 3 minute break to allow for transitioning to the next topics on the agenda.

iii. PM/CM Consultant

Action: Chair Mills made a **motion** to accept the proposal submitted by Turner, Townsend / Heery for a hybrid Project Manager for the Station 41 project. Commissioner Erickson **seconded** the motion and it **passed unanimously**.

iv. Low-voltage proposal by BCE

Action: A consultant is also needed to help with the low-voltage work that needs to be done at Station 41. This consultant would help with the design of all the speakers, alarms, security, IT, and noise reduction components of the project. It has been a challenge to find a firm that has experience with large public buildings like fire stations. Chair Mills made a **motion** to accept the proposal by BCE. Commissioner Erickson **seconded** the motion and it **passed unanimously**.

B. Public Access to Pine Ave – metal detection, plants, buildings

Action: A number of citizens have expressed interest in reclaiming items from the Steuber building site. There is a limited time frame of 2-3 days in between trainings during which people could potentially access the site. Commissioner Erickson recommended having a shorter time period (4 hours) during which the public could access the property. Commissioner Merritt mentioned his concern over the liability of having citizens on the property. Chief Waller mentioned that multiple citizens have asked for access to the same pieces of property, and feels we need to be equitable in whatever solution is agreed upon. Commissioner Merritt mentioned possible having the landscaper put plants on the side of the road for people to claim for free. Chair Mills recapped, that as

much as the Board would like to let the public reclaim some of the materials from the Steuber site, the logistics and liabilities of the process seem to outweigh the good will the action would engender. The Board recommends saying “No” to all such requests.

C. Relocation expenses – Pine Ave.

Action: The last moving expenses for the property need to be approved, as required by state WAC. Commissioner Erickson made a **motion** to approve the moving expenses listed for the Five J’s LLC PPO move. It was **passed unanimously**.

D. Office / Admin Support Job Descriptions

Action: Two administration positions will be required within the next year as a Fire Marshal program is established and one current admin will be retiring in 2025. Chair Mills made a **motion** to approve the two job descriptions and salary ranges brought to the Board. Commissioner Erickson **seconded** the motion, and it **passed unanimously**.

E. Fire Marshal – Job Description, Hiring, Contract

Action: Fire prevention, education, code enforcement and management have been lacking in the city of Snohomish. A Fire Marshal would build a program that would address these issues, and provide another degree of safety for the community. Chair Mills made a **motion** to approve the Fire Marshal job description and authorize the Chief to start the hiring process and extend a conditional offer of employment with the proposed personal services contract to the top candidate. Commissioner Erickson **seconded** the motion and it **passed unanimously**.

F. Lt. Promotional List Certification

Action: Commissioner Merritt made a **motion** to certify the promotional list for the position of Lieutenant presented to the Board. Commissioner Erickson **seconded** the motion, and it **passed unanimously**. The commissioners extended their congratulations to all the participants and their thanks to the personnel who helped with the testing.

G. Torpin South County Report addendum

Action: Mr. Torpin, a fire service consultant, worked with SCFD4 to explore the feasibility of collaboration with the SRFRR organization. The Commissioners would now like him to explore the potential of collaboration with South County Fire. SCFD4 needs to think about strategies for maintaining District services over the next few decades. Chair Mills made a **motion** to approve the scope and estimate for a contract addendum for Jim Torpin as presented. Commissioner Erickson **seconded** the motion and it **passed unanimously**. Commissioner Merritt asked about the status of responses to the letters sent out to neighboring fire districts asking for a joint meeting of commissioners. Chief Waller stated that responses have been received

from all parties and he is ready to send out a poll to the participants to help select dates for meetings.

H. Audit – Contract for Dowell Consulting (independent private audit)

Action: The State Auditor has requested that we perform an independent private audit of our finances in addition to that done by the state. Chair Mills made a **motion** to accept the terms of the contract with Andrea Dowell Consulting as presented. Commissioner Erickson **seconded** the motion, and it **passed unanimously**. Commissioner Merritt asked if there had been discussion about putting Andrea on retainer. Funds have been included in the 2025 Budget to allow retaining her for this position for the foreseeable future.

I. Transport Waivers

Action: There were 3 transport waivers before the commissioners. Commissioner Erickson made a **motion** to approve the District recommended waiver amounts with the exception of waiver request 2024-03 in which case the entire balance was waived. Chair Mills **seconded** the motion, and it **passed unanimously**.

X. COMMENTS

A. District Staff (no comments)

B. Executive Staff (summarized in the written report in the packet)

Chief Hodkinson

- + Chief Hodkinson stated that our call volume is definitely increasing and we will need the planned additional staffing to help respond.
- + Special thanks to our Training Division and Bizelli, Higbee, and Lane for their help preparing for block training.
- + There are significantly more tasks expected of Operations crews than a few decades ago. This includes studying for promotional testing, mentoring probational employees, increased training, support crews (Technical Rescue, Swift Water) and committee work. The SOP (Special Operations Policy) Board submitted a signed ILA to the county for us to be an official participating agency on the Technical Rescue Team.
- + We currently have 3 people out on leave/light duty.
- + The final plans for the live burn scheduled the first week of April are underway.
- + Special thanks to Jon Stewart and Kurt Bartelheimer for their parts in the recent rope rescue drill.
- + Lt. Osborne is helping with the upcoming Confined Spaces Class.
- + Special thanks to the personnel who helped proctor and oversee the recent Lieutenant testing.

Commissioner Erickson expressed his pleasure at the way the three agencies (SCFD4, SRFR, SoCo) are working together to stage and participate in the block training at the Pine Avenue property. Commissioner Merritt participated in the training on a SRFR crew and stated that it was very beneficial and very well organized.

Chief Osborne

- + Currently there are 4 new vehicles very close to being fleet ready.
- + Maintenance Specialist Gary is working overtime to help ready all these vehicles, including the new engine and get them stocked with equipment.
- + Repairs from the water damage done to the Annex are nearly completed and the building should be ready for the next commissioner's meeting.
- + A small leak in the drying room at Station 41 was caught early and Maintenance Gary was able to cheaply repair it. He does have some concerns about the green spots he noticed on the cold water copper pipes.
- + Next FIIRE Program Safety meeting is tomorrow. The committee will discuss a "Near Miss" form that Chief Osborne has developed to help individuals report these situations. Commissioner Erickson commented that L&I is shifting from punishing departments for safety failures to encouraging them to develop strategies to prevent accidents without fear of punishment.
- + 170 citizens were served at the most recent Senior Center breakfast. Maintenance Gary is a prominent figure at this event.
- + We had a number of participants in the Seattle Stair Climb.
- + We participated in the First Responders Night at the Sports Dome. Events like this help our personnel network with other first responder agencies (Police Department, National Guard, etc.).
- + The Explorers took in 8 new members, and 2 more have expressed interest in joining. This will bring the total to 25.
- + Yesterday we received notice from the state about the required RT130 training for Wildland Firefighting participants to receive their red cards. Everyone on the department will receive the training, to ensure they are in shape. Not all are required to receive certification for state mobilization. Kurt Bartelheimer is our highest certified red card FF.
- + We received a \$24, 861.60 check from govdeals, and most of the surplus we sold has been picked up by the buyers. There will be a recommendation for one more vehicle to go to surplus coming before the commissioners soon.

Chief Frater

- + Significant revenue items this month include a \$1.8 million payment from the city and the funds from VFIS to cover repair costs to the Annex. Chair Mills asked if it was difficult to work with VFIS and Chief Waller responded there were a few adjustments we had to submit to them.
- + Special thanks to Sam Drake, Christine Heike and Neil Broumley for their efforts on the Awards Ceremony.

Chief Waller

- + We are working hard to send out information about the live burn. Commissioner Merritt commented on the promotional video that the three agencies (and the city) worked to produce for the public. It will be

sent out through social media and our websites. Hopefully it will appeal to the media as well and we will have a good response to the media day during live burn week.

C. Commissioner

Commissioner Merritt extended his thanks to the department for their hard work. Chair Mills added that the Awards Ceremony was very well put-together, and looks forward to attending many more in the future. The "Chair Chatter" video made by Chief Waller and Chair Mills is currently being viewed and discussed by the duty crews.

XI. ADJOURN

At 2147 hours, the Regular Board Meeting was adjourned.

**MINUTES OF REGULAR FIRE COMMISSIONERS BOARD MEETING,
March 11, 2024**

Minutes prepared and submitted by:



Christine Montagne-Heike, Records Specialist



Don Waller, District Secretary

MINUTES APPROVED BY FIRE COMMISSIONER:



4/8/24

Date

District Secretary - Date