

Snohomish County Fire District #4

MEETING MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING **BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS**

DATE:	Monday, October 9, 2023
LOCATION:	Headquarters Fire Station #43 – Harvey Room – Snohomish, WA

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:	EVAN MERRITT , Chair RICHARD E. FLATH , Fire Commissioner JILL GLEASON , Fire Commissioner
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 Merritt called the meeting to order at 1900 hours. All members of the Board were present.

II. ADOPT/ADJUST AGENDA

There were no additions or corrections to the Agenda.

III. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Discussion: There were no comments or questions regarding the minutes of the September 6, 2023 Regular Meeting.

Action: Commissioner Gleason made a **motion** to approve the 09/06/2023 Regular Meeting minutes as presented and it **passed** unanimously.

IV. OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT (No comments)

V. Information Items:

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

09/12/2023 for \$ 1,891.43
10/16/2023 for \$ 97,465.53
09/15/2023 for \$169,546.53
09/29/2023 for \$133,222.04

B. Payroll – August 2023 Payroll in the amount of \$720,679.51 was presented.

C. Treasurer's Report

D. Budget to Actual Report

- 1. Expense**
- 2. Revenue**

Discussion: Commissioner Flath asked if there were any more outstanding bills regarding item #35 on page 24 (the Liz Loomis contract.) Chief Waller explained that the billing total for the project was divided into monthly installments for payment, and should be paid off mid November. Commissioner Flath also inquired about differences in the figures on the reports on pages 44 and 45 which seem to show differing starting balances. Chief Frater explained one report shows balances by Fund category and the other shows cash balances. Chief Waller stated he would look into the differences and report back to the board.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Equipment Purchase

Discussion: Chief Hodkinson reported we are still in the process of updating equipment so that the new and existing engines are comparably equipped.

Action: Commissioner Flath made a **motion** to *approve the two equipment purchase authorizations from LN Curtis, for up to \$13,000.00* , and it **passed** unanimously.

B. Asbestos Testing

Discussion: Before any training and work on the Pine Avenue property can be completed, we need the results of an asbestos report. We have researched 3 bids, 2 of which are significantly different. Commissioner Flath commented that the number and types of testing samples seemed to differ between the bids as well. Chief Waller concurred, stating that one of the bids did not include lead paint testing and was ineligible for consideration because of that. Chief Waller believes that both remaining bids meet the state and county requirements for testing, and will do some follow-up on the bids to make sure they both include all the components that are required.

Action: Commissioner Gleason made a **motion** to *approve the Chief to enter into an agreement with the lowest of the two quotes that meet all the needed testing and reporting requirements.* The motion **passed** with two “Ayes” and one “Nay” based on wanting to hear more information from the Chief.

C. City MOU

Discussion: Our current ILA with the city states that the city has to pay the District for their portion of the property within 30 days or they start to incur interest. This was drafted under the assumption that we would be able to transfer the property to them within 30 days. The facts have changed and it will now take 30 – 180 days to be ready to transfer the property. Taking the new facts into consideration, the lawyers have encouraged changes to the MOU to prevent unfair assessment of interest penalties. The new language gives requires the city to pay half the costs up front and the rest within the 180 days or when the property is transferred (whichever is first) to avoid the 4% interest fee.

Action: Commissioner Flath made a **motion** to *authorize the Chief to sign the MOU with the City of Snohomish on the payment process for the land.* It **passed** unanimously.

D. Fund Changes

Discussion: The accountants and auditors Chief Frater has been working with have recommended that we reduce the number of managerial funds (meaning funds you can freely transfer money between) from our current five funds to one (F70). This

simplifies the process for reporting to the state. After much discussion, the staff recommends that we condense into two funds, one to include leave liability, cash reserves and training, and the other to be a capital fund for facilities and equipment expenditures. By passing this motion now, we will be able to more clearly label funds and items for the upcoming budget year. There was discussion of the items that would be reported in each fund, and how to ensure funds were accurately tracked to keep their reserves at adequate levels. Monthly financial reports to the commissioners will continue with the same format.

Action: Commissioner Flath made a **motion** to adopt Resolutions 559 and 560 as updated and Resolution 561 as presented. It **passed** unanimously.

E. Policy #201

Discussion: This motion will update Policy 201 to reflect the three new resolutions that were passed.

Action: Commissioner Gleason made a **motion** to adopt Policy 201 as presented and it **passed** unanimously.

F. Draft Budgets

1. Expense Budget:

Discussion: the CBA employees follow the October CPI (4-7% in the last few 12 month periods and are capped at 3%). Non CBA employees use the August CPI figures (Executive Chiefs, Part Time and non-represented admin staff). 5.4% was the August cpi figure. Staff recommends, and the budget reflects, a 5.4% increase for Part Time pay, 4% for non-represented staff, and 3% for Executive Chiefs. The budget also includes provisions for a fire marshal and a 6 month office position for succession planning for retirements in mid 2025. Overtime has been increased by 3% to match the CBA. The overall cost increases for personnel went up by 4.48% with the added positions but the overall operations costs decreased 7.93%, so that yielded a net operational budget increase of 2.3% over last year. We have also increased our transfers to the reserve funds by 180% (4.65 million) to plan for building stations. Commissioner Gleason inquired about the last cpi increases for the four groups of employees. In August of 2022 we increased pay by 4% for CBA employees, 9% for non-represented staff, Part Timers had a wage adjustment using various comparable data and 8% for Executive Chiefs. There was further discussion about the timing and amount of the cpi to be offered this year.

Action: Chair Merritt made a **motion** to adopt the CPI increases for wages of CBA covered employees and executive chiefs by 3%, non-represented admin staff by 4%, and Part-Time employees by 5.4%. It passed **unanimously**.

2. Revenue Budget

Discussion: Chief Waller stated we are waiting for information on the state utility tax to help budget predictions. The official budgets will be adopted in November. Commissioner Flath noted that the County Assessor has reduced property values by an average of 5.9%, meaning homes are worth less. Commissioner Flath feels if we do ask for the full \$1.50 on the General Fund and 1% increase on the EMS Levy, it will seem less of an impact on citizens since their property values (and taxes) decreased.

Action: Commissioner Flath made a **motion** to direct the Chief to prepare a budget assuming a \$1.50 for the General Fund and a 1% increase for the EMS levy.

3. Capital Budget

Discussion: The Capital Budget includes costs for replacing a 2007 and 2010 staff vehicle. There is also budget for 3 ambulance purchases, allowing us to surplus and/or hold in reserve 2 of our older ambulances. Commissioner Flath asked if purchasing 4 new engines would better meet community needs. Chief Waller explained his reasoning behind purchasing 3 and how a rotation cycle will be established to continually keep newer vehicles in the fleet.

Action:

4. Strategic Budget

Discussion: This budget includes projections out 6 years and see the impact of different levy rates and different project priorities. This is not part of the adoption process, it is an information tool to help with decision making.

Action:

G. Relocation Estimates

Discussion: Part of the Pine Avenue property deal includes relocation costs for tenants currently on the property. This figure includes 2 moving costs and 3 rent supplements. The total of \$426,778.33 is divided between SCFD4 and the City. Our cost comes in at ~ \$183,542.00. Commissioner Flath mentioned that it would be good to have some control over the costs that are being authorized. Any costs over the bid submitted will have to be brought before the commissioners to be approved.

Action: Commissioner Gleason made a **motion** to approve the relocation costs as presented and recommended by Common Street for the Moving of the Stueber Business and JoAnne Hardy, along with rent supplements for John Pettit, Jeff Pettit, and Valentin Jimenez. The motion passed with 2 "Ayes".

H. Transport Waiver

Discussion: The information on the request is in the packet given to the commissioners. There were no questions for Chief Frater about this.

Action: Commissioner Flath made a **motion** to waive the balance owed on Transport Waiver #2023-14. It passed **unanimously**.

I. Leave Conversion

Discussion: Three of the executive chiefs have requested leave conversion per their personal service contracts.

Action: Commissioner Gleason made a **motion** to accept all three leave conversion requests as submitted. It passed **unanimously**.

VIII. COMMENTS

A. District Staff (no comments)

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

Chief Hodkinson Call volume is slightly above this time last year. A Ropes Safety Class will offered at RLB on 10/16/23, with eight of our personnel slated to attend. Anthony Parra has completed his rapid entry swimmer class and is cleared to join the Swim Team. Neil Broumley arranged for SCFD4 to host an EMS conference at the Educational Annex for EMS providers in the county. Neil has also been working with

other county agencies to provide a large scale MCI Drill including SWAT, helicopters and the local hospitals, to take place on October 11, 2023 from 0900 to 1200 hours. Commissioner Flath asked if there had been any discussion of the most recent COVID virus variation and immunizations. Chief Waller explained the recommendations are the same as a year ago – get vaccinated, wear masks if you feel sick or someone around you is sick. Aaron Hammer has been working on bringing a 3-day IMS class to the county on October 21, 22 and 23. Chiefs Frater and Hodkinson attended a one day labor relations conference in Seattle recently. Ben Kloes just completed his acting driving credential and Joe Melnyk completed his acting officer credential. Chair Merritt commented he had received very positive feedback from someone who attended the EMS Conference we hosted.

Chief Osborne mentioned Engine 40 is now back from the shop and working as it should. The boxes have been ordered for Brush 43 and once they arrive it can quickly be configured for field use. The fourth quarter L & I meeting is scheduled for tomorrow (10/10/23). A tri-county safety group is in process of forming. 10/14/23 the Soccer Dome will host a Health Fair. Chaplains Margie Jacobson and Geoff Andrist completed an *Aces for Paces* training hosted by Providence Health mental health providers. This past Saturday the Explorers helped serve breakfast for 183 people at the Senior Center. Chief Mansfield did an awesome job organizing schedules and information for Fire Prevention Week in the schools.

Chief Frater The historical accountant (Andrea Dowell) has finished her review and made recommendations. The 2021 and 2022 Audit corrections have been made and we will be making adjustments to our depositing process based on her recommendations.

Chief Waller the Tribune will be shadowing SCFD4 at Riverview School tomorrow during Fire Prevention Week. Most of Chief Waller's time has been taken up with finalizing the property sale and preparing the steps for after property closing, as well as preparing the 2024 Budget. The final inspection of the new Spartan engine on order is scheduled for October 26 and 27. Once we have reviewed changes, the engine could be delivered by mid November or December. The county is exploring a Nurse Navigator line that could help decrease 911 call volume. There is a current navigator line, that only grabs about 5 calls per year. An RFP process was used to locate providers. The current provider, Evergreen, did not want to submit a bid. Two RFQ bids came back – one is a very similar process to Evergreen and the other is GMR (AMR's parent company) a very robust program that tries to divert calls from 911. Joe Hughes from South County was able to get funding for the first year covered through the North Sound ACH. Future costs will be assessed by volume of calls processed. Tell-A-Doc, Lyft or Uber transport for urgent care, virtual doctor visits, and self care recommendations can all be arranged through the Nurse Line. It is projected that about 5% of our calls will route to the nurse line, and they should be able to address half of those (2.5%). The other 2.5% get kicked back to 911. The goal is to implement the program by January 1, 2024. Dr. Keay suggests starting with a small list of determinant codes that can be sent to the Nurse Line. The committee will review the recommendations and use the data from this year to advise on participation in future years.

C. Commissioner

Commissioner Flath mentioned that next month’s meeting should include an Executive Session for conducting the Fire Chief’s annual evaluation. Commissioner Flath also noted that a donation had been sent in to the Fire Department and wondered which policy covers donations. Chief Waller replied that donations go to the Silver Dollar Club, which partners with the chaplains and explorers. The doner can designate the funds or not, and receives a letter clearly explaining the process and recommendations for the funds. Commissioner Flath asked if the Silver Dollar club ever reports on the use of the donations. Chief Waller stated he can check with them for information for the commissioners. Commissioner Flath mentioned that there is an upcoming Commissioners’ Conference that the board will be attending on October 25 – 28 at the Tulalip Resort.


IX. ADJOURN

At 2024 hours, the Regular Board Meeting was adjourned.

**MINUTES OF REGULAR FIRE COMMISSIONERS BOARD MEETING,
October 9, 2023**

Minutes prepared and submitted by:


Christine Montagne-Heike, Records Specialist


Don Waller, District Secretary

MINUTES APPROVED BY FIRE COMMISSIONER: 
11/13/23
Date