Snohomish County Fire District #4

MEETING MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

DATE: Monday, April 1, 2019
LOCATION: Headquarters Fire Station #43 – Lauterbach Room
1525 Ave. D – Snohomish, WA

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: MARK HINTZ, Chairman
JIM SCHMOKER, Fire Commissioner
RICHARD E. FLATH, Fire Commissioner

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Ron Simmons, District Secretary/Fire Chief
Mike Gatterman, Deputy Chief
Samantha Larkin-Sinn, Office Assistant

ROLL CALL
Chairman Hintz called the meeting to order at 8:02am hours. All members of the Board were present.

ADOPT/ADJUST AGENDA
Chief Simmons announced that he will be removing item 7a, Finance Review, from the agenda today. We have agreed that this will occur at the last meeting of each month. Chairman Hintz made a motion to accept this change, it was unanimously agreed upon.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING
Discussion: Commissioner Schmoker noted the discussion about the transport waivers. He states that only one of them should have had the entire balance waived. The other was to have $165.00 waived from the total as recommended by Chief Gatterman. It is then mentioned, by Commissioner Schmoker, that in the last line of the Social Media topic the word “member” needs to be changed to “members”. This correction also needs to be made to the word “minute”. Commissioner Schmoker then discusses how the wording in the last sentence about “fuel” is strange. Chief Simmons sees the error and will have it corrected.
Action: Commissioner Schmoker made a motion to approve the minutes, once these changes have been made. The motion was seconded and passed. The minutes from March 6th were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT
Michael Jorve was present for the meeting, but had no comments at this time.
OLD BUSINESS
2019 EMS Levy

Chief Simmons thanked the board for meeting with him last week to discuss the Levy options before them. He then presents the idea of having a separate Paramedic Levy, in place of the EMS Levy. Chief Simmons thinks that this option could be a real "juggling act" to try and pass due to the need to have very detailed communication with the public. Commissioner Schmoker agrees and states that as a member of this community he believes this wouldn't work. Commissioner Schmoker sees it automatically as "the district is taking more money" and he is sure that the public will see it the same way. Chief Simmons agrees and moves back to the discussion of a permanent levy.

It is Chief Simmons belief that a permanent levy would serve the citizens a lot better. The Chief states that if this levy fails to pass then many projects will have to be put off in 2020. Commissioner Schmoker concurs and says that if this is the case, the Station 42 and 43 projects will not be able to be completed as planned.

Commissioner Hintz is also in agreeance that the district should go for a permanent levy being that he thinks the community has changed a lot and it sees the service the department provides. Chief Simmons says that it will be a lot easier for the district to plan things financially if we had a permanent levy.

Commissioner Schmoker comments on the fact that 30 years ago, our paramedic program was more of an extra system, but now it's become a requirement and the costs for it are only going up. Chief Simmons agrees and explains that 75% of the calls we get dispatched to are EMS calls. The Chief then proceeds to present the problem if this levy should fail on August 6th. If this levy doesn't pass as presented, Chief Simmons says we must be prepared to change our message immediately and have a way to get it out to the public in order to present the renewal of the 6 year levy in November.

Commissioner Schmoker discussed language related to the renewal being considered as the permanent levy. Chief Simmons does not believe that we should use "renewal" in conjunction with the change in the levy, he thinks we use "continuation" in describing the permanent levy and "renewal" if we have to fall back to the 6 year levy. Commissioner Flath suggests that we should explain the public what a "permanent levy" means.

Further discussion has Chief Simmons explaining where most of our fire funding is spent and explaining the need to collect the maximum amount of the EMS funding. He then states that the public needs to understand why the district wishes to collect the $.50 cents presented in the levy.

Commissioner Flath then asks about the "Countdown" provided in the Commissioner Packet. Chief Simmons explains that it is just a list of events between now and November where the District have the opportunity to get out in the public and provide information. The Chief says that there has been discussion about an open house and the crews think it would be best done at our training site. Chief
Simmons mentions that the last time we did an open house at the training site there was a good amount of people that showed up. However, if the district decides to do an open house at one of the stations, the Chief believes it would be best done at station 43 headquarters. Commissioner Hintz thinks that the training site would be the best option because it has more of a “pizazz” factor.

Commissioner Schmoker states that there are a few date errors on the countdown that need to be corrected. Commissioner Flath asks if we would have equipment and apparatus at these events, Chief Simmons says yes. Commissioner Flath asked when do the voting ballots go out and Chief Gatterman said in July.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**Financial Business**

**Accounts Payable**

**Discussion:** Batch #347356 is in the amount of $29,745.97. Commissioner Flath notes an error on the AP signature page; Roger Portmann was listed as a Commissioner. It was further noted that this is a County Finance document. We will notify them of the mistake. This correction was made at the beginning of the meeting and thus AP was able to be approved. Commissioner Schmoker asks about the door repair that was made at Station 43 and inquires if this was for regular maintenance. Chief Simmons said no and explains that a spring and cable had broken. Commissioner Flath asks if the Daily Dispatch invoice was for the job posting the district just listed and Chief Gatterman said yes. Commissioner Flath then asks about item #24 in reference to our lawyers invoice. Chief Simmons explains that Sophia has been working with us on a L & I situation and that we are on track legally. Commissioner Flath then asks for clarification on a petty cash tuition reimbursement. Chief Gatterman explains that once the enrolled firefighter gets their passing grade, we reimburse them for the class. He further explains that this is also approved ahead of time.

**Action:** Commissioner Schmoker moved to accept the warrants. It was seconded by Commissioner Hintz and passed unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Career Staffing**

Chief Simmons discussed the document provided to the Board explaining staffing. One of the topics the Chief wished to discuss was evening out the career shifts so that we have less dependence on the Part Time staff, as well as allowing for the career staff to provide greater coverage for their own absences. The Chief discussed the future outlook of career versus part-time staff explaining that this will not happen overnight. The Chief would like to have 8 full time personnel per shift by the end of 2019, not including the BC. Commissioner Hintz asked if these changes are in concert with the Local? Chief Simmons explained that the District created the minimum staffing standard when the District put a contract paramedic at Station 41. Unfortunately there was not a lot of forethought put into the future and we created a situation in consideration of a 3 station model. This has left us with a situation with inefficiencies in the way we utilize personnel, especially considering that it is dependent on the availability of part time personnel who are becoming scarce. Chief
Simmons says it doesn’t make much sense to have two stations in the city so close in proximity to each other when you can combine those resources and cross-man apparatus while also making an engine more available in the City, which is actually the Districts greater liability.

The Chief discussed our current overtime issues and that some Local members feel that everyone should be working a share of extra shifts to make up for the lack of Part-Time staffers. Commissioner Hintz asked if equalization is part of the Local contract, the Chief said no. This is his initiative to start the District down the path of not having to struggle under the use of overtime funds to have adequate staffing, which also includes the strategic plan of assuring the availability of a staffed fire engine.

The Chief talked about the pending Firefighter test to establish a hiring list. Commissioner Flath asked if there was a current list that would be expiring? After further conversation the Chief will look to see if any of our current Part-Timers were still on the list and available. Commissioner Flath noticed that the policy states we could have up to 6 part time employees on one shift. Chief Gatterman said yes and this has happened in the past.

PUBLIC COMMENT
None.

DISTRICT STAFF AND WORK GROUP COMMENTS
Chief Simmons apologized to Commissioner Flath for not getting his meeting packet to him until Sunday night, and for the exclusion of his name on the AP form. The Chief will work with staff to make sure these issues are resolved.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS
Commissioner Flath refers to the Chief Minutes and asked for clarification on who does the Personal Performance Evaluations for whom. Chief Simmons explains the chain of command and who does which evaluations. The Chief then says that we appear to be behind on these, but Chief Gatterman states that he does have a stack of evaluations on his desk that he needs to go through, so they might not be as far behind as believed.

Commissioner Flath, referring to the last Chiefs Meeting Minutes, asks about what Lieutenant Heike is doing related to bunks. Chief Simmons explains that Lt. Heike has taken over the management of Structural Firefighting Clothing, bunker gear. Lieutenant Heike is getting gear cleaned, repaired and removing old gear.

Commissioner Flath asked if Tim has gotten the fuel cards yet, as discussed in the last meeting. Chief Simmons says he hasn’t been able to talk to Tim about this yet, so he isn’t sure if this has been completed.

Commissioner Hintz asked who would be attending the Sno-Isle Commissioners Meeting this coming Thursday. He believes that we need to make sure we are keeping up a presence at the Sno-Isle meetings. Commissioners Hintz, Schmoker
and Chief Simmons will attend in Marysville. It was reminded that we will be hosting the May meeting.

ADJOURN

At 8:57 hours, the Regular Board Meeting was adjourned.

MINUTES OF REGULAR FIRE COMMISSIONERS BOARD MEETING, April 1, 2019

Minutes prepared and submitted by:

Samantha Larkin-Sinn, Office Assistant

MINUTES APPROVED BY FIRE COMMISSIONER:

4/19/19 Date