

# Whatcom County Fire District 4

## Meeting Minutes of the Board of Commissioners

### August 12, 2015

The regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners was held on the above date at the district office. Those who attended were as follows: Commissioners Mary Beth Neal, Harry Andrews and Steve Ness; Interim Fire Chief William Pernet, Board Secretary Kris Parks and Captain Joe Noonchester.

Commissioner Andrews called the meeting to order at 12:08 p.m.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

#### **BOARD ACTION**

##### Meeting Minutes

Approval of Minutes of the July 15, 2015 Meeting.

Commissioner Andrews moved to approve the meeting minutes. Commissioner Neal seconded; motion passed.

#### **MONTHLY REPORTS**

##### Finance

Chief Pernet provided information on the financial statements and on the payroll and capital vouchers.

Approval of the payroll voucher: Commissioner Ness moved to approve the payroll voucher.

Commissioner Andrews seconded; motion passed.

Approval of the capital voucher: Commissioner Ness moved to approve the capital voucher.

Commissioner Andrews seconded; motion passed.

##### Chief's Report

Chief Pernet provided information on the chief's report which included the response activity from July, the dollar loss activity and response times.

Personnel:

Andrew Martin has left the organization to take a position with the Seattle Fire Department. Andrew was a volunteer for 10 years and a career firefighter for 5 years. We wish him good luck in his new endeavors. Volunteer Dan Murphy was hired as a full-time firefighter with the Bellingham Fire Department. He resigned as volunteer with the department.

FMLA Seminar:

Chief Pernettt attended a one day seminar on Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) compliance which included the latest updates.

City of Bellingham Agreement:

The Chief has been working with the City of Bellingham to update and approve the 2012 contract between District 4 and Bellingham Fire. The contract includes resource sharing and mitigation payments to D4 with the goal of achieving a comprehensive auto aid agreement between agencies.

Medical Insurance Mid-Year Meeting with CAS:

Chief Pernettt and staff met with Adam Brown from CAS to discuss NWFR’s mid-year performance on healthcare costs and to discuss the 2018 Cadillac tax.

**Operations Division Report**

Chief Pernettt provided information on the operations division report which included the department time-off statistics, July staffing, overtime hours and volunteer shift hours for July and information on:

**Crew Activities**

July 4 Standbys  
Volunteer Training  
Tender Operations  
Quarterly Training  
Tractor Show Standby  
Business Inspections

**Meetings Attended**

Mitigation Signing  
Border Chiefs  
Board Meetings  
County Ops  
Labor Negotiations  
Officer Meeting

**Operations Projects**

Wild Land PPE  
Safety Committee  
Personnel Issues  
Life Safety Rope  
Annual Appraisals  
Burn Tower Conversion

Calls of Interest:

Fourth Weekend July 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>

22 Brush/Grass fires; 2 electrical fires; 15 EMS calls; 12 Smoke Investigations; 14 false alarms. A total of 65 calls in 48 hours. Smoke from the large wildland fires in Canada increased our smoke investigation calls.

On 7/6/15 Station 61 and 63 crews responded to a brush fire and found a one to two acre area of grass and underbrush burning, one structure threatened. The fire was being fought with garden hoses by campers from the area. The fire spread quickly due to strong winds blowing from south. The fire was brought under control and extinguished by crews and no structures were damaged. The cause was undetermined at the time.

On 7/17/15 E69, E12, T12, E43, E75 and B76 responded for a building fire at 641 E Axton Road. E69 and T69 arrived to a 90% involved abandoned structure that had no exposures. E69 called defensive and initiated command. This structure was reported to be vacant for years by across the street neighbors. E69/T69 performed a close couple evolution in order to secure a water supply. The fire was defensive and the abandoned structure was eventually extinguished while crews kept any possibility of grass fires in check. The fire cause is undermined at this time.

On 7/27/15 B76, C7102, E61, E63 and E69 dispatched to a garage fire on Clark St. in Blaine. E61 arrived at two story residential with light smoke showing from the rear of building. On officer walk around E61 found homeowner spraying water on detached garage. Shop was approximately 12' x 40' and located about 10' from the house. Smoke was coming from eaves of the garage. Water was applied to the fire located in the truss above the doorway. The fire was extinguished and valuable items removed from the garage. The cause is believed to be electrical.

### **Training Division Report**

Captain Noonchester presented the training division report.

The report included the staff productivity, the career and volunteer firefighter training for July and the following information:

North Whatcom's firefighters have completed 458 hours of training for the month of July. This is down from last month because the call volume has increased so drastically. The department set records for overall call response.

In July, North Whatcom Fire experienced extremely dry conditions leading to an unusual amount of grass/urban interface type fires. For training, the department conducted crew refresher events that included wild land and size-up scenarios. Every summer in our district we do have some grass fires but this year has been very warm and dry. It isn't over yet!

The North Whatcom Tender Group has been active each Monday night practicing their skills delivering water to our engines in the field. They work very hard to provide this valuable service and we definitely could not operate without them. Great job guys.

As always, the department strives to be the best it can be and part of this includes continual training during shift work. The firefighters and company officers plan evolutions during their day and will always include any volunteers that are on duty with them. These crews have developed a strong bond with our new people as well.

David Comp has successfully passed his probationary year as of August 12<sup>th</sup> 2015, pending Chief Pernet's approval.

Outstanding effort in July goes to:

- FF Danny Jensen
- FF Val Harper

## **Technical Services & Maintenance Division Report**

Chief Pernet presented the technical services & maintenance division report.

There was no meeting with the County on our section of the Capital Facility Plan in July.

The new official Ballot Drop Box has been installed at station 63. Since the day the ballots were mailed there has been a steady flow of folks dropping of their ballots.

The planning for the 911 Memorial ride is in overdrive as we get close to September 11<sup>th</sup>. We are seeing many volunteers step up and donate their time. Our Tech Help folks have done a wonderful job on social media and the web site. In addition, Dean Crosswhite from Fire District 7 has taken on a tremendous amount of duties. Thanks go out to both. <http://911memorialride.org/>

All Blaine firework stands were inspected and the Blaine fireworks show was also inspected as required by code.

In July the department changed vendors for our staff callback texting service to a company called MyStates (Alert Sense). Most of the other Whatcom County Fire Districts were already using this service. It is currently funded by the Department of Emergency Management. Using this new paging service will give us the ability to send instant text messages, emails, and voice messages to home recorders. We also use this service to page out our new Rehab unit.

The department has begun the process of updating the map books and is currently working with Mike Price along with District 7 and South Whatcom Fire to update all the streets in the county. The hope will be to split the cost of the data work however each district will have to pay its own expenses for the printing of their own map books.

The crews have assisted the City of Blaine in designing a sprinkler system with some of our old appliances in storage. The city plans on having three splash days this summer.

There were a total of 12 inspections completed for the month of July.

### Apparatus:

The department continues to bring on new members for our new Rehab 70 unit. It already has been deployed to two working fires.

All apparatus have been issued new Pacific Pride fuel cards. Pacific Pride continues to be our best vendor for fuel.

### Facilities:

The new exhaust system for station 68 was installed over the weekend of August 1 and 2. The installers also serviced our two other systems. With the grant funds the department was also able to purchase new end fittings for the exhaust system at station 69. With this modification all apparatus now are interchangeable between staffed stations with the exception of station 12.

Station 64 (Custer): Division Chief Hollander is looking for direction regarding the roof repairs for the Custer Station.

The water heater at station 65 (Haynie) was replaced due to leaking issues.

IT:

It looks like most commissioners are using their new laptops.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Burn Tower:

Captain Noonchester sent out official requests for proposal.  
He might be able to present the proposals at the September board meeting.

Trickle Creek Annexation:

Chief Pernet provided the Board with an update on the annexation process and handed out a draft Interlocal Agreement between WCFD #4 and the Bellingham Fire Department (City of Bellingham). Commissioner Ness made the motion to authorize Chief Pernet to make the decisions in the final negotiation of the language re: term, effective date and payment due dates with final approval by the Commission Chair. Commissioner Neal seconded; motion passed.

Fire Chief Hiring:

The next step in the process is the review of the applications.

The Chair called for an executive session at 1:04 p.m. for 11 minutes.

Executive Session:

*per RCW 42.30.140 “Collective bargaining sessions with employee organizations, including contract negotiations, grievance meetings, and discussions relating to the interpretation or application of a labor agreement; or... that a portion of a meeting during which the governing body is planning or adopting the strategy or position to be taken by the governing body during the course of any collective bargaining, professional negotiations, or grievance or mediation proceedings, or reviewing the proposal made in the negotiations or proceedings while in progress.*

The meeting resumed at 1:15 p.m.

**Next Board Meeting:** September 15th at 12:00 p.m.

The Strategic Planning Meeting is scheduled for September 19<sup>th</sup> at Station 12.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:16 p.m.

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Harry Andrews, Chair

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Kris Parks, Board Secretary

## **Motions and Directives:**

### **Minutes:**

Approval of Minutes of the July 15, 2015 Meeting.

Commissioner Andrews moved to approve the meeting minutes. Commissioner Neal seconded; motion passed.

### **Vouchers:**

Approval of the payroll voucher: Commissioner Ness moved to approve the payroll voucher.

Commissioner Andrews seconded; motion passed.

Approval of the capital voucher: Commissioner Ness moved to approve the capital voucher.

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