

Spokane County Fire Protection District 8

MINUTES

Regular Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting

Station 82

December 13, 2011

6:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners was called to order by Chair Hesse at 6:03 p.m. In Attendance: Commissioner Lee Boling, Commissioner Greg Hesse, Commissioner Dennis Ross, Chief William Walkup, Deputy Chief Tony Nielsen, Deputy Chief Lonnie Rash, Carol Trescott, Administrative Assistant, members of the public and members of the District.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion made by Commissioner Ross, and seconded by Commissioner Boling:
The meeting Agenda is approved as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Motion made by Commissioner Ross and seconded by Commissioner Boling:
The Consent Agenda is approved as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Non-represented Staff COLA – When the 2012 budget was adopted in November, the Board directed staff to include a placeholder in the budget for a cola for non-represented staff. By including the placeholder in the budget the Board allowed time to review and discuss the issue further at a later date.

There was also previous discussion on conducting a meeting shortly after the first of the year specifically to look at budgeting for 2013 and 2014. A budget meeting will be held on Saturday, March 3, 2012.

Chief Walkup reported the 2012 levy certification has been submitted to the county. If the cola placeholder funds are not used in 2012 they can be brought forward as cash-carried-forward money for 2013.

Commissioner Boling said the Board was presented with a budget at a previous meeting that included the possibility of employee layoffs. He stated the District went out to the public for a ballot measure telling taxpayers additional funds were needed in order to continue current operations. With that in mind, Commissioner Boling found it troubling to now allow a cola for District employees. He stated both he and Commissioner Ross thought the Board would be discussing layoffs at the November meeting. Commissioner Boling requested a vote on the non-represented staff cola. He then said if there were changes after the budget workshop the Board could readdress the issue.

Commissioner Hesse said his recollection was that the Board had agreed on a 3.7% cola for non-represented staff at the previous meeting. He said some of the District's members have received no salary adjustment for more than one year and that the bargaining unit is scheduled to receive a cola in 2012. Commissioner Hesse felt the Board should be as fair as possible to all its members.

Commissioner Ross stated if the cola were brought to a vote he would be against it but said that he may feel differently after the budget meeting. He said the last meeting he was in favor of including a placeholder in the 2012 budget and wanted to leave the option open at that time.

Further discussion followed on the issue but the Board was not in agreement on the direction and outcome regarding a cola for non-represented staff.

Motion made by Commissioner Boling, and seconded by Commissioner Hesse:

That we vote on the non-represented staff cola of 3.7%. The motion carried unanimously.

The motion was restated by Commissioner Boling, and seconded by Commissioner Ross:

That the non-represented staff cola not be awarded at this time.

Commissioner Boling voted Yea; Commissioner Ross voted Yea; Commissioner Hesse voted Nay.

The motion carried with a vote of two to one.

Commissioner Boling requested a review of the July 20th Special BoFC meeting minutes and referenced his statement during that meeting, "if all efforts have been exhausted to meet the budget you have to go back to employees for either concessions or reductions". He stated there was discussion that took place at that meeting regarding salaries and expenses, operational expenses and property tax decline.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Oath of Office – Commissioners Hesse & Ross and Paramedic Firefighter Jason Wilkins – Chief Walkup introduced Paramedic Firefighter, Jason Wilkins. Commissioner Boling administered the Oath of Office to Commissioners Hesse and Ross, and Paramedic Firefighter Wilkins. Chief Nielsen presented PM/FF Wilkins with a SCFD8 badge.

B. Healthcare Resolution – By state statute, a resolution is now required for participation in a self-funded healthcare program. Resolution 11-06 will adopt the WFCOA Healthcare system and authorize the fire chief to sign an interlocal agreement with WFCOA allowing the District to participate in the healthcare program.

Motion made by Commissioner Boling and seconded by Commissioner Ross:

Move that we adopt Resolution 11-06 and authorize the Chief to sign for us in that process.

The motion carried unanimously.

C. January Meeting Date – Commissioner Ross is unavailable for the regular scheduled meeting on January 10, 2012. He is available January 3rd or 17th. Commissioner Hesse is unavailable January 17th. Commissioner Boling requested that unless there is an item on the agenda that required a vote by all three members, it was his desire to maintain meeting dates as scheduled and posted. An excused absence may be granted to an absent board member, or they have the option to participate by phone. The next regular meeting will be held January 10, 2012.

D. Electrical Usage by Members – Last winter Chief Walkup became aware that some members were using electricity at District facilities to maintain heaters for their vehicles. He ordered the practice to be discontinued at that time. The Local has subsequently requested individuals be allowed to access electricity for their vehicles. In exchange those individuals are willing to reimburse the District for any costs incurred on a monthly or annual basis. The Chief requested direction from the Board on whether or not the practice should be allowed or if reimbursement should be required based on estimated cost and usage per individual. Certain types of acts are considered de minimis, such as radio usage in an office. If the Board chose to adopt policy and standards this practice could be classified as de minimus use and allowed. The Board discussed several options and directed the Chief to draft policy to allow electrical access by individuals for their personal vehicle heaters.

EXECUTIVE REPORT: Chief Walkup

A. Survey Results – The Board reviewed results from October’s Customer Satisfaction Survey and alarm statistics activity year-to-date.

B. Moran Prairie Annexation – Chief Walkup reported he had consulted legal counsel regarding a 7.6 acre Moran Prairie annexation. Brian Snure sent a letter to the City of Spokane which stated the District has an agreement with the city regarding timely notice of such issues. He also requested to ensure the city’s practice is consistent with that agreement in the future. In response, the District’s legal counsel received a voicemail and an email from the assistant city attorney, Jim Richmond. Mr. Richmond communicated that there is plenty of time for the District to articulate its concerns. Brian Snure told Mr. Richmond that the District does have concerns and he urged city staff to contact the fire district as soon as possible. Chief Walkup said the District plans to raise the issue of response times and service to the area. Mr. Snure was not comfortable with allowing the city to move forward without the District’s comment. Brian Snure has subsequently received notice that the city has taken the item off the table and is in no hurry to proceed.

On January 1st the Spokane County Boundary Review Board will be eliminated. The Boundary Review Board is currently the forum where fire districts may request that jurisdiction be invoked in order to get a hearing before a board of impartial individuals to make decisions regarding annexation.

Chief Walkup has scheduled a meeting with Commissioner Richard, and the county’s legal counsel, Jim Emacio, to discuss the issue. Their decision has potential implications for both fire districts and the county and a possible substantial loss of revenue. The Board also felt that Commissioner Hesse should also attend the meeting on Monday, December 19th.

C. Budget Amendment – Chief Walkup will bring an amended 2011 budget before the Board in January for their approval and adoption. The purpose of an amended budget is to include the \$314,000 Assistance to Firefighters Grant funding. There is no statutory requirement to amend the budget but the state auditor has stated an amended budget is advisable.

D. 2009-2010 State Audit – The Washington State Auditor’s office has completed a 2009 – 2010 financial and accountability audit of the District. There were no findings or formal recommendations. The audit team conducted an informative exit interview in presentation form with Commissioner Hesse in attendance.

E. Recognition Event 02/10/12 – The District’s annual recognition event will be held Friday, February 10, 2012 at The Luxury Box, in Spokane Valley.

CORRESPONDENCE

Attached

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dr. Patrick Tennican expressed his support of the commissioner's involvement with the Moran Prairie annexation issue. In addition, he shared his concern on a possible vacation of Ben Burr Road and the effects vacation would have on the area relative to community health and safety. He requested the District speak out on the proposed vacation regarding increased response times and public safety. Dr. Tennican questioned two letters submitted by the fire district to the county in which one was not in support of vacation and the other neither supports nor opposes the vacation of Ben Burr Road.

The District is under constraints by its statutory authority. Chief Walkup said he was personally told the vacation was going to be approved and had requested some assurance on the issues brought forward by the District. He was told that the issues of concern by the District - response times, health and safety, and signalization - would all be addressed when there is a plan for the parcel. Because at the time there was no plan for the parcel, there was nothing to mitigate.

Dr. Tennican said there is a lot of misinformation disseminated and that there have been several proposals for the land which depend on vacation approval of Ben Burr Road. He stated Ben Burr is a safe route to 57th Avenue and referenced RCW establishing public land should not be used for private benefit.

The Board reviewed the September 15th and November 15th letters which the District sent to the county engineer. The letters express concerns that a vacation may impact traffic congestion on the Palouse Highway and create a potential to reduce response time to District citizens.

Chief Walkup will contact legal counsel to find out what the agency can legally do, and specifically whether the District and commissioners can collectively or individually take a position in support or opposition to a vacation or an action when the property use is unknown.

Commissioner Boling asked that the letters written by the District to the county on September 15, 2011, and November 15, 2011, be included with the minutes of the meeting as well as posted with the minutes on the District's website.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Spokane County Fire Commissioner Association annual dinner meeting will be held 01/12/10 at the Ramada Inn at the Spokane Airport. Commissioners Hesse and Boling and Chief Walkup will be in attendance.

A schedule of Santa's visit with SCFD8 members was listed in the Spokesman Review Voices.

Commissioner Hesse received a thank you letter from Steve Bailey for the District's support in allowing SCFD8 members to backfill Spokane Valley Fire stations so that their personnel could attend a memorial service for one of their members who passed away from a duty related death.

The WFC / WFCA Joint Legislative Day is scheduled for Wednesday, January 25, 2012. Commissioners Hesse and Boling and Chief Walkup plan to attend.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Gregory A Hesse, Chair
Fire District 8 Commissioner

ATTEST:

William A. Walkup, District Secretary