

Spokane County Fire Protection District 8
MINUTES
Board of Fire Commissioners Regular Meeting

April 13, 2021
6:00 pm

This meeting was conducted electronically via Zoom

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chair Greg Hesse. In Attendance: Commissioner Andy Rorie, Commissioner Lee Boling, Commissioner Greg Hesse, Fire Chief Lonnie Rash, Assistant Chief Chris Wyrobek, District Secretary Carol Trescott, members of the public and members of the District.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

A Motion was made by Commissioner Boling and seconded by Commissioner Rorie: **Move to approve the Agenda as written.**

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

The following warrants and electronic transfers were approved for payment:

- Warrant Numbers 112942 through 113019 totaling \$222,454.96
- Electronic Transfers 03/01/2021 – 03/31/2021 totaling \$344,203.51

A Motion was made by Commissioner Rorie and seconded by Commissioner Boling: **Move to approve the Consent Agenda as written.** The Motion carried unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. Resolution 21-02, General Obligation Refunding Bond – Apparatus: Chief Rash provided the Board with Resolution 21-02 which provides for the issuance of a limited tax general obligation refunding bond to exercise the purchase option under the current PNC apparatus lease purchase agreement. The District selected Pacific Premier Bank for refinancing which will decrease the current interest rate from 3.99% to 2.17%, and provide a saving of \$79,537 over the twelve-year life of the contract.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Rorie and seconded by Commissioner Boling: **Move to adopt Resolution 21-02 for the issuance of refunding bonds relative to the District's apparatus refinance.** The Motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Oath of Office, Division Chief Kristopher Cress: Chief Rash administered the Oath of Office to Division Chief Kristopher Cress. Chief Cress was recently promoted from Lieutenant/SCBA Technician to Division Chief of Support Services.

The commissioners congratulated Chief Cress on his achievement. An in-person badge pinning will be conducted at a later date.

B. Resolution 21-03, Fire Levy Lid Lift: Chief Rash stated the District's fire levy rate has decreased from \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value to \$1.14 per \$1,000 of assessed value in 2021. Per discussions at two previous Board workshops, Chief Rash presented the commissioners with options for an August 3rd multi-year fire levy lid lift which will generate an estimated \$1,256,244 in revenue in 2022. The lid lift will enable the District to maintain service levels, firefighter staffing, equipment, and facilities amid rising operation costs. He asked the commissioners to consider which limit factor or specific index they wish to use for the ballot measure.

Discussion followed on limit factors tied to CPI-W, and CPI-W Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue. The commissioners agreed to approve a six-year fire levy lid lift request tied to CPI-W Class B/C.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Boling and seconded by Commissioner Rorie: **Move to approve Resolution 21-03, Fire Levy Lid Lift with a limit factor tied to CPI-W Class B/C.** The Motion carried unanimously.

C. Resolution 21-04, EMS Levy Lid Lift: Chief Rash said the District's EMS levy rate has diminished from \$.50 per \$1,000 in assessed value to \$.37 per \$1,000 in assessed value in 2021. Restoring the rate to \$.50 would generated an estimated \$453,636 for paramedic staffing, equipment and facilities in 2022 and allow the District to maintain the level of fire protection and EMS services it provides to our citizens.

Discussion followed on the probabilities of running both the Fire and EMS measures on the August Primary ballot. Commissioner Rorie felt it is essential that the fire levy lid lift request be successful in order to maintain District operations.

Commissioner Boling felt effective messaging on the importance of both the Fire and EMS lid lift measures could be communicated to the community.

Commissioner Hesse was in agreement with both but felt the Fire levy was crucial at this time.

Chief Rash said the District's M&O measure will be on the ballot in 2023.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Hesse and seconded by Commissioner Boling: **Move to not approve Resolution 21-04, EMS Levy Lid Lift at this time.** The Motion carried unanimously.

D. Interlocal Agreement for Acquisition of Real Estate Property: As discussed at two recent workshops, the City of Spokane Valley is entering negotiations with Central Valley School District for the purchase of a 17.4 acre parcel at 44th and Bates Road. The City has stated they are willing to allow District 8 to purchase three to four acres of that parcel to be used for a future fire station in the Ponderosa neighborhood.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Boling and seconded by Commissioner Hesse: **Move to authorize the Fire Chief to continue discussions with the City of Spokane Valley for the acquisition of a portion of the property located at 44th and Bates Road and to serve as the agent of the board.** The Motion carried unanimously.

E. Consideration of Surplus/Sale of Real Property: Chief Rash said as previously directed by the Board he has worked with a local realtor to obtain a fair market value estimate for the 4.55 acre District-owned property on Baltimore Road. The Chief said he was prepared to share those findings with the Board in open session, or the discussion could take place in Executive Session if the Board felt that sharing the market analysis would cause a likelihood of a decreased sales price.

The Board elected to receive the information in Executive Session.

Consideration of Limited In-Person Public Meetings: Chief Rash said under the Governor's phase three recovery plan, limited in-person meetings are now permissible provided a remote access option is available for those who do not wish to or are unable to attend in person. He also provided the Board with the District's *In-Person Meeting Venue Plan* which outlines requirements for conducting face-to-face gatherings.

The commissioners felt they have been able to conduct the District's business efficiently and effectively by remote access and elected to continue to evaluate any move to in-person public meetings on a month-by-month basis, and as permitted by COVID venue guidelines.

EXECUTIVE REPORT: Chief Rash

A. COVID-19 Update: Chief Rash said on March 22nd the District moved to Phase 3 of the *Phased Approach to Safe Start* guidelines. The District has submitted a FEMA recovery request for approximately \$35,000 in personnel backfill wage expenses.

Lieutenant Retirement/Promotions: Lt. Bruce Ellison recently retired from the District after more than 30 years of service with Fire District 8. Brad Mertens and Shayne Hanson were recently promoted to Lieutenant and will assume their new roles beginning May 16th. All of the District's personnel changes over the past year will be recognized more formally when social gatherings are permitted.

B. Professional Development Report: Chief Rash recognized the accomplishments achieved by District personnel and presented the Board with a list of members and their professional development program achievements by course, step, and hours that they have dedicated to their advancement.

C. Chief Officer Uniforms: Chief Rash shared a plan to transition the District's Chief Officers' uniforms from white to dark. He said the new apparel will be phased in over the next year as uniforms are replaced.

The commissioners were in favor of the Chief Officer's move to dark uniforms and felt they should be replaced at one time as a group in order to show uniform consistency.

D. Valley Fire Wildfire Awareness: Chief Collins with Valley Fire invited Chief Rash and Chief Cates with District 9 to discuss wildfire awareness concerns in preparation and response for this year's upcoming wildfire season. The conversations were recorded and will be used for social media and recognition of May as wildfire awareness month.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 6:53 pm, Commissioner Hesse called for Executive Session per RCW 42.30.110 (1)(c) to consider the minimum price at which real estate will be offered for sale or lease when public knowledge regarding such consideration would cause a likelihood of decreased price.

At 7:05 pm, Commissioner Hesse called the regular meeting back in session. No decisions were made in Executive Session.

The Board directed Chief Rash to secure additional fair market value estimates for the property on Baltimore Road.

CORRESPONDENCE

- EMS and Trauma Council thank you letter to MSO Tom Chavez

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jim Nelson with D.A. Davidson spoke briefly regarding the District’s successful apparatus refinance and cost savings the Fire District will realize with the lower interest rate of the refunding bonds.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Commissioners PDC filing deadline is April 15th.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:08 pm Commissioner Hesse adjourned the regular meeting.

Gregory A. Hesse, Chair
Fire District 8 Commissioner

ATTEST:

Carol L. Trescott, District Secretary