

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



MINUTES

July 12, 2022, 6:00 pm

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners was held at Station 82 and on Zoom. Chair Lee Boling called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. In Attendance: Commissioner Andy Rorie, Commissioner Greg Hesse, Commissioner Lee Boling, Fire Chief Lonnie Rash, Assistant Chief Chris Wyrobek, District Secretary Carol Trescott, members of the District and members of the community.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & INTRODUCTIONS

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jack Collins, Vice President of L3711, said the Local is proud of the MOU that they and the District worked on collaboratively and he hopes the Board will approve it. He thanked the District on the joint work done on the MOU.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Hesse and seconded by Commissioner Rorie: **Move to approve the Agenda as presented.** The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

The following warrants and electronic transfers were approved for payment:

- Warrant Numbers 114068 through 114144 totaling \$246,910.88
- Electronic Transfers 06/01/2022 – 06/30/2022 totaling \$444,961.25

A motion was made by Commissioner Hesse and seconded by Commissioner Rorie: **Move to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.** The motion carried unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. Part-time Program: Chief Rash said the District has had a part-time program for many years; it is now organized through Teamsters L690 with a current contract of January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2023. Over the past three years the District has lost a number of part-time firefighters due to various factors; most recently two part-time members were hired into full-time positions with the District and at this time there is one part-time member. The Chief spoke with legal counsel and with a Local 690 representative to get a sense of where the part-time program stands. Chief Rash used available data to provide the Board with an evaluation of the program relative to the costs of recruitment and part-time program costs. The District has not recruited part-time firefighters since 2019 and transferred some of the allocated funds in the part-time program to the full-time program. The part-time program is currently funded at \$75,000.

Chief Rash provided the Board with an analysis based on maintaining five part-time members in the program, including the costs for recruitment, training, and wages as well as the correlation in the reduction of full-time overtime. He found the part-time program to be cost neutral.

The Chief asked the Board to provide direction on whether the District should maintain the part-time program, continue to reduce reliance on the program, or actively recruit part-time personnel into the program.

Chief Rash recommended maintaining the part-time program which would allow the Fire Chief to fill positions as needed and as the needs of the District change. He has no plans to add to the program within the next two years based on the ability to recruit and maintain part-time staffing. He said maintaining the option to retain the program will allow the ability to look at it in the future and have further conversation with L690 as the contract nears expiration.

Discussion took place on lateral recruitment and how other agencies in the state are recruiting for their departments.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rorie and seconded by Commissioner Hesse: **Move to continue the current Teamsters L690 contract and review at the end of the contract.**

Commissioner Boling amended the motion and Commissioner Rorie seconded the amended motion: **To allow the Fire Chief to make decisions relative to the part-time program as times change and things fluctuate.** The amended motion carried unanimously.

B. Board of Fire Commissioners Workshop; 2022 Board Agenda Planning Calendar: Chief Rash proposed holding a board policy review workshop during the week of October 17th. He also proposed initiating a board agenda planning calendar in order to schedule both routine and specific topics throughout the year. The Chief presented the Board with a draft 2022 planning calendar and a draft 2023 planning calendar.

The commissioners chose Thursday, October 20th as the date to hold their policy workshop; and, they were in support of maintaining a board planning calendar.

NEW BUSINESS

A. MOU Local 3711 Vaccination Accommodations: In October of 2021 the District made the decision to not separate employment and to accommodate a member who was granted an exemption for not receiving the governor-mandated vaccination requirement. An accommodation notice was prepared and signed by that member on October 27, 2021. After a recent PERC decision that vaccination accommodations are a mandatory subject of bargaining and should be negotiated with the representing union and not an individual, the District engaged in accommodation discussions with the union.

District staff and L3711 met in a labor management setting and drafted an MOU which was presented to the Board for their consideration. Chief Rash outlined the details of the MOU.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rorie and seconded by Commissioner Hesse: **Move to approve the MOU with L3711 on accommodations as presented.** The motion carried unanimously.

B. Parental Bonding Leave: The District recently updated its PFML and FML policies in order to be in compliance with current state and federal law. During the policy review it was noted that Procedure 10.07.07 states a member may take two consecutive shifts of sick leave for the sole purpose of bonding when there is no other qualifying medical event. The union has an interest in allowing its members to use additional sick leave for parental leave and bonding.

Both staff and L3711 queried the District's contract comparable agencies to see what they allow for bonding. Many of those agency's policies do not reflect current changes in law. Chief Rash presented a table showing 462 hours, or 19 shifts, is the average amount of sick leave allowed by the seven comparable agencies for the purpose of parental bonding.

The Chief said Labor Management discussions included a consideration of the importance of maintaining a minimum amount of sick leave prior to taking sick leave for bonding. Dialog also covered the impacts to the budget and the number of sick leave hours that could potentially be used.

Chief Rash recommended allowing District members to use 19 consecutive 24-hour shifts, or 12 consecutive weeks for days shift employees – the average allowed by the District's comparable agencies.

The commissioners were in agreement with the Fire Chief's recommendation; they would like to review sick leave usage in two years.

Chief Rash will post the updated Paid Leave procedure for a 30-day comment period.

C. Mid-year Budget Update: Chief Rash reported that as of mid-year the District has collected 54.8% of anticipated tax revenues; expenditures are at 46.13%; and, suppression salaries are at 50.88%. The salary increase is due to overtime for three members who are out on extended or long term leave. The Chief said four new recruits will return from the academy, along with the recruit academy instructor, which should alleviate some overtime. Repair and maintenance services are trending high due to a catastrophic failure of Station 81's HVAC, Station 81's fire alarm panel, Station 82's drain issue, and long-term repairs to apparatus. The Chief provided the commissioners with a mid-year budget detail.

EXECUTIVE REPORT: Chief Rash

A. 75th Anniversary Kickoff: On June 23rd, District members gathered to reconnect and kick off the District 75th year of service. Service pins and certificates

were presented to those in attendance, as well as a 75th anniversary challenge coin and mug. Chief Rash thanked the Firefighters Association and the Local for their support in sponsoring the driving range activity.

Commissioner Boling thanked Chief Long and staff for their work on the event.

Wildfire Deployment: Chief Long was deployed for two weeks to Alaska as Planning Section Chief and a part of the Northeast Incident Management Team. He spent most of his time in Anchorage and had a short stay in Fairbanks.

B. Recruit Academy Graduation: The District four recruits will graduate from the Washington State Fire Academy on Thursday, July 28th. A graduation ceremony will be held in Bellevue beginning at 5:00 pm.

OPERATIONS REPORT: Chief Wyrobek

A. EMS Min/Max Process: Per WAC, the current strategic plan, and the DOH, the East Region Trauma Council is required to conduct a min/max evaluation to look at EMS and transport capabilities in the county. Each agency in Spokane County that provides EMS has been asked to provide basic demographics and EMS response data for the last year. The data will be evaluated by the EMS Council, the East Region EMS Council, and the DOH in order to determine whether there are enough transport licenses in the county to serve the community. MSO Chavez and Chief Wyrobek are gathering the District's data; it is due to East Region by the end of August.

B. Department of Natural Resources Arcadia Staffing: DNR Arcadia Division and North Columbia are experiencing staffing challenges. DNR has typically staffed 12 engines with four people; this year they are able to staff 11 engines and many of those have only three people. There are normally five or six overhead; this year there are three positions filled and one of those will leave on August 15th. DNR is also seeing a decrease in available aircraft with one air attack, one fire boss, and a type one helo in Deer Park; other fire bosses are currently out of state on assignment. Some resources are available in Moses Lake and Yakima and can be pulled from Coeur d'Alene if needed. North Columbia is down three engines and is struggling to find overhead for their 20-person Type 2 hand crew. These challenges could mean longer durations for local crews before aid is provided.

CORRESPONDENCE

- A.** Thank you from the Eden family
- B.** Thank you from James Zimmerman
- C.** Email correspondence from Tom Daugherty regarding hydrant placement

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- A.** SCFCA quarterly meeting is Thursday, July 14th, at the Fire Lookout Museum, 123 W Westview, in Spokane.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

None

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:52 pm Commissioner Boling adjourned the regular meeting.

Lee C. Boling, Chair
Fire District 8 Commissioner

ATTEST:

Carol L. Trescott, District Secretary