

Spokane County Fire Protection District 8
Board of Fire Commissioners Special Meeting
Station 81 and on Zoom

MINUTES

August 31, 2021, 6:00 pm

CALL TO ORDER

A special meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners was called to order at 6:00pm by Chair Greg Hesse. In Attendance: Commissioner Lee Boling, Commissioner Greg Hesse, Fire Chief Lonnie Rash, Assistant Chief Chris Wyrobek, Division Chief Jason Wilkins, Division Chief Kristopher Cress, and District Secretary Carol Trescott. Commissioner Andy Rorie attended electronically. The meeting was also attended by several members via Zoom.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

NEW BUSINESS

A. Governor Issued Vaccination Mandate for Healthcare Workers: Chief Rash explained the components of the Governor's vaccination mandate. On August 26th the Chief sent vaccination guidance to all District members, along with Request for Religious Accommodation and Request for Medical Accommodation forms. The forms were reviewed and approved by legal counsel. The guidance also included a timeline for vaccination compliance. After discussions with Local 3711 and Local 690, an update was sent to the membership which included the accommodation request forms and a deadline of September 6th, 5:00 pm, to submit request for accommodation forms to Chief Wyrobek.

Legal counsel believes they will be able to review and comment on any request for accommodation forms they are asked to review within three business days. The member will be notified of the status of their exemption request and the District will then determine if it is able to provide a reasonable accommodation for the employee that does not create an undue hardship on the agency or its membership. If the District receives a request for a reasonable accommodation, it will need to determine on a case by case basis if the request meets the threshold based on guidance from legal counsel, and if the accommodations can be met.

If an accommodation cannot be met and is not granted, the District would inquire with the Department of Health as to whether the employee is certified or not certified. Without a complaint, the DOH is not going to pull a person's certification; however, the person generally may not be certified at the next step. If the District is not able to provide a reasonable accommodation, it would more than likely move to separation for the inability to provide a reasonable accommodation.

Within labor contracts, if a member loses their certification, they are placed on leave without pay and will have a number of days, as determined by the Fire Chief, to have their certification reinstated. If the member is not able to regain certification, they will be separated.

If a member chooses not to get the vaccination, and the District is not able to provide a reasonable accommodation, the member would be placed on leave without pay.

Chief Rash said employers can legally require all of its employees to be vaccinated and that the Board will need to decide if they will require all members of the District to be vaccinated against Covid-19. This can be accomplished by resolution of the Board and followed by Board policy. Legal counsel has determined vaccination can be called for based on a healthy and safe work environment for all.

Local 3711 president, Jason Wilkins, said working with the District on the vaccination MOU has provided a good process and that if the commissioners chose to enact a total vaccination policy for the entire Fire District, he felt confident the MOU negotiation process had been fair.

Chief Rash said from a supervisory means it is less impactful if there is a standardized procedure for vaccinations so the District can be confident that 100% of its members are vaccinated and a healthy environment is maintained.

After Board discussion it was determined that Chief Rash will bring a draft vaccination resolution to the Board for their consideration.

The commissioners agreed to move their September regular meeting to Tuesday, September 7th, 5:00 pm, at Station 81 and Zoom.

B. MOU Local 3711 Vaccination Impacts: Chief Rash provided a MOU between the District and Local 3711 which addresses the impacts to the Local's membership of the governor's vaccination mandate. The document is a result of two labor management meeting and was approved by legal counsel.

The MOU outlines the process provided to bargaining unit members for adhering to the vaccination mandate, and the outcome should they choose to not be vaccinated.

After discussion, a **Motion was made by Commissioner Boling and seconded by Commissioner Rorie: Move to adopt the Memorandum of Understanding between the District and Local 3711 on vaccination mandate requirements.** The Motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE REPORT

A. Staff Vehicle Purchase: The District has deferred the purchase of two command vehicles; one from 2019, and one from 2020. Staff has found two Ford F150 trucks at state bid pricing available and ready for delivery in December. Both current vehicles are beyond Capital Replacement Plan benchmarks and are in need of replacement. Funds are available and have been deferred for a couple of years. The units are \$41,200 each including taxes.

The commissioners agreed on the vehicle purchase. Staff will move forward with acquiring the two F150 command vehicles.

B. Budget Workshop Dates: The 2022 Budget Workshop will be Tuesday, September 28th, 6:00, at Station 82.

C. Regular BoFC Meeting Date: The September regular Board of Fire Commissioners meeting will be Tuesday, September 7th, at 5:00 pm, at Station 81 and on Zoom.

D. Station 82 Air Conditioner: Staff received three bids for the replacement of two air conditioning units at Station 82; prices ranged from \$40,000 to \$48,000. Chief Rash recommended accepting the most responsive bid from Trademark Mechanical of \$47,650 to replace two 8.5 ton air handlers, with AC condensers. The units are 3 phase and will require only minor modification to some of the current duct work. The lower bid left unknown additional costs for extra building modifications and concrete work.

The commissioners agreed with Chief Rash's recommendations to select the bid from Trademark Mechanical for the replacement of two air conditioning units at Station 82.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

IAFF 3711 Jason Wilkins thanked the District for working through the MOU process. He said Chief Rash has always been very collaborative, open and honest in working through a complex process, and he thanked the Board for approving the MOU.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:25pm Commissioner Hesse adjourned the special meeting.

Gregory A. Hesse, Chair
Fire District 8 Commissioner

ATTEST:

Carol L. Trescott, District Secretary