

Spokane County Fire Protection District 8

MINUTES

Board of Fire Commissioners Regular Meeting

September 8, 2020
6:00 pm

*This meeting was conducted electronically via Zoom
due to Governor Inslee's Stay Home, Stay Healthy order*

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners was called to order at 6:02 pm by Chair Greg Hesse. In Attendance: Commissioner Lee Boling, Commissioner Greg Hesse, Fire Chief Tony Nielsen, Assistant Fire Chief Lonnie Rash, District Secretary Carol Trescott, Division Chief J. Wilkins, Division Chief Chris Wyrobek, Division Chief Marty Long, and MSO Tom Chavez. Commissioner Andy Rorie was absent.

INTRODUCTIONS

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Delete: New Business, Item B., Policies/Procedures Review

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

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

The following voucher/warrants electronic payment are approved for payment:

- Warrant Numbers 112446 through 112505 Totaling \$193,765.33
- Electronic Payments 08/01/2020 – 08/31/2020 Totaling \$372,707.79

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS

A. Volunteer Program Analysis: Chief Nielsen said when the current strategic plan was developed we recognized the need to conduct an analysis and review of the District's volunteer program to ensure it meets the needs of our community and of our members. He presented a staff report drafted by Chief Wyrobek which includes the results of discussions and surveys with volunteer members, white board exercises, meetings with other area fire chiefs, and comparisons with other fire districts. Chief Nielsen asked that the Board review the work that was completed and provide any advice, direction and recommendations on the program revisions. With Board approval, he proposed implementing the changes to the volunteer program in January, 2021.

Chef Wyrobek provided a Power Point presentation summarizing his analysis in the staff report.

Commissioner Boling and Commissioner Hesse were appreciative of Chief Wyrobek's work and felt the changes to the volunteer program would be good for District members and for the community.

Chief Nielsen said the revisions will be beneficial for our volunteer members and provide them with an opportunity to respond to calls. They will also allow for growth in the support services program for those who have already performed first in work and would like to remain engaged in a different capacity. The District's WSRB rating would not be affected by the proposed changes.

A. Motion was made by Commissioner Boling and seconded by Commissioner Hesse: **Move to adopt the volunteer program changes as presented and implement in 2021, or as the Chief sees fit.** The Motion carried unanimously.

B. **SCC Fire Science Facility Usage:** Chief Nielsen reported that SCC's Fire Science program instructor informed all area fire service agencies that they would be losing their tower at the end of this year due to the north/south freeway project. The instructor has asked local agencies for permission to utilize their training grounds to train fire science students. The Chief said District 8 has had a long relationship over the years with the college through our resident program, our officer development education and our IFSAC certification testing. With Board approval, Brian Snure said he believes the District could allow SCC to use our facilities at no charge provided the District does not supply any paid staff for their training. Legal also drafted a facility use agreement and a hold harmless agreement for signature prior to the college's use of the District's facilities. Chief Nielsen asked the Board if the District should allow SCC to use District facilities provided no paid staff is used in their training. As a member of SCC's Fire Science Advisory Board, Chief Nielsen said board members have been talking with area fire departments to determine how they could best help the college.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Boling and seconded by Commissioner Hesse: **Move to allow SCC to use District 8 facilities per the agreement, provided no District personnel are used for their training.** The Motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE REPORT: Chief Nielsen

A. **COVID-19 Update:** Spokane County remains in Phase 2, and SCFD8 remains in Phase 2 of the District's Safe Start Plan. Staff meets via Zoom on Tuesdays & Thursdays; a Daily Directive is sent out Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays. A volunteer training signup was initiated on Crew Sense this week for Thursday night trainings; appropriate numbers, masks, and social distancing will be adhered to. Our 113th Daily Directive was distributed on Monday. There have been 115 suspected cases and 35 confirmed cases within the District. Two members were exposed last week, one directly and one indirectly; the patient tested COVID positive. Our supply of PPE remains good. Five facilities in the District's response area are designated as clusters. Chief Long is working with Immaculate Heart Retreat Center and Catholic Charities in preparation for the retreat center becoming a COVID isolation center. The facility is scheduled to be online mid-September through the end of 2020, with a possible 2021 extension. MSO Chavez will be sending out direction to our crews informing them about the center and what they may anticipate when responding there.

Chief Nielsen said the budget looks good and staff has done a great job curtailing any spending that is not absolutely necessary; we are currently 8.5% under expended for the year. The county treasurer extended the second half property tax collection deadline to December 31.

The District's summer newsletter was distributed electronically. Chief Nielsen said he would like to combine the fall and winter newsletter into one printed publication; the cost is \$4,500. No summer newsletter or lid lift information flyer was mailed this year as previously planned and budgeted for.

The commissioners felt it was important to communicate with the community and they approved the distribution of a fall/winter newsletter mailing. Commissioner Boling suggested that information regarding current station access restrictions be included in the newsletter, or that a sign should be posted at the station entry doors directing visitors on how they can access the on-duty crew.

B. Station 82 Backup Generator: The transfer switch has arrived and is scheduled to be installed September 14th.

C. Apparatus Refinance: The District's two Pierce pumpers were acquired with a 15-year lease purchases at a 4.62% annual interest rate. Because interest rates have dropped substantially, Jim Nelson with D.A. Davidson has suggested refinancing the apparatus. Mr. Nelson believes the District could secure an interest rate between 1.7% and 1.8% - saving \$84,000 over the life of the contract. The balance of the current contract is \$926,000; and 13 years. PNC and Mr. Nelson concur that the best option is to refinance in May, 2021 as the current agreement with PNC calls for a remittance in May of each year. If the commissioners are supportive of a refinance, Chief Nielsen said he will return to the Board with a draft refunding bond resolution in January, 2021. A RFP would then be sent to 25 banks in March with an April due date, and a close and refinance would occur in May, 2021. Chief Nielsen said he believes there is a pre-payment penalty and the District is obligated to make a payment on May, 11, 2021 so acting before the proposed timeline may not be financially beneficial. He will confirm with Jim Nelson.

The Board asked the Chief to assess whether refinancing now would offset any benefits to acting next year.

D. Annual Awards Banquet: Given current COVID restrictions and the unknown future of the ability to gather in large groups, staff has asked whether they should move forward with plans for an annual awards banquet this winter.

MSO Tom Chavez explained the nature of the Coronavirus and the possibility of a vaccine availability by this winter. He does not believe state guidelines will be in place relative to social distancing for group functions until much later in the year.

Carol Trescott said the District has the banquet venue reserved for the end of January but she could work with the facility's scheduler to see if they are able accommodate a later date. She suggested cancelling this year's banquet, or moving it to late spring/early summer as an outdoor gathering. The commissioners agreed that the event will look different, should not include a buffet line, and should be pushed out further in the year. The Board definitely wants to recognize and show their appreciation to District members in some manner.

Chavez said the safest option that would allow people to get together would be at an outdoor venue either late spring or early summer.

Commissioner Hesse was in agreement that a May/June outdoor event would be the safest option. Commissioner Boling asked that the January awards banquet be postponed and that other options be reviewed and brought back to the Board.

E. BVFF Retirement Pension Approval: Former Volunteer Firefighter, Roger Conner, has met service eligibility requirements to receive a lump-sum pension payment from the state Board for Volunteer Firefighters. The District's local board must certify and approve his service and the BVFF payment.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Hesse, and seconded by Carol Trescott: **Move to approve the Board for Volunteer Firefighters Invoice Voucher and retirement pension payment to Roger Conner.** The motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

CORRESPONDENCE

Attached

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Paid Family Medical Leave Policy

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 911 annual remembrance ceremonies will be held at each station on Friday, 09/11/2020 at 06:58
- Quarterly Chief Chat will be Thursday, 09/17/2020, at 19:00 via Zoom
- 2021 Budget Workshop will be 09/22/2020, at 18:00 via Zoom
- SCFCA meeting scheduled for Thursday, 09/10/2020 is cancelled
- Commissioner Boling will be attending the WFCA special board meeting on Saturday, 09/12/2020 via Zoom

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:14 pm Commissioner Hesse adjourned the regular meeting.

Gregory A. Hesse, Chair
Fire District 8 Commissioner

ATTEST:

Carol L. Trescott, District Secretary