

**SPOKANE COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT NO 8  
Board of Fire Commissioners Regular Meeting**



**MEETING MINUTES**

February 8, 2023, 6:00 pm

**CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS**

A regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners was held at Station 82 and accessible 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, and members of the District.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**RESOLUTION 23-01, Regular Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting Date Change:**

A motion was made by Commissioner Rorie and seconded by Commissioner Hesse: Move to approve Resolution 23-01 as written. The motion carried unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Blaine Holman, President of Local 3711, expressed his support for the lateral hire MOU and felt the agreement would be beneficial for the District considering the current environment and recruitment challenges, specifically for paramedics. He said he hoped the commissioners will approve the MOU before them.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

- Add Executive Report, Item H, Physician Advisor

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

**APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

The following warrants and electronic transfers were approved for payment:

- Warrant Numbers 114581 through 114646 totaling \$280,748.70
- Electronic Transfers 01/01/2023 – 01/31/2023 totaling \$419,474.88

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. MOU-FF/EMT and FF/Paramedic Lateral Hiring:** Chief Rash said the lateral hire MOU before the Board does not require an initial physical ability test or CPAT. A survey was conducted of the District's seven comparable agencies, and of those seven, Pullman is the only department that offers a lateral position, and they do require a CPAT. The Chief also contacted three local departments who have positions posted; Spokane Fire Department is the only one of the three that requires a CPAT or equivalent. Chief Rash said he has had conversations with 3711 regarding their

concerns that requiring the CPAT as the measure may impact an agency of our size in our ability to recruit candidates. Chief Rash stated all parties recognize the importance of having fit, capable employees.

After the initial MOU was drafted, a sentence was added stating lateral hires will be held to the same performance and fitness standard as entry level probationary members. The District's intent is to develop performance and fitness standards specifically for lateral hires; those standards could then be carried over to entry level members for evaluation and validation. Chief Rash said the District has the ability to ensure members are capable of performing the job during their probationary period.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rorie and seconded by Commissioner Hesse: Move to approve the Lateral Hire FF/EMT and FF/Paramedic MOU as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Procedure Review:** As part of the annual procedure review process, Chief Rash presented the Board with 16 of the 54 procedures that were reviewed by the Policy and Procedures Committee in 2022. He specifically addressed the Grooming Standards procedure and the changes recommended to it by legal counsel. As revised, visible tattoos would be allowed if they are not offensive as determined by the Fire Chief. Restrictions on hair length were removed provided it does not interfere with the use of PPE. In addition, all gender-specific references were deleted.

The commissioners tabled the procedure review until the March regular meeting.

**B. BoFC Travel Reimbursement:** After a recent conference held in Spokane, a question arose on the ability of the Fire District to reimburse commissioners for local travel expenses. Legal counsel, Brian Snure stated the Board is within its right to receive reimbursement for meals and hotels when attending local meetings, however, IRS rules specifically state if an employee has the ability to commute to and from their home, any reimbursement they receive for meals and hotel expenses are taxable. Chief Rash said there is nothing currently in the District's travel procedure prohibiting local expense reimbursement, but such reimbursements do have a tax implication.

Board discussion followed. The commissioners agreed that a formal reimbursement procedure is needed; they may also allow all District members to receive reimbursement for their meals when attending local conferences and training. The Board's preference is to discuss and authorize commissioner hotel and meal reimbursement prior to their attendance at local conferences and meetings.

Chief Rash will return to the Board with a draft travel reimbursement procedure at the March meeting.

**C. Election of Board Chair and Vice Chair:** A motion was made by Commissioner Rorie and seconded by Commissioner Hesse: Move to elect Lee Boling as Board Chair for 2023. The motion carried unanimously

A motion was made by Commissioner Rorie and seconded by Commissioner Boling: Move to elect Andy Rorie as Vice-Chair for 2023. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **EXECUTIVE REPORT** Chief Rash

**A. Baltimore Road Property:** Chief Rash will meet with the Baltimore Road community during the last week of February. The original plan was to change the covenants to allow the District to be able to sell its property or use it in a different way. A title search revealed there are no covenants on any other properties in the area, therefore, legal counsel modified the language in the District's letter to read "vacate" covenants in lieu of "change" covenants, thereby making every property in the area alike.

**B. Santa Float:** Chief Rash said he appreciates Local 3711 and all members of the District who participated in the December Santa float. He heard from many members of the community that they were happy to have Santa back.

**C. Engine 81 Warranty Work:** A cracked bulk head was found on Engine 81 last September. The Pierce service center completed the repairs as warranty work at no cost to the District.

**D. Fitness Assessments:** All represented and non-represented full-time suppression members completed a fitness evaluation. Chief Rash said a peer fitness trainer is assigned to each shift and he thanked Lt. Jenkins, FF/PM Curley, and FF/PM Ricci for their work with the program, and Chief Wilkins for his work on the schedule.

**E. Portland Flight Times:** The return flight to Spokane from the NWLS in March departs Portland at 5:45 pm. The other option was a morning flight which would have meant missing the last day of the conference.

**F. Washington State Chiefs:** Chief Rash will leave his position on the Board of the Washington Fire Chiefs in July. He was elected as Vice-Chair of the Inland Empire Fire Chiefs Association and feels his time will be well spent locally.

**G. M & O Levy:** Chief Rash held two M & O informational public meetings and has received several phone calls from citizens. Ballots are due February 14<sup>th</sup>.

**H. Physicians Advisor:** Dr. Dang accepted a position as AMR's Physician Advisor in addition to his duties as a SHMC emergency room physician. The District has entered into an agreement with Dr. Travis Dierks to serve as the District's new Physician Advisor. Dr. Dierks is an ER physician at Sacred Heart Medical Center, the founding member and lead instructor for EMS Connect, and a citizen of Fire District 8.

#### **OPERATIONS REPORT** Chief WYROBEK

**A. Fulltime Firefighter EMT/PM Interviews:** Interviews were recently completed with approximately 20 entry level Firefighter/EMT applicants; in addition, four Firefighter/Paramedic applicants participated in interviews and skills assessments. Five EMT candidates and one Paramedic candidate are moving forward in the process. The fire service locally, statewide, and beyond is facing a challenge recruiting people for

paramedic positions. Chief Wyrobek is working with other local agencies on strategies for joint recruitment in Spokane County.

**B. Chaplain McNally Vehicle:** A support unit has been equipped for use by Chaplain McNally in his work as the District's Chaplain. This will help to identify him when he responds to calls and aid in his work with the therapy dog program. In addition, he will use the vehicle when he conducts District-specific business, when he delivers weekly supplies to the stations, and when he checks in with District members. Chaplain McNally is EVIP certified, an 860 officer, and is dispatched to calls when needed. His use of the vehicle falls within District procedure. A climate control system was installed in the vehicle so that Chaplain McNally is able to ensure that Pierce is in a safe, temperature-controlled environment, and that the community knows he is safe as well.

The commissioners expressed concerns with having a vehicle designated for use by the Chaplain and if he should be authorized to take it home, as well as the cost of its operation, and the community's perception. They asked if Spokane Valley Fire Department would be sharing in operational costs if Chaplain McNally responds to their area.

Chief Rash said there is an auto-aid component which is mutually beneficial to both agencies. He will return to the Board with an operational cost analysis, and procedures that govern the chaplain program and the District's volunteer members.

District Volunteer, Bob Lundy, said while he appreciates what the commissioners said about not taking vehicles home, he supports Chief Rash's position on the program. He said what Aaron McNally provides for the District is something more than being a volunteer. Given the number of volunteers in the agency at this time he was not sure how much pushback the Board would get from volunteer members. Lundy said he supports Aaron and Pierce and what they are providing, which in his opinion is exceptional service. He asked the commissioners to keep an open mind for what he is offering. If the vehicle is at his house he may have an opportunity to warm it up in the winter as opposed to going to the station and then warming the support vehicle for the dog and himself. He said the commissioner's thoughts on taxpayer expenses are notable, but he felt the cost would be minimal to citizens versus the benefit that Chaplain McNally provides.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

None

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- WFOCA/WFC Legislative Day is Friday, February 17, 2023; Chief Rash provided a schedule for the commissioners.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- A. Procedure Review
- B. Chaplain Vehicle Use

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 6:42 pm Commissioner Boling adjourned the regular meeting.

---

Lee C. Boling, Chair  
Fire District 8 Commissioner

ATTEST:

---

Carol L. Trescott, District Secretary