



Snohomish County Fire District 21

Board of Commissioners:
 Jim Strago
 Pos. 2 - vacant
 Eric Nordstrom

Fire Chief:
 Chad Schmidt
Asst Chief:

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Commissioners' Retreat

March 11th, 2017 - 8:30am @ Medallion Hotel (Arlington)

Attendees: Eric Nordstrom, Jim Strago, Chad Schmidt, Wendy Britton, Joel Smith, Dave Safford, Ed Taft, Gary Chase, and Bob Merritt (via phone)

CALL TO ORDER

- Meeting began at approximately 8:30am after Chief Schmidt arrived. Chairman Nordstrom noted the agenda was an outline of items to try and cover for the day, and that Bob Merritt was scheduled for a phone conference at about 9:00am to discuss the topic of a Citizens Task Force.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

District Fire Chief - Discussion regarding hours, and retirement eligibility; Chief Schmidt has declined benefits and will opt out of PERS as well. Chairman Nordstrom will follow up with DRS regarding PERS.

Ambulance Transports - Mr. Safford expressed concerns regarding transports and mutual aid coverage for the City of Arlington. Concerns included frequency of calls, coverage for Heights, and distance of transports with limited staffing. He stated that he feels getting into the transport business was premature and that Chief Hots viewed it as a money maker. However, he noted that it provides experience to volunteers.

Discussion regarding transport fee schedule:

BLS Non-Emergency	Resident	\$568.86
	Non-Resident	\$668.86
BLS Emergency	Resident	\$568.86
	Non-Resident	\$668.86
Mileage Charge	Resident	\$17.07/loaded mile
	Non-Resident	\$17.07/loaded mile

Treatment – No Transport	BLS Response Fee	\$108.86
Bill separately for supplies	No	
Balance Bill	Yes	

Chief Schmidt commented on New World dispatching A49 by default and recent discussions with Oso to have A37 dispatched as next in and first in when appropriate in place of A49.

Discussion regarding increase in volunteer resources. Establishing plan for tones to alert all volunteers to return to Station 49 for staffing when transporting out of Arlington. In addition, Captain Bates will respond when available.

Discussion regarding transport license responsibility and commitment. Chief Schmidt noted that it is his responsibility to ensure that we have what we need going forward. Discussion in process with the City of Arlington regarding number of transports our District is providing and limited staffing.

Further discussion regarding county wide mutual aid, increased call volumes and response times within Marysville and Arlington. The EMS Council is in the process of developing an Alternative Destination Policy which will allow transports to clinics and detox care centers. It will also limit transports from clinics to local hospitals, and include a no diversion policy for hospital transports.

Mr. Safford expressed concerns with communications. Chief Schmidt provided overview of communications which included dispatch, radio use, and alerting volunteers.

Discussion regarding the prevention of volunteers showing up for calls and not being needed or being canceled.

Mr. Taft commented on the need to educate the public regarding appropriate use of 911 vs. personal transports. Chief Schmidt shared case scenarios relating to transport challenges. Mr. Safford also expressed concerns with the abuse of using 911 for non-emergencies. Mr. Chase expressed concerns regarding District liability. Chief Schmidt discussed what constitutes an emergency and the fact that people know if they call 911 for transport it expedites their ability to get into the hospital.

Volunteers - Chief Schmidt is in the process of defining roles for all volunteers. Shift workers are required to have their Firefighter and EMT certifications. Discussion regarding roles for EMT, Driver Operator, Water Rescue, and support services. Desire to have volunteers be able to respond and fit a specific role within in the department vs. having to have everything under the sun to be able to respond on calls. Commissioner Strago expressed concerns regarding liability and scope of practice. He will follow up with VFIS during April meeting to obtain clarification of requirements. Chief Schmidt expressed his desire to have community members feel comfortable coming into the station to participate in department activities and events. He

noted that he wants to have a place for everyone; however, he recognizes that not everyone may have a place in our organization.

Discussion regarding changes in volunteerism within communities. Mr. Taft expressed frustration with legislative rules and regulations imposed on fire districts. Chief Schmidt expressed his desire for supplemental support system to daily staffing fulfilled by volunteers with large volunteer turn out for calls.

Discussion regarding mentoring and partnering seasoned volunteers with less experienced volunteers. Mr. Taft shared examples of conversing with others to share knowledge and information. He emphasized the value of having younger population learn from their elders.

Chief Schmidt shared recent conversations and networking activities which provides us with the opportunity to learn from others mistakes and successes. He will continue to reach out within the industry and community to seek mentoring opportunities and foster the sharing of knowledge. In addition to working on bringing in experienced individuals, he expressed his belief in raising somebody up to take his spot, and shared his passion for coaching.

Community Task Force - Bob Merritt provided introduction which included a summary of his background and work experience. Discussion regarding fire service history, culture, and need for customer involvement.

Historically his task force work has been as a result of Strategic Planning sessions. Discussion regarding key question Board would like to see answered. Mr. Merritt provided an example from Prosser Fire District; "What level of service do you think we should provide?"

Discussion regarding group dynamics and need for unbiased and uneducated participants that are willing to spend 6-8 weeks working on task force; time commitment will depend upon scope of work. Group will need to be educated regarding board of Commissioners, how District is financed and how service is provided.

Commissioner Nordstrom asked Mr. Merritt for his recommendations regarding hiring a consultant to establish goals, develop question and work with task force. Mr. Merritt recommend bringing in a third party facilitator with experience to lead group, develop scope of work, and establish realistic costs using good data.

Commissioner Nordstrom expressed concerns regarding workload associated with data gathering. Mr. Merritt advised that he partners with Bran Snure to share resources with clients. In addition, generic information is available depending on question(s) asked. He noted that the greatest gift you can give your Chief is a Strategic Plan for their journey.

Chief Schmidt asked how he selected stakeholders. He stated that they avoid people in the fire service, law enforcement, and others who bring a bias to the table. Recommendation is to select someone from your local hospital board, school board, or other members with business and public policy backgrounds. This provides organizations with a group that is in your pulse point and in your community; invite them to Board meetings for quarterly updates.

Commissioner Nordstrom inquired whether or not Mr. Merritt has experienced difficulties getting people involved. Mr. Merritt advised you must establish and adhere to a set end date. Commissioner Nordstrom expressed concerns regarding previous comments made and community viewing this type of activity as having someone do our job for us. Mr. Merritt advised that Commissioners need to look outward in community and ask what level of risk the District is willing to take.

Chief Schmidt inquired about the process of using the community task on an ongoing basis once the initial project is complete. Mr. Merritt advised discussion would be necessary regarding use of tools developed as a part of this process; unfortunately, 50% of the time the information ends up in a book on a shelf. He shared a successful example where Chelan County citizen's Community group came together and testified to others regarding Levy Lid Lift, provided statements of support with letters to the Editor, and assisted in passing the levy. Discussion regarding benefit of regional conversations and activities.

Commissioner Nordstrom inquired about \$10,000.00 - \$12,000.00 cost of utilizing Mr. Merritt as a facilitator. Mr. Merritt advised the actual cost depends upon the scope of work, number of meetings, type of meetings, and data collection efforts.

Discussion regarding Commissioners participating in the beginning and end only. From time-to-time a representative may be present as silent partner available to answer specific questions only.

Commissioner Nordstrom asked if Mr. Merritt has ever seen this type of work done with an outside facilitator vs. consultant. Mr. Merritt stated that he had within local City Council when developing their Strategic Plan. He also noted that the local school Board or hospital district may have a facilitator available. However, having a facilitator with fire service background would be beneficial. Discussion regarding need to maintain relationship with citizens' community group long-term. Chief Schmidt emphasized importance of developing and maintaining stakeholders committee.

Chief Schmidt agreed that a stakeholders committee is vital going forward and that ultimately the public needs to choose their service. Commissioner Strago stated that it's not an issue of if we should do it, it's an issue of how much we're willing to pay to get it done; Value being undisputable. Dave Safford recommended going back to citizens in Board meeting to explain concepts. Discussion regarding expense and desire to limit cost.

Discussion regarding time commitment and need to eliminate current fire service involvement. Chief recommends Board develop questions and seek cost proposal from Bob Merritt, Mr. Safford will contact Bob Campbell, and Chief Schmidt will contact Chuck Marr.

Discussion regarding need for establishing only one or two questions at the most to focus on, establishment of time frame limit of 6-8 weeks, ground rules, and goals.

Commissioner Nordstrom shared a two part question to consider "What level of service do we need and how are we going to establish a funding level to meet that level of service?"