

SNOHOMISH COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT NO. 21

Board of Fire Commissioners Special Meeting

Thursday, May 21, 2020 @8:00 a.m.

Arlington Heights Improvement Club, Arlington, WA 98223

Call to Order: Chairman Taft called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m.

Attendees: Chairman Taft, Commissioners Nordstrom & Safford, Fire Chief Schmidt and Executive Assistant Tiner. There were four Crew present.

Flag Salute: Led by Chairman Taft

Agenda Items:

Fulltime Fire Chief – Commissioners held a discussion regarding the need to have a fulltime Fire Chief for the District. Points made:

- With addition of second Fire Station, need someone fulltime to manage everything. Would work part of the time at each Station.
- A fulltime Chief could better manage the running of Station 49, plus the management of building Station 50.
- A part time Chief is less expensive, lower salary and no benefits.
- Chief Schmidt is doing a great job. If he cannot accept the fulltime position now, do not want to change Chiefs in the middle of building Station 50.
- Chief Schmidt surveyed comparable fire agencies and stated the average Fire Chief salary was \$154,000 - \$199,000 with benefits. Would request a minimum salary of \$150,000.
- Chief Schmidt would request a 10 year contract because of what he would be giving up to accept this position and because of the nature of a changing Commission Board.

It was the consensus of the Board to move forward with a fulltime Fire Chief starting January 1, 2021. Discussion regarding salary and contract to be held later.

Five Member Board –

- Board feels the District is growing and would benefit from a larger member Board.
- Two Board members could have discussions without violating the quorum rule.
- Better protection for the Fire Chief.
- Comment of maybe moving to two meetings a month with a larger Board.
- Concern expressed regarding potential conduct of new members in regards to meeting attendance and possible abuse. Suggestion that all meetings outside of their regular ones to be approved by the Chair.
- Discussion of writing a Resolution to direct the meeting attendance of Board members.
- Executive Asst. Tiner verified with the District's Attorney that the Board could draw up a Resolution stating what they expect of all Board members.
- Discussion of redistricting to have Commissioner representation from both Station areas – two from each area and one at-large. Need to check on the legality of that.
- Chief Schmidt will find out when they can put the five member Board on the ballot.

- Chairman Taft would like to put out some type of flyer to the District to solicit interest in the five member Board.

Wildland Fire Training Invoice –

Commissioner Safford moved to approve the Wildland Fire Training Invoice of \$1,000.00; Commissioner Nordstrom seconded. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Hovercraft Update – Will be delivered within the next few weeks. Have been some deliver delays. Questions asked about the Hovercraft trailer; whether it should be a flatbed or an enclosed unit. Commissioner Nordstrom would like to see a picture of both

District Finances – Chief Schmidt showed the status of the District's finances using the Cushman Model.

- We will be at our Emergency Reserve Goal by 2024.
- Need to purchase a new Engine by end of 2020 using a bond at 1.75%.
- Apparatus and Equipment Reserves and Facilities Fund look good.
- The bond for Station 50 will cover most of the building costs. Looking at Grants to cover the rest.
- Part of the grounds around Station 50 will be a small park with a walking path. It will help with wetland mitigation. Chairman Taft wants to be caution regarding encouraging the Public to walk around the Fire Station grounds.
- Chairman Taft had questions on the overall cost to operate Station 50. Would like to see one figure for the cost to operate Station 49 and one for Station 50 at the next meeting.
- The District's WSRB rating dropped to a 4, which is an improvement.
- Once the District starts operating out of Station 50, there will be an increase in ambulance transport revenue.
- Should go to the Citizens in 2023 to ask to reset the Fire Levy at \$1.30 and in 2025 to reset the EMS Levy at \$.50. At some future point, will need to ask the Citizens to raise the Fire Levy to \$1.40.
- Talked about the cost of hiring two new Full Time Firefighters within the next two years.
- FF Spencer asked the Board if Part Time Firefighter's wages will be increasing in the next few years. Chief replied that is part of the plan.
- FF Spencer also asked how the District plans to retain Part Timers if they are not hiring Full Time for another two years. Chief said that he will encourage them to also work at other agencies to help give them a full time schedule. Will also encourage educational degrees and other training; may provide financial assistance.
- Discussion held on hiring plans/options.

COVID Update –

- Snohomish County will still be operating in Phase 1 through June.
- The District has applied for all applicable COVID Grants.
- Have not seen much increase in costs due to COVID. Have sufficient supplies.
- There has been a decrease in calls, but an increase in severity of calls.
- Chief will attend a County meeting today in regards to the reopening process.

Future Plans –

- Chief will establish a hiring roster to be able to hire 1-2 FTE's in 2021 and 1-2 in 2022. Will do the testing this Fall.
- Discussion on developing a Residency Program and possibly using house across the street from Station 49. Could save the District money and increase response times. Would have "house rules." Chairman Taft would like to see some figures on this.
- Discussion of a pole barn to help house apparatus, equipment, etc. FF Bates looking into this.
- The Crews have been helping Laura with the maintenance of the Community Center.

Station 50 Update – Project Manager Cargile gave a report via email:

- The District has directed TCA to proceed with the schematic design of station 50.
- The District has issued a change order to TCA for this work and are waiting for TCA's signature.
- Wetland Resources has flagged the wetlands on the property as a result of the walk-thru by the District, Vic Associates, TCA, Wetland Resources and DEA engineers. A map of the areas has been updated and then over-laid with the current site plan for Station 50. Due to the additional wetland to the South and the required set-backs and buffers, the team is currently relaying out the buildings to see how they will fit on the site. It appears that we can continue with the building layout as planned; but the building will need to be shifted to the North and East, and parking revised in order to stay out of the wetland buffer zones.
- The next step is for Cascade Surveying to survey the flagged areas.
- AESI (Geo-tech) will be performing soil analysis of the site.
- The District has directed TCA to proceed with the design of the waterline extension.
- The District has issued a change order to TCA for this work and are waiting for TCA's signature.
- Chief Schmidt read a message from Bob Campbell regarding the water main issue and discussed upcoming meeting with the City.

Chairman Taft recessed the meeting at 12:00 p.m. for Lunch

Chairman Taft resumed the meeting at 12:50 p.m.

Apparatus Color Schemes – Discussion held regarding the color schemes of the District apparatus. Chief stated he surveyed the Crews because they are the ones driving, and take pride in their Rigs, and they like the current color scheme of black over red. Suggestion for in the future to put the Arlington Eagle symbol on the Rigs to tie them to Arlington.

Commissioner Safford showed pictures of examples of various district's apparatus color schemes. Different options were discussed. The Chief will draft a policy for District apparatus color schemes.

It was stressed that, whatever the color scheme, that the top designator needs to be of a contrasting color to be sure to stand out from above.

Chief Spending Limit – Chairman Taft wants a policy that anything to be purchased that is over \$500 that is not normal day-to-day operations, be approved by the Board. Discussion held. Many normal items are over \$500, e.g. radios, SCBAs, weight equipment, etc. Would slow down normal business process. Commissioners Safford and Nordstrom feel the current process is sufficient.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Commissioner Safford moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:34 p.m.

Minutes Approved By:

Chairman Taft

Commissioner Nordstrom

Commissioner Safford

Fire Chief/Board Secretary Schmidt