

**GRAHAM FIRE & RESCUE
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
OCTOBER 2, 2013**

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Pierson called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Attendance:

Present: Commissioner Gerald W. Gustafson, Commissioner Verne M. Pierson, Commissioner Robert E. Skaggs, Fire Chief Ryan Baskett, Deputy Chief Tony Judd, Assistant Chief Todd Jensen, Assistant Chief Tom Mason, Assistant Chief Steve Richards, and Board Secretary Jodi Reynolds

Commissioner Pierson led the Pledge of Allegiance and welcomed the audience.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Pierson requested a modification of the Agenda to include item 2.A., Approval/Modification of Agenda.

Commissioner Skaggs moved to approve the Agenda as modified. Commissioner Gustafson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIALS

Payable Vouchers #1110 through #1124 in the amount of \$8,859.84, Payable Checks #16780 through #16812 in the amount of \$304,362.87, Payroll EFT's in the amount of \$370,866.34 and Account Transfer Voucher #1945 in the amount of \$84,052.24, for a total of \$768,141.29 were presented for approval.

Commissioner Gustafson moved to accept the payables in the amount of \$768,141.29, after proper auditing. Commissioner Skaggs seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Fire Chief Vacation. Chief Baskett requested Board approval to take two weeks of vacation leave beginning Monday, October 7, 2013.

Commissioner Skaggs moved to approve Fire Chief Baskett's request to take two weeks of vacation leave beginning Monday, October 7, 2013. Commissioner Gustafson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

2014 Proposed Budget Review. Chief Baskett presented the Board with the 2014 Budget package consisting of his 2014 Budget Message, the 2014 Proposed Budget and supporting documentation. He explained the presentation would begin with Deputy Chief Judd giving an overview of the revenue outlook.

Deputy Chief Judd began by reviewing the estimated tax revenues for 2014. He stated the 2013 assessed valuation decreased over last year, \$4.48 billion for 2013 compared to \$4.49 billion for 2012. New construction increased by \$95 million, translating into \$142,910 in fire tax collection. The increase over 2013 was due entirely to new construction. The EMS tax calculation shows an increase also due to new construction. Deputy Chief Judd referred to Chief Baskett's Budget Message and reiterated their desire not to transfer the 1% to the reserves again this year. They are estimating 4% in 2014 uncollected taxes which will likely be offset by the collection of the delinquent taxes from the prior year, which for the past two years has been approximately \$350,000. Chief Judd then moved to non-tax revenue. He explained ALS transport revenues are trending upward, and they estimate \$1.25 million in revenue. Interest earnings and miscellaneous contracts with the schools, fairgrounds, power plant, etc. are expected to stay the same. Lastly, we will receive our annual EMS grant in the amount of \$1,500 for EMS supplies. Chief Judd said he is still working on identifying any additional cash carryover above the \$2.25 million dedicated cash amount. At this time they are not requesting a transfer from the reserves to balance the budget.

Commissioner Skaggs requested clarification as to whether this proposed budget included the layoffs, station closure and unemployment benefits for the laid off individuals. Chief Baskett responded affirmatively.

As requested by the Board, Deputy Chief Judd reviewed the 2014 Proposed Budget by focusing on each line item showing either an increase or decrease over 2013, or those still needing work by staff.

Commissioner Skaggs inquired with the elimination of the Data Entry Clerk/Runner position, how the runner duties would be accomplished. Chiefs Baskett and Judd responded they were working on a plan.

Deputy Chief Judd stated he was still researching the line item for Telephones. He explained the line item for Telephones under Communications was to include only land lines and cell phone expenses, with all data communications under the appropriate IT Division line item(s). Historically the assignment of these line items may not have been consistent and he wanted the figures in the budget to be accurate.

Commissioner Skaggs voiced his concern over the apparent defunding of the Safe Sitter Program. Chiefs Baskett and Judd assured him the program is not going away; rather, it will be funded in a different manner. Chief Baskett explained the funding would come from partnerships between local business entities and the Department in a sponsorship-type program.

The Board expressed its concern as to whether the facilities maintenance budget is adequate for routine station maintenance, for example, Station 21-4 exterior painting and pillar repair. Chief Baskett and Assistant Chief Steve Richards replied no money is in the budget for such projects, but any emergency repairs will come out of the Emergency Fund. The Board asked that Assistant Chief Richards continue to monitor the condition of the stations.

Upon the conclusion of the line item budget review, Chief Baskett recapped for the Board the items not funded in the proposed 2014 Budget and the items removed from the 2014 Budget which will need to be included in the 2015 Budget.

2014 Maintenance & Operations Levy Presentation. Chief Baskett directed the Board to the 2014 Maintenance & Operations Levy Staff Report distributed earlier for their review. He requested the Board, after adequate opportunity to review the report, be prepared to make a recommendation on this issue at the next Regular Board Meeting on October 14th. He summarized the report for the Board and concluded with the recommendation the Department move forward with an M&O Levy for citizen consideration in 2014 to recoup the funds lost due to the economic downturn in order to provide an adequate level of service for our citizens. Chief Baskett also expressed he did not want to rely on M&O Levies in the future and would like to decrease our reliance gradually until we no longer need one – a de-escalating program.

After further discussion, the Board concluded they could see making no other changes to the proposed budget and were prepared to direct staff to proceed.

The Board approved the 2014 Proposed Budget as submitted by Chief Baskett.

The Board returned to the proposed M&O Levy topic and discussed a number of factors including when to run the measure, pros and cons of primary vs. special election, deadlines, cost, budget concerns, SAFER Grant influence and various economic factors.

Chief Baskett requested Board approval to put together a Citizen Steering Committee.

Commissioner Skaggs moved to direct Fire Chief Baskett to adopt a Citizen Steering Committee to assist with the planning and preparation for the election. Commissioner Gustafson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

SAFER Grant Letter. Deputy Chief Judd informed the Board he had received a request from DHS/FEMA requesting a letter from the Board stating they are completely aware of the requirements of the SAFER Grant to not incur any layoffs and maintain staffing levels during the two-year performance period. Deputy Judd stated he had prepared the letter for their approval and signature.

Commissioner Skaggs moved to sign the letter prepared by staff stating the Board of Fire Commissioners is aware of the requirements of the SAFER Grant as pertains to staffing levels and layoffs. Commissioner Gustafson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

GOOD OF THE ORDER/PUBLIC INPUT

None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chief Baskett requested a 10-minute Executive Session under RCW 42.30.140 to plan strategy for collective bargaining, with no business to follow.

Commissioner Pierson announced a 10-minute Executive Session under RCW 42.30.140 to plan strategy for collective bargaining, with no business to follow. Executive Session was announced as beginning at 11:50 a.m.

An announcement was made at 12:00 p.m. to extend the Executive Session another 10 minutes.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, the Special Board Meeting of October 2, 2013, was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Verne M. Pierson, Commissioner

Anthony D. Judd, District Secretary