

**GRAHAM FIRE & RESCUE
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
January 22, 2018**

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Portmann called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Attendance:

Present: Commissioner Ryan Portmann, Commissioner Gerald W. Gustafson, Commissioner Russell T. Barstow (by phone), Commissioner Gina Blanchard-Reed, Fire Chief Pat Dale, Deputy Chief Tony Judd, Deputy Chief Oscar Espinosa and Board Secretary Jodi Reynolds

Absent: Commissioner Adam G. Rosenlund had an excused absence.

Commissioner Portmann led the Pledge of Allegiance and welcomed the audience. He requested that anyone wishing to speak sign in for the record.

APPROVAL/MODIFICATION OF THE AGENDA

Deputy Chief Judd stated he had a modified Agenda which he distributed to the Board members and staff. He explained the modified Agenda includes the payroll financials for the Consent Agenda and a quarterly report.

Commissioner Blanchard-Reed moved to approve the Modified Agenda as written. Commissioner Portmann seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Regular Board Meeting Minutes of January 8, 2018

Approval of Financial Documentation:

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Payables: Checks #23830 through #23902 = | \$192,629.42 |
| Payables (Payroll): Checks #23912 through #23926 = | \$391,085.35 |
| Payroll: Checks #23903 through #23911 = | \$15,482.04 |
| Payroll Transfers (EFTs) = | \$701,443.66 |
| Transfer (EFT) = | <u>\$157.34</u> |

TOTAL: \$1,300,797.81

Commissioner Blanchard-Reed moved to approve the Consent Agenda in the amount of \$1,300,797.81 after proper audit. Commissioner Gustafson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Fire Chief's Report

Fire Chief Dale greeted the Board and audience members and then reported on the following:

The open house held on January 10th at Station 96 was a huge success. Sixty-five citizens attended as did several off-duty members. The next open house is scheduled for this

Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. at Station 91. The goats from Station 96 will be making an appearance.

The Memorial Service for Pierce County Sheriff Deputy Daniel McCartney was held on Wednesday, January 17th. Graham Fire had two engines and a medic unit in the procession and approximately 15 members attended the service. We had a strong showing, approximately 30 people in total.

He presented facts about the M&O Levy to the Graham Business Association last Wednesday, and this past Saturday to citizens at the Frederickson Community Council meeting.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Budget, Finance and Audit – No report

Policy and Procedure – Commissioner Blanchard-Reed requested they revisit this item later in the meeting after staff makes copies of the policy under consideration.

Mergers/Consolidations – No report

Joint Labor/Management – No report

Strategic Leadership Plan – No report

Legislative Affairs – Commissioner Blanchard-Reed stated she printed out the WFCA and WFC proposals to discuss with the State Legislators on Thursday. Commissioner Portmann recommended that if the Board is in support of these proposals, then they should adopt them as their legislative agenda.

Commissioner Portmann moved to adopt the WFCA Legislative Report as their agenda for discussion during Legislative Day on January 25th. Commissioner Gustafson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Assignment of Committees – Commissioner Portmann explained it is time to review their committee assignments, and he is requesting one change. He will take Commissioner Gustafson's place on the Budget, Finance and Audit committee while Commissioner Gustafson will take Commissioner Portmann's place on the Joint Labor/Management committee. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed asked that staff update the committees list for the next meeting.

Deputy Chief Judd provided copies of Policy 211 – Financial Management, to the Board. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed pointed out some minor changes and asked her fellow Board members to review the policy over the next few weeks and to be prepared to vote on it at the next meeting. Commissioner Portmann asked that this item be left on the agenda for the next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Station 92 Modular Home Update. Fire Chief Dale stated he had two projects related to this property. He deferred to Deputy Chief Judd to provide an overview of the current status of the site plan and the proposal from Verizon. Deputy Chief Judd referred to the Preliminary Site Plan which he projected onto the screen. Through this process we have discovered a few property line issues. We have been using a small piece of property owned by the grocery store owner where we laid asphalt down, and the other neighbor's fence line, driveway and a portion of a shed are on our property. A portion of the property is wetlands and includes buffers, which we must stay out of. We believe we have plenty of space for a septic system, well and building. We have located the potential site for a three-bedroom modular caretaker's residence. Our next phase includes getting the site plan fully developed and locating the septic system, well and building to ensure this will all fit. Then, we will get an engineered septic system designed and installed. Commissioner Portmann asked Deputy Chief Judd to estimate the cost for the septic system and well. He responded \$8,000-\$10,000. Citizen Bob Benum suggested giving the neighbor an easement for the driveway and fence to protect our land. Deputy Chief Judd

agreed and added that another option would be to move the property line so we could utilize the driveway as a road for access to the back of the property. This will need to be addressed at some point.

Lukas Wahl of IAFF Local 726 inquired with regards to this being a caretaker facility vs. fire station, whether it meets the L & I requirements to call it a fire station. Deputy Chief Judd responded the original plan was to call it a caretaker's facility. To meet the requirements for a fire station we would have to lower the road significantly to meet sight distance requirements. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed asked if there is a difference in operations between the two types of facility. Deputy Chief Judd responded there is none. Commissioner Portmann asked if we could ever place career staff there. Deputy Chief responded it depends on various codes and he did not have the answer to that.

Commissioner Blanchard-Reed asked about the cost of phase 2. Assistant Chief Steve Richards responded that we have not gone down to the County to ask the necessary questions. We are going to have some property line issues that must be addressed before the County will allow us to proceed. The well needs to be addressed to see if we can have a community well, and we are going to have to replace the septic tank. He cannot provide any solid figures on this yet without having certain questions answered. Commissioner Portmann asked if long-term, we see this as a viable option for a fire station. Population growth is limited due to the growth management act for several more years, so there will be no large developments. Deputy Chief Judd responded this is one of the reasons why we have not proceeded. This was identified as a topic for the Strategic Plan, and is a question for the Board as to whether we go ahead with this and if it meets our needs. Commissioner Portmann suggested before we sink any more money into this, we consider whether it fits our response model. Does it need to be moved a mile one way or another to better address the needs of the community? Deputy Chief Judd responded the location could possibly be moved east, but not west, without dropping properties, under the WSRB. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed asked what the call volume is at Station 92. Deputy Chief Judd responded approximately 300 calls. He added that the next phase is to do the design for a septic system, which should only cost a few thousand dollars. Commissioner Portmann stated he agrees we should proceed with the next phase, and if we decide not to go further, we could sell the property with the updated septic system on it. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed asked if the septic system design locks the owner into a particular usage for the property. Deputy Chief Judd responded it is the size of the building that is limited by the design, not the usage.

Lukas Wahl stated it is important for the Board to decide if we will have people there to take care of the facility, or if we will have response from there in the future. The Labor group would prefer the facility meets L&I requirements for a fire station to ensure our members' safety, so he is not in favor of a caretaker's facility.

Commissioner Blanchard-Reed moved to table this discussion until they have an opportunity to address the Strategic Plan and determine the budget for the coming year. Commissioner Barstow seconded the motion.

Commissioner Gustafson asked when the Strategic Plan will be finished. Fire Chief Dale stated he recommends waiting for the outcome of the levy. If it passes, we would move into a strategic planning process. If it does not pass, then we do not move into a strategic planning process until later in the year or until we get the results from running the levy again. Commissioner Portmann requested that two meetings from now, February 26, staff put on the agenda to discuss the timing of the Strategic Plan.

Commissioner Portmann called the question. Motion carried unanimously.

Deputy Chief Judd explained the second project is the location of a cell tower on the north side of the Station 92 property above the wetlands. Verizon Wireless has approached us to lease space for a tower. We do not have any specifics at this point, but this could be a source of revenue for us. In addition, cell service is poor in that area which affects our personnel, so we would benefit from a cell tower in this area.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution No. 896, Changing Regular Board Meeting Days.

Board Secretary Jodi Reynolds read Resolution No. 896, Changing Regular Board Meeting Days, into the record. Commissioner Barstow pointed out a typographical error in the draft. Discussion ensued about the start times of the meetings. The Board decided to maintain the start times as presented in the resolution.

Assistance to Firefighters Grant. Chief Dale informed the Board the current cycle is open. Staff met and decided to submit a grant request for equipment, training and policy development for the topic of active shooter. The recent event at Graham-Kapowsin High School, although it turned out not to be an active shooter incident, has heightened our awareness. He then deferred to Deputy Chief Judd to address the specifics, since he is the one writing the grant. Deputy Chief Judd stated the numbers are still being developed. The application is due February 2nd. We intend to put in for ballistic vests and helmets for each member of the Department and training for this new equipment by subject matter experts within Pierce County. Training would be in an off-duty capacity because our training calendar is full. While he does not have specific numbers yet, he is confident the total will be under \$200,000 with a 10% match, so the most he would be looking to the Board for is \$20,000 which would come from the Contingency Fund. These awards do not start until September, so it will either be late 2018 or 2019 when the match would occur. He requested Board approval to proceed with the grant because of the matching requirement.

Commissioner Barstow moved to authorize staff to proceed with preparing and submitting an application for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant.

Commissioner Blanchard-Reed requested a breakdown of the total amount into equipment and training. Deputy Chief Judd replied approximately \$100,000 in equipment and \$50,000-\$70,000 for training which includes time and instructor cost.

Commissioner Portmann called the question. Motion carried unanimously.

Fire Chief Dale informed the Board he had two policies for their consideration that are tied to Chiefs Bargaining Unit Agreement recently ratified. He requested action on the following tonight:

Policy 1002 – Chiefs Bargaining Unit Promotions

Commissioner Gustafson moved the approval of Policy 1002 – Chiefs Bargaining Unit Promotions, as written. Commissioner Barstow seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Policy – Overtime

Commissioner Blanchard-Reed moved the approval of Operating Instruction 123 – Overtime, as written. Commissioner Barstow seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Lukas Wahl of IAFF Local 726, read the following letter into the record:



**PIERCE COUNTY PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS
LOCAL 726**
International Association of Fire Fighters

Date: January 22, 2018

To: The Board of Fire Commissioners

It has been brought to the attention of Pierce County Professional Firefighters that one of the members of the board is distributing misleading and false information about Proposition 1, the Maintenance and Operations Levy on the February ballot. The following false statements were placed in the voters pamphlet by this board member:

“The call volume is incorrect, they have included mutual aid calls, they are not required to respond to.”

Graham Fire and Rescue has a signed agreement with the agencies bordering Graham Fire and Rescue and under this agreement Graham Fire and Rescue will respond with mutual aid when needed. If Graham Fire and Rescue did not answer these calls, the neighboring departments would not answer our calls when we are in need. Without mutual aid the department would be further hampered by reduced staffing, endangering both the firefighters and citizens we serve.

“The idea that they are required or need to have more fire fighters on a engine is not based on facts or law. The National Fire Protection Association only requires that your Fire department meet the intent of the regulation.”

NFPA 1710 guidelines recommend that a first-arriving engine company must consist of 4 fire fighters. The first-arriving Ladder company must consist of 4 fire fighters. Graham Fire and Rescue currently has staffing of two firefighters on fire engines and two firefighters on the ladder truck, clearly not meeting the intent of NFPA 1710.

“Your new Board of Fire Commissioners and new Fire Chief want to add up to 30 or more fire fighters based on new taxes”.

The plan that was brought forward by the administration at the November Commissioner meeting clearly stated that the continuation of proposition one would hire 18 additional firefighters, not 30. In addition, it was clearly stated multiple times that Proposition 1 is a continuation of the 2014 maintenance and operations levy and is not a new funding measure.

“do not be fooled, make your Fire District live within the current 17-million-dollar budget, which is supporting the current manpower levels. When you hear about layoffs it’s not based on the facts”.

The 17-million-dollar budget in 2018 includes funding provided by the existing Maintenance and Operations levy. Without the continuation of the levy the district would be short millions of dollars in 2019. The department provided a document to the board outlining the programs that would be cut along with the real likelihood of Firefighter and support position layoffs.

All the misleading information provided by this board member were based on personal feeling and agendas. The Board member has been unable to produce a single document that supports his statement in the voters pamphlet. This member has been a standing board member for 20 plus years and has become a mentor to many and was respected by many. Unfortunately, he has lost that trust, he has dismissed our values and can no longer be trusted to provide information to the public or the department he represents. Pierce county professional firefighters ask this member to be accountable for his actions and apologize to the department, its employees, and the citizens of Fire District No. 21.

· Respectfully,
Pierce County Professional Firefighters

Mr. Wahl stated he would not divulge the name of the Board member, but the name could be found in the voter's pamphlet under the "No" committee.

Citizen Bob Benum stated he attended Chief Dale's presentation at the Frederickson Community Council meeting. He recalled the Chief stating that if the M&O Levy passes, it is his intent to hire 15 Firefighters and start two funds, one for heavy equipment and one for minor equipment. He asked the Board if they agreed with that. Commissioner Portmann directed Mr. Benum to the past meeting minutes to see what the Board actually voted on. He added that the Board was presented with three options, and the option they approved directed the Chief to hire 18 Firefighters and start an Equipment Replacement Fund and a Facilities Fund.

QUARTERLY REPORTS

Deputy Chief Judd distributed copies of the quarterly report submitted by IAFF Local 726. He explained that In the future, prior to the first meeting of each quarter, the Local and the Association are invited to submit written reports. Their next opportunity will be the first meeting in April.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Blanchard-Reed stated she liked the new look of the Department website.

Commissioner Portmann stated he wished to clarify an earlier exchange. He explained the Board is trying to adhere to their meeting rules this year. Although the rules do not prohibit the Board from having a dialogue with the audience, it discourages it. Also, the rules require the Board Chair to refer operational issues to the Fire Chief. Citizen Bob Benum asked if the Chief works for the Board. Commissioner Portmann responded affirmatively. Mr. Benum said if he has a question about something the Chief said, he wants to be able to talk to the Board and ask them questions. Commissioner Portmann responded he will be able to ask questions, but perhaps not in this forum. It may be offline and then he will get back with a response. The purpose of the meeting is for the Board to conduct business. In the past, the Board has frequently veered off track due to engaging in dialogue with members of the audience. The Board is still trying to determine how best to hear from the constituents and address their concerns while maintaining the decorum, professionalism and proficiency of the Board. Mr. Benum stated that while he is limited to speaking for three minutes, he feels strongly about being allowed to air his views and talk to the people in charge.

Commissioner Portmann responded there is some latitude within the rules to allow someone to speak for longer than three minutes. He continued that this is their first meeting with himself as Chair, and he is trying to set the tone while being fair and responsive to everyone. Mr. Benum stated being straightforward is important to him.

Commissioner Blanchard-Reed stated she wants to make sure the public comment section, section H, of the policy is printed out for the public. Deputy Chief Judd responded that it is.

Fire Chief Dale stated he felt compelled to provide a point of clarification. The three major areas he covers in his presentations are: 18 people hired, an apparatus replacement fund and an equipment replacement fund.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Fire Chief Dale requested a 15-minute Executive Session under RCW 42.30.110 (1) (g) to evaluate qualifications of public employees or review their performance, with no business to follow.

Commissioner Portmann announced a 15-minute Executive Session under RCW 42.30.110 (1) (g) to evaluate qualifications of public employees or review their performance, with no business to follow.

Commissioner Portmann announced a recess at 7:58 p.m.

The Executive Session was announced as beginning at 8:00 p.m.

The Executive Session was announced as ending at 8:15 p.m.

Commissioner Portmann reconvened the Regular Board Meeting at 8:16 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, the Regular Board Meeting of January 22, 2018, was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Ryan Portmann, Commissioner

Anthony D. Judd, District Secretary