

**GRAHAM FIRE & RESCUE  
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
OCTOBER 10, 2018**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Commissioner Portmann called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**Attendance:**

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

Absent: Fire Chief Pat Dale had an excused absence.

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

**APPROVAL/MODIFICATION OF THE AGENDA**

**Commissioner Rosenlund moved to approve the Agenda as presented. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.**

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Approval of Regular Board Meeting Minutes of September 26, 2018

Approval of Financial Documentation:

Payables: Checks #25111 through #25169 =	\$125,731.96
Transfer (EFT) =	<u>\$796.88</u>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b><u>\$126,528.84</u></b>

**Commissioner Blanchard-Reed moved to approve the Consent Agenda in the amount of \$126,528.84 after proper audit. Commissioner Gustafson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

None

**GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

**Fire Chief's Report**

None

**STANDING COMMITTEES**

Budget, Finance and Audit – No report.

Policy and Procedure – Commissioner Rosenlund reported the committee has two policies for first reading and review by the Board. Policy 212 and Policy 217 are back from the attorney. The text in blue print is new language, and the text in red is language taken out. The committee's recommendation is do pass. He asked the Board to review the policies for the next meeting. The committee believes the policies encompass the intent of Board, and the revisions provide the necessary clarification and specificity. One last policy is at the attorney.

Commissioner Portmann inquired if the committee has an email(s) from the attorney stating a policy is “approved as to form” that can be retained for future reference. He responded affirmatively.

Mergers/Consolidations – No report.

Joint Labor/Management – No report.

Strategic Leadership Plan – No report.

Legislative Affairs – No report.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### Cancellation of October 24, 2018 Regular Board Meeting

Deputy Chief Judd stated the Board does need to cancel the October 24<sup>th</sup> meeting due to lack of quorum, and the only question is whether to reschedule it or not. Commissioner Portmann inquired if they need to schedule a meeting for the end of the month to approve the financials. Deputy Chief Judd replied as long as staff has authorization from the Board to pay our obligations as scheduled, the Board would approve the financials at the first meeting in November.

**Commissioner Gustafson moved to cancel the October 24, 2018 Regular Board Meeting due to a lack of quorum. Commissioner Barstow seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.**

Commissioner Gustafson stated the Board can legally cancel this meeting and not reschedule it, but it is not a good habit to get into. He suggested they reschedule the meeting for either October 22<sup>nd</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup>. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Portmann asked if staff anticipates any business other than the financials. Deputy Chief Judd responded there may be additional business. Also, in speaking with Chief Dale today, staff may request the Board hold a Special Board Meeting during the first week of November to discuss some time sensitive items that will need to be addressed prior to the November 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Commissioner Rosenlund moved to schedule a Special Board Meeting for October 29, 2018, starting at 6:35 p.m. to discuss regular business. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### Centralized Senior Management Team

Deputy Chief Judd informed the Board Chief Dale had prepared notes on this topic for the Board to consider. We are trying to plan for the future. We are hiring 27 new people between September 2018 and March 2019: 22 career position Firefighter/EMTs and Firefighter/Paramedics; a Human Resources Manager; a second Mechanic; an Administrative Support Front Desk person; a Facilities Maintenance person; and a District Secretary around the first of the year. We will be nearing a stress point where all of these additions need to occur in an organized manner and be managed carefully to go as smoothly as possible. What is hampering that to some degree already is that our Senior Management Team is spread throughout the District. Our Assistant Chiefs are located at Stations 96 and 91. Everyone has a role to play in bringing on 27 new people during a five-month window. We must then continue with training, deployment plans and everything else to get those people on the floor. Chief Dale is recommending we centralize the Senior Management Team at Station 94 to increase communication in preparation for this. In the short-term, beginning in one month, we plan to utilize the “Board Room” side of the Training Room here at Station 94 for temporary office space. The long-term plan involves remodeling the Station 94 entrance area into office spaces,

within the footprint of the existing building. We are looking to add four or five new office spaces, which will require the relocation of the antique Fire Engine. Staff does not have any cost estimates yet, but will shortly. The proposed funding sources are the remaining bond funds, approximately \$160,000, and a combination of reducing 2019 Budget line items and using Reserve funds, if needed. Deputy Chief Judd reiterated the need to get the Senior Management Team together, and staff believes this plan makes the most sense.

Commissioner Portmann requested Board discussion. Commissioner Gustafson asked what will happen with the office spaces being vacated. Deputy Chief Judd explained Station 91 will still have the majority of the Training Division there, in addition to the Public Educator. They have tentative plans already for the one office being vacated. The Medical Services Officer from Orting Fire may relocate from Station 96 to that office. At Station 96, the Logistics Division will assume that vacant office in order to centralize all of Logistics. There will not be any open or empty offices. Commissioner Gustafson asked who exactly they plan to bring back to Headquarters. He responded all of the Assistant Chiefs: Mason, Richards and Waltrip. We need four to five offices because three will be occupied immediately, one will be used by light duty positions, possibly leaving one office for the future.

Commissioner Portmann asked Deputy Chief Judd if he was looking for direction tonight in order to move ahead and get a cost estimate and begin planning. He responded that he is looking for affirmation this plan makes sense and direction to move ahead. If at any time the cost estimates come back much higher than anticipated, then they will come up with Plan B. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Rosenlund agreed it will help to have the management team in one location, but he is not ready to commit. He is interested to see what the remodel will cost. Commissioner Portmann stated he sees the increased efficiencies of having the team here, on site, but he does not want to tap the Reserve funds. He wants to scrape the budget first. Commissioner Gustafson stated he must see exactly what this plan is going to look like and the cost. He suggested maybe we can rent local office space instead. Deputy Chief Judd responded that has been considered. Our first step is to get an architect on board to design a plan, and then we will get preliminary cost estimates. Discussion continued. Commissioner Portmann stated staff has Board consensus to move ahead preliminarily and come back to the Board with an estimate. Deputy Chief Judd responded that we will be advertising and going out to bid for architect services in the near future.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Citizen Bob Benum asked if there would be opportunity for public input on this and wanted to know when the meetings would take place. Deputy Chief Judd said that he can provide input at this time. Mr. Benum asked how much the two sides of this room are used. He also inquired about the utilization of space in the bay. Deputy Chief Judd explained which apparatus are out there and that the bay is full. He said he would be happy to show him around out there. The training rooms are used constantly for training and meetings and by the community.

Commissioner Portmann added there are positives for these rooms being available for use by community groups. Deputy Chief Judd stated often both sides of this room are being used in combination for larger events such as the monthly meeting of the Graham Business Association and for Department Academy graduation ceremonies.

Citizen Hugh Vance addressed Commissioner Portmann. He explained they were neighbors and his son Craig and Commissioner Ryan Portmann were childhood friends. He then shared his recollection of a prank that allegedly the two, as children, were involved in. Once he finished, he asked Commissioner Portmann if he remembered this incident, and he responded

that the statute of limitations are up. [Laughter.] Mr. Vance stated he understands Commissioner Portmann is a policeman now and thanked him for his duty to our country. As a policeman, he should have a pretty good idea of how the law works, and how, in America, we can do just about anything as long as it is not illegal. He said he has lived in the Graham area and has been associated with the Graham Fire District since 1969. He served as a Captain during those years when the District was all volunteer. They had two fire stations, two engines and a pumper. He is here tonight speaking as a concerned citizen and a taxpayer. In 2017, the Board hired Fire Chief Pat Dale to a full-time position with the District. Recently, Chief Dale terminated an office employee of the District, Lynne Walters. He believes the termination of Lynne Walters was an illegal action. The area of his concern is Fire Chief Pat Dale has never had the authority to hire or terminate anyone, only the Board has that authority. It appears to him Chief Dale is testing the authority of the Board, hoping to gain power for himself. He said he understands employment "at will." They can fire you, unless you are in a union, but if you are not in a union, they can walk in and say, "You are out of here." Commissioner Portmann then informed Mr. Vance there is a time limit for public speakers, and asked that he please get to his bullet points. Mr. Vance said he understood and asked that he be allowed to speak. Mr. Vance continued that "at will" is a term that means that an employee may be fired at any time, for any reason, or for no reason at all, as long as the reason is not illegal. He said that, plain and simple, Chief Dale screwed up. He had no authority to terminate Lynne Walters. If this action should end up in court, he is sure the court would rule in favor of Lynne Walters because it was an illegal action. He did not have the authority. If he would have followed the channels, come to the Board and explained everything that was going on, then the Board would have taken action and terminated the employee. No problem. He would not be here tonight and no one would question it. But, the fact is, he acted illegally, and that put the Board in jeopardy. The Board is the Fire Chief's boss, and the Board's boss is him, the taxpayer, the person who put them in their positions. He stated in closing, the Board has the authority and should take immediate action to rectify this injustice. Lynne Walters should be reinstated and receive all back pay and benefits that have accumulated since she was terminated. Mr. Vance provided copies of the document he read from to the Board, and thanked the Board for their time.

#### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

None

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**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 possible business to follow.**

**Commissioner Portmann announced a recess at 7:05 p.m.**

**Executive Session was announced as starting at 7:08 p.m.**

**Executive Session was announced as ending at 7:23 p.m.**

**Commissioner Portmann reconvened the Regular Board Meeting at 7:25 p.m.**

**Commissioner Rosenlund moved to accept the Separation Agreement between the District and a former employee, as written, and to allow the Board Chair to sign the Agreement in lieu of the Fire Chief. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed seconded the**

**motion. Commissioners Portmann, Barstow, Rosenlund and Blanchard-Reed: Yes; Commissioner Gustafson: Abstain. Motion carried by a majority.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**With no further business to come before the Board, the Regular Board Meeting of October 10, 2018, was adjourned at 7:27 p.m.**

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Ryan Portmann, Commissioner

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Anthony D. Judd, District Secretary