

**GRAHAM FIRE & RESCUE
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
February 24, 2021 (Virtual)**

PUBLIC HEARING – BENEFIT CHARGE

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Homan called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL BY CHAIR

Present: Chair Robert Homan, Commissioner Ryan Portmann, Commissioner Gerald W. Gustafson, Vice Chair Adam G. Rosenlund, Commissioner Gina Finley (Blanchard-Reed), Fire Chief Pat Dale, Deputy Chief Oscar Espinosa and Board Secretary Jodi Reynolds

Absent: None

RECONVENE HEARING BOARD

The Graham Fire & Rescue Governing Board reconvened as the Benefit Charge Appeals Review Board pursuant to RCW 52.18.070.

STAFF REPORT

Battalion Chief Todd Jensen provided the staff report.

APPEALS – PETITIONS

One petition was presented to the Board for their consideration, by Battalion Chief Todd Jensen at the petitioner's request, as follows:

Petitioner Name: Sherman

Parcel #4132500200

Petition Statement: Not saving enough over last year

Commissioner Rosenlund moved to approve the Administrative Adjustment, as recommended by Staff, on the Sherman parcel to deny that particular petition. Commissioner Finley (Blanchard-Reed) seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Commissioner Rosenlund moved to approve all Administrative Denials that were not submitted to the Benefit Charge Review Board, as recommended by Staff. Commissioner Gustafson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

ADJOURN PUBLIC HEARING

Chair Homan adjourned the public hearing at 6:38 p.m.

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

APPROVAL/MODIFICATION OF AGENDA

Commissioner Rosenlund moved to approve the Agenda as submitted. Commissioner Gustafson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Regular Board Meeting Minutes of February 10, 2021

Financial Documentation:

General Fund:

Payables: Checks #29529 through #29586 =	\$149,765.94
Payables (Payroll): Checks #29513 through #29528 =	\$549,130.71
Payroll: Checks #29507 through #29512 =	\$13,617.14
Payroll Transfers (EFTs) =	<u>\$902,298.57</u>

TOTAL: \$1,614,812.36

Commissioner Portmann moved to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted. Commissioner Finley (Blanchard-Reed) seconded the motion. Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Fire Chief's Report

Fire Chief Dale welcomed the Board and audience to the virtual meeting and reported on the following:

Strategic Priorities of COVID-19

These remain in place, with optimism ahead.

Current Events

1. CFO/District Secretary Hiring Process – Sandi Roberts starts Monday, March 1st.
2. New Tender Update – An abbreviated Push-In Ceremony was held on February 15th at 6:30 p.m. at Station 96. Tender 92 is now in service.

Standing Committees

- Policy and Procedure – Commissioner Rosenlund reported the committee met yesterday. They will have the policies prepared for the March 24th Board Meeting.
- Mergers/Consolidations – Chair Homan reported the committee will meet with the Chair and Vice Chair for Central Pierce Fire & Rescue's Board of Commissioners on March 22nd. They will report back to the Board following that discussion.
- Legislative Affairs – Chair Homan reported that several House Bills have been introduced this session and then provided a brief description of each of the following: HB1159, HB1168, HB1479, HB1448 and Senate Bill 5384.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Staffing Proposal Presentation

Chief Dale introduced his Staffing Proposal which covered the following areas:

The population of our district is growing at an average of 2% per year, with an increasing call volume of nearly 4% per year. Without increasing staffing, we compromise our service delivery effectiveness, Firefighter safety and injury rates, and supervision of our point-of-service delivery.

The proposal addressed the following **Strategic Plan initiatives**:

1. Graham Fire & Rescue Strategic Plan 2018-2025 Initiatives
2. Plan for 3-Person Companies
3. Analyze Response and Staffing Model for Maximum Efficiency

Upon conclusion of his presentation, he requested the Board consider approving his Staffing Proposal. He then turned the meeting back over to Chair Homan. Chair Homan requested Board questions and comments at this time. Discussion ensued. Chair Homan then called for a motion by the Board.

Commissioner Rosenlund moved to approve the Staffing Proposal at the gold level, as presented. Commissioner Finley (Blanchard-Reed) seconded the motion.

Discussion was held on the motion. Discussion concluded.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Citizen Robert Benum commented the Chief's proposal was very well done. He stated he was concerned that the one half million dollars in overtime is a waste of money. They should just hire another person. He strongly agrees with the overall concept, but not with the overtime proposed.

Chief Dale responded to Mr. Benum's concern by explaining in order to staff one position 24/7, 365, across all three shifts, and taking into account sick leave and vacation time, etc., it actually takes 4.3 people, so you must hire five, which is far more expensive than the overtime cost proposed of one half million dollars.

Mr. Benum commented he prefers they hire five people rather than rely on overtime due to safety concerns.

Citizen Carolyn Benum asked if the cost for the consultant in the proposal is budgeted for somewhere. Chair Homan responded affirmatively. She also requested clarification with regard to the number of personnel on a medic unit. Chair Homan responded two.

Jasper Stenstrom, IAFF Local 726 District Vice President, addressed the Board, staff and community members. He explained NFPA standards for staffing fire apparatus is four Firefighters, while the majority of Graham Fire's fire engines are staffed with only two, and only two apparatus have three Firefighters at any given time. A standard of three-person engine companies is considered the absolute minimum in the U.S. Inadequate staffing presents an increased safety risk to both the Firefighters and the public. The passage of the Benefit Charge and the unanimous passage by the Board of the Staffing Proposal tonight assure the delivery of a safer, effective and efficient service the citizens deserve.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Portmann commented his gratitude to the crew members who have responded to a family member on a few occasions recently. Many community members have commented similarly on their experiences with our personnel whose professionalism is noticed and appreciated.

Commissioner Rosenlund stated he is anxious to hear the results of the Standards of Coverage Report relative to the Station 92 area.

Chief Dale expressed his thanks to the Senior Management Team and staff including Deputy Chief Oscar Espinosa, Human Resources Director Annie Vandenkooy, Battalion Chief Todd Jensen and Administrative Support Specialist Jodi Reynolds for providing information for development of his Staffing Proposal. He concurred with Labor Leader Jasper Stenstrom that tonight marks a major milestone and thanked the Board for the action they took. He stated we have come a long way in a short period of time due to Labor Leaders, District Administration and the Board working together toward a common goal.

Chair Homan commented he appreciated the Board's attentiveness during this process. He commended Chief Dale for a great presentation and a plan that is very workable. He thanked Battalion Chief Juergens and Deputy Chief Espinosa for their work on the uniform policy, which now includes Board members. The Board can order short- and long-sleeve button down shirts through Jina in Logistics, if they wish.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair Homan announced a 20-minute Executive Session under RCW 42.30.110 (1) (g) to evaluate qualifications of a public employee or review their performance, with no business to follow.

The Executive Session was announced as beginning at 7:50 p.m.

The Executive Session was announced as ending at 8:10 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, the Regular Board Meeting of February 24, 2021, was adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

Robert L Homan

Robert Homan, Board Chair

Pat Dale

Pat Dale, District Secretary