

**GRAHAM FIRE & RESCUE
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
August 11, 2014**

CALL TO ORDER

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

Attendance:

Present: Commissioner Robert E. Skaggs, Commissioner Gerald W. Gustafson, Deputy Chief Tony Judd, Public Prevention and Education Officer Myra Merdian-Drake and Board Secretary Jodi Reynolds

Absent: Commissioner Russell T. Barstow and Fire Chief Ryan Baskett had an excused absence.

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

APPROVAL/MODIFICATION OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Gustafson moved to approve the Agenda as presented.

Commissioner Skaggs seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Skaggs stated he received written notification from Commissioner Barstow informing the Board he would be absent from this evening's Board Meeting due to a family emergency.

Commissioner Gustafson moved to excuse Commissioner Barstow's absence from the Regular Board Meeting due to a family emergency. Commissioner Skaggs seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of July 28, 2014, were approved as presented.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Pierce County Fire Prevention Bureau Monthly Reports for July 2014
- Letter from Pierce County Auditor's Office confirming receipt of Resolution No. 832
- South Sound 911 – 2015 Preliminary Cost Allocation Letter and Estimate

Additional correspondence:

- 2015 Self-Funded Plan Rate Changes from the Washington Fire Commissioners Association for the District's medical insurance plan. Deputy Chief Judd pointed out there will be no increase in premiums and no change in benefits; however, the one month premium "holiday" of 8% allowed in 2014 will not occur again in 2015, so we will have to increase the budget accordingly.

FINANCIALS

Payables Checks #18105 through #18135 in the amount of \$108,868.49 and a Transfer (EFT) in the amount of \$269.98, for a total of \$109,138.47, were presented for approval.

Commissioner Gustafson moved to accept the payables in the amount of \$109,138.47, after proper auditing. Commissioner Skaggs seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Chief's Report

In Fire Chief Baskett's absence, Deputy Chief Judd reported on the following:

Congratulations to Firefighters Hergert and Krattli, who completed their paramedic training, internship program with Graham Fire & Rescue, acquired their national and state certifications and are currently working as firefighter/paramedics.

The Department annual picnic is currently scheduled for Sunday, September 14th at Station 21-6, but some discussion is taking place regarding moving the picnic to Saturday the 13th in hopes of increasing attendance. Commissioner Skaggs regrettably will be unable to attend either date, and Commissioner Gustafson is unavailable on September 13th as he will be at the state fire training facility open house in North Bend.

Resident Firefighter Stimson has been on a leave of absence and has notified us he will not be returning. He is enrolling in a nursing program, and we wish him luck. His exit interview is in the Commissioners' reading file for their review.

M&O Levy. The election results as of this morning, while not finalized yet, were at 58.36%, not passing. The measure is currently on the ballot for November.

Commissioner Skaggs wished to thank, once again, the staff, the public, the union; everyone who made a great effort to get the word out. He suggested the Department use the reader boards at the stations to convey information to the citizens.

Commissioner Gustafson thanked the firefighters for their work placing and waving signs.

Commissioner Gustafson moved to approve staff to utilize the station reader boards to notify the public of station closures and other potential impacts of not passing the M&O Levy in November. Commissioner Skaggs seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Deputy Chief Judd informed the Board staff is currently discussing the overtime situation. The budgeted amount has been spent, and now the L&I money is being spent. Some changes may need to occur before November. He is expecting direction from Fire Chief Baskett addressing this. Commissioner Skaggs stated the Board is aware of the situation and with the arrival of budget season, these matters will need to be addressed.

Commissioner Skaggs announced he was opening the floor for public comment on the M&O Levy.

Bill Hicks, a member of the Citizen Advisory Group, stated he went out and spoke to several people and many did not understand the impact of the levy. As far as they were concerned it was just another tax. He suggested any future signs and mailers include the phrase "A Lifesaving Decision" to grab the readers' attention. He also suggested listing on future flyers the following three consequences of the levy not passing: 1) slower response times for medical calls, 2) more property damage caused by fire due to slower response times and 3) an increase in insurance rates. He advised these three items appear prominently on the flyer, and then the reader will read the facts and figures. In addition, he suggested signs be placed at stations 5 and 6 when they are closed stating the closure is due to levy failure. He said he will do everything he can to help get this levy through as will the other members of the Citizen Advisory Group.

Commissioner Skaggs shared he had conversations with people at the Fire Department's booth at the Pierce County Fair and they told him there was too much information provided. Some union members expressed to him similar sentiments and the need to convey what will happen if the levy fails and not to "sugar coat" the information.

Catherine Dye, a resident of Graham, stated she has spoken to a lot of people, especially after the article appeared in the newspaper, and they say it's not about the tax. They're not sure about the spending. It's a lack of confidence, so there's got to be some rebuilding of confidence. Many she spoke with did not want to vote yes or no, because they support the levy but do not support how the money is being spent. She has spoken with many residents in the Grand Firs community who see the fire trucks often and they think everything is going fine. They talk about smoke detectors being checked and batteries changed and free transports to the hospital. If you are going to ask them for money they need to know why. They just don't see it. She also addressed the firefighters going out door-to-door. For the firefighters, it's all about saving their jobs, their pay and benefits. You need to turn it around and make it personal to the citizens. She stated she was very willing to go out and help. She expressed the need to reach more people, especially the older residents who live outside of the developments.

Luke Wahl, representing Local 726, stated he had an operational question. He asked if the status of stations 21-5 and 21-6 will be posted on the reader boards daily. Deputy Chief Judd responded affirmatively.

Public Prevention and Education Officer Merdian-Drake stated the residents across from station 21-6 are not aware when the station is not staffed with response personnel because the staff members' cars are parked there.

Gina Leigh, a member of the Citizen Advisory Group and the "For" Committee, stated her group had also recommended the sign state when the station was closed for response.

Citizen Catherine Dye asked if any consideration had been given to placing a ballot measure to make this a permanent tax rather than doing M&O's. Commissioner Skaggs responded this could not be done for M&O funds, only for EMS. Deputy Chief Judd added the EMS levy will be up in two years and we will address it at that time. Ms. Dye also inquired as to the status of the grant the Department had applied for and Commissioner Skaggs replied we did not receive the grant to hire firefighters.

Commissioner Skaggs thanked the audience for their comments, and Deputy Chief Judd continued with the Chief's Report.

South Sound 911. The updated minutes are in the Board books for review.

Resident/Volunteer Program Rebuilding. Nothing new to report.

SCBA Purchase. We have not received any formal complaint from the Scott manufacturer so we plan to move forward with the award as voted for at the last Board meeting.

Joint Impact Fee Committee. Staff should have our Capital Facilities Plan available for the Board to review this week or next, and will request their approval at the first Board meeting in September.

Prentice Property. A real estate agent notified Chief Baskett he plans to list the five acres east of station 21-6, which we have first right of refusal on. Staff has told the agent to go ahead and list the property and notify us of any offers, and then we have 20 days to match the offer or let the right of refusal go. Chief Baskett has no plans to purchase the property.

Station Safety Inspections. We have moved away from the old paper forms and are now completing the inspections electronically.

NEW BUSINESS

Deputy Chief Judd informed the Board he has received a request from Local 726 to proceed to Step Three of the grievance process. He requested the Board select a date to hear the grievance, either at the August 25th Regular Board Meeting or at a Special Board Meeting, preferably before the end of the month or the first week of September. Commissioner Skaggs requested the District's legal counsel be present. Commissioners Skaggs and Gustafson stated they were available on August 29th or the first week of September, and Commissioner Barstow should be contacted for his availability. Deputy Chief Judd said he would coordinate the scheduling and provide the Board with all of the materials one hour prior to the meeting, or earlier, for their review.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

GOOD OF THE ORDER/PUBLIC INPUT

None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Deputy Chief Judd requested a ten-minute Executive Session under RCW 42.30.110 (1) (f) to receive and evaluate complaints/charges against a public employee, with no business to follow.

Commissioner Skaggs announced a ten-minute Executive Session under RCW 42.30.110 (1) (f) to receive and evaluate complaints/charges against a public employee, with no business to follow. The Executive Session was announced as beginning at 7:40 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, the Regular Board Meeting of August 11, 2014, was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Robert E. Skaggs, Commissioner

Anthony D. Judd, District Secretary