

**GRAHAM FIRE & RESCUE
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
January 12, 2015**

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, Commissioner Russell T. Barstow, Fire Chief Ryan Baskett, Deputy Chief Tony Judd and Board Secretary Jodi Reynolds

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 Barstow seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of December 22, 2014, were approved as presented.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Congratulatory letter from Enduris Re: WFCM Management Excellence Award
- Thank you letters from a citizen
- Pierce Co. Fire Prevention Bureau Monthly Report for December 2014

FINANCIALS

Payables Check #18726 through #18773 in the amount of \$57,972.39 and a Transfer (EFT) in the amount of \$360.23, for a total of \$58,332.62, were presented for approval.

Commissioner Gustafson moved to accept the payables in the amount of \$58,332.62, after proper auditing. Commissioner Barstow seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Chief's Report

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

Kelli Colonna had given notice she would no longer be able to continue in her part-time position with the District beginning in February. After speaking with her, Chief Baskett believes she will likely request a leave of absence. He plans to meet with her again. He and Deputy Chief Judd are not ready to present the Board with a plan for covering her duties at this time.

Violet Sorensen passed away on December 26th. She and her husband Otto had been longtime members of the Graham community, and Otto was one of our original Fire Department members. Chief Baskett attended the memorial service and represented the Department.

The Board had requested to meet the new hires at the first Board meeting in January; however, after consideration of their training schedules and involvement in their academies, Chief Baskett contacted Chairman Skaggs and he agreed to an academy graduation ceremony. Staff is planning to hold the ceremony on February 23rd at 6:00 p.m. before the regular Board meeting. Commissioners Gustafson and Barstow agreed with this plan. In the meantime, Chief Baskett invited the Board to call ahead or just stop in at Station 91, Monday through Thursday, to meet the new hires.

State Audit. Commissioner Gustafson, Chief Baskett and Deputy Chief Judd attended the exit interview. The meeting was brief, with no findings or recommendations to discuss. A copy of the complete report is located in the Board's reading file for their review. The state auditors shared with them they are very pleased with the changes we have made and our increased transparency. Chief Baskett thanked Deputy Chief Judd for a fantastic job on the budget last year and providing the information in a clear and concise way for the auditors. Commissioner Skaggs related he received similar positive comments from the auditors when he was interviewed by them.

South Sound 911. He attended the Operations Board meeting last Friday, and there are no actions items at this time. They are working on the financial changes to move the agencies currently under contract with FireComm over to South Sound 911 under the Interim Agreement, until the full-time agreement for 911 services is established. Retired Fire Chief Ken Sharp was introduced as the interim Deputy Director of Fire Services for South Sound 911. Chief Baskett is meeting with Director Sharp tomorrow morning to discuss our expectations and concerns with the transition to South Sound 911.

Staffing. An operational order went into effect January 1st returning our daily staffing to 11 minimum, eliminating our part-time closures of Stations 95 and 93, and allowing us to occasionally staff Station 96. So far this year we are at 45% staffing at Station 96.

Policy Review. Continuing our effort to update our policies, we have four policies for the Board to review: Operating Instruction 105 – Board Meeting Minutes, updated; Operating Instruction 606 – Respiratory Protection, a new policy; Operating Instruction 614 – Education Fund Distribution, updated to cover non-represented employees; and Operating Instruction 460 – Prefire Plan, completely rewritten to represent our current objectives. Chief Baskett requested the Board review the policies over the next two weeks and contact staff with any questions or comments. He will request Board action on these policies at the next regular Board meeting. He stated he and Deputy Chief Judd estimate, by presenting the Board with four or five policies per month, all policies should be current by the end of this year or first part of next year.

SCBA Purchase. We are expecting notification of the delivery date any day now. At the last Board meeting Commissioner Gustafson raised several concerns in regards to the MSA SCBAs. Chief Baskett stated he has addressed each concern and provided his findings to the Board as follows:

- Exact status of certification – Chief Baskett stated a copy of the NIOSH, NFPA and Department of Health & Human Services Approval is attached to the Chief's Report for Board review.

- Cross contamination issue requiring extra work cleaning the regulator – He reviewed the owner’s manual and determined the MSA masks have less potential for cross contamination because exhaled air is diverted out of the face piece through the exhalation valve in the bottom portion of the mask and not through the regulator, unlike the Scott masks.
- Does the regulator need to be taken apart and cleaned after every use? – Chief Baskett stated he attached two pages from the owner’s manual addressing this topic. It appears the cleaning process is the same as it is for our current SCBAs. The exterior of the regulator is cleaned with soap and water, and the personal mask is cleaned after every use. The masks we are purchasing are very similar to the masks we use today, so our personnel already know the procedures dictated in the policy.
- Buddy breathing system certification status – The SCBAs we ordered do not include buddy breathing hoses because we decided to use our current buddy breathing systems to save money. The re-use of our 3-foot Quick-Fill hoses is still a NIOSH approved method for giving air to a down firefighter through the Universal Rescue Connection.

Chief Baskett concluded by stating he was confident the committee did a thorough review of the products considered during the RFP process. He reminded the Board we are running out of time to stop the purchase of the MSA SCBAs, so if they wish to change direction, he needs to know immediately. Commissioner Skaggs asked Commissioner Gustafson if he was satisfied with Chief Baskett’s responses to his concerns. He answered affirmatively. Commissioner Skaggs directed staff to continue with the purchase of the MSA SCBAs as recommended by the committee.

Volunteer Committee. At the last Board meeting, Commissioner Gustafson requested Chief Baskett organize a meeting with the Board, Chiefs Baskett and Judd, and the volunteers, constituting a Special Board meeting. Since that time Chief Baskett contacted the two volunteer officers, Kinne and Barcus, to discuss this request. They said they preferred to meet with Chiefs Baskett and Judd and one Commissioner. Chief Baskett asked Commissioner Gustafson if he would agree to this alternative. Commissioner Gustafson explained he was primarily concerned with the requirement that volunteers must complete four to six 24-hour shifts, and that this was nearly impossible for volunteers to meet. He said he would like to see a modification made. Chief Baskett suggested he (Chief Baskett) and Deputy Chief Judd meet with the volunteer officers and return to the Board with a recommendation on how best to move forward.

Chief Baskett reminded the Board our recent volunteer recruiting process started with 296 interested people, all of whom were contacted, and only 22 remained interested, of which 11 submitted applications and tested, and only three of those actually live in the District. This is an ongoing problem throughout Pierce County and the topic is discussed often at the Pierce County Chiefs meetings. He stated another problem is there is not a volunteer academy available to send these individuals to for training. So, as part of his evaluation of the entire volunteer program, he has to determine a way to get these individuals trained and out on the street for us. Commissioner Skaggs addressed Commissioner Gustafson and asked if he felt there was still a need to call for a Special Board Meeting. He said no and agreed to withdraw his request and directed Chief Baskett to proceed with scheduling a meeting. Chief Baskett inquired if a Board member wanted to attend the meeting with the volunteers. Commissioner Skaggs recommended

Commissioner Gustafson do so, since he is on the committee, and he agreed. Chief Baskett stated he would notify Commissioner Gustafson with the date and time.

Pierce County Mutual Aid Agreement. Chief Baskett referenced the revised Pierce County Mutual Aid Agreement attached to the Chief's Report. He explained that following the Oso incident, some of the neighboring agencies failed to receive reimbursement for their work from the federal government if they had direct mutual aid agreements in place. In order for this not to occur in our county, the Pierce County Chiefs revisited the Pierce County Mutual Aid Agreement to ensure it contained language to cover an extended work period outside of the normal parameters of mutual aid. Attorney Joseph Quinn was tasked with this, and the final draft is expected to be approved by the Pierce County Chiefs. Chief Baskett explained he will then bring the agreement to our Board for approval. Commissioner Skaggs inquired about the revisions, and Chief Baskett responded the only revision is located on page 2, number 8) "Initial emergency services," which was revised to include "within the first 24 hours after arrival." Commissioner Skaggs inquired whether the agreement should include a requirement for agencies to have specific levels of training or certifications necessary for federal reimbursement. Chief Baskett responded he would look into it.

Facility Bond. Commissioner Gustafson had requested information on the money remaining on the bond, when it needed to be spent, and the possibility of refinancing at a lower rate. Chief Baskett tasked Deputy Chief Judd with researching these inquiries. He contacted Hugh Spitzer, legal counsel for the District #21 General Obligation Bond. Mr. Spitzer's email response is attached to the Chief's Report for reference. Mr. Spitzer stated there is little to worry about as we have spent all but 6% of the bonds. Chief Baskett added that with the purchase of the SCBAs, all but 1% of the bonds will have been spent. When the bonds were purchased back in 2008, we signed a tax certificate stating 85% of the sale proceeds would be spent by April 2010, and we met that obligation.

Deputy Chief Judd contacted Jim Nelson our bond agent about refinancing the bond. He informed us refinancing the bond is predicated on the way it was originally set up. Most G.O. bonds have a term of 20 years, but we opted for a 12-year term, making refinancing not as attractive because we are already paying a lower rate. We will not be able to refinance until the year 2016, for the final two years. Mr. Nelson stated he will put together some numbers for us for 2016. Chief Baskett distributed copies of the email from Mr. Nelson to Deputy Chief Judd. Chief Baskett asked Commissioner Gustafson if his questions were answered to his satisfaction and he responded affirmatively.

NEW BUSINESS

None

OTHER BUSINESS

Chief Baskett distributed a document to the Board for their consideration. He informed the Board that Fire Chief Wright of Central Pierce Fire & Rescue contacted him late last week. He is putting a proposal together to be the lead agency on a legislative measure which will allow us to collect federal funds on our transports covered by Medicaid and Medicare. Approximately 45-50% of our calls are connected to Medicaid or Medicare. We collect only a small amount of revenue on these transports. Chief Wright has researched this with a consultant out of California, who recently passed a law allowing

fire service transport agencies to recoup through federal funding already in place, for these billings.

Tonight, at their Board meeting, Chief Wright is requesting their Board consider Central Pierce being the lead agency and is requesting to move forward. Chief Wright wants to partner with as many agencies as possible, and has asked Chief Baskett to share in the cost of the consultant to get the process going. Chief Wright is requesting a \$10,000 commitment from Graham Fire & Rescue as a partnering agency. Commissioner Skaggs asked where this money would come from, and Chief Baskett responded it would have to come from the Commissioners Emergency Fund. He explained that once the legislation is in place, we can recoup a majority of that money in the end. Commissioner Skaggs asked if they have anyone in mind to sponsor this bill. Chief Baskett responded he had not gotten that far in the conversation yet with Chief Wright. He was contacted by Chief Wright on Friday and the document was emailed to him over the weekend. He reiterated that he is presently requesting approval to hire the consultant to build the legislation and find a sponsor. Commissioner Skaggs asked why we could not just partner up with a legislator who is supportive of the fire service to write the legislation. Chief Baskett responded we could, however, in order to “fast track” the process they believe this consulting company out of California has the experience necessary to get it done correctly. He cautioned that if this is not done right, we could see some adversarial groups in the hospital districts and private ambulance become greatly concerned about us getting this legislation through. The consulting company has already been through all of this in California. Commissioner Gustafson asked why we have to reinvent the wheel. Why don't we take California's bill and take it to our legislators and tell them that is what we need? Chief Baskett responded the bill needs to be revamped to fit Washington State legislative requirements. This consulting company has all of the necessary experience and can do the legwork. Commissioner Barstow stated this appears to be a bit of a gamble, but if we can recoup the initial costs and considering the additional revenue we would receive annually from transports, you don't know if you don't try.. Commissioner Gustafson asked Chief Baskett which other districts are involved and he responded Chief Wright is in the process of contacting the fire chiefs of the other neighboring districts and is confident he will gain the support of the larger districts in the county. Commissioner Skaggs asked for the total cost for the consultant and Chief Baskett responded the cost for Step 1 is \$60,000, which will get the bill written and into legislation. Chief Baskett also stated Chief Wright believes if they are successful with Step 1, they can then go to all agencies in the state for support for Steps 2 and 3, each of which will cost \$250,000. Discussion continued.

Commissioner Gustafson moved the approval of expending funds not to exceed \$10,000 from the Emergency Fund, line account no. 522.10.49.99, to partner with Central Pierce Fire & Rescue in contracting with a consulting company to draft state legislation for collecting federal funding through Medicaid, contingent upon sufficient funding from other Districts. Commissioner Barstow seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Chief Baskett stated he will keep the Board informed of progress made and will inform Chief Wright of Central Pierce Fire & Rescue he has obtained approval for Graham Fire & Rescue to partner with them.

GOOD OF THE ORDER/PUBLIC INPUT

None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, the Regular Board Meeting of January 12, 2015, was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Robert E. Skaggs, Commissioner

Anthony D. Judd, District Secretary