

**GRAHAM FIRE & RESCUE
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
November 9, 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 Barstow moved to approve the Agenda as presented.
Commissioner Gustafson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.**

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of October 26, 2015, were approved as presented.

CORRESPONDENCE

Pierce Co. Fire Prevention Bureau Monthly Report for October 2015
WFCA 2015 Management Excellence Award Winners

FINANCIALS

Payables Checks #20000 through #20044 in the amount of \$43,004.48 and Transfer (EFT) in the amount of \$774.02, for a total of \$43,778.50, were presented for approval.

Commissioner Gustafson moved to accept the payables in the amount of \$43,778.50, after proper auditing. Commissioner Barstow seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Fire Chief's Report

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

He thanked the Board and staff for their support while he was on vacation leave.

An invitation to the Annual Pierce County Commissioners and Chiefs Associations' Awards Banquet is attached to the Chief's Report. Those planning to attend should RSVP to staff by November 18th to allow time for processing the District's portion of the cost. Commissioners Skaggs and Gustafson responded they plan to attend and Commissioner Barstow declined.

At the last meeting the Board by resolution ratified the Firefighter/Paramedic hiring list. Deputy Chief Judd followed up by phone survey for approval to make conditional offers and start the pre-employment process for the top six candidates. Chief Baskett requested the Board officially approve the conditional offers of employment for the top six candidates.

Commissioner Barstow moved to approve issuing conditional offers of employment to the top six candidates on the approved Firefighter/Paramedic eligibility list. Commissioner Gustafson seconded the motion.

Discussion was held on the motion. Commissioner Gustafson asked Chief Baskett, of the \$2.4 million we have, and with all of the new people hired, where are we at with that money, under, over? Chief Baskett responded we are under it, and it takes some projecting. Of the 16 people planned to be hired with that money, we have absorbed four in our normal budget, so twelve are still out there. Commissioner Gustafson stated he had no further questions.

Commissioner Skaggs called the question. Motion carried unanimously.

SS911. Chief Baskett informed the Board automated dispatch services are being used on all frequencies, with no major issues being reported, only some minor ones. He will be attending an Operations Board meeting this Friday.

WSRB Rerate / Station 92 Living Quarters. Chief Baskett updated the Board on the status of the WSRB's report. The WSRB will hold our report for one year, allowing us time to implement our Station 92 plan. Commissioner Gustafson asked for an update on the plan for building living quarters. Chief Baskett stated he is continuing to work with others on the county permitting process. He has reached out to retired Lieutenant Faubion asking if he would help him develop a recruiting plan for volunteers at Station 92. He responded and will be happy to assist. Chief Baskett added that Volunteer Glenn Barcus will also be part of that team. He informed the Board he will begin drafting a letter to the affected parcel owners. He has also provided a previously used RFQ for Engineering Services to Deputy Chief Judd. The site will likely need engineering services to include survey, septic, layout, location of new facility, etc. He said he should have the RFQ to the Board within the next couple of meetings.

2016 Budget. Chief Baskett stated the items approved by the Board at the October 15th Special Board Meeting have been added to the 2016 budget and it is ready for Board approval. The only item left to consider is what the Board wishes to do with the remaining uncommitted revenue. He reminded the Board two options were previously discussed: either use the money to increase the depleted reserve account or do not collect the taxes and lower the citizens' tax collection rate. Chief Baskett then referred the Board to the "Additional Information" located in his Chief's Report, and reviewed the following:

Additional information:

- The full M&O rate for 2016 will be just over 52 cents per thousand or \$104.14 on a \$200,000 home.
- If we return the uncommitted revenue identified in the budget of \$761,000, it would save the tax payer \$28.82.

- If we return the \$444,648 received in tax assessment increase this year, it would save that same person \$16.84 for the year.
- If we return the \$813,000 received in tax assessment increase in 2015, it would save them \$30.79. (Remember, this was the first year we did not borrow from reserve to balance the budget since the economic decline.)

Commissioner Skaggs inquired if the \$813,000 was returned to the taxpayers, what affect that would have on the budget. Chief Baskett responded we would have to cut the difference between \$813,000 and \$761,000, approximately \$52,000, from the 2016 budget.

Chief Baskett then deferred to Deputy Chief Judd to review the changes in the budget. He began with the Revenue page and explained the 2015 Capital Purchase Carry Forward amount was increased from \$200,000 to \$215,000 due to the Station 91 asphalt work not being completed in 2015, and the \$15,000 being carried forward. He then moved on to the Budget Comparison document. He stated that per the Board's direction, the Contingency Fund amount was reduced to 1%, from \$210,000 to \$105,000. Deputy Chief Judd informed the Board the L&I insurance line items have been increased a total of approximately \$32,000. Part of that is the 2% across-the-board increase L&I informed us of a couple of weeks ago. He said he added some additional to the suppression L&I line item because our experience rating will likely continue to increase, for a total increase of 5%. Next, a retired LEOFF II Firefighter informed us his medical insurance premium decreased by \$36.00, so that line item was changed. Under the IT/Equipment - Printers line item, \$7,000 was deducted due to IT Director Stahnke locating a new printer/copier for Station 94 at a much reduced cost over what was anticipated. The purchase was made in 2015. The Suppression – Operating Tools & Equipment line item increased by \$47,600 once all items approved by the Board were included. The Fire Prevention – Pierce County Fair Supplies line item increased by \$1,200 to include the golf cart rental expense approved by the Board. Deputy Chief Judd concluded that in total, the 2016 budget was cut by \$45,000.

In addressing Commissioner Gustafson's concern (expressed during the October 15 Special Board Meeting) that the District may be paying too much for propane, Deputy Chief Judd explained he did not adjust the Propane/Natural Gas line item because we use almost entirely natural gas, and currently we are paying only \$.98 per gallon for propane, which is a low price. Chief Baskett concurred.

Deputy Chief Judd stated he made no changes to the Reserve Budget.

Commissioner Skaggs called for discussion regarding what to do with the \$761,000 in uncommitted revenue. Commissioner Gustafson stated he still wanted some of it to go back to the people. We have asked for \$2.75 million which is \$350,000 more than we were down before. We collected an extra \$813,000 and this year another \$445,000. Part of that should go back to the people. Chief Baskett responded he appreciated the Board being conservative and wanting to save dollars for the taxpayers, but he also sees the importance of building up a reserve. He stated he and Deputy Chief Judd calculated that if we maintain a 4% growth rate, which is the rate all of their projections are based on to determine how long an M&O levy would have to run, and we were to bank between \$2.8 and \$3 million in our uncommitted reserve over the next four years, potentially we would not have to ask the citizens for another M&O levy. Once we get to \$3 million there would be no reason to bank any more beyond that; it could go back to the citizens. Commissioner Skaggs agreed. Chief Baskett added that this was not something we

spoke to the citizens about. By building up \$3 million in reserves we would be extending the life of the M&O levy to eight years without having to go back out to the citizens and ask them for more money. Commissioner Barstow stated he is in favor of building the reserves so we do not have to go back to the citizens and ask them for more money down the road. Commissioner Gustafson requested staff obtain a ruling from Attorney Quinn regarding what the uncommitted reserve funds can be used for. He does not want it used for more wages. Commissioner Skaggs asked Commissioner Gustafson how much of the \$761,000 should go back to the citizens.

Commissioner Gustafson moved to reduce the 2016 M&O tax collection by \$445,000. Motion failed due to lack of a second.

Commissioner Barstow moved to place the \$761,000 uncommitted revenue in the uncommitted reserve fund in the 2016 Budget. Commissioner Gustafson seconded the motion. Commissioners Skaggs and Barstow: Yes. Commissioner Gustafson: No. Motion carried by a majority.

Commissioner Gustafson moved to approve the 2016 Budget as presented. Commissioner Barstow seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

L&I Letter. Chief Baskett referred back to the 2% L&I rate increase referenced by Deputy Chief Judd during the 2016 budget discussion earlier. He explained the Washington Fire Chiefs have written a letter to the Director of the Washington Department of Labor & Industries expressing their concern and objection to the continued rate increases. They have reached out to individual agencies requesting we also write letters to share our concern and look for a long term solution rather than raising rates on employers. He asked the Board if they would like him to draft a letter on behalf of the District.

Commissioner Barstow moved to direct Staff to write a letter to Director Sacks of the Washington Department of Labor & Industries to express our objection to the continued rate increases. Commissioner Gustafson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Gustafson added that the Washington State Farm Bureau handles its own L&I claims. Inspectors go out to the farms and correct any hazards, etc. This might be something we look into. Chief Baskett agreed and stated the letter from Executive Director Senter of the Washington Fire Chiefs mentions this option. Chief Baskett said this may be where the fire service is headed if the state L&I does not fix its problems.

Mattress Donation. Chief Baskett reminded the Board that due to the outstanding actions of our members to save a family pet at a fire in July, Tempur-Pedic donated a total of 34 mattresses with an estimated value of \$51,000 to our organization. Chief Baskett requested the Board officially accept this donation.

Commissioner Barstow moved to accept the donation of 34 mattresses valued at \$51,000 from Tempur-Pedic. Commissioner Gustafson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Chief Baskett reported that over 90,000 views of the video posted on our Facebook page have occurred and he could not be more proud of those who represented our

organization. He said he could not be more humbled to lead such an outstanding group of people.

Commissioner Gustafson said he received heart-felt thanks from the other districts who received the extra mattresses. Chief Baskett stated those agencies are South Pierce, Ashford/Elbe, Key Peninsula and Orting.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution No. 852, Surplus Personal Protective Equipment

Board Secretary Jodi Reynolds read Resolution No. 852, Surplus Personal Protective Equipment, into the record.

Commissioner Barstow moved the approval of Resolution No. 852, Surplus Personal Protective Equipment, as presented. Commissioner Gustafson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

GOOD OF THE ORDER/PUBLIC INPUT

None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chief Baskett requested a 20-minute Executive Session under RCW 42.30.140 to plan or adopt strategy/position for professional negotiations, with possible business to follow.

Commissioner Skaggs announced a 20-minute Executive Session under RCW 42.30.140 to plan or adopt strategy/position for professional negotiations, with possible business to follow.

Commissioner Skaggs announced a recess at 7:40 p.m.

The Executive Session was announced as beginning at 7:44 p.m.

An announcement was made at 8:04 p.m. to extend the Executive Session another five minutes.

Commissioner Skaggs reconvened the Regular Board Meeting at 8:10 p.m. He explained that during Executive Session the Board was presented with contracts for the Fire Chief and Deputy Chief. The Board is in the process of reviewing the contracts and will refer both contracts to Attorney Quinn for further review. The Board will take up the issue at the next Board meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, the Regular Board Meeting of November 9, 2015, was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Robert E. Skaggs, Commissioner

Anthony D. Judd, District Secretary