

**GRAHAM FIRE & RESCUE
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
April 24, 2017**

CALL TO ORDER

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

Attendance:

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

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

APPROVAL/MODIFICATION OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Rosenlund moved to approve the Agenda as written. Commissioner Portmann seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Commissioner Portmann moved the approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of April 10, 2017, as presented. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Blanchard-Reed moved the approval of the Minutes of the Special Board Meeting of April 14, 2017, as presented. Commissioner Portmann seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE

Thank You email to the Board from Gary Franz, Deputy Chief, Retired

FINANCIALS

Construction Fund:

Payables Check #22687 in the amount of \$960.00 was presented for approval.

Commissioner Rosenlund moved to accept the Construction Fund payable in the amount of \$960.00, after proper auditing. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

General Fund:

Payables Checks #22634 through #22686 in the amount of \$42,867.90, Payables (Payroll) Checks #22699 through #22712 in the amount of \$353,131.71, Payroll Checks #22688 through #22698 in the amount of \$17,549.20 and Payroll Transfers (EFTs) in the amount of \$606,503.93, for a total of \$1,020,052.74, were presented for approval.

Commissioner Rosenlund moved to accept the General Fund payables in the amount of \$1,020,052.74, after proper auditing. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Fire Chief's Report

Deputy Chief Judd greeted the Board and audience members and then reported on the following:

On April 14th the Department participated in what may be the first annual Safety Fair at Kapowsin Elementary. Lieutenant Faubion spearheaded this effort as a parent at the school. Public Prevention Education Officer Merdian-Drake helped provide many activities for the kids, our Support Services members helped staff our booth, and the Station 93 crew attended with both an engine and medic unit. Graham Fire had quite a presence at this very successful event.

Temporary Captain Woodey is returning from leave and Temporary Captain Rickey will be returning to his permanent position as Lieutenant. While it was a short appointment, we thank Jason for stepping up to fill the position.

South Sound 911. Deputy Chief Judd reported to the Board he attended the Operations Board meeting on the 14th. The big news is that Tacoma Fire cut over to the new common CAD system, so now all fire and law enforcement agencies operate on the same combined radio system and CAD system.

Deputy Chief further reported that before the Operations Board were two motions of support for the Policy Board. The first was the commissioning of a Strategic Plan for SS911 which incorporates the 10-point plan put forward by the Pierce County Fire Chiefs Association to resolve problems involving the cost of the radio system. They are hoping to have it completed in 98 days. The second motion was to support moving forward with the 63-20 financing plan for the new communications building. Both motions passed.

Station 92 Living Quarters. Deputy Chief Judd stated he had no update.

Apparatus. Deputy Chief Judd informed the Board that Engine 96 went down with mechanical issues for a few days. We borrowed an engine from Orting Valley Fire & Rescue, which has since been returned. Assistant Chief Richards just returned from Oregon with Engine E09-2, so we will have a reserve Engine again. He and Mechanic Fortner are scheduled to fly out on May 8th to do the final inspection on the two new Engines.

Policies. Deputy Chief Judd recalled for the Board that at the last meeting he presented them with two policies for their review. He inquired if the Board had any questions and if they were ready to take action on the policies.

Commissioner Rosenlund moved to approve Operating Instruction 417 and Operating Instruction 418, as written. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Orting Collaboration. Deputy Chief Judd stated he resurrected this topic following the Special Board Meeting on the 14th when there was discussion about locking into a potential merger with Orting Valley Fire & Rescue. He asked if the Board had specific direction for Staff and the Interim Fire Chief. Commissioner Portmann recalled the Board had approved the formation of several committees, one of which was the Legislative and Mergers/Consolidations Committee. He asked the Chair to staff this committee which will work with the Chief to provide information to the Board. Commissioner Gustafson stated he would like to be on the committee and also appoint Commissioner Portmann. Commissioner Portmann explained that since Commissioner Blanchard-Reed is much involved on the legislative front, and because this committee is

comprised of both Legislative and Merger/Consolidations, although he would like to be on the committee, he would recuse himself to allow her to be on the committee. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed suggested they separate the committee into two; Commissioner Rosenlund agreed. Deputy Chief Judd stated he would make a change in the policy for Board approval.

Commissioner Blanchard-Reed moved to separate the Mergers/Consolidations and Legislative Affairs Committee into two: a Mergers/Consolidations Committee and a Legislative Affairs Committee. Commissioner Portmann seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Portmann stated he accepted the Chair's invitation to participate on the Mergers/Consolidations Committee. Commissioner Gustafson confirmed he and Commissioner Portmann would comprise the committee.

Standing Committees

Performance Evaluation: Commissioner Portmann recalled at the last meeting the Board discussed the document released by Prothman Company they (Prothman) believed to be their final draft. The Board, however, had already taken action on a prior draft of the Leadership and Management Assessment and accepted it as the final report. So, now there is a second draft before the Board that Prothman Company had forwarded which is now up for approval. Commissioner Portmann recommended the Board approve the second draft and also include Chief Baskett's rebuttal to the document, and include Chief Baskett's rebuttal to the first draft with that document. He welcomed any discussion. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed questioned if there should be two motions. He concurred.

Commissioner Portmann moved to accept the final version of the Leadership and Management Assessment from Prothman Company, as presented. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Portmann moved to include the rebuttals by Chief Baskett to the first and second versions of the Leadership and Management Assessment from Prothman Company with those documents. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Policy: Operating Instruction 107. Commissioner Rosenlund stated he researched the topic of quarterly reports and contacted East Pierce Fire & Rescue for clarification of their procedure. He learned the quarterly reports from the Volunteer and Labor groups were simply for awareness and the Labor group reports did not include any negotiation items. His contact said most quarters the groups had no reports; and, while it is still in the policy, it has been taken off the agenda. Commissioner Rosenlund recommended clarification that the quarterly reports by Labor are not to supersede the Labor/Management process.

Commissioner Rosenlund moved to approve Operating Instruction 107 – Board Meeting Procedures, as written. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed seconded the motion.

Discussion was held on the motion. Deputy Chief Judd inquired if the Board was going to amend the policy. Commissioner Rosenlund responded and Blanchard-Reed concurred they would leave it as is because they had discussed and clarified the intent. Discussion ensued. Deputy Chief Judd recommended the Board put something in the policy to make the intention clear. Commissioner Portmann suggested the Board table this issue for one more meeting in order to spell out in the quarterly reports section what they want to capture. Deputy Chief Judd summarized they want to capture that the quarterly report is an informative-type report, non-negotiation-style, that will be provided in written form prior to the meeting.

Commissioner Rosenlund rescinded his motion.

Commissioner Blanchard-Reed requested that if the Board has any policy areas they would like to have looked at in the next month, to please let the committee know. Commissioner Rosenlund added they will continue to review other Districts' Boards' policies to determine future ones to consider. Deputy Chief Judd explained a policy being considered in the past was for the Board's Reserve Account to establish some rationale behind the amount in the account.

Interim Fire Chief: Commissioner Gustafson deferred to Commissioner Portmann who explained the next step is for the Board to finalize the contract for the Interim Chief. They will call for an Executive Session either now or later in the meeting. The Board decided to proceed with New Business at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

Deputy Chief Judd informed the Board that Kelli Colonna is resigning from her part-time position as runner. She has accepted a full-time employment opportunity elsewhere. He would like to fill the position at least temporarily, with a current Volunteer or Resident, before going outside of the organization. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed asked him what the job entails. He responded it involves traveling from station to station delivering paperwork and supplies, in addition to running various out-of-District errands. This is a 20-hour per week position, part-time, with no benefits.

Commissioner Rosenlund moved to authorize Staff to reach out to current members of the Department to fill the part-time runner position recently vacated. Commissioner Portmann seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Deputy Chief Judd informed the Board he has new signature cards for the County bank account he will be requesting they sign following the meeting.

Commissioner Blanchard-Reed moved to amend the Agenda to move the Executive Session up to the present time. Commissioner Rosenlund seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Deputy Chief Judd requested a 15-minute Executive Session under RCW 42.30.140 (4) (b) to plan or adopt strategy/position for professional negotiations, with possible business to follow.

Commissioner Gustafson announced a 15-minute Executive Session under RCW 42.30.140 (4) (b) to plan or adopt strategy/position for professional negotiations, with possible business to follow.

Commissioner Gustafson announced a recess at 7:27 p.m.

The Executive Session was announced as beginning at 7:29 p.m.

An announcement was made at 7:44 p.m. to extend the Executive Session 10 minutes.

An announcement was made at 7:54 p.m. to extend the Executive Session 10 minutes.

The Executive Session was announced as ending at 8:04 p.m.

Commissioner Gustafson reconvened the Regular Board Meeting at 8:06 p.m.

Commissioner Gustafson stated the Board had before it the Interim Chief's Contract.

Commissioner Portmann moved to approve the contract between the District and Interim Chief Pat Dale, as presented. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Rosenlund moved to hold a Special Board Meeting on Monday, May 1, 2017, beginning at 6:00 p.m., at Graham Fire & Rescue Headquarters Station 94, to recess into Executive Session under RCW 42.30.110 (1) (g) to evaluate qualifications of a public employee or review their performance. Commissioner Portmann seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Portmann asked Interim Fire Chief Pat Dale to please stand and speak briefly to the audience. Chief Dale began by saying he is very excited to be here. He retired two years ago with 33 years of service, split almost evenly between the Kent Fire Department and the City of Olympia. At the City of Olympia he was the Operations Chief for 16 years. Most recently he was the Director of Fire Service Training for Bates Technical College. Because all of his career experience has been with city fire departments, he expects there will be a bit of a learning curve reporting to a Board of Fire Commissioners and with the fire district model. He thanked the Board for their offer and said he is excited to get started next week. He also expressed he enjoyed meeting the audience members and thanked them for their attendance.

Commissioner Portmann stated the duration of the Interim Chief's contract is eight months to allow sufficient time to explore possibilities with Orting Valley Fire & Rescue and then determine the need to hire a permanent Fire Chief.

GOOD OF THE ORDER/PUBLIC INPUT

Citizen Robert Benum stated he was not present when the discussions about Orting took place and asked what the advantage to him is, as a citizen of District 21, for the Fire Department joining forces with the City of Orting. Commissioner Portmann responded the decision was made several months back to look at a possible merger. A merger or consolidation could benefit both districts; but, he does not have enough information to see if this makes sense for Graham or not. He has many questions including, does this help or hurt our response time? Does this help our fire rating or not, and how does it affect mutual aid? He said these are questions that need to be answered before deciding whether or not to move ahead with the merger. He hopes in the next two to three months he and Commissioner Gustafson will be able to report back to the Board their findings, working in collaboration with the current Chiefs. Commissioner Rosenlund added that the collaboration of training, mechanics and command staff are some of the things in the beginning that could be of benefit. But, until we ask those questions, we do not know. We may go down that road and find out it is not a benefit to the citizens of Graham, so we would not move forward. Mr. Benum asked if they had a timeline. Commissioner Gustafson gave a brief history of past merger considerations with Eatonville and Orting and why the mergers did not occur. Commissioner Rosenlund stated it would be nice to have a tight timeline, but because there are two parties involved, both sides need time to analyze and determine if it is mutually beneficial.

Mr. Benum stated he had another question for the Board. If the report from Prothman the Board used for the action against Chief Baskett was preliminary, and now another report was issued, he does not quite understand that. He asked if the new report is available and Deputy Chief Judd responded that as of tonight it is, because it was just approved by the Board, and is now a

public document. Mr. Benum stated he would like a copy and asked if it would be available to pick up tomorrow. Deputy Chief Judd responded it would.

Citizen John Marshall stated that some people do not trust the Board and he is in that category. He asked if the citizens get to vote on a merger with Orting, and Commissioner Gustafson responded yes, absolutely. Commissioner Rosenlund explained both the citizens of Orting Valley and the citizens here would both have to approve a merger. Mr. Marshall said he heard about Graham and Orting working together for a common purpose as far back as December. He asked if the big picture was to go from Edgewood to Elbe, making it all Central Piece 726. Commissioner Gustafson responded, "No, not really." Mr. Marshall said, "I know you were just like me, a hundred years ago, and now you're sitting there. So, I hope you respect some of us who maybe do not trust you guys as far as we can throw you. So that's what it looks like. It looks like 723 [*sic*] are just steamrolling." Commissioner Gustafson explained the history of other potential mergers from years past and why the District decided against those. He stated there are many factors to consider to make sure it is feasible. Mr. Marshall asked Commissioner Gustafson to "remember when he was sitting out here" and then said, "I see you are a marked man, the next one voted off the island." Commissioner Gustafson responded, "That could be."

Citizen Curt Patterson asked what the insurance rating is for Orting. Commissioner Portmann responded that these are the questions we are going to ask: Will this help or hurt our insurance rating? Will it help or hurt our response times overall? What facilities issues do they have? These as well as other questions must be explored during this process. Mr. Patterson added that the citizens are looking to get their rates down. Commissioner Rosenlund responded he is aware of the impression and understands the skepticism, but the intent is to quicken response times, improve insurance ratings, and overall improve the service to the citizens. Mergers are happening throughout the country. Consolidating Administrative staffs could allow us to fully fund a Human Resources person.

Citizen Carolyn Benum stated she had eleven short questions to ask the Board. The questions and responses are as follows:

- Question: After the contract between the firemen and you was negotiated and approved on approximately February 27th by the commissioners, were any changes made to the contract after that?
Answer: No.
- Question: Did the firefighters receive a pay increase of roughly 6%?
Answer: Deputy Chief Judd responded the increase to base wage was CPI 2.1%, plus 1% catch up to get them closer to their comparables. In addition, the District bought back two of their holidays, converting them from time to money, and added that to their salary. The real increase to wages was 3.1% plus the buying back of that time. He confirmed the total comes close to 6%. Commissioner Gustafson added that the contract is for four years.
- Question: Did the firefighters also receive, in the new contract, incentive pay for something that was previously in their job description?
Answer: Deputy Chief Judd responded, "Yes, cross staffing incentive."
- Question: Were the complaints that were finally brought against Chief Baskett brought forth by the Union Local 726?
Answer: Deputy Chief Judd explained a Vote of Confidence was conducted by the Local and came back negative, and after that they produced a list of complaints.

- Question: Is Commissioner Rosenlund an active member of Local 726?
Answer: Commissioner Rosenlund responded he is in a different bargaining unit, but he is a member of Local 726.
- Question: During the process of the vote of no confidence, the list of union allegations and the third party review, did Commissioner Rosenlund recluse [*sic*] himself at any time from fully participating in all areas of these discussions, votes and reviews which impacted the Chief's position?
Answer: Commissioner Rosenlund responded that since he is not a part of their bargaining unit he never attended a bargaining unit meeting for Graham, including the Vote of Confidence. He recused himself from one (Board) meeting. He participated in an interview with the Prothman representative, and when the report came through, he sat in counsel with the rest of the Board and discussed the reports, and then voted.
- Question: Did the Board check with the Washington State Fire Commissioners Association as to whether or not that was unethical because he was a member of 726?
Answer: Deputy Chief Judd responded they did not check with the Fire Commissioners Association; they checked with their attorney who said there was no conflict, based on state law.
- Question: Were there multiple review reports submitted to the Board by Prothman? Three?
Answer: Commissioner Rosenlund stated they have only seen two as a Board. Commissioner Portmann explained there was an initial draft that went to the committee of Barstow and Portmann, then the same draft was forwarded to the Board, which the Board acted on and adopted. Then Prothman came back with a second version, and said the Board had adopted their draft version and not their final version. In the second draft the only change that was asked for was for a reference to Deputy Chief Judd loosely tying him to the Vote of No Confidence to be redacted because it was not accurate.
- Question: Did you choose to adopt the first rough draft which had not been fact checked or edited? Then Mrs. Benum said, "I guess not, because you did not choose to adopt that one because you wanted his name out of there."
Answer: Commissioner Portmann responded, "No, we adopted the first version that came through. In the second version, that was the only redaction that was made out of that version."
- Question: There were 26 pages and then it brought it down to 15, is that correct?
Answer: Commissioners Portmann explained it started at 22 pages, and then there were some formatting issues, so then it was down to 15.
- Question: Did Chief Baskett ask to have his response to the review submitted with the draft and final report and was that request followed?
Answer: Commissioner Portmann responded that his rebuttal will be attached to the report, as stated in the motion.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, the Regular Board Meeting of April 24, 2017, was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Gerald W. Gustafson, Commissioner

Anthony D. Judd, District Secretary