

**GRAHAM FIRE & RESCUE  
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
November 13, 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 G. Rosenlund, Commissioner Gina Blanchard-Reed, Commissioner Ryan Portmann, Fire Chief Pat Dale, Deputy Chief Tony Judd and Board Secretary Jodi Reynolds

Absent: Deputy Chief Oscar Espinosa

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 Barstow seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.**

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Approval of Special Board Meeting Minutes of October 11, 2017

Approval of Regular Board Meeting Minutes of October 23, 2017

Approval of Financial Documentation:

Payables: Checks #23499 through #23573 =	\$102,398.92
Payables (Payroll): Check #23585 =	\$5,381.80
Payroll: Checks #23574 through #23584 =	\$4,342.08
Payroll Transfer (EFT) =	\$1,379.97
Transfer (EFT) =	\$588.06
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b><u>\$114,090.83</u></b>

**Commissioner Rosenlund moved to approve the Consent Agenda in the amount of \$114,090.83 after proper audit. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Pierce Co. Fire Prevention Bureau Monthly Report for October 2017

**GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

**Fire Chief's Report**

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

The three Recruit Firefighters – Ryan Watson, Justin Funk and John Ernst, will graduate from the Bates Academy on November 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at the Bates Technical College South Campus. The Board is invited to attend. All three are doing very well, toward the top of the class.

The State Auditor notified staff he will be here on Monday, November 20<sup>th</sup> to start the 2016 financial and accountability audit.

2018 Budget Review. Chief Dale informed the Board staff would proceed with a review of the changes made to the budget since the first line-by-line review. He deferred to Deputy Chief Judd to proceed with the review. Deputy Chief Judd stated he would start with the Revenue page and distributed copies to the Board. He explained he highlighted the areas where he made changes and proceeded to review these as follows:

Tax Revenue:

- M&O Levy: To keep the same rate, the amount was increased by approximately \$350,000.
- 1% Fire/EMS Levies transfer to Reserves: This amount was removed, but you will see a transfer to the Equipment and Fleet Replacement Fund which will go into the Reserve Account.

Non-Tax Revenue:

- GEMT: Increased from \$300,000 to \$400,000. Commissioner Gustafson asked about getting the money back the District previously contributed. Deputy Chief Judd explained for the first few years, fees will be charged to the agencies who did not contribute and this money will come back to us and the other agencies who did.
- Miscellaneous Contracts: \$4,000 added to account for the ½ FTE – Lieutenant in Training – shared with Orting Fire.
- Unspent Equipment Replacement Carry Forward: \$177,279. Commissioner Blanchard Reed asked where this money will go and he responded it will go into the Equipment and Fleet Replacement Fund.
- 2016 Remaining Fund Carry Forward: Projects not completed in 2017 to be done in 2018.
- Capital Purchase Carry Forward: Two staff vehicles budgeted for 2017 which will not be purchased before the end of the year.

Total Revenue: \$18,160,250

Expenditures:

Deputy Chief Judd explained he would now proceed with Expenditures. He handed out the revised Budget Comparison Fund Totals document. He stated the first two pages address revenue, and restate what he just reviewed. The expenditures start on page three. He reviewed the changes as follows:

- Transfer to Reserves: Transfer of \$677,366 into Fleet and Equipment Replacement Fund.
- Payroll: Several minor adjustments.
- LEOFF 1: Added one retiree and will remove one in July and one in September 2018.
- BIAS: Their invoice came in and was far less than he expected.
- Under Operations – BC/Capt/LT/FF: Firefighter/Paramedic who resigned being replaced by Firefighter. Also includes delaying hiring of new employees until April 1<sup>st</sup>, if M&O passes.
- Operating Tools & Equipment: Contains an error. Comment section itemized amounts do not equal total of \$15,000. He will make correction.
- Previous Year Remaining Funds – PPE and Previous Year Remaining Funds – Safety Equipment: Rollovers of 2016 remaining funds for projects to be completed.
- EMS – LTs/PMs: Should be 29 FTEs in comment section, not 30.
- New Equipment: Includes purchase of 4 LifePak 15s for Medic Units over five years at 0% interest and trade-in of two LifePak 12s.

- Previous Year Remaining Funds: \$20,000 for newsletter added to \$20,000 for newsletter in 2018 results in \$40,000. May do quarterly newsletter for community outreach.
- Personnel Training – Suppression/Staff: Added Peer Fitness CE for trainers.
- Personnel Training – EMS: Reduced from \$40,000.
- Previous Year Remaining Funds – CTC: Command Training Center
- Previous Year Remaining Funds – Training: Rural Water Supply Training
- Previous Year Remaining Funds – Facilities: Station 91 HVAC, Contracted Grounds Work, Station 93 Mobile Home Removal.
- Utility Vehicles: Added one more command vehicle in addition to two already planning to purchase.

Total Expenditures: \$18,160,250

Deputy Chief Judd then distributed to the Board a revised sheet showing the adjusted FTE Allotment resulting from the resignation of a Firefighter/Paramedic in 2017.

Deputy Chief Judd handed out the revised Reserve Budget sheet to the Board. He explained, under Reserve Commitments, he has broken out the amounts for Fleet Replacement and Equipment Replacement. Although we do not have 1% from Fire & EMS Levies going in, we do have the transfer of \$677,366 from General to Reserve. The Economic Contingency Fund will be \$1.7 million by the end of next year. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed asked if this equals 8%, and he responded affirmatively. The 2018 Budget Review presentation concluded.

Chief Dale stated the goal is to approve 2018 Budget at the next Board Meeting.

Results of Proposition 1 Fire Levy Lid Lift. Chief Dale confirmed for the Board the Levy Lid Lift passed. He requested Deputy Chief Judd hand out the Pierce County election information and statistics staff compiled at the request of the Board at the last meeting. He pointed out the data from the November 7<sup>th</sup> election shows the “Blank” vote number was 247, which is approximately 2% of the total number of ballots. He said he finds this remarkable and an area we can make an impact on going forward. The “Approved” votes totaled 55.86% or 4,068 votes. Deputy Chief Judd added that in past elections, the District averaged only 7 blank votes vs. 247 in this election. Commissioner Portmann commended Chief Dale on his use of social media to reach that demographic. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed suggested staff obtain voter demographic information to help determine the method of outreach to be utilized moving forward. Chief Dale agreed.

Operating Instruction 423 – On-Call Chief Duty Officer. Chief Dale requested Board disposition of this policy.

**Commissioner Rosenlund moved to approve Operating Instruction 423 – On-Call Chief Duty Officer, as written. Commissioner Portmann seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.**

Maintenance & Operations Levy Amount. Chief Dale referred the Board back to the handout with the election information, specifically item #1 – “History of time of year versus success/failure of measures – GF&R and Pierce County,” and the attached election statistics sheet. All of our measures over the past nine years were on the August or November ballot and passed, with the exception of the 2014 M&O measure on the August ballot which failed, but did pass in November. He explained there is no data for February or April elections because Graham has never run a measure then; in fact, there is very little data for those elections in

Pierce County at all. Chief Dale then referred the Board to the statistics for our neighboring fire agencies and briefly reviewed them.

Chief Dale then returned to item #3, "M&O Levy – 2018." In order to validate, the measure requires 3,015 "Yes" votes plus 60% favorable majority (minimum 5,026). He then addressed considerations for the timing of the M&O next year, starting with February. He stated he spoke with Tom Siegel, Superintendent of the Bethel School District. They plan to put three measures on the February ballot: Enhancement Renewal, Technical Levy Renewal and a Bond. If they fail to pass, Superintendent Siegel would recommend to his Board to go back out in November. Chief Dale said he also conferred with members of the Local to do some strategizing on this. Other considerations for February are the high likelihood of validating and sharing the cost with Bethel School District. Also, the holiday season affords us many opportunities for community outreach. Considerations for April include: We would probably be alone on the ballot and bear the entire cost; it would require considerable outreach to secure a favorable majority "Yes" votes; and require us to aggressively pursue validation. April would allow us approximately eight additional weeks for community outreach than February would; but possibly some of the headway made during the holidays could be lost if we wait until April. A consideration for August is lower voter turnout historically. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed stated that while she is not advocating for August, summer does offer several outreach opportunities. She is concerned about the effectiveness of outreach over the holidays. Luke Wahl, Local 726 Vice President, provided additional historical insight into past elections.

Commissioner Rosenlund asked what the dollar amounts are of the Bethel School District measures. Commissioner Portmann stated he heard the total of the Enhancement and Technical levies is less than what they are currently collecting. Luke Wahl stated the schools currently collect \$4.51 per \$1,000 AV, and all they have said so far is that the total will not exceed that amount. He believes the total will come to what they are collecting now, with the Bond making up the difference. Commissioner Rosenlund stated he sees the advantages of the February election, specifically, the multiple measures on the ballot.

Commissioner Blanchard-Reed asked Chief Dale if he was seeking a motion by the Board on the timing of the M&O Levy and the amount. Chief Dale responded affirmatively. He referred the Board to the document provided to them at the November 6<sup>th</sup> Special Board Meeting outlining options for the M&O Levy amount.

Commissioner Blanchard-Reed expressed that if we are going for the Gold level we will have to wait until November. Commissioner Portmann stated he is in favor of the Silver approach. He wants to increase staffing, and this is the most reasonable way to do that and most likely to pass. Commissioner Rosenlund stated he also likes the Silver option where we are still around a rate of \$.60 per \$1,000, which is consistent with the last M&O. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed requested the figures provided by staff at the previous meeting showing the annual increase in taxes for each level: Bronze, Silver and Gold, for a taxpayer who owns a \$300,000 home. Commissioner Portmann replied the increase is \$86.40 for the Bronze, \$185.70 for the Silver, and \$289.20 for the Gold. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed stated that as much as she does not want to see taxes raised, she would rather go for the Gold level and do it well, rather than starting with Silver, determining it is not enough and asking the taxpayers for more. She asked Chief Dale his thoughts on this. He said we are going to be levy-dependent for at least a few more cycles. Silver could be a step which would increase staffing by four positions, which requires hiring 18 people. Then, in four years, we could go out for the Gold level. Commissioner Portmann stated he did not know if voters would go for \$.96 per \$1,000 AV. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed stated when she compares the \$185 (Silver) to the \$289 (Gold) to protect her property and her life, the bottom line is a difference of just \$100. Commissioner Rosenlund

stated he is concerned about breaking the trust of our citizens. There is a risk of swinging for the fences in November, and if the levy does not pass, we will start 2019 with a budget shortfall. Discussion continued.

Commissioner Gustafson stated it is a matter of fact that four years ago we ran an M&O levy in order to save jobs and not have to lay people off. It is a cardinal sin to hire people off of an M&O. If it does not pass again in four years, those people are gone. You have to work it so you can keep those people. We had \$2.9 million then. Including the 2018 budget, we will have brought in \$9.5 million over four years; \$6.1 million in new taxes; GEMT should bring in \$400K - \$450K; ambulance billing has brought in \$200K more each year; and with the M&O which started at \$2.75 million, we are up over 100%. Also, home values have increased significantly, resulting in far higher property taxes. It is easy to look at the short-term, with blinders on. Roy has been unable to pass their levies that require 50% approval. We need to think about these things. There will probably be someone who will write a no side this time, unlike last time. If we cannot get by with what we've got, we're doing something not quite right.

Commissioner Blanchard-Reed asked what else we can do in order to increase staffing. Commissioner Gustafson responded that over the weekend he asked a number of fire districts and they only have two people on their fire engines. Some of our stations have three on an engine and some have two. Commissioner Portmann stated we are a unique district and straddle the growth management line. While two-person engine companies may work from 224<sup>th</sup> south where call volume is lower, he wonders about the areas where apartments are going in, nursing homes, and industry over by Fredrickson, and if three-person engine companies are more suitable in these areas. If we stay status quo we will have to send more units to a scene to have enough manpower, which can then leave other parts of the district vulnerable. Commissioner Gustafson stated we have mutual aid available. The Tacoma Fire Department has a lot more people than we do, but their fire engines are far older. Commissioner Rosenlund stated he is interested to know how many Firefighters other comparable districts have on their engines. We are in a place that we need to step up to three. He agrees with some of the points Commissioner Gustafson raised, but in order to work toward the goal of the Gold standard, the standard of care our citizens deserve, he believes we can get there following the conservative approach, which is the Silver plan. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed asked if there is any way to pay for additional staffing other than with an M&O. Commissioner Gustafson stated government grants can be used. Deputy Chief Judd said these are SAFER grants and the last one we had covered two years, but now they are back to three. Commissioner Rosenlund brought up the Fire Benefit Charge which is being researched currently. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed asked what the downside is of going for the Gold standard early and adjusting later in the year. Commissioner Portmann responded he is concerned about the dollar amount. If the \$.61 goes down significantly or there is a big opposition, we may be back to running a measure to just sustain what we have.

Commissioner Gustafson asked Chief Dale what is being done about Station 92. Chief Dale responded that according to his Silver plan, we will eventually work toward a sustainable volunteer force in the south starting with Station 93 and putting a building at Station 92. Commissioner Gustafson asked when this could happen and Chief Dale responded it could happen immediately using the Bond money. Commissioner Barstow stated he is in favor of the Silver plan. He is adamantly opposed to two-person staffing, so whatever can be done to end that he favors. Commissioner Portmann asked about the plan for staffing Station 92. Chief Dale stated he is working with Labor on this transition and working on building a pool of Resident/Volunteers that we would hire from. This would bring in even more people. Commissioner Rosenlund said those he had spoken to about this Resident/Volunteer program are really excited about it and like the idea of Graham going back to being a great teaching

department. He stated he believes those things Commissioner Gustafson wants at Stations 92 and 93 can happen with the Silver plan. Commissioner Gustafson voiced his concern that building a pool of Resident/Volunteers will be difficult because once we get them trained, they get hired by someone else. Discussion continued.

**Commissioner Rosenlund moved to direct Fire Chief Dale to develop a plan, based on the Progressive/Silver model, to place a Maintenance & Operations Levy measure on the February 2018 ballot. Commissioner Barstow seconded the motion. Yes: Commissioners Barstow, Rosenlund, Blanchard-Reed and Portmann; No: Commissioner Gustafson. Motion carried by a majority.**

Santa Breakfast. Chief Dale informed the Board the annual Santa Breakfast is scheduled for Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 9:00 a.m. at Station 94, and they are invited to attend. Commissioner Gustafson said Board members are expected to be there to help cook and serve breakfast. Set-up and cooking begins between 7:00 and 7:30 a.m.

### **STANDING COMMITTEES**

Budget, Finance and Audit – No report

Policy and Procedure – Commissioner Rosenlund stated they have a new policy, which was handed out for a first viewing, and requested they review it over the next two weeks. He highlighted the following: 1. Operating Budget Policies – Frequency of reviewing revenue and expenditure reports and who reviews them; 2. Equipment Replacement Reserve – Added Fleet Maintenance Reserve and Fire/EMS Equipment Reserve; 3. Uncompensated Absences; 4. Economic Contingency – Figure is 5%-25% of annual expenditures; 5. Budget Calendar – The Fire Chief will propose an annual budget calendar by the first Board meeting in September. Deputy Chief Judd added that most of this is current practice, but it is good to get it down in writing. Commissioner Barstow requested Commissioner Rosenlund place a copy of the policy in his District mailbox.

Mergers/Consolidations – No report

Joint Labor/Management – No report

Strategic Leadership Plan – Commissioner Rosenlund stated a meeting is scheduled to interview consultant Doug Mah on December 19<sup>th</sup>.

Legislative Affairs – No report. Commissioner Blanchard-Reed reminded the Board and staff Legislative Day is Thursday, January 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Resolution No. 887 – Surplus Helmets and Boots

Board Secretary Jodi Reynolds read Resolution No. 887, Surplus Helmets and Boots, into the record. Commissioner Rosenlund stated the Board will review the resolution over the next two weeks.

### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

None

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

### **GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Deputy Chief Judd stated we need to swear into office Commissioner Blanchard-Reed at the next Board meeting, once the election is certified.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Chief Dale requested a five-minute Executive Session under RCW 42.30.140 (4) (b) to plan or adopt strategy/position for collective bargaining, with business to follow.

**Commissioner Gustafson announced a five-minute Executive Session under RCW 42.30.140 (4) (b) to plan or adopt strategy/position for collective bargaining, with business to follow.**

**Commissioner Gustafson announced a recess at 8:36 p.m.**

**The Executive Session was announced as beginning at 8:39 p.m.**

**The Executive Session was announced as ending at 8:44 p.m.**

**Commissioner Gustafson reconvened the Regular Board Meeting at 8:45 p.m.**

**Commissioner Portmann moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the IAFF Local 726 Chiefs Bargaining Unit and the District amending Article 33 – Duty Chief Program. Commissioner Rosenlund seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**With no further business to come before the Board, the Regular Board Meeting of November 13, 2017, was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.**

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Gerald W. Gustafson, Commissioner

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Anthony D. Judd, District Secretary