

**GRAHAM FIRE & RESCUE
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
August 28, 2019**

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Blanchard-Reed called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Attendance:

Present: Commissioner Gina Blanchard-Reed, Commissioner Gerald W. Gustafson, Commissioner Russell T. Barstow, Commissioner Ryan Portmann, Fire Chief Pat Dale, Deputy Chief Oscar Espinosa, District Secretary Brenda Barker and Board Secretary Jodi Reynolds

Absent: Commissioner Adam Rosenlund had an excused absence.

Commissioner Blanchard-Reed led the Pledge of Allegiance and welcomed the audience.

APPROVAL/MODIFICATION OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Barstow moved to approve the Agenda as presented. Commissioner Portmann seconded the motion. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Regular Board Meeting Minutes of August 14, 2019

Approval of Financial Documentation:

General Fund:

Payables: Checks #26792 through #26874 =	\$189,303.72
Payables (Payroll): Checks #26880 through #26897 =	\$431,391.11
Payroll: Checks #26875 through #26879 =	\$11,126.42
Payroll Transfers (EFTs) =	<u>\$865,549.77</u>

TOTAL: \$1,497,371.02

Commissioner Barstow moved to approve the Consent Agenda in the amount of \$1,497,371.02 after proper audit. Commissioner Gustafson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Fire Chief's Report

Chief Dale welcomed the Board and audience members and reported on the following:

The quarterly newsletter was sent to the printer and should go out mid-September.

Our next Open House is planned for Saturday, October 5th from 1:00–3:00 p.m. at Station 91.

The remodel at Headquarters Station 94 is almost complete. Staff has moved back into their offices. The Board of Commissioners Meeting quarters and Training Room should be restored by the end of next week. The antique engine will be returning soon.

Last April, he became aware Bates Technical College submitted for a capital improvement project for a training tower. They have received funding for \$2 million for a scope study. Just a few weeks ago he learned they received funding for the rest of the project, \$31 million. He then initiated a meeting with the President of the college, Dr. Zhou. They are looking for property beyond what they already own. A partnership is developing with Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) to build on their property located at the Roy "Y," 20-30 acres. Dr. Zhou is interested in pursuing local and regional partners, including local fire districts and the State Fire Marshal. She has requested our help to communicate this to the fire service in general, and she would like to hire a subject matter expert from the fire service to manage the scope of the project and has asked our input on who that might be. Discussions are higher level visionary at this point, and he has an acute interest because it is right in our back yard.

Commissioner Portmann asked if there was anything the Board could do to show support and if the funding has already been secured. Chief Dale responded the \$33 million is already there, and an opportunity may exist for the Washington Fire Commissioners Association to be involved. Chief Dale added this is an action item in our Strategic Plan under Training, "Seek partnerships for fire training facility."

Staff is already engaged in the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan, in partnership with Central Pierce Fire & Rescue, to make sure we have a voice to advance Fire and Life Safety rules, as development comes this way and the increased population affects our ability to deliver service. This is also an action item in our Strategic Plan under Executive, "Work with county on planning, development, zoning and building codes."

Standing Committees

Budget, Finance and Audit – No report
Policy and Procedure – No report
Mergers/Consolidations – No report
Joint Labor/Management – No report
Strategic Leadership Plan – No report
Legislative Affairs – No report

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – Staffing to 19 on September 1, 2019

Deputy Chief Espinosa referred to the previously Board-briefed Firefighters Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) MOU related to the increased staffing to 19 on September 1, 2019. The CBA changes allow the following:

- A delay of the contract required intra-shift rebid until January 1, 2020;
- The promotion of a 6th Captain to address the loss of an Acting Battalion Chief position on January 1, 2020;
- FLSA Kelly Day language adjustments; and,
- Language clean-up related to the aforementioned items.

He explained the cost of the Captain promotion is neutralized as no promotional action would result in significant overtime to fill shift Battalion Chief vacancies.

Commissioner Gustafson requested clarification on the effect on overtime. Deputy Chief Espinosa responded on January 1st, 2020, according to the Firefighters CBA, the District would lose one of its eligible Acting Shift Battalion Chiefs. If nothing is done, the District would incur considerable overtime in 2020. The solution is the promotion of a 6th Captain which would neutralize that overtime liability.

Commissioner Portmann explained for the audience this honors the commitment made when the District went out for the levy to increase staffing. This eliminates cross staffing September 1, 2019, and adds a third person to the ladder truck on January 1, 2020.

Commissioner Portmann moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between IAFF Local 726 Graham Firefighters Bargaining Unit and the District related to the increase in staffing to 19. Commissioner Barstow seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Chief Dale stated that now the motion has passed, he would like to thank the Board for their leadership and commitment to this effort to increase minimum staffing to 19 and celebrate the fact that this eliminates cross staffing, a significant benchmark for this organization, beginning this Sunday. Thank you for your support!

Commissioner Blanchard-Reed thanked the citizens for their support, as well.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – HRA Changes

Chief Dale explained this involves a switch from one vendor to another for the employees' Health Reimbursement Accounts (HRA)/VEBA. There will be no financial impact other than possibly a nominal fee to switch vendors. We are required to do this. This changes the way the District pays out the amount for the HRA.

Commissioner Portmann stated that before, the employee had the choice to either take the money as a cash benefit or have it deposited into a VEBA. But, because of tax rules, we are required to eliminate the cash option.

Commissioner Portmann moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between IAFF Local 726 Graham Firefighters Bargaining Unit and the District related to Health Reimbursement Accounts. Commissioner Barstow seconded the motion.

Discussion was held on the motion. Commissioner Portmann asked Chief Dale if the Chiefs Bargaining Unit CBA has the same language as the Firefighters, and he also inquired about the Support Staff members and other non-represented employees and their HRAs. Chiefs Dale and Espinosa concurred and stated staff would look into this. Discussion concluded.

Motion carried.

2020 Budget – Chief Dale referred the Board to the 2020 Budget Calendar provided to them. The calendar shows for date 8/28/2019 the topic of "Revenue Projections/Board Budget Goals." He deferred to District Secretary Barker to cover the Revenue Projections topic. District Secretary Barker explained the numbers we have now are the known, very basic numbers. The

County will release the preliminary revenue projections in mid-September. She explained the following numbers have been provided to the Board previously:

- EMS Levy Lid Lift: Increase at \$.399 of \$96,134 if we stay where we are at vs. increase at \$.499 of \$899,234 if the levy passes.
- Fire Levy Cap at 6%: \$11,380,256.91 before new construction.
- M & O Levy set amount: \$4,300,000.
- GEMT Revenue: \$900,000.

Chief Dale stated he would facilitate the discussion of the Board Budget Goals. He suggested, as a jumping off point, the following three goals:

1. Fund the Apparatus Replacement Plan – Assistant Chief Richards has developed a very detailed plan.
2. Fund the Equipment Replacement Plan – Includes SCBA, PPE and hose.
3. Build a Reserve Fund.

He welcomed discussion by the Board members. Commissioner Portmann stated he fully supports these goals. He would like to save as much money as possible. For the past two years much effort was put toward hiring people and reorganization, and since several people are still supported by levy dollars, he would like to see us funding those types of accounts, in addition to the reserves, in case the economy takes a downturn or we struggle to pass a levy in the future.

Commissioner Blanchard-Reed asked how the SAFER grant fits into the budget in terms of replacing those funds. Chief Dale explained the SAFER is for three years and is not included in the budget as a major source of revenue because it is temporary. She asked what the plan is for replacing these funds as they decrease and go away. Chief Dale responded the excess levy is the plan. With the four-year levy we planned to hire 18 people. The infusion of federal money allowed us to hire them faster. The 18 are not at any risk. The risk comes at the end of the excess levy. Commissioner Portmann added we have the money front-loaded in order to pay salaries as long as possible.

Commissioner Blanchard-Reed stated she completely agrees with these priorities.

Commissioner Gustafson asked how much longer we have until the bond matures. Chief Dale responded until the end of 2020.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Citizen Robert Benum asked if staffing is going from 17 to 19, and Chief Dale responded affirmatively.

Mr. Benum stated he and Mrs. Benum sent out invitations a month ago for their 9th annual summer party and car show on August 25th. He said mid-way through the event this past Sunday, five of District 21's best arrived. He learned they were the duty crew from Station 96, and were some of the nicest young men in Pierce County, taking time to interact with the kids and others. To show their appreciation, Mr. Benum presented Deputy Chief Espinosa with a framed picture of the crew posing with Mrs. Benum. Deputy Chief Espinosa accepted the picture and said he would pass along their message to the crew and thanked the Benums.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Portmann commended Assistant Chief Richards for his work on the Station 94 remodel. It looks great—nice and bright and fresh. Kudos to him for his excellent work handling the project.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Blanchard-Reed announced a 15-minute Executive Session under RCW 42.30.110 (1) (g) to evaluate qualifications of public employees or review their performance, with no business to follow.

The Executive Session was announced as beginning at 7:04 p.m.

At 7:19 p.m., the Executive Session was extended ten minutes.

At 7:29 p.m., the Executive Session was extended five minutes.

At 7:34 p.m., the Executive Session was extended five minutes.

At 7:39 p.m., the Executive Session was extended five minutes.

At 7:44 p.m., the Executive Session was extended five minutes.

The Executive Session was announced as ending at 7:49 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, the Regular Board Meeting of August 28, 2019, was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Gina Blanchard-Reed, Commissioner

Brenda L.B. Barker, District Secretary