

**GRAHAM FIRE & RESCUE  
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
March 24, 2021 (Virtual)**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Homan called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**ROLL CALL BY CHAIR**

Present: Chair Robert Homan, Commissioner Adam Rosenlund, Commissioner Gerald Gustafson, Commissioner Ryan Portmann, Commissioner Gina Finley, Fire Chief Pat Dale, Deputy Chief Oscar Espinosa, District Secretary Sandi Roberts and Board Secretary Jodi Reynolds

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Citizen Robert Benum requested Chief Dale's retirement date. Chief Dale responded that it is officially February 1, 2022.

**APPROVAL/MODIFICATION OF AGENDA**

**Commissioner Rosenlund moved to approve the Agenda as submitted. Commissioner Portmann seconded the motion. Motion carried.**

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Regular Board Meeting Minutes of March 10, 2021, with roll call correction  
Financial Documentation:

General Fund:

|  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| Payables: Checks #29678 through #29747 =           | \$210,591.10                 |
| Payables (Payroll): Checks #29661 through #29677 = | \$670,125.87                 |
| Payroll: Checks #29655 through #29660 =            | \$12,480.11                  |
| Payroll Transfers (EFTs) =                         | <u>\$879,589.87</u>          |
| <b>TOTAL:</b>                                      | <b><u>\$1,772,786.95</u></b> |

**Commissioner Finley moved to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted, including the Minutes with roll call correction. Commissioner Portmann seconded the motion. Motion carried.**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

None

**GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

**Fire Chief's Report**

Fire Chief Dale welcomed the Board and audience members to the virtual meeting and reported on the following:

Strategic Priorities of COVID-19

SAFER Grant

As indicated in the "Road to Twenty-Four Staffing Plan," we submitted for a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant. Our application was successfully submitted and received a couple of weeks ago.

### Career Firefighter and Paramedic Recruitment

The recruitment process for six career Firefighter and Paramedic entry level positions opened March 17<sup>th</sup>. We are once again contracting with Public Safety Selection in order to reach a wider and more diverse applicant pool. The Assessment Centers will begin in May.

### Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment

We are accepting application packets for Volunteer Firefighters beginning April 1<sup>st</sup>. Through our website, approximately 200 citizens have voiced their interest in volunteer testing.

## **Standing Committees**

### Policy and Procedure

Commissioner Finley reported on the following policies:

- Policy 212 – The policy is ready to go back to legal.
- Policy 217 – She added the Volunteer (Pension & Relief) Board definition. Legal counsel had some suggestions, so the committee will update the draft for the Board to approve.

Commissioner Rosenlund reported on the following policies:

- Policy 214 – He reviewed the proposed changes and stated if the Board approves them this evening, he will send it to legal. Discussion ensued. The Board approved the changes.
- Policy 224 – The policy is in draft form. If the Board approves the proposed changes this evening, he will send it to legal. The Board approved the changes.

Discussion ensued between Commissioners Finley and Rosenlund as to the process of drafting policies, sending to legal and updating the policy with suggested changes, and then whether the policy should go back to legal a second time. Commissioner Portmann stated he feels strongly that all final product must have approval by legal prior to coming before the Board for a vote. The Board concurred with Commissioner Portmann.

Chair Homan asked which Commissioner would like to serve on the Volunteer Pension & Relief Board along with him, per Policy 217. Commissioner Portmann recommended Commissioner Gustafson due to his extensive interest in and involvement with the Volunteer program, and he accepted.

### Mergers and Consolidations

Commissioner Portmann reported he and Chair Homan met with Central Pierce Fire & Rescue's Board Chair Matt Holm and Commissioner Stringfellow to start a dialogue to explore ways to create efficiencies within our organizations. Chair Homan stated the next meeting will occur after our new Fire Chief is selected.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### Fire Chief Job Description

Chair Homan explained Human Resources (HR) Director Vandenkooy successfully merged the current and proposed job descriptions as requested.

**Commissioner Rosenlund moved to approve Policy 1000 Fire Chief Job Description, as written. Commissioner Portmann seconded the motion.**

Discussion was held on the motion.

**Motion carried.**

Fire Chief Search – Selection Process

Discussion was held on the merits of an internal search versus an external search, or a combination of the two. Chair Homan asked HR Director Vandenkooy if we had qualified internal candidates. She responded affirmatively. Board members considered if an external search was agreed upon, whether it would be regional or national, and what that would cost. Chair Homan responded that based on his experience, the cost would be approximately \$30,000 for either a regional or national search. Each Board member expressed his/her opinion and substantiated their preference. Chair Homan requested Board input on whether or not they are ready to make a decision on the type of search tonight. They unanimously agreed to decide tonight. Discussion concluded.

**Commissioner Rosenlund moved to approve initiating an internal search for the Fire Chief position vacated by the retirement of Fire Chief Dale. Commissioner Portmann seconded the motion.**

Discussion was held on the motion.

**Motion carried. Yes: Commissioners Homan, Rosenlund, Portmann and Finley; No: Commissioner Gustafson**

Chair Homan asked if any Board members were interested in sitting on the Fire Chief recruitment committee with him and HR Director Vandenkooy. Commissioner Rosenlund voiced his interest. Chair Homan stated he will work with HR Director Vandenkooy and Chief Dale to determine what the recruitment process will look like and bring that information back to the Board at the next meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS**

None

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Citizen Robert Benum commented he strongly disagrees with the Board's decision on the recruitment process for Chief and expressed his concern that the Board members made their decision without consulting others. He stated \$30,000 is only 20% of the Fire Chief's annual salary, and not a big number in order to get the best candidate possible. He concluded by stating that he is very disappointed in all five of the Board members.

Citizen Carolyn Benum asked if the policies are posted on the website. She clarified she wanted access to all of the documents supporting the Agenda, like they received at the in-person meetings. Chair Homan responded that staff will begin posting all Board Meeting documents on the website.

Chair Homan responded to Mr. Benum's comments and assured him the \$30,000 cost was irrelevant in their decision; rather, the Board is confident that at the conclusion of this process they will have a good candidate, and he or she will do a great job as Fire Chief. Chair Homan stated he anticipates that at the conclusion of this process, Mr. Benum will no longer be disappointed in the Board; he will be proud of them and the new Fire Chief. He thanked the Benums for their comments.

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Homan commented that because the Joint Labor/Management Standing Committee was dissolved by the Board, he proposes appointing Commissioner Gustafson as the Pierce County Fire Commissioners Association (PCFCA) liaison. Since Commissioner Gustafson regularly attends the PCFCA monthly meetings, he could report back to the Board any pertinent information from those meetings. The Board concurred, and Commissioner Gustafson accepted the position.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

**With no further business to come before the Board, the Regular Board Meeting of March 24, 2021 was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.**

*Robert L. Homan*

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Robert L. Homan, Board Chair

*Sandi Roberts*

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Sandi Roberts, District Secretary