

JCFPD #4 COMMISSIONERS MEETING

NOVEMBER 11, 2008

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ron Garrison at 7:00 pm. Those present were Commissioners Ken McEdwards and Meril Smith, Chief Bob Herbst, Secretary Peggy Ware, Anne Pittman, Evelyn Cemper, Wayne Schlaefli, Dalila Dowd, Mike Hyde, Judi Hyde, John Dowd, Rhonda Lorenzen, Paul Lorenzen, George Sickel, Brinnon Volunteer Firefighter Association President Sue Fresonke, Brinnon Volunteer Firefighter Association Secretary/Treasurer Ron Stephens, Sue Bond, ArlaBelle Froats, Sandy Bardon, Robert Bardon, Nick Fields, Jacque Hartley, Bill Linden, Joanie Hendricks, Diane Garrison, Eric Hendricks, and Don Coleman.

Commissioner McEdwards made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 14, 2008 regular meeting as mailed. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Motion passed.

The October 31, 2008 Financial Report was presented to the Commissioners by Secretary Peggy Ware.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to accept the October 31, 2008 Financial Report. Commissioner McEdwards seconded the motion. Motion passed.

The 3rd Quarter Budget Report was completed on October 31, 2008. Total Budget of \$250,500.00, expenditures year to date \$188,224.18, leaving an ending balance of \$62,275.82.

Vouchers of \$36,187.57 were presented to the Commissioners. Transfer of funds will be \$36,187.57 from the Investment Account into the Cash Account.

Commissioner McEdwards made a motion to pay the vouchers in the amount of \$36,187.57, and to transfer \$36,187.57 from the Investment Account into the Cash Account. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the November 5, 2008 payroll in the amount of \$8,017.49. Commissioner McEdwards seconded the motion. Motion passed.

The Chief's Report/Ambulance Report was presented by Chief Bob Herbst.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to accept the Chief's Report. Commissioner McEdwards seconded the motion. Motion passed.

There was no Volunteer Ambulance and Firefighters Association President Report.

There was no old business.

Chief Herbst read a letter to the Fire Commissioners recommending the suspension of Volunteer Points Policy 2860, Section 3.1 thru Section 3.13 for the calendar/points year 2009. In lieu of the financial compensation of policy 2860 for the volunteers the Brinnon Fire Department proposed the following incentives for 2009: increase t-shirt issue to 2 shirts per year for each active volunteer; issue 1 ¾ zip sweatshirt to each active volunteer, and the Fire Department shall pay the full \$60.00 for all volunteers enrolled in the BVFF Retirement program.

Brinnon Volunteer Firefighters Association Secretary/Treasurer Ron Stephens said that the association members agree with the suspension of the volunteer points for the calendar/points year 2009 with the understanding that if in 2009 a levy passes the points policy on some type of financial compensation will be reinstated for 2010.

Commissioner McEdwards made a motion to suspend Policy 2860 Section 3.1 thru 3.13 for calendar/points year 2009, and the suspension will not exceed one year.

Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Secretary Ware read Resolution 2008-5 Approval of JCFPD #4 2009 Budget in the amount of \$261,200.00.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to adopt Resolution 2008-5 approving the JCFPD #4's 2009 Budget in the amount of \$261,200.00. Commissioner McEdwards seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Secretary Ware read Resolution 2008-6 Property Tax Increase Resolution-General Levy. Commissioner McEdwards made a motion to adopt Resolution 2008-6 Property Tax Increase Resolution-General Levy. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with 3 yes votes.

Chief Herbst read a recommendation to Surplus and Dispose of three vehicles in order to reduce repair costs. The vehicles are the 1986 Ford F-350 4x4 Utility Truck, 1991 Ford E-350 Type III Ambulance, and the 1997 Jeep Cherokee Laredo. The 1986 Utility Truck and the 1997 Jeep Cherokee both have a "Blue Book" value of approximately \$3,000.00 each.

Commissioner McEdwards said that he is willing to surplus the 1986 and the 1991 vehicles now.

Commissioner McEdwards made a motion to surplus and place the 1986 Ford F-350 4x4 Utility Truck, and the 1991 Ford E-350 Type III Ambulance up for sale. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Chief Herbst read a request that the following rescue equipment be declared surplus and authorized for donation to Mason County Fire Protection District #17: Briggs & Stratton Hydraulic Power Head-#60195, 1 TNT Combination cutter and spreader unit, 1 set of hydraulic hose lines for listed equipment, and any surplus hydraulic fluid for power head. The old extrication equipment is no longer being used, and has been in storage. Mason County FPD #17 would be happy to accept the donation.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to surplus and donate the old extrication equipment to Mason County Fire Protection District #17. Commissioner McEdwards seconded the motion. Motion Passed.

Chief Herbst read a recommendation to accept Sara J. Myers as a 45 day conditional member of the Brinnon Fire Department.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to accept Sara J. Myers as a 45 day conditional member of the Brinnon Fire Department. Commissioner McEdwards seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Secretary Ware reported that Washington Fire Commissioners Association Health Care Plans are offering Domestic Partner Coverage for the first time. The Fire Commissioners first need to decide if they will offer this coverage. If so, the Fire Commissioners need to choose either “same-gender only”, “opposite-gender only”, or “both same-gender and opposite-gender”.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to add Domestic Partner Coverage to the WFCA Health Care Plan offering the coverage to both same-gender and opposite-gender. Commissioner McEdwards seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Secretary Ware attended both the Snure Pre-conference Laws Update Seminar and the Washington Fire Commissioner Association Conference in SeaTac from October 22-25, 2008. Secretary Ware gave a brief report on the conference. At the WFCA Conference, Fire District #4 did receive a 1st Place Management Excellence Award, and Commissioner Ron Garrison was recognized for 25 year membership as a Fire Commissioner in the Washington Fire Commissioners Association. Secretary Ware presented Commissioner Garrison with his 25 year pin.

Secretary Ware attended the Washington Fire Administrative Support Fall Workshop at King County Fire District #20 on Friday, November 7, 2008. Secretary Ware gave a brief report on the workshop. The topic of the workshop was public works.

Commissioner Garrison asked for public comment, and called on Wayne Schlaefli to continue with his comments from the public hearing regarding volunteer recruitment.

Wayne Schlaefli said that he had met with Chief Herbst to discuss ideas for volunteer recruitment. He showed a couple of posters and a brochure that he had created to help recruit volunteers. Mr. Schlaefli said that Chief Herbst did not really seem interested and gave reasons why he could not use the posters and brochure. Mr. Schlaefli said that he had talked to a number of the volunteers that have left the Brinnon Fire Department, and he asked the Commissioners if they had held official exit interviews with any of those volunteers.

Commissioner McEdwards responded that he had talked to some of the past volunteers, but that he had not had any official exit interviews.

Commissioner Garrison and Commissioner Smith both said that they had not held any official exit interviews either.

Wayne Schlaefli said that he had a brief conversation with Commissioner Smith about his reason for leaving the Volunteer Fire Department. Also, last month Mr. Schlaefli suggested putting an article about the new recruits in the newspaper. He wondered why nothing had been in the paper.

Chief Herbst said that he can not respond to why some people have left the department because he does feel he can discuss the reason. He knows that some volunteers had a problem with the policies, but that he just enforced the policies that were already in place when he was hired. Many of the policies were adopted in the 1990's when Chief Herod was here.

Joanie Hendricks asked Mr. Schlaefli if he had talked to the volunteers that are still with the Fire Department.

Wayne Schlaefli said that he had talked to some.

Chief Herbst said that when Mr. Schlaefli came to his office he asked about the Chief bending his requirements to accommodate volunteers. The District rules and requirements are based on state/government standards. Chief Herbst has a requirement that a volunteer is not allowed to respond to an emergency if they have consumed any alcoholic beverage in the last 12 hours.

Wayne Schlaefli asked if the Chief is held to the same standard. Mr. Schlaefli said that he could not be a volunteer because he has two glasses of wine every night.

Chief Herbst responded that he is held to the same standard. It is addressed in his employment contract.

Don Coleman said that he tried to communicate with the commissioners when Chief Herbst was hired, and the commissioners were unresponsive. He wrote to the commissioners regarding his concerns and received no response. Mr. Coleman said that he tried to work with the Chief for a year. He could not meet the call volume requirement. Mr. Coleman took a one year leave of absence after which he resigned. A year later he found out that the policy in regard to requirements had changed.

George Sickel read a letter to the Fire Commissioners requesting a copy of all written and email correspondence related to volunteer resignations since Fire Chief Bob Herbst was hired in 2005.

Eric Hendricks asked Mr. Sickel why he wanted the information. Why did he want to know?

George Sickel said he wants to go to the next step.

An audience member asked what the next step is.

Diane Garrison asked how we are supposed to move forward in a positive direction with all the negativity.

Judi Hyde said that it is important for the community to move forward. It might make some people uncomfortable, but we need to move forward so the necessary funding will be available to provide needed services to the community.

Don Coleman said that he agrees. We need to find out what the problem is, and people need to stop butting heads and move on. Mr. Coleman would hope that his experience could be used to help see the problem and use that information to move forward.

George Sickel said that he managed a 10 million dollar budget, and he would be embarrassed by how the Fire District handles their budget. He said that the Commissioners should use community members with financial background to prepare their budget.

Jacque Hartley said that the Fire Commissioners, Chief and Secretary sit up front and only talk to each other.

Bill Linden said that he has a hard time hearing the commissioners. He suggested that the head table be moved closer to the audience and that everyone sit facing the audience.

Dalila Dowd said that she appreciates the open public meeting. She supports the Fire Department just as she always has. The Fire Department shouldn't be attacked. Also, she has good hearing, but she did have trouble hearing some of the conversation at the head table. Also, an explanation of what is being voted on would be nice. The communication isn't always there, but she thinks we all want the best for the community. She said that the commissioners and chief are doing a good job.

Mike Hyde asked if the vouchers that are approved every month are individually checked.

Commissioner Smith responded that he looks at each individual invoice/voucher.

Chief Herbst said that he has been employed by the Fire District for almost 4 years.

During that time, people come and people go. He has always respected Don Coleman, and appreciates that Don will state what he thinks. Chief Herbst said that after he was hired the Fire District was in danger of losing its EMS license. He dreads coming to the Fire Commissioner meetings because he knows that at each meeting he will be crucified. Unlike some other elected officials, Fire Commissioners are personally held responsible for the financial welfare of the Fire District. Chief Herbst held up a file containing the Medical Program Directors investigation of Fire District #4, and a second file containing

emails to the MPD and Training Coordinator. The results of the investigation were positive. Chief Herbst said that he was hired as a full time fire chief working an average of 160 hours per month. He puts in close to 250 hours per month. Chief Herbst said that he does it because of his concern and care for the community of Brinnon. He is held accountable for his actions. His direct supervisor is the Chairman of the Board.

Anne Pittman said that her husband Clair was sick for six years. He was very sick, and many times there would be an aid call to 51 Terrance Lane. Chief Herbst was always there when the call came in taking care of Clair. If it wasn't for Chief Herbst there taking care of him, Clair would have died sooner. Thank you for all you do for us.

Eric Hendricks said that the Fire Department has 100% support of the Park Rangers at the State Park.

Sue Bond said that everyone has their own story. All the problems need to be put behind us and let go. The Chief has done all he can. Yes, he probably has offended some people along the way. The behind the scenes undermining is wrong.

Don Coleman said that he agreed with the last people to speak. We need to work together and fix the situation. If the Chief rubs people the wrong way maybe we should have a liaison.

Chief Herbst said that it has been discussed.

Commissioner Garrison said that we could not have asked for a better Fire Chief than Bob. Why do people have to tear things up? Let it go and move on from now.

Paul Lorenzen said it seems we have a hard time maintaining volunteers and wondered why.

Commissioner Garrison said that he has been here for 25 years, and people come and people go. There are many reasons—personalities, don't have the time, moving, health, burned out.

Wayne Schlaefli said that he only recently got involved. He initially came to a meeting to find out about the possible closure of the Duckabush Fire Station. Now he is only interested in the volunteers. He said that the Fire Chief needs his personnel skills enhanced.

Chief Herbst said that he knows that he does not have the best personnel skills. He understands that there is a problem. Chief Herbst said that EMT course requirements will be changing because the State will no longer be overseeing the EMT program. The course will be taught through the National Registry for EMT. The course will require an additional 36 hours as part of the training. It costs approximately \$5,000.00 to outfit a new volunteer. One bunker coat and pants is approximately \$1,800.00.

Commissioner Garrison apologized for his language and temper.

Sue Bond said that getting a new fire chief is like having a new football coach. There are adjustments. She asked George Sickel to drop his request for information.

George Sickel said he would like to have his request met to see both sides. George Sickel said that he would rescind his request for two months. He asked that the commissioners and chief be willing to work with and listen to people.

Commissioner McEdwards said that he is very willing to talk to and listen to the community.

Sue Bond said that in her experience you do not write a budget based on community opinion. The entity has a committee to create the budget.

Brinnon Volunteer Firefighter Association Secretary/Treasurer Ron Stephens said that the 2009 Budget is almost the same as the current budget.

George Sickel responded that there would be the same results as last year.

Brinnon Volunteer Firefighter Association President Sue Fresonke asked what's wrong with the results.

BVFF Association Secretary/Treasurer Ron Stephens said "we respond to all calls".

Dalila Dowd suggested that we recruit a Chaplain.

Commissioner Garrison thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner McEdwards seconded the motion. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Ware
District Secretary