

Whatcom County Fire District 4

Meeting Minutes of the Board of Commissioners

May 04, 2010

The regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners was held on the above date at the district office. Those who attended were as follows: Commissioners Mary Beth Neal, Steve Ness and Harry Andrews; Fire Chief Bill McLaughlin and Board Secretary Kris Parks, staff and members of the district.

Commissioner Ness called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

CONSENT AGENDA

A: Meeting Minutes

Approval of Minutes of the April 05, 2010 Special Meeting
Approval of Minutes of the April 07, 2010 Board Meeting
Approval of Minutes of the April 07, 2010 Special Meeting
Approval of Minutes of the April 07, 2010 Local Relief and Pension Meeting
Approval of Minutes of the April 18, 2010 Special Meeting
Approval of Minutes of the April 28, 2010 Special Meeting

Commissioner Ness moved to approve the meeting minutes. Commissioner Andrews seconded; motion passed.

B: Vouchers

Payments to the International Association of Fire Chiefs and Hughes Fire Equipment for shelves were explained to the Board by Chief McLaughlin.

Commissioner Neal moved to approve the vouchers. Commissioner Ness seconded; motion passed.

MONITORING FIRE CHIEF'S PERFORMANCE

ENDS POLICY 1.4 MONITORING REPORT

The Chief presented the monitoring report on the Ends policy 1.4 "Disaster Preparedness" in accordance with the monitoring schedule set forth in the Board policy.

BROADEST POLICY PROVISION:

The community is prepared for natural disasters.

CEO'S GENERAL INTERPRETATION:

The Chief submitted that this policy would be met if the community can expect continued fire and EMS services consistent with the expected needs should a disaster occur within the community; and that the community is aware of possible disasters and of the steps necessary to ensure their own protection.

REPORT:

The department is capable of full operation in the event of the most probable disasters, and of reduced operations in some possible disasters. The department did not respond to any disasters during the past year.

In no case can the department be entirely prepared for all possible events. Some events would be so catastrophic as to disrupt all infrastructure and make service delivery impossible. Those events are very unlikely, and the department instead has targeted the ability to respond to likely events, such as wind storms; and events with a moderate probability, such as volcanic eruption.

Certain identified shortfalls remain, as outlined in bold below. The Chief does not believe we can meet the shortfalls within the current resource levels. One exception to that is mutual aid training, which he believes we can improve over the coming year.

THE CHIEF REPORTS COMPLIANCE.

GENERAL INTERPRETATION:

For the public to be assured of continued emergency medical and fire response, the department has to have appropriate plans, supplies and support. These include the following:

Disaster Response SOG's: Standard Operating Guidelines on winter storms, flooding, wildfires, volcanic eruption, wind storms and earthquakes have all been issued to the fire personnel.

Training: All personnel have been trained on the SOG's and on personal preparedness.

Continuity of Government: A continuity chain of command policy has been established.

Mutual Aid: In the past year, the department has added automatic aid with 3 departments and has provided a record number of mutual aid responses. Assistance into the district also increased during the year. **One shortfall, however, is the reduction in mutual aid training that has happened, as relations between the training divisions have been strained at times.**

Mobilization: The department continues to participate in mobilization and is the leader in Whatcom County in this arena. In addition to the training and experience gained by our personnel from participating in response to other jurisdiction's emergencies, I am working to increase the availability of intra-region resource response. In the past year, a more effective county mobilization plan has been put into place, and 3 departments have joined the mobilization efforts.

Staffing: Our policies and SOG's include the ability to call back personnel as needed automatically.

Food: We now have 72 hours of food for 24 responders on hand.

Portable Water: We now have 72 hours of water for 24 responders on hand.

Supplies: We have cots and sleeping bags to support an increase in staffing to 20 personnel.

Utilities: We have backup electricity for stations 12 and 11. We will be adding backup power for station 13 this year. **We are vulnerable to a disruption in natural gas delivery to station 12.**

Fuel: We have adequate fuel on hand for our generators. **We do not have adequate fuel on hand for round the clock apparatus response past 24 hours.** We have multiple fuel suppliers to reduce the likelihood of supply disruption.

Supplies and parts: We have started stocking spare parts for the apparatus, including air and oil filters. We have added additional chainsaws, portable lighting and other commonly needed equipment. We have added sand and sandbags, and we now have snow removal equipment suitable for our own facilities. **We do not currently have spare tires for the apparatus.**

POLICY PROVISION #1: A. The Community has self-sufficiency knowledge necessary for response to natural disasters.

CEO's INTERPRETATION:

The Chief interprets this to mean that the public would be able to meet their own needs during probable events, such as wind storms, power outages, snow storms or flooding. As such, we would expect to see the following behaviors:

Residents are aware of possible hazards.

Residents know what resources are needed to maintain self sufficiency.

Residents have adequate supplies to be self sufficient for 72 hours.

Residents demonstrate the ability to respond appropriately during actual events.

REPORT:

Residents are aware of possible hazards. The public should be aware of the most likely hazards, as the district has endured windstorms, winter storms and flooding during the past two years. There is adequate information available about the risk of earthquakes, terrorist attacks and volcanic eruptions.

Residents do know what resources are needed to maintain self sufficiency. The primary responsibility for disaster preparedness education in Whatcom County is the Sheriff's office. The Fire Departments play a supporting role. Many of the residents have taken the sheriff's Community Emergency Response Team training that educates local residents about emergency preparedness. To date, CERT reports 39 classes have been offered in the county. **We have not conducted any surveys to determine overall preparedness levels beyond monitoring the Sheriff's activities.**

Residents have adequate supplies to be self sufficient for 72 hours. **Anecdotal evidence indicates that the community is probably not well prepared for extended power outages, food shortages or loss of water supplies.** Some of this shortfall is made up by the American Red Cross, which has pre-designated shelters within the district and has made some preparations for continuation of shelter, food and water. During the past events, we did not receive any requests for assistance or to respond to adverse effects from a failure of self sufficiency. It is the Chief's belief that the public is prepared for short term, likely events only.

Residents demonstrate the ability to respond appropriately during actual events. During the three events that occurred over the past two years, the actions of the public were largely appropriate. During the flooding, a significant number of residents filled and placed sandbags, resulting in the prevention of any damage in the flooding areas. Traffic accidents did not appreciably rise during the winter weather and we avoided any injuries from downed power lines.

THE CHIEF REPORTS COMPLIANCE.

Commissioner Ness moved to approve the motion to accept and approve the monitoring report 1.4.
Commissioner Andrews seconded; motion passed.

ENDS

Nothing at this time.

GOVERNANCE PROCESS

Membership Survey

Commissioner Ness informed that the district office will email the survey results to the members and that the district will conduct the same survey one year from now.

The Chief provided the Board with information regarding some budget changes.

Board Action Request: Engine Surplus

Chief McLaughlin provided info on the Board Action Request to the Board.

The Chief is recommending that Engine 13 be declared surplus as of June 15.

Commissioner Ness moved to approve the Board Action Request to declare Engine 13 surplus as of June 15 and leave the repair decisions up to the administration.

Commissioner Andrews seconded; motion passed.

Board Action Request: Award of Bids for Station 13

Chief McLaughlin explained the Board Action Request to the Board.

The Chief recommends that the Board award the bid for remodel of Station 13 to Arrow Construction.

The Board discussed the references and the timeline on the project.

Commissioner Ness moved to approve the motion of awarding the bid, with construction not starting any later than 60 days from today to Arrow Construction.

Commissioner Neal seconded; motion passed.

The Board directed the Chief to provide a monthly progress report to the Board.

BOARD SCHEDULE

The next board meeting is scheduled for June 7th at 12:00 p.m.

BOARD MEETING EVALUATION

Nothing at this time.

FIRE CHIEF'S OPERATIONAL UPDATE

Nothing at this time.

The Board provided information on the elimination of the Assistant Chief position.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Mary E. Neal, Commissioner

Kris Parks, Board Secretary

Motions and Directives:

Commissioner Ness moved to approve the meeting minutes. Commissioner Andrews seconded; motion passed.

Commissioner Neal moved to approve the vouchers. Commissioner Ness seconded; motion passed.

Commissioner Ness moved to approve the motion to accept and approve the monitoring report 1.4. Commissioner Andrews seconded; motion passed.

Commissioner Ness moved to approve the Board Action Request to declare Engine 13 surplus as of June 15 and leave the repair decisions up to the administration. Commissioner Andrews seconded; motion passed.

Commissioner Ness moved to approve the motion of awarding the bid, with construction not starting any later than 60 days from today to Arrow Construction. Commissioner Neal seconded; motion passed.

The Board directed the Chief to provide a monthly progress report to the Board.