

BENTON COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT #1
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Regular meeting of April 3, 2018.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was delayed due to Chief Click's participation at an active structure fire in the area. Chairman Morris called the regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners of Benton County Fire District No. 1 to order at 6:40 p.m. at 30004 S. Finley Road, Kennewick, Washington. In attendance at this meeting were Commissioner Houchin, Commissioner Morris, Commissioner Sleater, Fire Chief/District Secretary Click, and Financial Manager Paden-Lilly.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions to the agenda. At this time, Chairman Morris revised the order of the agenda to allow for the EMS Levy presentation to be given.

EMS Levy

Chief Click gave a presentation on emergency services provided by the Fire District, reviewing the following:

- The Fire District is a combination department with 90 volunteer, part-time and full-time firefighters serving 17,800 people over 320 square miles.
- Responds to an average of 1,300 calls per year for structural/wildland fires, emergency medical service, technical rescue, and hazardous materials response.
- Emergency services are funded through a fire levy of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value, which voters renew every six years.
- The District operates under a balanced budget, passing all financial and accountability audits with the state.
- Relies primarily on volunteer firefighters, saving taxpayers money, which frees up revenue for fire trucks, equipment and facility upgrades.
- Aggressively maintains fire trucks, facilities and equipment to extend the life
- Applies for grants and shares costs with neighboring agencies to make local tax dollars go further.
- Responded to 1,516 emergency calls in 2017 – 54% were EMS-related. EMS calls were 10% higher in 2017, than the previous year.
- 90% of EMS calls in the District require patient transports to a hospital.
- Relies on neighboring fire agencies to transport patients because the District does not own ambulances and cannot fund the service out of existing revenue.
- Relying on “mutual aid” ambulances may take longer to reach patients in an emergency and also impacts the resources that mutual aid partners have to serve their own communities. The Fire District wants to provide better service to the community and be a good partner to the other agencies.
- The Fire District is considering asking voters to approve a levy for Emergency Medical Service. The rate is capped at 50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value (or \$100 per year/ \$8.33 per month for a \$200,000 home). If approved, funds would be used to purchase, outfit and staff two ambulances. This would reduce response times by as much as seven minutes when a patient needs immediate care.

The Board then opened the meeting up to the audience for comments and questions. Seven guests were present, and the following questions and clarifications were asked:

- A resident asked if the Board already made a decision to place the EMS Levy on the ballot? No, the Board of Commissioners is still considering the EMS Levy and will decide at the April 17 meeting.
- A resident shared their tax statement for an acre lot with no structures on it that was assessed approximately \$900 in taxes, of which approximately \$80 was for fire protection services. She also owns other property that her residence is located on which would have a higher assessment for taxes.
- A resident shared their tax statement stating that they have a 1975 house on 2.25 acres that is assessed at approximately \$239,000. He feels taxes are too much already.
- A resident shared that they cannot afford any additional taxes; irrigation assessments have gone up and they do not want fire trucks to come for medical services.
- A resident stated they are being taxed right out of their shoes. They are not saying the District does not need to provide the service, but they cannot afford it.
- A resident mentioned that as land and property owners who have renters, they are packing the load for taxes, as many of the residents are voters but do not pay taxes.

A group discussion and question and answer session continued regarding alternative ways to provide EMS services that would be more affordable to the Finley residents. The overall feeling from the majority of the guests that were present, is they are not interested in paying an additional tax for ambulance services. Mr. Jim Gose requested a map indicating the boundaries for all six fire districts within Benton County. Ms. Sheila Thackham requested information on comparisons of EMS Levy's of other area fire districts.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED LOG

The correspondence received log was reviewed.

CORRESPONDENCE SENT

There correspondence sent was reviewed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Houchin made a motion to approve the March 20, 2018, minutes as submitted. Commissioner Sleater seconded the motion and the motion passed.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Fund Transaction Details

Presented to the Board were 2018 transactions #537 through #577. The transactions total \$58,050.52. General Fund \$48,941.90; Hazmat Fund \$7,726.39; Training Center Operating Fund \$1,174.69; SCBA Fund \$188.75 and Joint Agency Fund \$18.79. After a discussion, Commissioner Sleater made a motion to approve the vouchers. Commissioner Houchin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. The voucher registers are attached to these minutes and constitute a part thereof.

Transaction Summary Reports

The budget expenditure report was reviewed.

REPORTS

Commissioners, chief and staff reported the following:

- Commissioner Houchin reported that the March Hazmat meeting was cancelled due to a lack of a quorum.
- Commissioner Morris reported that the EMS Council met on Monday and a discussion was held regarding the possible need of holding additional EMT classes each year. One is held each year with the CBC program, but many applicants are not getting into that class. A committee was put together to identify needs and to review if the CBC program needs to be modified.
- There was no Safety Committee report.
- Chief Click reported the following:
 - The Benton County Commissioners are holding a special meeting on May 3, to discuss how to allocate the \$15 million reserve remaining in the public safety tax fund. The Benton County Fire Chief's plan to attend that meeting with a list of ideas that fire agencies might benefit from.
 - An emergency vehicle dealer held an ambulance demonstration at the District Office last week. The ambulance was the same specification that Franklin #3 purchased.
 - A presentation was given to area fire chiefs last week regarding the Spokane Freeman High School shooting. A very good discussion on lessons learned and where they go from here. An emphasis was placed on the importance of fire and police working together.
 - Area Chiefs are reviewing SeComm charges for services and looking at other possible assessment models. Dispatch consolidation should begin in August or September.
 - A new radio programming template is complete.
 - The PulsePoint Respond Program may be implemented in the next couple of months. The software will notify citizens who are trained in CPR and willing to assist, to be notified when someone nearby is having a cardiac emergency and may require CPR.

OLD BUSINESS

Item relocated to beginning of the agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

RFQ – Architect and Engineering Services

Chief Click shared that one RFQ was received for architectural and engineering consultants for the proposed remodel of Station 150; CKJT Architects. After a discussion, Commissioner Houchin made a motion to accept the consulting services of CKJT Architects for the proposed Station 150 remodel. Commissioner Sleater seconded the motion and the motion passed.

RFB – Lighting Upgrade Renovation

Captain Bush was assigned to the structure fire and unable to attend the meeting, so this item was tabled until the next board meeting.

RFB – Asphalt Project – Station 140

Captain Bush was assigned to the structure fire and unable to attend the meeting, so this item was tabled until the next board meeting.

Volunteer Firefighter Applications

This item was tabled until the next board meeting when physical results are available.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next Board of Commissioner meeting will be on April 17.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.