

BENTON COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT #1
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Regular meeting of July 6, 2021.

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Christenson called the regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners of Benton County Fire District No. 1 to order at 4:00 p.m. at 1811A S. Ely St. Kennewick, Washington. In attendance at this meeting were Commissioner Christenson, Commissioner Couch, Commissioner Jenkins, Fire Chief/District Secretary Click, Deputy Chief LoParco, and Executive Director Paden-Lilly.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Maintenance department retirement was added to old business and 2022 budget preparation was added to new business.

CORRESPONDENCE

The correspondence received log and correspondence sent was reviewed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Jenkins made a motion to approve the June 15, 2021, minutes as submitted. Commissioner Couch seconded the motion and the motion passed.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Fund Transaction Details

Presented to the Board were 2021 transactions #1358 to #1396. The transactions total \$198,327.66. General Fund \$56,841.65; Hazmat Fund \$6.50; Fire Training Center Operations Fund \$1,793.28; SCBA Fund \$4,105.08, Joint Agency Fund \$83.68 and Project Fund \$135,497.47. Commissioner Jenkins made a motion to approve the vouchers. Commissioner Couch seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. The voucher registers are attached to these minutes and constitute a part thereof.

Budget Expenditure Reports

The budget expenditure reports were reviewed.

REPORTS

Commissioners

Commissioner Christenson reported:

- The President announced a one-time pay raise for federal wildland firefighters to ensure they earn at least \$15 per hour this year.
- He attended a meeting of the Greater Columbia Accountable Community of Health. A presentation was given about community paramedicine, and he will forward the presentation to Chief Click for his review.

Fire Chief

Chief Click reported:

- Crews are surviving the extreme hot weather conditions.
- On the Fourth of July, the District responded to seven calls, six of them related to fireworks. A wildfire broke out in the Finley area and another in Badger Canyon.

- He met with Fire Marshal Clark Posey to discuss the possibility of restricting fireworks in the future based on current fire danger ratings.
- Because the rates for dispatching services are currently the same for small districts as they are for larger cities, the County Fire Chiefs are meeting this week to finalize a proposed amendment to the BCES cost formula.
- Mobilization fires are starting to pick up. Captain Nicholls just returned from a fire in Wenatchee and a strike team from this region was sent to Spokane this morning.
- An event is being planned at Station 170 on September 25 in honor of the 75th Anniversary of the District. This event would be an open house with a picnic, followed by an award ceremony for District members.
- The District' insurance broker contacted him to discuss possible increase in cost and coverage cuts for next year's premiums. He will research options and recommend a potential provider change based on cost and coverage.

Deputy Chief

Deputy Chief LoParco reported:

- The wildland fire season has been his number one project. An ice distribution program has been implemented to test the feasibility of keeping bags of ice on hand during the summer. It has been set up at Station 160 and so far, it is going well.
- In the coming months, he plans to conduct a thorough review of the safety program.

Training

Captain Nicholls reported that new application testing will take place this Saturday.

Approximately 12 people have confirmed their attendance, out of a total of 20 applicants.

Labor Representative

Captain Bibe reported that the labor group is hoping to meet with management in the next couple of weeks.

OLD BUSINESS

Facility Bond Project

As a result of project delays, little progress has been made on the Station 170 project. At his July 20 meeting with the A&E firm and Contractor, Chief Click will emphasize the importance of fine-tuning the landscaping and completing the groundwork prior to the event on September 25.

COVID-19 Impacts

Deputy Chief LoParco reported that the District's facility mask and social distancing requirements remain the same. The following Open Public Meeting Proclamation is now in effect:

In Person Meetings:

Effective June 30, 2021, you may return to operating in person public meetings without regard to capacity limitations. The following guidance was issued by the Governor's office:

- *Vaccine verification/negative testing: Recommended but not required for large indoor and outdoor events*
- *Physical distancing: No requirements*
- *Facial coverings For Members of the Public (see below for masking rules applicable to staff and commissioners): Not required for vaccinated individuals, children under 5, individuals with a medical or mental condition that precludes wearing a mask, Unvaccinated individuals are still*

required to wear masks. Based on this rule and the continuation of Proclamation 20.28 which removed the prohibition on placing conditions on attendance of public meetings, it is my opinion that you may, but are not required to, require proof of vaccination of members of the public that wish to attend your meetings without a mask. If you make this a requirement, unlike the rules for employees, you are not required to track or maintain copies of the public's vaccination status. Members of the public that refuse to comply or provide proof of vaccination status should be given the option of attending the meeting virtually (see below).

Updated L&I requirements for your employees, volunteers and commissioners are attached. The L&I guidelines detail options for fully vaccinated workers to go without a mask, methods for verification of worker vaccination status, choices workers have to continue to mask up and other updated guidance to prevent the spread of COVID-19 on the job and help employers meet their obligations to provide a safe and healthy workplace.

Virtual Meetings:

The lifting of the restrictions was not accompanied by a lifting of the State of Emergency or a modification of Proclamation 20.28-15. Accordingly, although you may resume your pre-pandemic meeting practices, subject to the L&I safe workplace rules, you are still required to provide a virtual meeting option.

Maintenance Department Retirement

At the April 6 Board Meeting, the Board approved hiring a firefighter/paramedic to fill the staffing vacancy created by the upcoming retirement of Maintenance Supervisor Schoenwald. The current Firefighter/Paramedic Eligibility List has been exhausted since then. Chief Click will meet with the Labor representatives to discuss the option of hiring from the current Firefighter Eligibility list, with a contingency timeframe for completing paramedic certification.

NEW BUSINESS

Captain Eligibility Test

Chief Click reported the captain testing has been completed. Three candidates passed the test, but only one meets all the prerequisites. The three candidates are: Ryan Chambers, Robert Moore, and Michael Pena. Following a discussion, Commissioner Couch moved approve the eligibility list. Commissioner Christenson seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

Chief Click will have a discussion with the Labor representatives regarding the rule-of-three hiring practice when there are not three eligible candidates.

2022 Budget Preparation

Executive Director Paden-Lilly presented information on tax levy rates and revenue sources for 2021, as well as the 2021 Budget document broken down by General Fund, Reserve Fund, Fire Training Center Funds, Custodial Funds, and Bond Funds. Commissioner Couch would like to schedule a special meeting for the first part of August to conduct a workshop on the budget for 2022. The Board will review the documents and determine a workshop date at the next regular meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next Board of Commissioner meeting will be on July 20, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.