

BENTON COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT #1
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Special meeting of August 29, 2023.

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Jenkins called the special meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners of Benton County Fire District No. 1 to order at 3:00 p.m. at 1811A S. Ely St. Kennewick, Washington in-person and via video-conference. In attendance at this meeting in-person were Commissioner Carpenter, Commissioner Jenkins, Executive Director Paden-Lilly, and Attorney Michelle Fossum. Commissioner Phillips joined the meeting via video-conference at 4:00 p.m.

An announcement was made that the meeting was being recorded.

Attorney Fossum announced that the Board of Fire Commissioners has issued a Statement of Formal Charges against Samantha Ward. These charges have been raised due to her alleged violations of the rules, regulations, or directives set forth by Benton County Fire District #1. Attorney Fossum summarized the Statement of Charges against Samantha Ward and stated that this was Ms. Ward's opportunity to respond to the allegations before a disciplinary decision was made.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Volunteer member Brandie Froberg provided comments in support of Samantha Ward.

DISCUSS A COMPLAINT AGAINST A PUBLIC OFFICER OR EMPLOYEE. RCW 42.30.110(I)(F)

Ms. Ward elected to respond to the Statement of Charges in open session and was allowed 30 minutes to present information related to the allegations. Union President Chad Blashill and Attorney William Edelblute also spoke on her behalf within the allotted timeframe. Ms. Ward also provided documents as part of her response.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Jenkins called a 20-minute executive session at 3:40 p.m. per RCW 42.30.110(1)(g) to evaluate the performance of a public employee and RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) to discuss litigation, potential litigation, or enforcement actions with legal counsel. At 4:00 p.m. the meeting was extended by 15 minutes. At 4:15 p.m. the meeting was extended by 10 minutes. The meeting was called back to order at 4:25 p.m.

POTENTIAL ACTION ITEMS

Potential Disciplinary action against a public employee

Commissioner Jenkins asked if there was a motion to be considered. Commissioner Carpenter moved to terminate the employment of Samantha Ward. Commissioner Jenkins seconded the motion. Commissioner Carpenter and Commissioner Jenkins voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed. As Commissioner Phillips was not present for Ms. Ward's response to the Statement of Charges he abstained from voting.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.