



Pierce County Fire District 13

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Minutes

Board of Fire Commissioners Regular Meeting

January 12, 2016

Present: Commissioners Zuluaga, Ballantyne, and Noll, Chief McCollum, Captain Wassall

Members of the Public and Staff: 3 plus guest speaker, Jay Stern with Hentschell Insurance

Commissioner Zuluaga called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM and led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Minutes:

Motion- A motion was made by Commissioner Ballantyne to approve the minutes of December 8, 2015.

Seconded: Noll

Passed

Vouchers:

*Motion-*A motion was made by Commissioner Ballantyne to approve vouchers #12675 through #12708 in the amount of \$6,991.32 for volunteer quarterly reimbursements.

Seconded: Noll

Passed

*Motion-*A motion was made by Commissioner Ballantyne to approve vouchers #12709 through #12746 in the amount of \$39,520.49 for payables.

Seconded: Noll

Passed

Motion- A motion was made by Commissioner Zuluaga to approve voucher #12747 for a deposit in the amount of \$20,265.40 for fire mobilization, flashover tuition and medical insurance reimbursement

Seconded: Ballantyne

Passed

Correspondence/Public Testimony:

1. Thank you note from St. Matthews Episcopal Church regarding our support of their recent auction.
2. Thank you note from Scott Peters at Edward Jones for our EMT services provided him.
3. Thank you note from Monica Watchie, Advisory Committee member with Thomas Jefferson High School for our support.

Special Reports and /or Standing Committees:

January 12, 2016 Chief's Report:

Calls: 19 calls in December. 12 EMS, 1 fuel, 5 service calls and 1 mutual aid with District 14. Last years total was 224 calls for service

Staffing and Recruiting: Academy is going fine. Into testing phase of our academy which is always a challenge. Currently with 6 in Buckley academy and planning for a late summer academy here.

Financial Report: Pierce County Budget and Finance trial balance sheet is submitted for your review. It shows we have \$107,020.21 balance after this months payables.

Training: The 2016 training calendar is on the schedule. We train in a three year cycle to be in compliance with the WAC as well as the ongoing EMT training we do.

SS911: Meeting was last Friday. SS911 was established a regional dispatch center combining Fire Com, Tacoma Fire, and Puyallup dispatch centers. Early in the process the City of Tacoma and Pierce County insisted on keeping the radio systems used for dispatch as they are part of their critical infrastructure. Pierce Transit and Pierce County combined to form a radio network named CCN while the City of Tacoma kept theirs separate. It is not very clear how much it will cost to maintain these networks but everyone involved knew that there would be a cost associated with communications. Most radio users anticipated a cost of somewhere around \$25 - \$30 per radio per month. The City of Tacoma came up with a cost of \$45.52 per radio per month. Members of the Tacoma user group voiced there opinion that this seemed high and asked SS911 to act on our behalf. The SS911 policy board agreed to pay the user fee down to the \$30.00 per month per radio figure for 2016. Over the last six months an MOU has been negotiated and should be signed in February or March. The City of Tacoma submitted a user agreement to me for review and signature and I have refused to sign it as it has no language referencing the MOU. It states that we agree to pay the \$45.52 amount. Although not very happy about the refusal they have accepted a letter of intent to stay on the system pending the signing of the MOU. The CCN user agreement was atrocious and rejected by all agencies who use their system and the Chiefs Association.

Due to the cost of the Tacoma Radio System we took a hard look at our radio usage and shut down 2 base stations and 7 portables. We can make this cut without impacting user safety. As a group, the Operations Board has asked to have a seat at the table to examine the costs for 2016 with both the City and County radio group. I will be forwarding the user agreement and the MOU to the Board as soon as the MOU has been signed.

After further discussion, Commissioner Zuluaga recommended the Commissioners send a letter to the policy board of South Sound 911 regarding the split radio/dispatch costs.

Good of the Order:

Annual dinner this Friday at the BPIC.

Old Business:

1. Progress report on business model and work plan: Ongoing.
2. Chief's Review: Commissioner Zuluaga shared that the commissioners felt Chief McCollum did an excellent job and his contract has been extended for 3 years.

New Business:

1. **Jay Stern** with Hentschell & Assoc. Insurance gave a review of our current insurance coverage, which consists of \$4 million dollar general and management liability coverage (\$1 million primary limit and \$3 million excess limit). Commissioner Ballantyne asked about our significant event and Commissioner's coverage. Jay explained general liability includes such things as slips, falls, injuries and commercial auto liability (could include one of our vehicles or one of our volunteers using their own car to get to the scene).

Management liability covers the commissioners and includes employment practices. Defense coverage is also included in the policy, which is over and above the \$4 million dollar coverage. We have guaranteed replacement cost coverage on our property, and agreed upon value on firefighter equipment. Jay felt our coverage is sufficient.

We also have earthquake insurance with a \$95,000 deductible (\$51,000 Browns Pt. Station 77 and \$44,000 Dash Pt. Station 76). Jay thinks there could be some federal money available if a serious earthquake occurs. Commissioner Ballantyne concurred.

Commissioner Ballantyne asked if a lawsuit could be extended to Pierce County. Chief McCollum explained that Fire Districts act as an independent entity with the ability to levy taxes to pay for themselves.

Commissioner Noll asked about the time we have kept a \$4 million limit. Jay indicated we have had this limit for about 5 years. The Commissioners discussed reviewing this in the future to consider increasing. Per Jay the cost is approximately \$750 per year for each million up to \$5 million, and then drops to approx. \$500 per year above \$5 million.

Commissioner Noll brought up that EMS is our biggest liability. The Chief shared that we have kept our primary functions as fire & EMT services. We offer transport services only in EMS situations where ambulances are not available due to a high number of calls.

Commissioner Ballantyne asked about a Loss Control Review. Jay shared the insurance company will send out if requested. Online training is also available. We will review.

2. **Seismic review of Station 77:** Commissioner Ballantyne is a seismic engineer and recently reviewed the fire station doors at Station 77 with the Chief. Doors can rack/twist during an earthquake preventing opening.

***Motion-** A motion was made by Commissioner Ballantyne to seek a Structural Engineer consultant for a seismic study on Station 77.*

***Seconded:** Noll*

Passed

3. **Funding:** Commissioner Zuluaga brought up the fact that we used enterprise monies (monies from wildland fire participation and academies) to pay bills. The levy amount is down from property tax losses due to property value declines and the 1% cap. He asked if we need to look at increasing our levy to reflect the true cost of operating Fire District 13. The Chief replied that to maintain an adequate level of service, we need to take a serious look at a levy lid lift. The Chief will reach out to Pierce County for assistance. These are typically presented in the August primaries. Commissioner Zuluaga suggested we continue the levy discussion at next month's Commissioner meeting.
4. **Captain Hoffman:** Commissioner Zuluaga recognized our prior Captain's (Chris Hoffman's) attendance at the meeting. The Commissioner has requested feedback and insights from Captain Hoffman due to his tenure with the department (almost 6 years). Captain Hoffman has completed and will email it to Commissioner Zuluaga.
5. **Website:** Commissioner Noll wanted to know if there is more we felt we could do to disseminate information to the public, and increase public awareness. Commissioner Ballantyne reiterated the importance of more public outreach. It was discussed that a volunteer firefighter, Jude Courmier, currently posts to the department's website. As Commissioner Noll has website experience, the Chief will arrange a meeting between Commissioner Noll, Jude Cormier and himself.

Announcements:

The next regular meeting will be February 9, 2016 at 9:00 AM.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 11:21 AM

Approved By:

Chairman Zuluaga

Commissioner Ballantyne

Commissioner Noll

Fire Chief/District Secretary