

**SOUTH WHIDBEY FIRE/EMS
SPECIAL MEETING
5579 Bayview Road, Langley, Washington
April 24th, 2020 – 10:00 AM**

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/130035077>

Minutes

Attendance: Chairman Mestemacher, Vice Chairman Noblet, Commissioner Metz, Chief Palmer.

In Audience: FF/EMT Christopher Turner, FF/EMT Robbie Husom, Sherrye Wyatt, Deputy Chief Jon Beck, Vicki Lange, Michael O'Brien, Wanda Grone, two unknown callers.

- I. **Call to Order.** Chairman Mestemacher called the meeting to order at 10:06AM.
- II. **Approval of Agenda.** Commissioner Noblet made a motion to approve the agenda as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Metz.
- III. **Public Input.**
 - a. Wanda Grone, Island County Treasurer - asked the Board to please identify themselves when they speak. The Board agreed to do so.
- IV. **Consent Agenda** - All matters listed within the Consent Agenda have been distributed to each member of South Whidbey Fire/EMS's Board of Commissioners for reading and study. They are considered to be routine, and will be enacted by one motion of the Commissioners with no separate discussion. If separate discussion is desired, that item may be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the Regular Agenda by request.
 - a. Approval of Minutes
 - i. Regular Meeting on March 12th, 2020
 - ii. Special Meeting on April 16th, 2020
 - b. Finance Officer's Reports –
 - c. Monthly Vouchers— \$301,913.60

Commissioner Metz made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda; Commissioner Noblet seconded. Motion carried.

- V. Unfinished Business –
 - a. Levy Lid Lift discussion.

Chief Palmer confirmed with the Commissioners that they received the most recent copy of the lid lift resolution provided by the District's attorney, Brian Snure. The Commissioners confirmed that they did receive the document via email. Chief Palmer stated that the only changes made since the last resolution was supplied is that this document asks for .30 cents per \$1000 of assessed valuation, and asks to include an inflator based on CPI. This will help us balance out and keep the District in a better position. Our inflation costs over the years have increased significantly, and the real cost to us is the 12-14% call volume increase since 2012.

Chief Palmer stated that we've had a reduction in volunteers over the years, granted our current volunteers are working extremely hard, and this levy will allow the District to staff one engine 24/7.

SWFE is a first responder agency - we do not transport patients. We have a very good working relationship with the hospital. The department maintains a contract with the hospital to help us replenish our medical supplies. The District also services the highest age group on the island.

SWFE also has a very strong maintenance program on apparatus, thanks to Deputy Chief Jon Beck. Because of that, we have been able to extend the life of our apparatus - our oldest is 26 years old. We are working hard at following guidelines from the Washington State Ratings Bureau (WSRB) to keep current and improve our insurance rating. Chief Palmer stated that we are at a critical need to replace our MERVS as we put a lot of miles on them - they are our medical response vehicles.

Commissioner Noblet asked Chief Palmer - what if we are not effective at passing the lid lift?

Chief Palmer replied that we could be facing longer response times by not being able to staff an engine 24/7. We will also have to look into cutting staff. We will also look at all of our contracts and see what reductions can be made, and operate on a maintenance-only budget.

Chief Palmer stated there is a lot of pressure on the volunteers right now as they all have day jobs, and we are currently only staffed 7am-7pm, Monday-Friday. They often stand volunteer shifts alone, and some responses have critically low response staffing. Chief Palmer does not see the need for a large, full career department, nor is he trying to get us there. He does see the need for 24/7 staffing though, to support the volunteer response and relieve pressure on volunteers.

Chairman Mestemacher opened the floor to public comment.

Barry Pomeroy - Mr. Pomeroy thanked the Commissioners and Chief for putting the levy lid lift together. Mr. Pomeroy would like to add that the workload and the stress levels have doubled for him during the pandemic, both here as a volunteer at SWFE and his career department on the mainland.

Commissioner Noblet stated that it is absolutely apparent that the District needs the lid lift to provide our services - if not, lives are at stake, even though we are in a difficult economical time right now.

- b.** Resolution 2020-09 Levy Lid Lift. A motion was made by Commissioner Noblet to pass Resolution 2020-09 Levy Lid Lift; Commissioner Metz seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. New Business –

- a.** Resolution 2020-10 Warrant Cancellation. Commissioner Metz made a motion to approve Resolution 2020-10, Commissioner Noblet seconded. Motion carried.

VII. Announcements:

VIII. Comments from Commissioners. Chairman Mestemacher confirmed with Chief Palmer that we will be conducting the next meeting on the regularly scheduled date of May 14th via GoTo Meeting; Chief Palmer confirmed.

IX. Executive Session. None

X. Action taken as result of Executive Session: None

XI. Conclude. Chairman Mestemacher concluded the meeting at 10:47AM.

Sarah Pedersen,
District Secretary