

**YAKIMA COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 4
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
September 27th, 2021**

The meeting convened at 4:00 pm at East Valley Fire Station 40. Those present via Zoom were Commissioner David Ramynke, Commissioner Les Riel, Commissioner Ben St. Mary, Admin Director Jenifer Huitt, Lieutenant McDonald, FF Reeves and; at Station 40 were, Fire Chief Dale Hille and District Secretary Katelynn Hogan.

Commissioner Riel called the meeting to order at 1600.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Riel amended the agenda to include an executive session, making Review of Drafted Policies 6. A. and the executive session 6. B. under new business. The agenda was approved as amended. Chairman Ramynke made a motion, Commissioner Riel seconded unanimously.

LIMITED OPEN PUBLIC INPUT for items NOT on the Agenda – Public comment for items that are on the agenda are allowed as the item comes up for discussion during the meeting.

Commissioner Riel opened up discussion for public attending the meeting.

Lieutenant McDonald vocally presented his appeal letter. He expressed he is very dedicated to getting back into shape to be able to return to work. He expressed if his leave was approved it would accommodate him to do so. LT McDonald's Physical therapist has noted he's making great progress.

Commissioner Riel asked Lt McDonald because he has it written out to send his appeal statement to the board and the District Secretary. Lt McDonald agreed and the meeting continued.

CONSENT AGENDA

- a. **SECRETARY'S REPORT**
 - Fund balance as of August 31st, 2021
- b. **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**
 - September 13th, 2021 BOC Regular Meeting Minutes
- c. **CLAIMS REQUESTS FOR APPROVAL**

Claims Requests Fire	\$	10,291.22
Claims Requests EMS	\$	734.80
Total Claims	\$	11,026.02
- d. **CORRESPONDENCE**
 - NOTICE – WSP Contractor Vaccine Requirement Contract #K14728
 - CHMELIK SITKIN & DAVIS Hourly fee increase effective January 01, 2022
- e. **CHIEF'S REPORT** – None

Commissioner St. Mary made a motion to a approve the consent agenda as submitted items a-d as submitted. Chairman Ramynke seconded motion carried unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Vaccination mandate exemption requests / accommodations discussion

FC Hille explained the district has received two exemption requests from the vaccination mandate. One from a career FF Avery Rooks for a religious exemption and one from Volunteer Firefighter Kyle Schlotfeldt for a medical exemption. The religious one has been looked at by an attorney and the attorney feels that this is a valid exemption request. As well FC Hille reviewed the medical exemption request from Volunteer Kyle Schlotfeldt and equally feel that his is too a valid exemption request. FC Hille encouraged the board to follow and accept the exemption requests as they were sent out. Commissioner Riel noted he is in favor of the exemptions but

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would also like to know what type of Hardship this could put on the district and how the district will make accommodations in the future. FC Hille stated once the board reviews the exemptions and has verified, they're valid. Then a discussion on accommodations and weather they would be allowed by the fire district would happen. If so, what would those accommodations be per Commissioner Riel. He addressed the rest of the board to see if there is any other discussion or motion to accept the listed exemptions? Chairman Ramynke stated he reviewed both and is in agreeance that both requests are valid exemptions. Chairman Ramynke made a motion to approve the requests for exemption from both Career FF Rooks and Volunteer FF Kyle Schlotfeldt. Commissioner St. Mary seconded and Motion carried unanimously.

FC Hille stated we now need to look at accommodations, mentioning he has been looking at what other fire districts around the state have been doing. The accommodations range from no accommodations being required to extraneous PPE 24 hours a day while a person is in the station while on duty. Even then with the accommodations those people don't have a clear direction or vision as to what that looks like when actively working on a fire scene or something of that nature. Exemption requests have to be applied for on an annual basis, this is not a blanket exemption. FC Hille listed multiple reasons that he feels display why accommodations would be a hardship on the district. For example, appropriate PPE required of other FF while working with unvaccinated individual when they cannot wear that PPE. People assigned to a rehab unit during a structure fire when changing bottles on an FF cannot wear high levels of PPE, or taking vitals on unvaccinated individual while on a structure fire. Other reasons listed were disinfecting living surfaces while unvaccinated individual is in station. Working in a public or private interaction setting while having to wear high levels of PPE diminished the ability to communicate clearly and install confidence as a safe and proactive responder. Having to wear PPE that is not fire rated on the scene of a wildfire increases the risk of the firefighter for injury, there are no masks made of that sort that are fire resistant. Fire ground operations require clear and unobstructed ability to send radio traffic and other means of communication. Firefighters function in a team approach in all aspects of their job with no reasonable methods to have one member separated from the others in everything they do throughout their daily work. Financial burden of PPE expense for the unvaccinated Firefighter as well as testing measures. Cost of personnel time to disinfect all surfaces in the station, vehicles after every shift or response. The threat of a covid outbreak with in the department due to an unvaccinated member creates devastating effect and creates an undue hardship on the district and unacceptable risk. FC Hille mentioned these risks were discussed with all the captains in the executive meeting and they all agreed this would create an undue hardship on the fire district and in its operational duties. Commissioner Riel asked FC Hille to forward bullet points to the board to be able to give this issue more thought and be able to make a final decision later. FC Hille asked if no accommodations be the choice of the board that we place people on a recall list for hire for six months from the date of separation instead of a LOA. For a career person that mean if in that six month the law changes to where you don't have to be vaccinated or the member decides to become vaccinated same thing would apply for volunteers they would be called and asked if they would like to fill any vacancy. FC Hille stated trying to figure out who will make sure everything is sanitized and who will monitor if the accommodations are being followed is a hardship on the district. Chairman Ramynke stated it is not reasonable for a 24/7 department with limited resources to make accommodations. FC Hille explained there are many unknowns if granting accommodations for example how and when will a test be administered, what if Covid-19 tests become unavailable when the need is in high demand? Commissioner Riel asked that Chiefs bullet points get emailed out to the board, to do more research on this and explained a final decision doesn't need to be made at this point. Mentioning the board could possibly hold a special meeting on October 11th. FC Hille explained there is potential that if somebody knows that they

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aren't going to grant accommodations then they could potentially go get vaccinated, however October 11th would then be too late. FC Hille stated October 4th would be the absolute last day to get the Johnson and Johnson shot. FC Hille asked what the board going to do for the best of the fire districts from now and for the future to pose the best outlook for all involved. Commissioner Ramynke stated the board needs to contemplate this for a few days and hold a special meeting to make a final decision on this. The rest of the board agreed. The decision was made by the board to hold a special meeting at 1500 on Thursday the 30th of October.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Review Drafted Policies

- 04.01.01 Job Description - District Fire Chief
 - 04.01.03 Job Description - Captain
 - 04.01.04 Job Description - Director of Training & Compliance
 - 04.01.05 Job Description - Lieutenant
 - 04.01.06 Job Description - Firefighter
 - 04.01.07 Job Description - Recruit Firefighter
 - 04.01.08 Job Description - Support Personnel
 - 04.01.10 Job Description - Summer Maintenance
 - 04.01.11 Chaplain Policy
 - 05.01.01 Budget Preparation and Adoption
 - 05.01.02 Authorization of Spending of Department Funds
 - 05.01.03 Petty Cash Fund
 - 05.01.04 Capital Expenditure Plan
 - 05.01.05 District Bank Accounts
 - 05.01.06 Reserve Fund Accumulation
 - 05.01.07 Donations and Contributions
 - 05.01.08 Credit Card Accounts-Revolving Accounts
 - 05.02.01 Charging for Services
 - 05.02.02 Cash Receipting
 - 05.03.01 Warrant Preparation and Approval
 - 05.04.01 Monthly Financial Reports
 - 05.05.01 Payroll
- Chairman made a motion to adopt the drafted policies listed under New Business item 'A' Review Drafted Policies, policy 04.01.01 Job Description - District Fire Chief through 05.05.01 Payroll. Commissioner St. Mary seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Executive Session Per – RCW 42.30.110 (1)(i), "potential litigation" means matters protected by RPC 1.6.

Commissioner Riel announced that all board members, FC Hille and DS Hogan would go into executive session at 4:40 till 5:00 and they would let anyone else know if they needed more time. The Executive Session ended at 5:00 and the Regular BOC Meeting reconvened. Commissioner Riel stated the board wasn't going to make any final decision at this time and that there will be a special meeting Thursday September 30th at 3:00 p.m. to take action on Sean McDonalds request for a six-month extension to his leave of absence.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Riel stated the fire commissioner association would be putting together a levy committee made up of business people and fire people. He stated this has to go through majority.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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FC Hille sold the rescue informing the board that the check is in the safe and the buyer will arrive Tuesday Morning at 7:00 a.m. to pick it up.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

FC Hille received two vouchers for two new windshields that needed replaced. The district will be getting that money back which is about \$1,000.00 because we have full auto glass coverage.

FC Hilles wife Paula volunteered to come in and help out DS Hogan who gets a little overwhelmed with some of the task-oriented jobs like typing meeting minutes. Commissioner Riel explained there had been past issues a previous chief's wife coming in to help out. Things were going missing and other things were being taken home. FC Hille mentioned his wife just offered to help take the stress off of DS Hogan. Commissioner Riel stated first we would have to have some sort of volunteer relevance statement that states nothing leaves the fire station, no documentation no nothing. No confidential documentation would be made accessible either. Commissioner Riel has no problem with Paula Hille volunteering to help out in the office with those exceptions. Commissioner Ramynke wants more time to think this through due to past experiences and mentioned a broader discussion could be had as to where we are going down the road. Stating DS Hogan isn't going to be here everyday weather its vacation or whatnot.

FC Hille stated that by the next board meeting he should be able to give the board the time line for the career hiring process.

SIGNING OF DISTRICT DOCUMENTS

The documents will be held for signature at a later date due to OPMA restrictions.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING – Monday, November 11th, 2021 at 4:00 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Ramynke made a motion to adjourn. There being no other business Chairman Ramynke adjourned the meeting at 5:08 pm.



Chairman David Ramynke



Commissioner Les Riel

Attest:



Vice-Chairman Ben St. Mary



District Secretary Katelynn M Hogan