

NEWMAN LAKE FIRE & RESCUE
Spokane County Fire District No. 13
Minutes for October 17, 2024
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Fire Commissioners of Spokane County Fire Protection District No. 13 met on October 17, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. at Station No. 1, 9324 N Starr Rd., Newman Lake, Washington.

ROLL CALL

Board: Commissioners Eileen Weyrauch, Teresa Phelps, and Ben Kaiser
Others Present: Chief Daron Bement, Captain Josh Ambach, Secretary Robin Harbin, Fire Auxiliary Representative Faye LeGrand and community member Dave Pfeiffer

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda consisted of the meeting minutes for September 19, and October 5, 2024; Financial Reports; Approval of October 2024 Warrants #12264 - #12303 in the amount of \$47,543.16; Payroll Taxes in the amount of \$5,753.47; and DRS Pension in the amount of \$2,786.70. Commissioner Kaiser motioned to accept the consent agenda; Commissioner Phelps seconded; Chair Weyrauch called for the vote, which passed unanimously.

AUXILIARY REPORT

Faye LeGrand reported the Fire Auxiliary balance is: \$12,708.04
Breakfast with Santa is scheduled for Saturday, December 7, from 9AM-12PM. Set up will begin on Friday, December 6, at 6PM, primarily setting up the training room with all of the gift selections. Captain Josh Ambach and Resident Firefighter Connor Hunnel attended the last Fire Auxiliary meeting. The Auxiliary approved the purchase of 25 zippered jackets for firefighters, (17 now and the remaining after firefighters complete their probationary period.)

CORRESPONDENCE

Secretary Harbin presented the LG Warranty for the new HVAC system installed in the resident side of Station 1. She will contact Larry Andrews of Andrews Mechanical to clarify the statement in the warranty regarding the time period covered – from date of manufacture or date of installation.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT by Chief Daron Bement

Calls/Training/Staffing/Apparatus/Facilities:

The management team continues to work on the final drafts of the 2025 budget. Chief Bement and Captain Josh Ambach participated in the Staff Ride at Little Big Horn the first week of October. Captain Josh Ambach and Lieutenant Carleen VanDerostyne will attend the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland October 20-25. Chief Bement and Captain Josh Ambach will complete Fire Investigation training at Spokane City Fire the last week of October and have been invited to attend a 40-hour IAAI Accredited Fire Investigator class at SVFD December 2-6, 2024. Volunteer Firefighter, Andrea Licari, who is currently earning her arson investigation degree, will also be attending the Fire Investigator class at SVFD, which is being offered to us free of charge.

We had 21 emergency incidents in September, an increase from 16 in September 2023. Year to date calls total 185, an increase from 172 at this time last year. We have already exceeded the total of 180 calls in 2023 with a record number of calls.

Without advertising, we have brought on a total of five Resident Firefighters. One is currently living at the station, with the other four planning to move in by the end of the month. The old workout room is being set up to house two residents which will leave one of the dorm rooms available for non-resident volunteers or duty officers who may be covering a night shift at the station.

We have brought on fourteen new volunteers, including the four new residents, and have separated three volunteers who were not meeting requirements. We will need to purchase a pair of structure fire boots right now but can hold off on purchasing the needed wildland fire gear until next year.

September training included Apparatus Maintenance, Hose Lay & Hydrants, Pump Proficiency Annual Testing, Live Fire, and EMS – Mega Code Scenario.

CAPTAIN'S REPORT by Captain Josh Ambach

We have again submitted a grant application for a DNR surplus engine and should know if we will be awarded one by the end of November 2024.

We have been awarded a grant through DNR to host a Clean Green day funded through Firewise. DNR will provide an excavator and three dumpsters for the Clean Green event. Chair Weyrauch stated it will be important to communicate that this grant is the reason for holding a separate Clean Green event from the annual Newman Lake Property Owners Association clean-up day.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2025 BUDGET PROJECTIONS – DRAFT No. 2:

Secretary Harbin presented the second draft of the 2025 Operating Budget which shows the projected \$769,000 Regular Levy plus the projected \$231,000 EMS Levy for a total projected 2025 tax revenue of \$1,000,000. The proposed Operating Budget items were presented by line item along with a summary page by department.

2025 Proposed Salary Schedule - DRAFT:

Chief Bement presented a preliminary draft of the 2025 salary schedule. Previous years' salary schedules included a 5% step increase as well as a 2% COLA for a total increase of 7%. The proposed 2025 step increase was dropped to 2% with a 3% COLA for a total increase of 5% rather than 7%. This adjustment will better accommodate the possibility of hiring a needed full-time firefighter Training Officer. Secretary Harbin stated that the salary schedule does not reflect taxes and benefits, which are increasing yearly, especially health insurance. Taxes and benefits are an additional 40-43% of an employee's salary.

Training Officer – Job Description & Job Posting DRAFT:

Chief Bement presented drafts of a job description and a job posting for the proposed Training Officer position. The full-time firefighter Training Officer position would fit into the 2025 budget at a proposed \$70,000 annual salary. The posting would be internal with IFSAC instructor qualifications required. Commissioner Kaiser expressed concern that we would have to let this position go if the EMS Levy is not renewed next year. Although the Regular Levy will be approximately \$792K in 2026, without renewal of the EMS Levy, the 2026 budget will be less than

the 2025 budget by at least \$200K. Commissioner Phelps expressed the same concern about bringing on a full-time Training Officer before renewing the EMS Levy. All commissioners agreed that the position is necessary. Chair Weyrauch asked Chief Bement to prepare ways to make the Training Officer position work. The topic will be revisited next month.

EMS Levy Renewal Due in 2025:

Secretary Harbin reported we are the only fire district to have an EMS Levy renewal on the ballot in 2025. To limit ballot costs, which can range from several thousand to over ten thousand dollars, it will be best to place the EMS Levy renewal on the ballot in August 2025. There should be sufficient entities on the August ballot to help share the cost. Captain Josh stated that our call volume is primarily EMS. We began getting the word out about the upcoming EMS Levy renewal at our recent Open House. Attending community members seem to understand the importance of maintaining EMS services and equipment.

NEW BUSINESS

Schedule the November Public Budget Meeting:

The November Public Budget Meeting is being held in the evening to accommodate the work schedules of community members who may wish to attend. The 2024 Public Budget Meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, November 19, at 6:30 p.m. Secretary Harbin will post the meeting announcement on the building, website, and Facebook page.

November Commissioner Meeting Date Change for Timely Accounts Payable:

RESOLUTION 2024-10 A One-Time Change to the Regular Meeting Time

Secretary Harbin explained that bill payments and paychecks would be late if the commissioner meeting was to be held on the usual third Thursday in November due to the Thanksgiving Holiday and the County warrant processing schedule. She presented Resolution 2024-10 to make a one-time change to the regular meeting time in November 2025 to 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 13. After reviewing Resolution 2024-10, Commissioner Kaiser motioned to approve Resolution 2024-10; Commissioner Phelps seconded the motion; Chair Weyrauch called for the vote, which passed unanimously. Robin will post the meeting announcement on the building, website, and Facebook.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Dave Pfeiffer said it has been nice to drive by the station and see cars here all night. He asked if the resident firefighter program will continue in perpetuity. Chief Bement replied that it will with the renewal of the EMS Levy this next year. Commissioner Kaiser stated it's typical for departments to have a constant rotation of residents. Chief Bement doesn't foresee a lack of interested resident firefighters in the future and expressed what a benefit it is to have so many young recruits with strong backs and minds set on learning.
- Faye LeGrand commented that the EMS Levy renewal has historically been successful. It's all about informing the community of what it does and why it's needed.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

- Secretary Harbin will reserve four rooms for the 2025 Northwest Leadership Seminar scheduled March 5-7, 2025 in Portland, Oregon, to be attended by Chief Bement and all three commissioners. Chair Weyrauch is the only commissioner interested in attending the 2025 WFCA Conference in Tulalip, Washington next year; Robin will reserve a room as soon as reservations open up.

- Chief Bement reported we received official notification that, unfortunately, we were not awarded either of the federal AFG grants applied for this year.
- Captain Josh stated all IV supplies are back-ordered due to the major suppliers being wiped out by the hurricane.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

Eileen Weyrauch
Eileen Weyrauch, Chairperson

11-13-24
Date

Robin Harbin
Robin Harbin, District Secretary

11-13-2024
Date