



Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting Minutes December 14, 2023

McLane Black Lake Fire Department
Board of Fire Commissioners
December 14, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Dale Putnam of District 9 Board of Fire Commissioners called the meeting to order at 1801 hours. Commissioners Dale Putnam, Len Albert, Mark Thompson, Mark Campeau and Jason Foust (virtual), Chief Leonard Johnson, Assistant Chief Chris Patti, Division Chief - Logistics Josh Ambrose, Business Operations Director Brett Warwick, Board Secretary Tom McBride, Captain Casey Sobol, Firefighter/EMT Anthony De' Aguiar, Firefighter/EMT Evan Pulse, and Firefighter/EMT Brian Amren attended the regular meeting held in person and via the virtual Zoom platform using the link posted on the Fire District's website.

BOARD FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

The Board for Volunteer Firefighters met prior to the Board of Commissioners meeting.

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

None. The agenda was approved as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT & VISITING SPEAKERS

New Fire District Volunteer Firefighter/EMT Spencer Kirk attended and introduced himself to the Board.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. *Approval of Minutes:*

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting on November 9, 2023 and minutes of the Special Meeting on November 27, 2023; the motion carried.

2. *Approval of Vouchers and Payroll:*

A motion was made and seconded to approve vouchers and payroll in the amounts listed below in items a through c; the motion carried.

- a. General Fund 6690 \$518,787.81;
- b. EMS/Apparatus Replacement Fund 6694 \$4,154.83;
- c. SORT Fund 6699 \$11,612.40.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Chief & Admin 2024 Salary Review

Chief Johnson presented a proposed new wage scale for Fire District employment positions not covered by the new Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). The new wage scale generally tracks the same increase rates by percent as that of the CBA. A motion was made and seconded to approve the new wage scales. Chair Putnam moved to table the motion to allow for additional review of the proposed new wage scale prior to consideration of the motion.

The Board returned to consideration of the motion; the motion carried.

2. Volunteer Reimbursement Policy (PPG# 2860) - Revision

Chief Johnson presented a new policy for Reimbursement to Volunteer Firefighters. The new policy will use units of service instead of time for measurement. This will allow for measurements more consistent with the minimum wage and other legal authorities. The new policy will allow for reimbursement of additional compensation, result in more frequent payments to volunteers, add more flexibility for credits, and encourage additional volunteer time.

Commissioner Campeau asked for confirmation that the new policy would still provide for training and skill development for volunteers.

Commissioner Albert observed that a purpose of the new policy is to reimburse volunteers for expenses incurred, and asked why there are different rates for different positions and experience. The Chief explained that the new policy is consistent with current IRS authorities and is designed to encourage volunteers to progress through promotions in the system.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the new policy; the motion carried.

STAFF REPORTS:

1. *Finance/Administration:*

Finance:

This month the Fire District's largest expenses applied to vehicle maintenance repair, knox boxes, fuel tank refill, Fall/Winter newsletter, and legal services to conclude the 2023-2025 CBA. Payroll and benefits showed a 5% increase after the CBA wage increase and overtime coverage. At the end of this pay and claim cycle, the District has utilized approximately 83% of its general fund expense budget. BOD Warwick will provide a detailed update after the end of the 2023 year.

Community Outreach:

The District thanks its volunteers and department members for assembling this year's Santa Sleigh route and for everyone who donated food and toys for those in need within our District. The shift crews led by Assistant Chief Patti and Logistics Chief Ambrose dedicated many hours to making this operation a success. The District continues to receive many compliments through its social media pages and at the station. The effort put forth by MBLFD resonated through the neighborhoods and really kicked off the holiday spirit for the McLane-Black Lake residents. The District will continue to build into the holidays with a visit from Santa at Station 91 on December 21st for department members and their families.

In November, a local Scout Troop visited Station 91 to learn about fire safety and tour the station with our firefighters. Thanks to Battalion Chief Speier and our "A" Shift firefighters, the Troop and parents had a tour they will not soon forget. It was great work from our firefighters to put on demonstrations, instruct safety actions, and make an overall enjoyable experience for all involved.

Health and Wellness:

The District's Health and Wellness clinic occurred on November 27-28 at Station 91 and 95. The clinic offered District firefighters an opportunity to receive their flu vaccination, respiratory evaluation, and hearing test. LifeScan physicals are scheduled for the second week in January for our agency and for other interested districts. The District has also hosted benefit representatives to meet with our firefighters and discuss changes and/or options for the upcoming year.

Ms. Meeds and BOD Warwick continue their work to close out the 2023 year by auditing and aligning the Crewsense reporting program to ensure a clean start to 2024. They appreciate the time and patience of department members as they process reports and schedule individual meetings to review information. A closing analysis of the 2023 financials will be provided at the January Board Meeting.

Events:

The District has begun planning the 2024 MBLFD Annual Banquet as well as the Egg Dash. Specific dates will be available in January and monthly progress updates will be provided. The District is inviting input and ideas for this year's events. Please reach out to Ms. Meeds or BOD Warwick so the District can continue to improve and expand these important outreach activities.

2. Logistics:

Volunteer Program

Four members have completed 23-2 Recruit Class and are preparing for graduation on December 18th. They will be starting internal training and progressing to shift.

Two members continue to progress through EMT Class in Thurston County and Centralia Community College.

Facilities

The following are highlights of completed or ongoing facility issues, repairs, maintenance, and inspection items since the last report.

- ST95: There is a problem with the heat in the decontamination room and it is being reviewed under warranty. Heat pump #7-valve was found faulty during biannual inspection. The valve has been replaced and is back to normal operation.
- ST92: On November 14 there was a water leak found at the NE corner of the building. The leak was repaired by a plumbing contractor and a request to Thurston County PUD for a leak adjustment was approved reducing billing by approximately \$250.00. The Fire District will be completing

water sampling to determine if the filtration system is still needed. Per Thurston PUD, it is not currently required.

- ST93: Reliable Electric has repaired the conduit, and Northwest Water Works will confirm that the tank fill/sprinkler pump has been restored to normal operation. Exterior lights were reported as not functioning. Evaluation of the exterior lighting system identified faulty light bulbs and/or ballasts. A plan for LED upgrade is being developed and exterior lights have been restored temporarily.

Apparatus

There are two out-of-service issues. One has been the on-going motor issues with E95, and E91 is at the body shop in Oregon for repairs to the door.

3. Operations:

AC Patti reported that operations activity for the month of November 2023 was busy. There were 215 calls for the month of November 2023, composed of 90 fire and 125 EMS. 2023 calls to date (2317) are ahead of 2022 calls through November (2157). BLS transports in November 2023 were at 62 and 617 for 2023 to date. The BLS count now exceeds the number from 2022.

Wait times at local hospitals are about average. There are increasing numbers of flu and RSV admissions to the hospital, but COVID numbers are stable.

The two new aid units have been received and accepted by the Fire District. Both vehicles are currently at the Fire District and progressing through final installation items. Expectations are having the first unit in-service as A91 by the end of 2023. The Fire District is awaiting the delivery of the F150 ordered for CH93. The delivery has been delayed for spray in bedliner installation.

The ESO transfer of backup data is expected to go live on January 1, 2024. 100% of the data will be transferred and preserved, but it will take 90-120 days to complete the transition. The underlying equipment and apparatus will not transfer.

Community outreach at the Fire District has been excellent in 2023.

- In November, a local Scout Troop visited Station 91 to learn about fire safety and tour the station with firefighters. Thanks to Battalion Chief Speier and "A" Shift firefighters, the Troop and parents had an outstanding tour.
- The Fire District thanks all its volunteers and Fire District members for supporting this year's Santa Sleigh visits throughout the community. The

event ran from November 27 to December 7 and was highly successful. Efforts produced 7,614 lbs. of non-perishable food and \$573.00 in cash donations that were provided to the Thurston County Food Bank.

- Santa Visit Staff will have the opportunity to visit with Santa and members of the agency on Thursday, December 21, 2023, at Station 91. Santa will be here to visit and for photos.

Operations overall for the month of November 2023 were average when compared with the previous month. EMS Operations were elevated for the reporting period. Major incidents since the last report are listed below:

- 11/1: Mutual Aid Structure Fire (w/FD13)- Shaker Church Rd: E91, T95, CH92, CH95. Failed electrical supply into to the residence causing an outside wall fire.
- 11/2: Mutual Aid Structure Fire (w/OFD)- Home Goods: E91. E91 assisted OFD with a fully involved semi-trailer at the loading dock that had extended into the building.
- 11/18: Technical Rescue- Rock Candy Mtn/Capitol Forest: E91, A91, E95. ATV accident. Patient located down a ravine. Crews utilized a rope system to extract the patient. Transported patient BLS.

4. Chief's Report:

Chief Johnson recognized the Fire District for its excellent work with other local authorities in response to the tragic carbon monoxide incident at the Evergreen State College.

The Collective Bargaining Agreement is finalized and ready for signatures.

Station 95 Site Restoration – The Fire District has entered into an agreement for professional services with Skillings, Inc. to start the planning, scope of work, bid specifications to repair the parking lot, drainage related issues and the water line. The contract is estimated at \$69,013. Project work is slated to start in January 2024 for preparation of bidding public works project in March/April 2024.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Campeau reported that West Thurston met last week and South Thurston is considering joining. Productive discussions continue related to ambulance services in the Thurston County area. Chief Johnson added that he will be meeting with hospital representatives to discuss ambulance services with respect to fire departments.

Commissioner Thompson reported that he did not waive his reimbursement claims in 2023. He did so in 2022, but will claim reimbursements in 2023.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the Board meeting; the motion carried. The Board adjourned at 1956.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

For Thurston County Fire District 9:



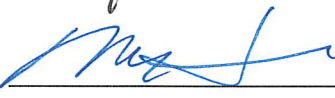
Dale Putnam, Chair



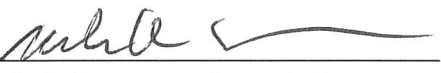
Jason Foust, Commissioner



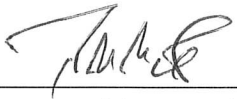
Len Albert, Commissioner



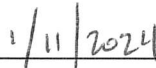
Mark Thompson, Commissioner



Mark Campeau, Commissioner



Tom McBride, Board Secretary



Date