



**Clark-Cowlitz Fire Rescue  
Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting Minutes  
911 N 65<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Ridgefield**

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**March 11, 2021**

Via Video Conference:

Commissioners Stan Chunn, Bob Johnson, Ken Ayers, Larry Bartel, David Town.  
DVC Mike Jackson, Ben Peeler and Dan Yager.  
Recording Secretary Kathy Streissguth.

Present: Chief John Nohr.

Meeting called to order by Commissioner Chunn at 4:00 p.m.

**CALL FOR LATE AGENDA ADDITIONS**

None.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Motion by Commissioner Town to approve the consent agenda as presented. Second Commissioner Johnson who asked about the \$22,000 expense for tools. Chief Nohr advised the payment was for the credit card statement and included a number of tool purchases for the new apparatus. No further discussion.

Call for the vote.

Aye: Bartel, Johnson, Town, Ayers, Chunn.

Nay: None.

Motion passed unanimously.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

WFCA membership renewal letter. Received a framed picture of the new Enforcer engine from the Pierce factory.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS**

None.

**STANDING COMMITTEES**

**Clark County Fire Risk Management Group – Bartel**

No meeting. No report.

**Fairgrounds Fire Facility Board – Johnson**

Commissioner Johnson summarized the March 10 FFFB meeting. Advised that CCSO Commander Phil Sample has been promoted to Chief Corrections Deputy. His replacement hasn't been appointed. Chiefs Maurer and Nohr continue to meet to discuss the future of operations at the facility. Chief Nohr is concerned that the lack of response from the station may impact the WSRB rating for both agencies. Waiting for in-person meeting restrictions to be lifted to schedule a joint Board meeting.

**Finance Committee – Town**

No meeting. No report.

## **WFCA Region VIII Update – Bartel**

No report.

## **Commissioner Updates**

None.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### **Admin Services**

DVC Yager summarized the summarized the February Administrative Services report. Asked Streissguth to cover the County Finance Committee meeting information. DVC Yager recapped a number of recent maintenance issues that have been, are, or need to be addressed. Discovered the frame height of the new Pierce engine is about 5" taller than the average Pierce engine. Working on a solution.

### **Community Risk Reduction/CARES**

DVC Jackson detailed the Community Risk Reduction and CARES program activities for the month of February. Commissioner Bartel asked if Cassidy Flaherty is still volunteering. DVC Jackson advised she is and recently received her Fire Inspector II certification. Chief Nohr thanked DVC Jackson for taking the lead on the DHS regional fire prevention grant application and coordinating the local fire official meeting.

### **Operations**

DVC Peeler reviewed the February Operations report. Noted that February was busier than normal with a higher number of multi-company structure fires. High-rise operations training conducted at the ilani parking garage was good practice for all the new multi-story buildings planned in the District. Preparations are ongoing for the upcoming test to refresh the BC promotion list.

## **CHIEF'S REPORT**

Chief Nohr summarized the February Chief's report. More information provided on the multiple structure fires this past month. Congratulations to FF Kenny Bjur who was promoted to Captain on March 1. COVID-19 vaccination update – members are participating in the vaccine distribution under a contract with Clark County Public Health. All pending new hires have cleared the hiring process. The three lateral hires will start on April 1. The three entry level hires will start on April 26. Additionally, the two alternates have also cleared the hiring process. Congratulated BC Ryan Berg who successfully completed his one year probation. The vehicle damage costs discussed at the last meeting were successfully submitted for insurance reimbursement.

Commissioner Bartel asked how many CCFR members are vaccinated. Nohr advised that out of 55 full time employees, 40 have been vaccinated. Additional personal are now expressing interest in receiving the vaccine. Airen is working on getting them scheduled.

## **SURPLUS VEHICLE – RESOLUTION NO. 210311-1**

Motion by Commissioner Bartel by to adopt resolution No. 2103311-1, a resolution placing the rehab bus into surplus. Second Commissioner Ayers. DVC Yager advised CCPH determined they did not need the vehicle after all. No further discussion.

Call for the vote.

Aye: Bartel, Johnson, Town, Ayers, Chunn.

Nay: None.

Motion passed unanimously.

**DRAFT LOCAL 3674 MOU**

Chief Nohr reviewed a memo to the Board regarding the proposed MOU on a salary savings program for the Firefighter Unit. The program is similar to that incorporated into the last BC contract. Commissioner Bartel stated he reviewed the numbers and wanted to confirm that a firefighter retirement would actually cost additional money. He asked if there are people interested and if there might be unrepresented LEOFF personnel that would be interested too. Chief Nohr confirmed there are six (6) Local 3674 employees and one non-represented employee that meet the age requirements. Commissioner Town asked for clarification on how many people could be in the program at one time. Chief Nohr advised that needs to be negotiated. Confirmed the district will need to put a maximum number in place for budgetary considerations. Commissioner Town wanted to ensure this program was not created for one person, which can create issues. Chief Nohr reported he has had no direct discussion with the eligible individuals; has only been working with the Local 3674 representatives.

Motion by Commissioner Bartel to authorize the Chief to move forward with negotiating the Salary Savings Program MOU with the Local 3674 Firefighter Unit. Second Commissioner Ayers. No further discussion.

Call for the vote.

Aye: Johnson, Town, Chunn, Bartel, Ayers.

Nay: None.

Motion passed unanimously.

Chief Nohr asked if the Board is comfortable in making the offer to the eligible unrepresented employee. Discussion.

Motion by Commissioner Bartel to authorize the Chief to offer the same salary savings program to non-represented LEOFF 2 employees. Second Commissioner Ayers. No further discussion.

Call for the vote.

Aye: Chunn, Bartel, Ayers, Town, Johnson.

Nay: None.

Motion passed unanimously.

**LATE EDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

Commissioner Bartel advised the DNR bill has passed the house.


**CITIZEN COMMENTS**

None.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None.

No further discussion. Virtual meeting adjourned at 5:06 p.m.

  
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Attest, John Nohr  
Fire Chief/District Secretary



# CLARK-COWLITZ FIRE RESCUE CONSENT AGENDA March 11, 2021

1. Minutes
  - February 25
2. Pre-paid Invoices
  - \$ 254,290.72 (CCFR February Payroll Benefits & DRS)
    - i. Check Nos. 6870 – 6879
3. Current Invoices
  - \$ 48,425.96 (CCFR General Fund 6228)
    - i. Check Nos. 20807 – 20839
    - ii. EFT 460
    - iii. ACH 461
  - \$ 3,576.13 (FFFB Fund 6254)
    - i. Check Nos. 20804 – 20806
4. Payroll
  - February 1-28 paid February 26
    - i. \$ 565,157.03 Gross
    - ii. \$ 366,570.14 ACH net
    - iii. \$ 7,555.42 Payroll Warrant net
      - Check No. 6869
    - iv. \$ 0.00 Payroll VOIDED
    - v. \$ 73,336.00 941 Tax Deposit paid February 26
  - February 1-28 Correction paid March 1
    - i. \$ 197.88 Gross
    - ii. \$ 176.29 Payroll Warrant net
      - Check No. 6870
5. February Use Tax
  - \$ 655.56 (CCFR) to be paid March 12
6. Voided/Destroyed Claims Warrants
  - None

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Commissioner Stanley Chunn – Chair

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Commissioner James R Johnson – Vice Chair

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Commissioner Larry Bartel

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Commissioner Ken Ayers

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Commissioner David Town



911 N 65th Avenue  
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**TO:** Commissioners  
**FROM:** Chief Nohr  
**DATE:** March 10, 2021  
**RE:** Proposed MOU on Salary Savings Program

The collective bargaining agreement with the BC Unit of Local 3674 contains a provision that allows for a post-retirement VEBA contribution to help defray the cost of medical insurance in retirement. The Washington Law Enforcement and Firefighters (LEOFF) retirement systems allow firefighters to retire at age 53 if they meet specific system requirements.

The biggest financial impediment for many retiring firefighters is paying for medical insurance from the point of retirement until the retiree reaches age 65 and becomes eligible for Medicare. Due to the cost of post-retirement medical benefits, many firefighters work well beyond the retirement age of 53.

The job of a firefighter is physically demanding, and many firefighters suffer one or more time-loss injuries over the course of their career. As our bodies age, some of those injuries can be more significant and lead to a longer recovery time. While the firefighter is not able to perform their regular duties, their positions on emergency response apparatus are often filled by other firefighters working costly overtime.

To help incentivize firefighters to retire before reaching the age where a catastrophic injury becomes more likely, many departments have instituted programs to assist with the cost of medical benefits in retirement. The programs are usually designed to provide a larger incentive at age 53 with significant decreases if the employees wait longer to participate.

The incentive to the District to participate is two-fold. The first is significant salary savings by having higher-paid employees retire and replacing them with new employees who generally start at a lower pay scale. These savings are compounded by the fact that new employees do not receive longevity pay or a deferred compensation match until they have been with the department for several years. The second savings comes from the fact that an aging employee with a long-term injury would not have to be replaced on an emergency apparatus at the overtime rate (1.5x regular pay).



The salary savings for replacing personnel at each level of the organization over the length of the respective salary schedule is outlined below:

- Firefighter-                 \$48,312
- Captain-                     \$26,328
- Battalion Chief             \$30,348
- Division Chief              \$62,004

To get a more accurate picture of the savings, we look at the cumulative effect of a Captain, BC, or DVC retiring. This would result in the following cumulative savings:

- Captain- \$74,640    (Capt.+ FF)
- BC-         \$105,624    (BC + Capt.+ FF)
- DVC-       \$167,028    (DVC + BC + FF)

These savings are offset by the cost of the post-retirement VEBA contributions. The following is the cost for each age of retirement utilizing the program in the BC contract as the example:

- 53 years old- \$64,800 (12 years at \$450/mo.)
- 54 years old- \$59,400 (11 years at \$450/mo.)
- 55 years old- \$54,000 (10 years at \$450/mo.)
- 56 years old- \$24,300 (9 years at \$225/mo.)
- 57 years old- \$21,600 (8 years at \$225/mo.)
- 58 years old- \$9,450 (7 years at \$112.50/mo.)
- 59 years old- \$8,100 (6 years at \$112.50/mo.)
- Employees are not able to participate in the program after age 60

The Local 3674 Firefighter Unit does not have a Salary Savings Program clause in their CBA. I am proposing a one-time Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Local 3674 to allow members in the Firefighter Unit to participate in a salary savings program based on the BC Unit contract program. I have attached a DRAFT MOU for review. The basic points are outlined below:

- Employees would have until April 12, 2021 to indicate participation
- Employees would be required to retire no later than December 31, 2021
- The program is limited to three (3) participants
- To further incentivize participation in this one-time offer, employees over age 55 would be offered the full contribution of \$450 per month (as noted above, the contribution decreases as an employee waits longer to retire)



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Review of this proposed MOU will be further discussed at our March 11<sup>th</sup> meeting. If you have any questions before the meeting, please reach out to me via email or on my cell phone at 360-606-9461.

## **Proposed MOU with Local 3674- Salary Savings Program**

The District and Local 3674 recognize that continued rising health costs between the date of retirement and the date an individual qualifies for Medicare is a concern for members of the District.

The District further recognizes that firefighters over 53 years of age are more prone to injuries that can require a long period of convalescence. Firefighter injuries can lead to multiple costs to the Fire District, including overtime costs for replacement on the injured employee and higher Labor & Industries insurance rates. In addition, these injuries can also have a long-term effect on the post-retirement quality of life of the employee.

The Fire District proposes a one-time offer of the Salary Savings Program to employees in the Local 3674 Firefighter Unit. Members will have until Monday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 1500 hours to notify CCFR of their intent to enter into the Salary Savings Program. Employees must retire from CCFR no later than December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021.

In order to qualify for post-retirement medical assistance, the retiring employee must meet the following criteria:

1. The employee must be a LEOFF 2 employee of Clark-Cowlitz Fire & Rescue
2. The employee must be at least 53 years of age at date of retirement
3. The employee must provide the written Required Notice of Intent to Retire
4. The maximum number of retired employees that can enter the program under this MOU will be three (3) members. If one or more employees are eligible to enter the program and there are not enough spots to absorb them, placement will be based on seniority.

### **Required Notice of Intent to Retire**

Employees wishing to retire under and enter the program under this MOU must provide the District with written notice of intent to retire by April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and their official retirement date must be no later than December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. The Notice of Intent must be submitted via email to the Fire Chief and must include the employee's name, last day of work, and official retirement date.

1. If an employee gives the District written notice of intent to retire and then does not retire, participation in the program is forfeited forever.
2. Exceptions to the timeframe for notification and retirement will be considered on a case by case basis. Such exceptions shall be presented to the Fire Chief for consideration and recommendation to the Board of Fire Commissioners and, if deemed to be mutually beneficial to the employee and to the District, may be approved by the Board of Fire Commissioners.
3. Employees entering into the program will be eligible to cash out a third (3<sup>rd</sup>) year of vacation accrual (normally, upon retirement, resignation, termination or death, accrued but unused vacation time remaining at termination will be paid at the employee's current rate of pay, not to exceed two years' worth of accrual at that member's current accrual rate per



the current Local 3674 Firefighter Unit CBA). Should the employee not adhere to item number one (1), the employee will forfeit the opportunity to cash out the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) year of vacation.

### **Program Benefits**

The benefit will be a set dollar amount of **\$450 per month**, deposited into a qualified VEBA account, starting the first month after retirement. Programs of this nature generally utilize a scaled approach to incentivize early use of the program, as outlined below:

- |                                |      |
|--------------------------------|------|
| 1. At least 53 and not over 56 | 100% |
| 2. At least 56 and not over 58 | 50%  |
| 3. At least 58 and not over 60 | 25%  |
| 4. At least 60                 | 0%   |

In recognition of this limited-term MOU, the District will recognize all employees eligible and entering into the program under this MOU, regardless of age, at the 100% rate of \$450 per month.

The program benefit will continue until one of the following occurs:

1. The employee reaches 65 and becomes eligible for Medicare;
2. The employee voluntarily withdraws from the program; or
3. The employee dies.

### **Program Revision or Termination**

Local 3674 and the District will meet on a yearly basis to determine if the set dollar amount under the Program Benefits section above needs to be adjusted (examples: the LEOFF 2 COLA, economy, etc.). If this is the case, Local 3674 and the District will meet to negotiate an appropriate dollar amount based on items such as cost, etc.

Should the Board of Fire Commissioners elect to terminate or revise this program after it is implemented and in effect, all employees who are participating in and receiving the program benefit as outlined herein will continue to receive the program benefit until they are no longer eligible to participate in the program.