



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

---

**February 8, 2024**

Present:

Commissioners Stanley Chunn, David Town, Ken Ayers, Larry Bartel, Jade Bourke. Chief John Nohr. ACs Mike Jackson and Eamonn Ryan. Recording Secretary Kathy Streissguth.

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

Flag Salute.

**CALL FOR LATE AGENDA ADDITIONS**

None.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Motion by Commissioner Bourke to adopt the consent agenda as presented. Second Commissioner Town. Commissioner Bartel asked about the combat gauze purchase. Acquired to adequately stock the mass trauma stop-the-bleed kits. Current inventory is expiring. No further discussion. Call for the vote. Unanimously approved.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS**

None.

**STANDING COMMITTEES**

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

No meeting, no report.

**Fairgrounds Fire Facility Board – Chunn**

No meeting, no report.

**Finance Committee – Town/Bourke**

No meeting, no report.

**WFCA Region VIII – Bartel**

Legislation issues update. Expecting the 103% annual inflator to die in committee. Tax increment financing changes bill is in rules. Expected to move forward with the inclusion of a mitigation requirement and a study on the impacts to fire districts.

### **Local BVFF – Chunn/Ayers**

Commissioner Chunn advised the board met to review and approve the retirement application for former FD12 volunteer Paul Ostrand, who was fully vested with 25 years of service payments.

### **Cowlitz Indian Tribe – Contract Liaison Bartel/Bourke**

Chief Nohr spoke with Timi Russin. Will be reaching out in the next few days to schedule the meeting.

### **EMS District 2 – Bourke**

Commissioner Bourke advised that representatives from FD3, FD6 and CCFR met on February 5 to discuss what concerns to bring forward for discussion at the EMS District 2 meeting on February 12. What is the fire district stance. The fire districts are concerned that if there is a subsidy, it is an EMSD2 issue, not a fire district issue. Also want to include language to allow the fire districts to transport in the event the service provider is not able to meet certain criteria. There is no provision in the current contract that allows CCFR to transport patients. Asked Chief Nohr to confirm that EMSD2 would not be able to trump the existing EMS levies for CCFR and FD6.

### **Commissioner Updates**

Commissioner Town advised he attended the Port of Ridgefield open house. The City of Ridgefield and the Port are working together on the Lake River waterfront development project. An article in the Reflector newspaper implied there is discussion on including some residential development with 5-7 story buildings.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### **Operations/Training – DVC Ryan**

AC Ryan summarized the January Operations and Training report. Discussed the Station 151 operational agreement he is working on with the FD6 Ops Chief. Chief Nohr noted that the Fairgrounds station is much busier than expected. Mutual aid between CCFR and FD6 is also more in balance.

### **Community Risk Reduction/CARES – DVC Jackson**

AC Jackson summarized CRR and CARES activities for the month of January. Anticipating having a new fee schedule, possibly for the next meeting. Noted that future updates should happen more quickly now that the background work has been done. Shared that the CARES programs may have an impact on the flattened call volume. Studying the data to determine how the programs are mitigating calls and delayed response times by freeing up the responding crews for other emergencies. There seems to be a noticeable impact on repeat callers. Noted there is now interest in Olympia to develop legislation to financially support these types of programs.

### **Admin/Logistics – DVC Peeler**

AC Peeler recapped the January Administrative Services and Logistics report. Stations 21 and 23 are slated to for Locution tap out system upgrades. This will improve response times. Will hold BC and Captain promotional testing in the spring. The lists are exhausted. Working on a mutual aid agreement with Columbia County in Oregon for marine response – they are just across the river. Delivery for new engines is about 24 months.

## **CHIEF'S REPORT**

Chief Nohr verbalized the January Chief's report, which will be emailed when complete. Will also provide the July – December 2023 financial reports. The new Clark County MPD, Dr. Macht has been invited and plans to attend to the April 25 Board meeting. Will be presenting information on CCFR to the Woodland Council on Tuesday, February 20 at 7:00 p.m. Will contact Steve Stuart to see if the Ridgefield council is also interested in a presentation. Chief Nohr participated on a wildland information panel at the Kiggins Theater on February 1 along with CRESA, DNR, and Ecology. Will attend the EMS District 2 board meeting on February 12. Met with Scott Higgins from the Fuller Group to represent the district in the purchase of real property in the coming years. Shared that Cowlitz Fire District 5 sold a fire station to DNR, which will be staffed with engine crews over the summer months. No hand crews will be placed at this location. Met with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe Foundation. Estimating a cost overage in acquiring the two ambulances. The additional cost is being taken to the Foundation board for approval. Their assistance and support of the district is much appreciated. Reported the new small city representative to the CRESA board is Washougal Mayor Dave Stuebe. Discussed the ilani Resort behind-the-scenes walk through for response personnel organized by AC Jackson. Discussed the Lexipol policy program. Noted that updates are provided to ensure the district is compliant with State and Federal laws.

Commissioner Bartel expressed concern that the Cowlitz Indian Tribe continues to delay discussion on the contract payment update. Also asked if there is a date for the County's impact fee hearing and the status of the CCFR annual report. Chief Nohr is not concerned about the CIT service contract. CIT/ilani staff and attorneys are compiling information on all new buildings since the last adjustment. It takes longer to work through things with all the people involved in the process at their end. Noted that their council is made up of over 20 people. The County has not yet scheduled a date for an impact fee hearing. The draft annual report will be distributed at the next meeting. Confirmed for Commissioner Town that impact fees are only assessed on new construction. In reply to Commissioner Bourke, the capital facility plan is still in process. Advised that DNR is still developing a plan to address wildland fires in the SW Region following the closure of Larch Correctional Facility.

## **TAX INCREMENT AREAS**

The first of two TIA public meetings for the Port of Ridgefield will be held on Wednesday, February 28 from 5 – 7 p.m. at the new Port offices on Division. The port requested a copy of the Ridgefield mitigation agreement. Discussed the possibility of a joint Board meeting with the Port Commissioners. The FD6 board also wishes to meet with the Port. Chief Nohr contacted Randy Mueller to see if they are willing to meet with both CCFR and FD6.

Commissioner Bartel expressed his concern that the district is not being proactive enough on the TIA issue. Feels we know now what the impacts will be; why wait 5 years before taking action. Need to find a way to get in front of it – reacting to the problem is going about it all wrong. We owe it to the citizens to not wait and see how much they suffer before doing anything. Commissioner Chunn asked what Mr. Bartel would like to see done differently, who replied that somehow the issue needs to be addressed now. Chief Nohr advised we tried to address it, but it's a poorly written law and we have no leverage. People at the capital said this isn't going to

affect you (*fire districts*). Yes, we are going to be impacted, we know this, but we don't have the leverage to make changes or fix the problem. Commissioner Bartel suggested involving the public to let them know what's happening and it isn't right – he is very frustrated. The Chief and the other Board members are also extremely frustrated. Some changes are going to be implemented; probably not enough. Citizens may be educated on what we see as the TIA issue; the district just cannot ask for support or opposition on any propositions or other election item. Commissioner Town recommended educating the district on how this will impact their service, but not get into a political fight. The impact of tax increment areas is not limited to Ridgefield, but will affect the entire district. Commissioner Bourke commented that we need to be careful with the messaging. Do not want to confuse the public if we will be going out for a lid lift. The two messages could create a mess. Chief Nohr shared he continues to state that he believes it's a bad law and a detriment to the fire service. Discussed possible legal action or review of any action that may be taken. Will develop educational messaging for the public regarding fire district funding sources and potential threats to those sources.

### **POLICY REVIEW**

Policies were distributed for review and adoption at the next meeting. Discussed Cannabis use. Meets Washington RCW requirements. No changes were recommended at this time.

- Policy No. 1026 Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace
- Policy No. 1009 Reporting for Duty
- Policy No. 1039 Military Leave

### **LID LIFT PROPOSITION**

Discussed placing a lid lift proposition in the August primary election. Funds would be used to maintain programs and service levels, purchase fire apparatus, and staff stations. FD3 and FD6 will also have a lid lift proposition on the ballot – expecting they will ask for \$1.50 per thousand. A draft timeline will be presented at the next meeting. Anticipating adopting a resolution at the first meeting in April. Need to decide the rate, annual inflator, and length of time. Very successful in 2017. Without a lid lift, allowing the rate to drop is not sustainable to keep up with inflation and growth. The 2024 levy rate is \$1.257 per thousand. Chief Nohr is considering the same request proposed in 2017 – 106% for six years. Keeping the district finances healthy is important. Noted that Kathy Streissguth was advised the district's bond rating increased to A+. This translates to lower bond interest rates, saving the taxpayers money in the long run. Will clarify how proration works. Commissioner Bartel encouraged focusing on the district's financial needs, not just that our rate is low. Chief Nohr advised we are funding reserves for long range, but without a lid lift CCFR may need to dip into reserves to maintain services. AC Peeler shared that he doesn't believe the permanent 103% inflator proposal currently going through the legislature would last long if passed. Everyone should expect to see an initiative come out to revert to 101% as soon as they can get it on the ballot. The 101% limit is our future. Chief Nohr advised he has the information plan for distributing information about the lid lift from the 2017 proposal.

### **LATE EDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

None.

### **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

None.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None.

No further discussion. Meeting adjourned at 5:37 p.m.

---

**Attest, John Nohr**  
**District Secretary/Fire Chief**