

BENTON COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT #1 BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday September 17, 2024 – 6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Carpenter called the regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners of Benton County Fire District No. 1 to order in-person and via video-conference at 6:00 p.m. at 1811A S. Ely St. Kennewick, Washington. In attendance at this meeting in-person were Commissioner Carpenter, Commissioner Jenkins, Chief/District Secretary LoParco, Deputy Chief Nicholls, and Executive Director Ewing. Commissioner Phillips attended via video-conference.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Carpenter called a 5-minute executive session at 6:01 p.m. per RCW 42.30.110 (1)(i) – Discussion with legal counsel about current or potential litigation. The meeting was called back to order at 6:06 p.m.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions to the agenda.

CORRESPONDENCE

The correspondence received and sent was reviewed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Carpenter requested that the minutes be amended under Mechanic/Firefighter Ball's report. Commissioner Jenkins made a motion to approve the regular minutes of September 3, 2024, as amended. Commissioner Phillips seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Fund Transaction Details

Presented to the Board were 2024 transactions #1782 to #1918. The transactions totaled \$446,238.69. General Fund \$442,446.96 and Custodial Funds \$3,791.73. Commissioner Jenkins made a motion to approve the vouchers. Commissioner Phillips seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously. The voucher registers are attached to these minutes and constitute a part thereof.

REPORTS

Commissioner Carpenter reported:

- He will be attending the Southeastern Washington Fire Commissioners Association meeting in Dayton on Friday and would like to take a District vehicle.
- He was reviewing past meeting minutes and questioned if a plan was in place for Firefighter/Instructor Allington's eventual retirement. Deputy Chief Nicholls informed the Board that there are a few different associates prepared to step in when Mr. Allington retires. Additionally, the goal is to hire a second instructor to ensure a smooth transition.

Fire Chief LoParco reported:

- The administrative group has been meeting to address future staffing needs following the resignation of Executive Director of Business Operations Ewing. Efforts are ongoing to develop a plan to manage staffing shortages while maintaining routine business operations. The District plans to contract with Archbright to hire a Finance Manager and Logistics/Facility Maintenance. Additional information will be provided at the next regular meeting.
- He attended the Chief's meeting for local Fire Districts, and all District Chiefs were present except District 6. The Chiefs were all in agreement to disband SEWSOG. He presented this during the Regional Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs meeting and hasn't talked with anyone since. He hopes to see some action in the next week.
- He attended a meeting regarding the radio project. The project is moving forward in a positive way to tie into our VHS system.
- He emailed Dr. Hodges about the MPD duties that Administrative Assistant Ferrell is doing and requested an update on hiring her replacement.
- On October 3rd there will be a Lineage Logistics presentation with a group from multiple government agencies, Senators, and County Commissioners. It's a review of the Lineage Logistics incident from beginning to where we are today. He asked the group to come together and have a planning session if there is a problem in the future. The meeting aims to foster cooperation and mutual support between the various agencies.
- We have crews out on some fires and an engine in California with a crew of three.
- The pinning ceremony went well, and we heard a lot of positive feedback.
- The check for Columbia Basin Dive Rescue to purchase the CBDR building will be delivered to them tomorrow.
- He is in the process of revising policies to ensure the completion of the most critical ones.
- We will need to run a levy lid lift on the ballot next year and we are considering working with Liz Loomis Public Affairs again to assist with marketing the ballot measure. A proposal will be presented at the next meeting.
- Participation letters were sent out to members last week in attempts to encourage greater volunteer attendance and improve emergency response.

Deputy Chief Nicholls reported:

- He's been working on preparing for the Captains Promotional Assessment that will be this Saturday. We have two candidates and hope to have the eligibility list in the month.
- He and Chief LoParco have been preparing for the IRONMAN event that is taking place this Sunday. Part of the course travels through the District and we were asked to staff a first aid tent with ability to transport. We will have a dedicated transport ambulance on the course and will be adjusting staffing accordingly.
- He has been working with staff members on the budgeting process and assisting Training Officer Bibe with development of the 2025 Fire Training Center (FTC) budget.
- He has been working on staffing and billing components for multiple recent state mobilizations and EMAC requests.
- Last week he had a meeting with the participating agencies in the Tri-County Recruit Academy. Discussion focused on increased participation by other agencies in the form of additional staff support, apparatus commitment, and facility usage. They developed a new billing structure for participating agencies. The meeting was well attended and positive in nature.

Training

Captain Bibe reported:

- He has been working on the budget for the FTC and training program for the District.
- He has been providing support for the Tri-County Recruit Academy.

Maintenance

Mechanic/Firefighter Ball reported:

- He spent last week in Wenatchee at the Mechanic's Conference. It was a record-breaking attendance this year.
- The red truck, #141 is back from repairs and he has been driving it.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

Intern Agreement

Captain Bibe presented the Intern Agreement for Ashton Shurtz to the Board and recommended its approval as submitted. Commissioner Jenkins moved to approve the Intern Agreement, and Commissioner Phillips seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Facility Use - BCSO

Commissioner Carpenter expressed concern that the Benton County Sheriff's Office (BCSO) has been using the District's facilities without compensation. According to District policy, a \$50 fee is required for facility use, and Commissioner Carpenter suggested the Board consider increasing this fee.

Commissioner Carpenter also inquired about the frequency of BCSO's facility usage. Fire Chief LoParco clarified that BCSO does not use the facilities for meetings or training but occasionally utilizes the restrooms and Wi-Fi to connect body cameras.

Commissioner Carpenter then asked whether the Board would consider charging BCSO for facility use. Commissioner Phillips opposed charging for restroom access, while Commissioner Jenkins did not comment. No further discussion or action was taken.
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Resolution 2024-15 – HIPAA Privacy Officer(s)

Resolution 2024-15, granting authority to the Fire Chief to designate the District's HIPAA Privacy Officer(s), was presented to the Board. Commissioner Jenkins moved to approve Resolution 2024-15, and Commissioner Phillips seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

EMAC and PNEMA Intergovernmental Agreement-

Chief LoParco presented the EMAC and PNEMA Intergovernmental Agreement to the Board, requesting authorization to sign the Agreement. Commissioner Phillips moved to grant Chief LoParco the authority to sign the Agreement, and Commissioner Jenkins seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next Board of Commissioner meeting will be on October 1 at 6:00 p.m.
- Southeastern Washington Fire Commissioners Association will meet September 20, in Dayton.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board the meeting was adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Approved by:

Submitted by:

Scott E. Carpenter, Board Chair

P. Scott LoParco, District Secretary