

BENTON COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT #1
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday September 3, 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, Commissioner Phillips, Fire Chief/District Secretary LoParco, and Deputy Chief Nicholls. CEO Click and Executive Director Ewing were in attendance via video-conference.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions to the agenda.

CORRESPONDENCE

The correspondence received and sent was reviewed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Phillips made a motion to approve the regular minutes of August 6, 2024, as submitted. Commissioner Carpenter seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Fund Transaction Details

Presented to the Board were 2024 transactions #1574 to #1709. The transactions totaled \$356,866.83. General Fund \$353,594.05 and Custodial Funds \$3,272.78. Also presented to the Board were transactions #1710 to #1750. The transactions totaled \$239,071.16. General Fund \$219,911.26 and Custodial Funds \$19,159.90. Commissioner Carpenter made a motion to approve the vouchers. Commissioner Jenkins seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously. The voucher registers are attached to these minutes and constitute a part thereof.

Budget Revenue and Expenditure Report

The Budget Revenue and Expenditure Report was reviewed.

REPORTS

Commissioner Carpenter reported:

- While visiting a neighboring agency he was able to see how their cascade trailer was set up, which he found fascinating.
- Benton 1 is expected to host a meeting for the Tri-County Fire Commissioners Association. The meetings are scheduled for the second Saturday of February, May, August, and November. He requested that Chief LoParco coordinate the scheduling for Benton 1 to host the next meeting.

Chief Executive Officer Click reported:

- He returned from the Pioneer fire last Friday sick and is working from home. His team is back up on Friday, and he anticipates that he'll be called out again Thursday or Friday due to the recent lightning and thunderstorms.
- He spoke with the sales representative from Hughes Fire Equipment, who informed him that one truck meeting almost all of our specifications is available, but the chances of securing it are slim due to high competition. However, due to the District's dissatisfaction with a previous product, they offered to place us in line for two trucks at nearly the same price as the original quote. He noted that issues with the previous truck, such as incorrect two-tone paint and unresolved items on the punch list, were raised in a formal letter of dissatisfaction. The sales representative will have the spec sheet to him this week so we can get in the manufacturer line now and take delivery in August 2025.

Fire Chief LoParco reported:

- He and Mechanic/Firefighter Ball inspected the refurbishment project in Yakima, which is about 90% complete and looks nice. Several valves needed to be replaced, and the pump is not working, but once these are fixed, the truck should be delivered soon. The truck has been at Cascade Fire since July of last year.
- The Administrative Building Project has been delayed by L&I and building permits, but everything is expected to be finalized this week. Once construction begins, the project should be completed in four to six weeks, with the Administrative Building in service by the end of the year.
- The District's first Pinning Ceremony will take place this Saturday at 9:00 a.m. at Riverview High School.
- A story in the Tri-City Herald inaccurately reported that the District struggled to put out the Lineage Logistics fire. The District is requesting a correction.
- He is following up to see if the District will receive a title for the CDR building.

Deputy Chief Nicholls reported:

- He has finished moving from the FTC into the temporary administrative office at Station 170.
- He continues working closely with Captain Bibe on training.
- While Chief LoParco was on vacation, he handled routine business and continued transitioning into his new role.

Battalion Chief Gutzmer reported:

- Structure academy begins tonight, with a large group of participants.
- There is a meeting tonight to discuss the Tri-County Recruit Academy fund. Participating agencies will agree on an acceptable cost share assessment per student for the academy starting tonight.

Training**Captain Bibe reported:**

- He continues training with Deputy Chief Nicholls on transitioning into his new role as Training Officer.
- The Class B fuel conversion project for the training tower will start soon.

Labor Representative

Union Vice President Bibe reported:

- Most of the Union leadership attended the IAFF International convention in Boston last week.

Maintenance

Mechanic/Firefighter Ball reported:

- A transmission in #125 went out and has been repaired. Another truck had issues with water pump and injectors, and #141 is back at Cummins due to repeated breakdowns.
- He spent all morning draining the ambulance fuel tank after the wrong fuel was mistakenly added. The crew pumped gas into the ambulance instead of diesel.

OLD BUSINESS

Tri-Tech Program

Commissioner Carpenter requested an update on the District's financial obligations as the host agency for Firefighter/Instructor Nathen Allington, the Tri-Tech Program Instructor for the Kennewick School District (KSD). Due to Instructor Allington's limited participation in District activities, KSD has fully reimbursed the District for his wages and benefits. As of now, the District has incurred no financial obligations related to the program.

NEW BUSINESS

SEWSOG

The District sent a letter to the Southeast Washington Special Operations Group (SEWSOG) Board on January 17, 2024, announcing its intent to terminate the Host Department Agreement. Chief LoParco and CEO Click have been following up with the SEWSOG Board, but they have yet to receive an answer on identifying a new host agency. Chief LoParco plans to attend the next meeting to discuss the matter further. CEO Click also noted that the option of appointing a third-party administrator has not progressed. Additionally, the District is completing the 2021-2023 audit report for SEWSOG, and there is concern about the group's financial situation, as no assessments have been issued this year. If no resolution is reached, Chief LoParco will seek legal counsel to proceed with terminating the Host Department Agreement.

Volunteer Firefighter Applications

Training Captain Bibe presented Volunteer Firefighter applications from Martin Caballero-Chavarria, Scott Critchfield, Trevor Deardorff, Erika Duron-Rodriguez, Brayden Freitag, Gavin Hartzell, Noah McLean, Caleb Moore, Erik Mora, Ashton Shurtz, Walker Smith, and Eddie Valdez. Commissioner Phillips made a motion to approve the Volunteer Firefighter applications as submitted. Commissioner Jenkins seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Performance Award

Deputy Chief Nicholls attended the Kennewick School District (KSD) award ceremony, where Firefighter/Instructor Nathen Allington was honored as the 2024 KSD High School Teacher of the Year for his dedication to preparing students for future careers. Congratulations to Firefighter/Instructor Allington!

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Carpenter called a 10-minute executive session at 6:42 p.m. per RCW 42.30.110(1)(g) to discuss the performance of a public employee. The meeting was called back to order at 6:50 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next Board of Commissioner meeting will be on September 17 at 6:00 p.m.
- The Pinning Ceremony is September 7, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. at Riverview Highschool.
- Southeastern Washington Fire Commissioners Association will meet September 20, 2024, in Dayton.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board the meeting was adjourned at 6:52p.m.

Approved by:

Submitted by:

Scott E. Carpenter, Board Chair

P. Scott LoParco, District Secretary