

**Whatcom County Fire District #4
via Zoom Meeting
4142 Britton Loop, Bellingham, WA 98226
12:00 p.m.
September 23, 2024
Special (date change) Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting**

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chairman Johnson called the special Whatcom County Fire District #4 Board of Fire Commissioners meeting for September 16, 2024, to order at 12:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Attendees: Chairman Steve Cooley; Vice-Chairman Tim Johnson; Fire Commissioner Mark Lann; Fire Chief Jason Van der Veen; Bellingham Fire Chief Bill Hewett.

With the rescission of Proclamation 20-28, the district continues to do its best to provide accommodations to the public. A direct link allowing the public to participate in the meeting during the public comment section was included on the meeting agenda and posted on the District's website.

To accommodate Bellingham Fire Department Chief Hewett's time restraint, Vice Chairman Johnson moved the Britton Rd/Northern Heights Annexation update to the beginning of the meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Britton Rd/Northern Heights Annexation Update: Chief Bill Hewett provided information involving the Britton Rd/Northern Heights Annexation process. The area includes the Britton Loop Station 12 property.

Chief Hewett stated that earlier this year, citizens brought forth a petition requesting to annex the specific area pertaining to the proposed annexation to the Bellingham City Council, which initiated the process. The Bellingham City Council then submitted the petition to the Planning Department for review. At this time, the Planning Department is investigating the costs and impacts to each department within the City of Bellingham, including fire service, law enforcement, and utilities. The deadline for these impact reports was in August.

Once that report is complete, the Planning Department will submit it along with its recommendations to the Bellingham City Council, which will then vote on moving forward, vetoing the annexation, or putting the process on hold. It is unclear whether the annexation petition will be reviewed in 2024.

Chief Hewett reviewed his comments submitted to the Planning Department regarding the impacts on the fire department. The report was shared with the Board. If the annexation is eventually approved, Chief Hewett stated that they would expect Britton Loop Station 12 to continue to provide the same services in that area regardless of who District 4 contacts through either the current auto aid agreement or some other arrangement.

It was noted that all Whatcom County and City fire agencies share an auto and mutual aid agreement that allows the closest apparatus needed, regardless of the agency, to be dispatched to an emergency.

Chief Hewett reviewed the 1997 Interlocal Agreement between the City of Bellingham and Fire Districts 2, 4, and 8, which states how the City would compensate fire districts for annexed areas. Chief Hewett agreed to share any additional information as it becomes available.

The Board thanked Chief Hewett for his time and the information he provided. Chief Hewett left the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

1. Meeting Minutes
 - a) August 12, 2024 – regular
2. Staff Reports – Chief / Operations / Training / Technical Support
3. Financial Report
 - a) Total Revenue – August \$15,148.42
 - b) Total Expenditures – September \$703,893.00
4. Voucher / Payroll / Benefits
 - a) Direct Deposit Payroll: \$644.00
 - b) Monthly Expenditure Voucher: \$703,249.00

MOTION: Commissioner Lann moved to approve the Consent Agenda as corrected. The motion was seconded by Chairman Cooley and approved 3-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Upgrading the Britton Loop Station 12 Exterior: Chief Van der Veen noted that he continues to work on the process and hopes to get some updated bids on the project by the next meeting now that summer is over.

Fire Engine Bid Quote: Chief Van der Veen reported that he is waiting for one more bid and hopes to have more information to present at the October meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Whatcom County Mutual Aid Agreement (Fire): Chief Van der Veen reviewed the agreement originally signed by all area fire agencies in 1986. He noted that multiple attorneys and fire districts/cities have vetted and approved the agreement. Chief Van der Veen stated that the updated agreement memorializes the agencies' daily mutual aid efforts.

MOTION: Commissioner Lann moved to adopt the Whatcom County Interlocal Agreement for Firefighting, Medical Aid, and Hazardous and Materials Mutual Aid Services. The motion was seconded by Chairman Cooley and approved 3-0.

CORRESPONDENCE

- To Travis Mills re: Fire Protection Class form WSRB

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **October Board Meeting Attendance Query:** All Commissioners present are expected to attend the October 15 meeting via Zoom.
- **D21 Planning Session Query:** Chief Van der Veen invited the D4 Board to attend the upcoming D21 on Saturday, October 12, at 9:00 a.m. at Odell Station 61. Chairman Cooley agreed to attend.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

- Britton Loop Station 12 Exterior Project
- Fire Engine Bid Quote
- District 21 Planning Session
- Whatcom County Consolidation Study Meeting

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: There being no further business, Chairman Cooley moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:42 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lann and approved 3-0.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jennie Sand, Board Secretary

ATTEST:

Steve Cooley, Chairman

Tim Johnson, Vice-Chairman

Mark Lann, Commissioner

Jason Van der Veen, Fire Chief