

Kitsap County Fire District #18
Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes
August 28, 2024
Poulsbo Fire Department
Poulsbo, WA

REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE:

David Ellingson	Commissioner	Jim Ingalls	Commissioner
Jeff Uberuaga	Commissioner	William Whiteley	Commissioner
Darryl Milton	Commissioner	Jim Gillard	Fire Chief
Shane Anderson	Deputy Chief (DC)	Nichole Sawyers	Administrative Director (AD)
Wendy Luther	Finance Director (FD)	Jeff Russell	Deputy Chief (DC)

Call to order: Meeting was called to order by Commissioner Milton at 4:00 p.m.

Approval of agenda:

Commissioner Ellingson moved to approve the 08/28/2024 agenda. Commissioner Ingalls seconded. Discussion: Commissioner Ellingson asked that we add College Tuition Reimbursement to Discussion Items. Motion was carried with a unanimous vote to approve the amended 08/28/2024 agenda. Passed.

Public Comment: None in attendance.

Executive Session: None

Action Items:

- 1. Consent Agenda:** All matters listed within the Consent Agenda have been distributed to each member of the Commission for reading and study, are considered routine, and will be enacted by one motion of the Commission with no separate discussion. If separate discussion is desired, that item may be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the Regular Agenda by a Commission Member or by citizen request.
 - August 14, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes
 - Vouchers
 - Department Payroll (August)

Commissioner Ellingson moved to approve the 8/28/2024 Consent Agenda. Commissioner Whiteley seconded. Motion was carried with a unanimous vote to approve the 8/28/2024 Consent Agenda. Passed.

- 2. Commissioner Payroll (August):**

Commissioner Ellingson moved to approve the August Commissioner Payroll in the amount of \$2,254.00. Commissioner Ingalls seconded. Motion was carried with a unanimous vote to approve the August Commissioner Payroll in the amount of \$2,254.00. Passed.

- 3. Policy 4021 Legal Blood Draws**

Commissioner Ellingson moved to adopt Policy 4021 Legal Blood Draws. Commissioner Whiteley seconded. Discussion: Commissioner Ellingson commented on the purpose of the policy and that blood draws would be at the direction of law enforcement and the medical program director. Motion was carried with a unanimous vote to adopt Policy 4021 Legal Blood Draws. Passed.

Discussion Items:

- 1. Station 76:** Chief Gillard attended the planning committee meeting for the Station 76 Project. It was a great meeting discussing environmental issues with some community focus on runoff to Johnson Creek. There was a friendly amendment to the conditional use permit which was passed. A member of the public provided a detailed

history of Johnson Creek, expressing concern for the health of salmon, but the Poulsbo fire Department team provided reassurance. The next step is to issue a public notice for the hearing examiner meeting, which is scheduled September 17, 2024.

2. **2025 Budget Process:** Chief Gillard commented on the progress of the 2025 budget, with discussions revolving around training and District priorities. There is a general comment from Commissioner Ingalls suggesting that the budget should be more clearly defined to better identify larger gaps and extra funds. The District is working on improving the budget process to make it more well-defined. The Kitsap 911 executive committee is proposing user fees for next year, which may be determined based on units of use. This could result in lower fees for Poulsbo Fire. Additionally, the Kitsap County Fire Commissioners have announced that they will be freezing dues next year. Commissioner Milton inquired about the potential for an earlier update for Station 72 before costs continue to increase. There is also a discussion about the possibility of implementing two aid cars instead of sending engines on non-fire calls. Chief Gillard mentioned that this will be addressed during the implementation of the next strategic plan and service level objectives, as it would involve an additional purchase with the goal of reducing unit utilization. Regarding the apparatus, there are plans to purchase a new medic unit, which is expected to be approved for budgeting and acquisition within the next one to two years. The topic of rechassing was also brought up, with the decision being made to purchase new units instead of rechassing due to the units having been recycled too many times. The primary focus remains on safety components, with the district aiming to ensure that the apparatus designs, dating back to the late 1990s, align with current safety standards.
3. **Facilities:** Chief Gillard stated Facility Manager Pickard is finishing up the Station 72 restrooms and will begin working on Station 71 by 2025. It is suggested to start planning for 2026 and consider the possibility of a capital bond. The 2025 Strategic Advisory Board (SAB) meeting will need to discuss the district's needs projecting through 2026-2028. Despite having a strategic plan and capital improvement plan, there is a question of whether we should have a third party evaluate our facilities, as suggested in the SAB, or handle it internally through a formal facility review. Commissioner Milton stressed the importance of deciding this before finalizing plans for Station 72 and future station placement, as these decisions may impact what is proposed in the capital bond. Commissioner Ingalls mentioned that the chief is seeking an examination of our current facilities to guide decisions based on a needs assessment. "While operational effectiveness can be assessed internally, we need to be aware of the estimates and the items that are not immediately visible." Commissioner Ingalls suggested breaking this down into two separate ideas: assessing current needs with our existing facilities, as well as preparing for future building and growth. There was also a question about the possibility of building a shop/maintenance facility on Pioneer Hill Road, raised by Commissioner Ueberuaga. Commissioner Whiteley asked for more specifics on the needs for the apparatus facility. Chief Gillard pointed out that the current issues include insufficient ground-level storage space and the need to expand the existing space. Other issues include the physical training room in the attic, outdated windows, and the need to update the restrooms to accommodate a growing and diverse workforce. Commissioner Milton also suggested exploring alternative options or locations before considering constructing another building; Keyport was specifically mentioned, and Chief Gillard suggested that the District consider options for the building's use, which could involve creating a fire station, repurposing the area for storage, and exploring surplus or other options. The Keyport community occasionally uses this building, so finding a way to keep it within the community while meeting legal obligations is desired. Chief Gillard intends to conduct an internal review of the facilities to identify specific needs and request quotes for items where there is uncertainty.
5. **College Tuition Reimbursement:** Commissioner Ellingson would like the District to adopt a policy for tuition reimbursement. Commissioner Ellingson stated that there should be verification the courses the District are paying for are successfully passed prior to reimbursing employees.

Commissioner Ellingson moved to adopt a policy that education reimbursement will only be paid to employees who have passed the course with a grade of C or above. Commissioner Ingalls seconded. Discussion: Commissioner Ingalls asked if the bargaining unit would need to be involved prior to establishing a policy. Chief Gillard stated a policy has been created and will be ready for review at the next meeting. Commissioner Ellingson stated that it would be okay to add an option for tuition advancement at the Fire Chief's discretion. DC Anderson stated the policy would cover all concerns and has language regarding a passing grade per the policy of the institution the employee attends as not all institutions use letter grading systems. DC Anderson also thanked the board for the consideration for the advancement of tuition funds.

Commissioner Milton moved to postpone this motion to next meeting pending the review of the district policy. Commissioner Ellingson seconded. Motion was carried with a 4 to 1 vote to postpone this motion to next meeting pending the review of the district policy. Passed.

Informational Items:

- 1. St. Michaels Medical Center (SMMC):** SMMC has been improving with the wait times over the past two weeks. SMMC is working on getting staffing for the CARES program. Regular meetings with leadership from the county urgent care facilities were held to discuss the impact on emergency medical services and the emergency department (ED). Transportation rates and patient concerns were also discussed. There were some services like labs and imaging being removed, requiring people to go to the emergency department and transition. Commissioner Ellingson stated that he has heard wait times have gotten worse from the Kitsap County Commissioners. Overall, the wait times in the emergency department are worse, but there have been some small improvements. It was discussed that urgent care facilities are slowing during certain time frames, but then reach peak hours causing a backup in services. Commissioner Whiteley asked about the letter that was sent to the Department of Navy regarding the potential of re-opening the naval hospital. The response received has been forwarded to another department for review, which can be a very long process.
- 2. Staffing/Hiring:** Chief Gillard notified the board that Probationary Firefighter, Merce Chamness had been removed effective 8/23/2024 due to failing to meet the probationary requirements. Firefighter, Dave Musselman has signed a separation agreement with his last day being 10/1/2024. Chief Gillard is currently recruiting for the CARES position. AD Sawyers updated the board on current hiring. Firefighter/Paramedic Hannah Limb, Firefighter Mathew McKenna, and Firefighter Bryce Withers started with the District on 8/16/2024 and have begun their probation. The Finance Director position received over 23 submittals and the District will begin reviewing resumes over the next week. The candidate selected for the Community Support Specialist position is still conducting pre-employment testing along with a Lateral Firefighter/EMT.
- 3. Apparatus:** Chief Gillard mentioned that the fire engine loaned to the City of Conconully was delivered to the community; they were very grateful. The District discussed options with the community to potentially sell the engine surplus if they choose. The District is currently looking into ordering a new medic unit later this year or early next year. A decision has been made not to refurbish the Pierce, which is 23 years old, as it may not be cost-effective for an item that old. The District also discussed the order of a battalion chief rig, which will take a few months to be assembled. Regarding the tenders, Chief Gillard mentioned that they are still researching apparatus improvements as part of the strategic planning and capital improvement plan. If the older apparatus are not replaced in this bond cycle, their replacement cost will not only be more expensive, but the units will also be over 30 years old. The District will need to discuss these issues further during the planning process. The District also mentioned that there were previous issues with the marine unit, but those have been resolved. The marine unit was purchased through a port security grant.
- 4. Financial Report (July):** FD Luther stated there was nothing out of the ordinary for the month of July. The interest rate is 3.87 percent generating over \$37,000.00 in interest for the month of July.
- 5. Overtime Report (July):** DC Russell discussed July overtime levels which have been the lowest of the year. The largest driver for overtime was for crew members deployed to the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) which was about \$19,000.00, but the District will be reimbursed for those expenses. The overtime budget has utilized 46 percent of funds, expending \$58,917.71 for the month of July.
- 6. Operations Report (July):** DC Russell stated in July 2023, the District responded to 354 calls, and in July of 2024, the District responded to 446 calls with 43 of those being CARES calls. This is a 12 percent increase in call volume. The District received mutual aid on 44 occasions and provided mutual aide on 33 calls. There was one brush fire. D/C Russell commented on how great the Poulsbo community is. There was a pretty substantial storm a few weeks ago generating eight responses; there were wires down and two burn piles that were ignited by lightning strikes. Battalion Chief Chris Rahl did a great job of organizing resources to resolve the fires.

Commissioner and Staff Comments:

Commissioner Whiteley: There will be a road closure 9/16/2024 in Port Gamble and Carver Drive from 6PM-6AM for a week or two. The District may want to check if there is emergency vehicle access.

Commissioner Ingalls: Asked about upcoming conference activities and involvement.

Commissioner Ellingson: Discussed a recent Labor & Industries Committee meeting and findings in regard to the Chapter 296-305 WAC and a local fire district. Climate resiliency requirements have been a recent topic with fire districts. Briefed the board about controlled substance diversion. Kitsap 911 has completed the closest unit dispatch and will be moving the dispatch area across the hall.

DC Russell: Thanked the board for allowing the District to loan their engine to Conconcully, WA.

FD Luther: Thanked the board for the birthday wishes.

Chief Gillard: Commented that Firefighter Tracy and Firefighter Folden are now a part of minimum staffing. Also, announced that Fire Marshal Harvey had a retirement party which was well attended. He will be missed at the department and thanked him for his service with the Poulsbo Fire Department.

Public Comment: No public present.

Good of the order:

Next Regular Meeting **Wednesday, September 11, 2024 at 16:00**

Kitsap County Fire Commissioners Meeting, **Tuesday, September 24, 2024 via Zoom**

Washington Fire Commissioner Association Conference, **Wednesday-Saturday, October 23-26, 2024**

Adjourn: The regular meeting was adjourned by common consent at 5:42 p.m.

ATTEST:

Nichole Sawyers, Administrative Director