

Vashon Island Fire & Rescue
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Penny Farcy Training Center
January 17, 2006

Commissioner Sommers called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

Commissioner Sommers read a statement on the Open Public Meetings Act.

All who wished stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioners present were Jennings, Sommers, Turner and Hoffmann; Commissioner Nielsen was excused.

Commissioner Turner moved to approve the minutes for the January 3, 2006 meeting as presented. Commissioner Hoffmann seconded the motion. Commissioners voting in favor were Sommers, Turner, and Hoffmann; Commissioner Jennings voted no.

Additions to agenda were both under new business. Commissioner Jennings added a non-voting participant on the Board of Commissioners and Hilary Emmer, a member of the public, wanted to discuss beach pumps. Commissioner Sommers moved the Panel Discussion to precede the Finance Report.

Public Comments on Non-agenda Items

Commissioner Sommers announced that Hilary Emmer would be the time keeper; people will be limited to speaking once on each topic and limited to two minutes.

Mr. Kreitner stated that this last fall he had a few occasions when the District came out because of asthma attacks and the response time was great. He heard from someone that the response time is going to be longer. The fire district did a great job and he asked the District to keep up the good work.

Craig Beles asked what the violation of the Open Public Meetings Act that was mentioned in Commissioner Sommers' comment. Commissioner Sommers explained one violation was returning early from Executive Session.

Jolene Lamb thanked the Board for having the retreat on island this year.

Commissioner Turner moved to approve the vouchers listed in the Commissioner packet. Commissioner Hoffmann seconded the motion. Commissioners voting in favor were Jennings, Turner, Hoffmann and Sommers.

Vouchers audited and certified by the auditing officer required by RCW 42.24.080 and those expenses reimbursement claims certified as required by RCW 42.24.090, have been recorded on the listing which has been made available to the Board. As of this date January 17, 2006 the Board does approve for payment those vouchers included in the above.

Vouchers 120125 – 120137 for the amount of \$175,913.69

Vouchers 100001 – 100044 for the amount of \$5,010.00

Vouchers 120138 – 120161 for the amount of \$20,203.63

Vouchers 100045 – 100067 for the amount of \$28,759.33

Panel Discussion

Panel members Mike Kirk, Rick Wallace, Rhoda Karusaitis, and Chris Coldeen gave a presentation on lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina.

Finance Report

Matt Sullivan, Finance Director, gave a finance report from the preliminary year end financials for 2005.

Hilary Emmer asked about apparatus rental income. Matt Sullivan explained that the District sends apparatus to State wide mobilizations and the District was paid rental fees for the time they were used.

Commissioner Sommers asked several questions. One was on the over spending for testing, hiring, uniforms, entry physicals, and paging. Matt Sullivan answered that there were two recruit academies in 2005 that impacted those budget items.

Commissioner Sommers' other question was on the Community Newsletter. Matt Sullivan stated that there were more newsletters last year than usual. Chief Wilson also stated that we mailed out a postcard soliciting volunteers at the end of 2005.

Marilyn Omev asked about expenses for the shift paramedics, and EMS items. Matt Sullivan explained that the District received more money from King County to expand the paramedic program. Marilyn Omev asked for highlights. Matt Sullivan answered that a budget was a tool for future planning.

Old Business

Draft Letter of Understanding - IEC

Commissioner Turner reported that IEC met with Matt Sullivan and Commissioner Turner to negotiate a Letter of Understanding. The items agreed upon will go out to the respective attorneys and then both parties will come back to see where the negotiations stand.

New Business

Recruit Academy

Chief Whitney gave a report on the recruit academy including cost and demographics of students.

Jolene Lamb asked if pagers were included in the cost.

Chief Whitney responded that they were not and will cost about \$110.00 apiece.

Jolene Lamb asked if Saturday practicals would cost more for 15 students than 5 students.

Chief Whitney responded that the cost was based on four instructors for Saturday practicals but not his own time.

Jolene Lamb asked if everybody from the current academy and EMT classes had a full class-B uniform.

Chief Whitney stated no, that about three years ago the District bought class-B uniforms for everybody. We found two years ago that many volunteers still had their uniforms in shrink wrap.

Troy Kindred asked about the nineteen volunteers from off-island. It seems like a lot of money to invest in off-island people. Are they signing a contract to help pay for their training?

Chief Whitney stated that this has been raised and District Counsel will look at doing contracts to recover our cost if the volunteers don't stick around. He stated that after an extensive advertising campaign for on-island volunteers there was not a good turn out. Off-island volunteers get a lot out of working with us. Not many Fire Districts are accepting volunteers at this time.

Marilyn Omev asked if we always need volunteers. Are there a targeted number of volunteers needed or a long range plan? Chief Whitney answered that we see a turnover of two-thirds by the fourth year. Currently we have 38 on-island volunteers; thirteen of them went through the recruit academy last year. We have 25 off-island volunteers. Last year we brought in 30 volunteers.

Jeremiah Mushen, an off-island volunteer, went through the recruit academy in 2004. He represented Vashon Island Fire & Rescue in the Katrina Relief. He has been at a fire on Vashon and recognizes that this island has survived with volunteers for a long time and continues to need volunteers. At the fire I was at we had the paramedics who were doing firefighting and many volunteers. We were exhausted by the end. This was a minor two bedroom house fire. Off-island participants raise the standard of volunteers and bring a level of commitment, physical fitness, and experience that is needed.

Joel Wade state that the biggest concern with comparing off-island and on-island volunteers is disaster preparedness. When the big disaster hits the ferries will stop running.

Commissioner Sommers stated that looking at new volunteers both off-island and on-island, there are no women on the roster.

Chief Whitney stated that last year we had several women join and this year we have several women who are in the recruit academy. Our level of requirements for the physical ability test and training is higher than in years past.

Jason Everett stated that the physical ability test that we just ran the recruits through is a National standard.

SOG Revision

Matt Sullivan presented SOG 2007, 2008, 2008.1, 2008.2 covering Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation that have been updated. These will go out for a three week review and then will come before the Board for approval.

Grants – Citizen Corps, Program/Rotary

Joe Ulatoski presented the Grants for Citizen Corps Program from King County and the Rotary that have been awarded to the Disaster Preparedness group on Vashon. Joe Ulatoski asked the Commissioners to sign the agreement to accept the grants and manage the money. Commissioner Jennings moved to accept the Grants for Vashon's Disaster Preparedness Committee Citizen Corps Program from King County and sign the agreement for funds totaling \$39,500. Commissioner Hoffmann seconded the motion. Commissioners voted in favor were Turner, Hoffmann, Jennings, and Sommers.

Commissioner Jennings moved to appointed Matt Sullivan to over see the grant funds. Commissioner Hoffmann seconded the motion. Commissioners voting in favor were Turner, Hoffmann, Jennings, and Sommers.

Non-voting member on the Board of Commissioners

Commissioner Jennings suggested having a non-voting member on the Board of Commissioners. He met with the Firefighters Association about this idea and thought that a member could participate and comment on the issues. It would provide a direct avenue of communication with volunteer members of the District.

Commissioner Sommers asked about the 501c3 status of the Firefighters Association. She was also unclear what would happen if the non-voting member did not work out.

Commissioner Turner thought it was a good idea; he suggested three month terms.

Joel Wade stated that the Vashon Firefighters Association is no longer volunteers; their board is made up of paid staff.

Hilary Emmer understood that members of the Board cannot be volunteers (with the fire district).

Commissioner Jennings stated that an elected official can only volunteer through a unanimous vote of the Board. This would not be a voting member and would give the volunteers a voice.

Jolene Lamb stated that more than one volunteer who had gone to that Firefighters Association's meeting stated that the organization did not represent them. In the past volunteers have needed to go through the chain of command. How will the non-voting member follow that policy?

Cedric Gagnaire said that Joel Wade had a good point. It would be good to have all volunteers to show up at Firefighter Association meetings. He would like to see a volunteer appointed to represent them on Board. This would be a great opportunity to bring people together.

Commissioner Sommers asked if membership in the Firefighter Association is open to anybody.

Jason Everett, as president of the Firefighter Association, answered that he is the only member of Board of the Firefighter Association who is paid staff. He was a member when he was a volunteer. It is his understanding that anybody who is a member of the District, volunteer or paid staff, can be a member.

Commissioner Jennings stated that it seems that the Firefighter Association has not been able to deliberate on this issue with the membership.

Commissioner Sommers stated that decisions would still be up to the five elected officials. She has tried as Chair of the Board to make meetings as open as possible to encourage people to take the opportunity to voice their opinions..

Casey Westphal stated that he was President of the Firefighters Association for two years and the by-laws state that all members of the Fire District -- paid and volunteer -- can be members of the Association.

Commissioner Jennings stated that when he went to the Association, they seemed to think having a non-voting member on the Board was a good thing. He told the Firefighters Association that he would come back to the Board with this suggestion. Commissioner Jennings would like the Firefighter Association to discuss this and get back to him on what they decide.

Joe Ulatoski asked what the difference was between volunteers saying what was on their mind in the audience or having someone on the board.

Commissioner Jennings answered Joe Ulatoski by saying that the difference was that the non-voting member would speaking on behalf of the volunteers. We have volunteers come to meetings and say what volunteers think and it is not tracked back to volunteers. This would give the volunteers a voice.

Jason Everett said that there was broad based support to have volunteers represented on the Board.

No decision was made.

Beach Pumps

Hilary Emmer would like to see a beach pump used when a truck runs out of water. It would be good to have a beach pump on every truck. Mike Kirk said that he would explain the process to Hilary after the meeting and set up a demonstration.

Commissioner Turner asked to revisit the policy for drafting water.

Randy Tonkin stated that at present the District has this capability.

Statistics in Commissioner Packet

Commissioner Sommers reviewed the incident report that was included in the Commissioner Packet.

Joel Wade asked if the Sunpro data was verified by the incident commander. For example Valley Communications shows the arrival time to the North End address which was the wrong address on one of the incidents.

Jason Everett stated that the information presented was fundamentally good information.

For the Good of the order

Commissioner Jennings moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Hoffmann seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted in favor. The meeting ended at 10:10 PM.

Maridee BonaDea
District Secretary