

**Vashon Island Fire & Rescue
Board of Commissioners
March 7, 2006**

Commissioner Sommers called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Commissioner Sommers welcomed the public to the Dockton Community meeting and acknowledged the great turnout. She encouraged anyone wanting emails to sign up.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by most present.

Roll Call

The Training Secretary, Susan Wolf, standing in for the District Secretary called the roll; Commissioners present were Chair Gayle Sommers, Jan Nielsen, David Hoffman and Ron Turner. David Jennings was absent.

Additions to the Agenda

Commissioner Sommers asked if there were any additions to the Agenda. There were no additions.

Approval of Vouchers

Commissioner Turner moved to approve the vouchers; Commissioner Hoffman seconded as follows:

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 March 7, 2006 the Board does approve for payment those vouchers included in the above and including payroll expenses of \$141702.59.

Vouchers 200132 – 200144 for the amount of \$22,339.42
Vouchers 300001 – 300014 for the amount of \$25,235.33
Vouchers 300015 – 300034 for the amount of \$11,513.16
Vouchers 300035 in the amount of \$16,568.17

Discussion was called for and a public comment from Hillary Emmert asked why the overtime was so high. She noted that one employee had 99 hours of overtime. Commissioner Sommers asked Chief Wilson and he responded that he would research the issue and respond. Commissioner Sommers also offered to get back to her.

All Commissioners then voted to approve the vouchers.

Operations Report

Assistant Chief Marty Fowler gave the Operations report. He stated there were 39 calls, of which 23 were EMS. Subtracting the ALS calls, and several where there was no transport left 13 transports. Three of those were by IEC.

Old Business

Equipment, Ladder Truck/Surplus E-551. Maintenance Supervisor Brett Kranjceovich put together a list of equipment needed if E551 was not surplused. The list was in the packet. The first list of equipment was in the grant request (\$38,710). The second list was a breakdown of the last line of the first list (\$4,060 included in the previous total). The third list is the balance of equipment that would have been off the surplused engine (\$42,305). The final list, prepared by Bob Larsen, was the cost of modification to Station 55 to accommodate the engine (\$15,218).

Commissioner Turner suggested the medic rigs could be parked outside rather than pay to modify the station. Wilson said the medic rigs have Schedule 3 drugs which needed to be secured. Commissioner Turner asked if when Stan and Kathy parked the vehicles at home, did they have drugs in them then. Joel Wade made a comment that he has seen the rigs parked at Thriftway. Commissioner Turner went on to say that it seemed that the cost of the equipment was higher than he had been anticipating and wanted to see if there was some other way to configure the station so it wouldn't require modification. Commissioner Turner made a motion to table this discussion until a study could be done to see if the drugs could be in a case in the building and taken on the rig if a call was received; Hoffman seconded. Commissioner Sommers asked how difficult it would be to secure the drugs in a case and then take them out when needed. Firefighter Everett thought the engine could also be used for training and it was a good idea to keep it even if it was kept at the Training Center.

Commissioner Turner would like more time to look at the equipment list. Commissioner Nielsen said he didn't have a problem with tabling it – the truck wouldn't be worth any less in a month. Commissioner Sommers asked Chief Wilson if he was clear on what the Board wanted. Chief Wilson replied that he was asked for a breakdown on what equipment would be needed to be purchased if the engine wasn't surplused and that is what he had supplied. Commissioner Turner offered to come down to the station to ask his questions and get the bottom line number.

Joel Wade asked for the bare bones cost of the truck. Chief Wilson answered \$463,784. Commissioner Turner said that he supports the ladder truck because we bought it and it's here. Still, he wanted to know what the bottom line cost would be.

Firefighter Everett asked about scraping ice from the medic rigs if parked outside could delay responses. Commissioner Turner had an idea about looking at the cost of putting up a carport versus reconfiguring the "hanger deck" (Station 55 apparatus bay). All commissioners approved tabling to first meeting in April.

New Business

Compliance with House Bill 1756 (2005). Chief Wilson explained that there were four determinations to be made. One was whether or not our district was substantially a career or volunteer organization which would dictate what direction then next decision would take. If the determination was a volunteer organization, then no further action was needed. If career, however, then the district has to outline services provided and determine optimum response

times. These would take the form of resolutions incorporating those determinations. A sample of what they would look like had been drafted by the District's attorney, Joe Quinn. Then those resolutions and our performance to them would be reported to the community. Commissioner Nielsen asked if that could be part of Annual Report and Chief Wilson answered in the affirmative, but it would be mandated.

Commissioner Sommers stated that at the retreat it had been proposed having community involvement to determine what community standards are wanted. Commissioner Turner asked Commissioner Nielsen if he hadn't volunteered to develop a committee for this question. Commissioner Nielsen admitted he had. Commissioner Sommers proposed having it consist of members, both career and volunteers, and then placing an ad in the Beachcomber to invite public to participate. She also invited those present to join the committee. Commissioner Turner suggested Commissioner Nielsen get with the Association to draw up a plan for what the committee would consist of and come back to the Board for a "blessing" to go forward.

There was a public comment from Carl Sells who asked the purpose of the committee. The answer from Commissioner Sommers was HB 1756 and its issues. Hillary Emmert asked if the first step was to decide the makeup of the committee; which Commissioner Nielsen confirmed. Firefighter Everett asked if there was a timeline and Commissioner Sommers answered that she believed it would be a fairly lengthy process and was actually to have taken place last year in 2005. EMT David Sova asked for clarification – either we were volunteer or career. Commissioner Nielsen and Sommers outlined the mandated statement.

A public comment from Joel Wade that he had read the entire document and encouraged careful review because of definitions and ambiguity of HB 1756. For instance, typically our district has defined response time to include dispatch, driving time and this RCW defines it as just driving time. The Committee will need to clarify the legislation. EMT Lanora Hackett asked what constitutes volunteer or career? Chief Wilson replied that the District's attorney determined we are substantially career and as Joel Wade had said, the language of the bill is ambiguous. He stated that since this had passed, the National Fire Service has used roster numbers to determine composition. Chief Wilson clarified that it depended on whether you used roster composition (predominately volunteer) or responses to calls (first on calls were 98% career). The Board would make the final determination based on standards because it is not clearly defined. Joel Wade stated NFPA standards are recommendations not requirements, generally you pay an attorney to interpret these kinds of things. Mr. Wade then quoted the recent grant application for the ladder truck which stated VIF&R is primarily "volunteer-staffed".

Public Discussion

Commissioner Sommers then opened up the meeting to public comments asking for Dockton residents to provide input to the Board about Dockton issues or fire district issues rather than political issues. Commissioner Nielsen stated last time the Board was at Dockton the discussion was about looking at the possibility of changing the station and putting staffing here. Septic engineering states no septic drainfield will work on this property. No way to add onto this building. Carl Sells commented that some new septic laws just passed a week

ago so that may impact those decisions. Commissioner Hoffman stated there are new systems that have been designed but still require an amount of soil. Septic tanks (holding tanks) will cost to have pumped. Firefighter Everett asked if the septic had failed or we had to upgrade. Commissioner Hoffman explained that anytime you remodel or enlarge a building you have to update the septic as well. Firefighter Everett then asked is the current use O.K? Commissioner Nielsen says yes for a weekly meeting and intermittent use but not for remodeling the station and expanding.

Firefighter Daron Buxton said if volunteers could stay in Station 55 for meal prep and showers and just sleep here at Dockton there wouldn't be that much of an increase in use. He said he couldn't conceive that a shower couldn't be installed there. Firefighter Jason Alberthal said you can't have staff just sleeping here without providing the showers and so forth. He read that 45 gallons per day is maximum to this station. He then related his own septic experiences two blocks from the Station 58 and, eight years ago installed the last of sand filter pumped type systems to be installed in the neighborhood. It is requiring monitoring from the county every two years and should it fail, they would have to install a containment system at a price of \$50-\$60,000.

Jolene Lamb then asked for printed report on calls and transports. She then related that recent comments from district "experts" had quoted number of historic calls were misleading. Joel Wade asked if Luana Beach Road counted (as Dockton community) to which there was laughter. He stated he had responded from this station (58/Dockton) for ten years. He asked if there were any plans to get the volunteers back because response times are now significantly longer and asked that something be done to improve it. Assistant Chief Fowler stated that he (Wade) had probably seen the signs (advertising for Recruit Academy), but he didn't receive an application for Mr. Wade. Among some laughter, Mr. Wade asked for an application. He asked if Chief Wilson would accept him and Chief Wilson's response was if he was willing to complete the terms of his discipline. Commissioner Sommers commented that they would love to have people come back.

Commissioner Turner offered his idea that anyone who wants to volunteer can be a support person, driver, etc. not especially a "Superman" if they wanted to improve response times. He stated, "We can't afford all the union labels to staff the station." He explained that taxes would be triple if the stations were staffed with all career staff. He encouraged people to come and volunteer and help the District. He said one possibility was to bring the seventy-some CERT people in and run drills with them and encourage them to be EMTs or volunteer in other ways. He felt enthusiasm will grow from Dockton to Burton and hopefully taxes won't have to be raised.

Firefighter Alberthal encouraged people to get their neighbors to volunteer and said the Dockton station used to boast 25 members and is now down to 3-4. He himself has dropped his own involvement and responses due to working, coaching, and pledged to catch up on his training and to improve his responses because his involvement with VIFR constitutes some of his best memories. Commissioner Nielsen pointed out that those two guys (Brett Kranjceovich and Jason Alberthal) helped save a house two blocks from the station within the past year. Firefighter Alberthal also thanked the neighbors who recently helped at a structure

fire. He said, "God bless that woman, I don't even know her name," then described how he had wrapped a hose around a post and told her to stand on it so he could fight the fire, which she did.

Hillary Emmert asked in the current Recruit Academy how many people had applied. A/C Fowler was unsure. Volunteer Liaison Wolf answered- 35. Commissioner Sommers clarified from Vashon and Wolf replied she thought around seven. Commissioner Turner said at present there were five from Vashon. Commissioner Sommers asked if there was a way for people to apply in different roles. Chief Wilson answered and said there are Support, EMT and Firefighters. She then encouraged people to put their names on list for information to volunteer. Hillary Emmert asked why the District would turn anyone away that wanted to volunteer. Volunteer Liaison Susan Wolf answered that some reasons why some folks are not accepted has to do with criminal history backgrounds or physical conditions making it unsafe for them in a demanding volunteer position such as firefighting. She offered her business cards to those interested in learning more.

A woman asked if the district ever put on a career day or open house and invited the public to come in and see what the volunteer opportunities are. She also commented that it seemed to constitute an enormous time commitment. Firefighter Cedric Gagnaire stated that the commitment to be an EMT is one Wednesday night and all day Saturday for 10-11 weeks. He said the minimum response for an EMT is 24 calls per year and monthly training as well as CBTs for maintaining certificates. Firefighter Alberthal agreed the training is "a chunk" at first and recommended training as a firefighter first and then an EMT. He and Kranjcevic want their kids to know what their family tradition has been for generations because that's how they got involved growing up. He remembered the Dockton station used to have an informal annual BBQ with 150 of the neighbors coming for the day of potluck and play.

EMT Sova applauded Commissioner Turner for coming around and cheerleading the current Recruit Academy. Firefighter Everett clarified the RA takes six months and EMT school ten weeks. Chief Mike Kirk said that he joined in 1967 and Explorers get parents involved and some started as Explorers. Training standards are required because of volunteer safety and teamwork.

Joel Wade brought up the Aaron LaBrie termination case and asked for an update. Chief Wilson said it was in the hands of the arbitrator and a decision must be made by April 8th.

Firefighter Jeremiah Mushen said Wade's website that unfairly criticizes current volunteers, who are donating their time, breeds a lot of negativity. FF Mushen stated that he was sure Mr. Wade was highly experienced and held in high regard by the Commissioners but he requested the Commissioners take his comments into consideration. Commissioner Sommers commented that it is a free country and people don't have to pay attention. Firefighter Mushen stated while he appreciates the freedom we have in this country, that as a current volunteer, he doesn't appreciate the comments and is, in fact, offended by it. Wade advised Mushen that he did not understand some of the past issues. He stated he had been a member with the district for 10 years and objected to the current Chief's conduct. Commissioner Sommers then objected to his personal attack.

Ms. Lamb then advised that people that are new are hearing things that are one-sided and they don't know the people that have left the department. She stated that she had been the highest responder in her 16 year history with the District and receipt of every award, including the Chief's award by the current chief. She stated that an EMT class heard disparaging remarks of IEC from two people and it was inferred that she was some kind of trouble-maker. She stated one person has already admitted to the remarks and apologized and she would like Firefighter Mushen to consider that. He then stated he didn't know about that and was only commenting on what he sees on the website.

Commissioner Comments

Nielsen motioned for adjournment. Before it could be seconded, Commissioner Hoffman asked if he could give an application to a volunteer. He was told he couldn't, however, subsequently he found out he was allowed.

There was a public comment from Katrina survivor, Milt Williams. He stated he was an 18 year veteran and had served in Iraq. He was in the 9th Ward in Louisiana (the one nearest the dam) when it broke. He stated they went 35 days with no law enforcement and were still getting food and water delivered 60 days afterwards. He stated that the attendees tonight needed to "get your act together" or they would be in no way ready for a disaster even a fraction of the size of Hurricane Katrina. He said, "Get over this childish (stuff) or we will not be ready." He then stated, "They're still finding bodies in Louisiana." There was general applause at the conclusion of his remarks.

Carl Sells commented he appreciated the Commissioners coming to Dockton. John Moore stated he would like better notification of meetings here because of his Post Office mailing address, he didn't receive the mailing. He suggested a sign be placed at station or a sandwich sign at the bottom of the hill.

Commissioner Turner then seconded Commissioner Nielsen's motion to adjourn. All Commissioners voted to then adjourn at 9:05 p.m., no decisions having been made.