

SOUTH WHIDBEY FIRE/EMS

Special Meeting - Board Workshop Minutes

5579 Bayview Road, Langley, Washington
December 10th, 2019 – 10:00 AM

Attendance: Chairman Mestemacher, Commissioner Simmons, Commissioner Hawley, Chief Palmer.

In Audience: DC Mike Cotton, Moffatt; FF/EMT's: McDougald, Kalahiki, Turner, Husom; Michael O'Brien; Kelly McDonald; Terry Ney (incoming Deputy Chief of Operations), Mike Noblet (Commissioner-Elect).

Commissioner Mestamacher advised anyone can ask any questions. It is a workshop, input is welcome.

- a. Proposed Policy Change - Policy 101: Board of Fire Commissioners: If a commissioner is assigned to a committee, request assigned board member report to other commissioners what was laid out in committee.
- b. Proposed Policy Change – Policy 1012: Salary and Benefits: change in salary benefit. New agreement to be discussed creates a 28 day work period. Requesting a change to pay periods so there is 26 in a year instead of 24. Marches the change out over the year. Request this go on agenda for 12/12 meeting. Triggers the 30 day period after 1st reading. January meeting will be the 2nd reading.
- c. Union Contract –

Commissioner Hawley asked why a union?

Chief Palmer explained Washington is a right to unionize state. We cannot, not negotiate with them.

Commissioner Hawley: why do they want to do this?

FF/EMT Husom: noticed from surrounding areas, not qualified as union being part time, then when they went full time they were behind. Wanted to be educated and understand what our rights are before department had full time crew members. Chose to proceed with going with IAFF so we are not impacted by everything at once.

Hawley: mostly concerned are you seeking representation as a protection against leadership, either commissioners or fire chief.

Ney: IAFF provides other support services. Having been on both sides, IAFF does a lot of things for their members.

FF/EMT Kalahiki: PTSD as an example, huge response to anyone in need, no questions asked.

FF/EMT McDougald: Documentation service, for exposures. Being able to record any exposure in one place.

Commissioner Mestemacher: Any further clarification?

Hawley, that was the core issue.

Noblet: read agreement several times, don't claim to be an expert. It seems like a reasonable agreement, and appears everyone is in agreement on the terms. Bottom line, bargaining unit is important to the people

on the line to have their interests protected. Have never had birthday off, love it is in there.

Simmons: can I go back and make it retroactive to have my birthday off...

Palmer: it has always been in SWFE Policy to have birthday off.

Palmer: to break down how this started: crew came to me and said they were unionizing, I then contacted PERC and they came onsite, we did some training before the negotiations started. The Affinity Model was used, where points of interest to both sides were put up on a white board using post-its. 90% of what was on the board, both parties were in agreement. A great deal of the contract language was already in policy. Few changes requested or made to existing policy. Every section and every line was negotiated, then noted date and when in agreement by both parties. Vicki Lange verified the steps and when they were agreed upon. SWFE signed tentative agreement with Union. SWFE attorney took a look at it and made his changes. Union agreed to all his changes, with no exceptions.

Mestemacher: anyone from the audience have questions?

Noblet, when does it need to be agreed to?

Palmer: State law says negotiations need to take place 5 months in advance of the budget. We were not notified until April, it took until June to get all the qualifications and certifications in place to be laid out in the budget. Now that budget is approved, agreement needs to be approved. Next contract, negotiations will have to start in March and will fine tune what is requested or required.

No further comments.

Meeting adjourned at 10:17 a.m.

Vicki Lange for
Sarah Pedersen,
Board Secretary