

South Whidbey Fire/EMS
SPECIAL MEETING

Strategic Planning Retreat
Saratoga Inn
201 Cascade Ave., Langley, WA
January 21, 2017

MINUTES

In Attendance: Chairman Kenon Simmons
Commissioner Bob Elliot
Commissioner Frank Mestemacher
Chief Rusty Palmer

- I. Call to Order – The Strategic Planning Retreat for South Whidbey Fire/EMS was called to order by Board Chair Kenon Simmons at 08:01.
- II. The Agenda was approved.
- III. The approved minutes of the 2016 Retreat were reviewed.
- IV. The District's Vision, Mission and Values Statements were reviewed. No changes were recommended.
- V. The Chief discussed 10 year response statistics with the Board. The department has experienced a 30% increase in total call volume over the last 10 years. The ratio of fire to medical calls has changed significantly during the same period, with 2007 at 43% fire calls vs 57% medical calls, and 2016 at 27% fire calls vs 73% medical calls. Each year sees an increase in medical calls while fire calls have remained fairly flat. The Chief did not anticipate that changing over coming years.
- VI. The development of a new Strategic Plan was discussed. The current plan is mostly complete, with the exception of construction of the Bayview fire station. Chief Palmer gave a status report concerning efforts to create a new plan. He will present the plan to the Board as part of the Mid-Year budget presentation.
- VII. The Chief updated the Board on the status of the Bayview fire station project. Carletti Architects are working on the building permit plans set and are targeting a February 1, 2017 submittal date. If that target is met, we should see startup of the project at the site by mid-summer. It is unclear at this time how long it will take the

County to review the plans. We experienced one recent delay with the septic permit. We were required to completely design the septic system for the CUP. We believed we would receive the permit based upon the 100% design, however, we must resubmit the plan for that permit.

The Bond timing was discussed at length. DA Davidson set a proposed timeframe of events in order to close the bond at the end of April. Kay Cope and the Chief are providing information to DA Davidson and are on schedule with the plan. Interest rates are beginning to rise and it was agreed that we should continue to secure the lowest rate as quickly as possible.

- VIII. The Chief discussed a memo from our legal counsel concerning the new FLSA Overtime Rule which increases the overtime threshold at which overtime exempt employees must be paid overtime. The Chief noted that all current employees to whom this would apply are well above the minimum threshold. The new rule will not apply to any District employees at this time.

The Chief updated the Board on the part-time firefighter program. The program is functioning as intended and daytime coverage is improved. Response times have dropped during the day. The Chief believes the program is making a difference and will continue to monitor the program and make improvements as necessary.

Inspection services for fire inspections were discussed. The Chief advised that inspections will be part of the duties for part-time firefighters and that training is upcoming.

The Chief raised the question of timing for a small number of full-time firefighters in the future. With current pressure on volunteers from the increasing call volume, the Chief believes that the need for some full-time staff is coming quicker than perhaps desired by some. The budget impact for such employees will be significant and the Chief suggested we plan now in order to be ready should the need arise.

- IX. The Chief discussed the volunteer duty roster that was put in place on January 1, 2017. Stations rotate each day and provide 12 hour night response during the week and 24 hour response on the weekends. Station 31 was the first to be on the roster and responded to 9 of 13 calls for service on New Years Day. To date the program is working and will monitored and adjusted as needed to ensure success.

The Chief advised the Board that he has discovered few affordable plans that would allow volunteers to participate in our health insurance program by creating a volunteer health group. He will continue to look for a plan that the District can afford.

- X. The Board and Chief reviewed the Capital fund balance and future needs. The division of funds was discussed. The purpose of the Capital Fund, Reserve Fund, and Contingency Fund was discussed. The District will work to ensure targeted fund balances are met as soon as possible.

The Chief recommended that the Facilities Plan Schedule and the Apparatus Plan Schedule be reviewed and updated to ensure that our replacement plans were still on track based upon our maintenance needs. The Chief will discuss those plans at a future Board meeting.

- XI. A general discussion of future funding needs took place. Much of the results of the new Strategic Plan and how it relates to current capital and operational needs will impact future funding. No specific options were address.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 13:39.

Respectfully submitted,

H.L. "Rusty" Palmer
Fire Chief, EFO