

MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN LAKES FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

REGULAR MEETING

February 25th, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.
125 W. Hayden Ave., Hayden, ID

I. Call To Order

COMMISSIONER THOMPSON called meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Commissioners Amende, Halpin, Pearce, Thompson, and Washko (*via Zoom*)

OTHERS PRESENT: Fire Chief Riley, Division Chief Mather, Division Chief Dill, Fire Marshal Drechsel, Secretary Knapp, Christian Agesen, Burt Maines, Chris Larson, Aaron O'Brien, Mike Duke, and Amy Manning.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

COMMISSIONER THOMPSON led the Pledge.

III. Amend Agenda

There were no amendments to agenda.

IV. Presentation

A. Idaho Independent Intergovernmental (III-A) Trust Annual Report

A copy of the 2019/2020 III-A Trust Annual Report was presented for review. AMY MANNING, III-A Executive Director, thanked the board members for allowing her to make the annual report via Zoom. She presented the following to the board members:

1. On Page 2 of the 2019/2020 Annual Report is a list of all participating agencies (currently 79), the board of trustees, employees/staff, and consultants. AMY MANNING also thanked the board members for allowing CHIEF RILEY to serve on their board of trustees, noting that he was recently elected to another 3-year term. She reported that CHIEF RILEY is also now the chair of the trust's Medical Review Committee, which is their busiest committee.
2. On Page 3 of the report is membership status which was 70 member agencies as of 9/30/2020; have added 9 more since then for a 20% increase. AMY MANNING reported that the number of trust staff increased by 41.9% to keep up with this growth. She also reported on contact with potential agencies during the plan year:
 - a. 44 agencies contacted the trust and received information;
 - b. 25 of those agencies asked for rates;
 - c. 12 new agencies joined the trust during the plan year;
 - d. 8 agencies were declined by the trust due to their risk analysis, but they were encouraged to reapply.
3. Page 3 lists Plan & Benefit Changes/Updates as follows:
 - a. 4 agencies are on custom plans;
 - b. 2 agencies moved to lower their deductibles;
 - c. 1 agency added vision and 1 added dental;
 - d. No benefits were dropped by any agency.
4. On Page 3 of the report is a list of benefit enhancements for the 2019/2020 plan year.
5. Page 4 has financial information including:
 - a. Budget increased by 49% due to new members; AMY MANNING noted that the trust calls premiums "contributions";

- b. Type of claims are broken out with medical claims accounting for 73.2%;
 - c. The trust has two types of stop loss: individual or specific and aggregate. AMY MANNING reported that the specific stop loss premium decreased by 27% over the prior year. She also reported that the state Dept. of Insurance granted the trust's waiver request for 10/1/2019 based on their amount of surplus funds. This saved the trust more than \$6,000 in stop loss;
 - d. The breakdown of the trust's banking accounts and investments are listed, including their main checking account with Idaho Central Credit Union, three (3) money market accounts, 21 CDs, and an interest-bearing account with the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP).
6. Page 5 has further financial information including:
- a. Interest income increased 14% over prior year due to enrollment numbers increasing and earnings from CDs;
 - b. Annual pharmacy rebates increased 6% over prior year. AMY MANNING explained that the trust, as a self-funded benefit, receives the rebates that normally go to the insurance companies;
 - c. Reserves (surplus) are required to be funded and then monitored by the state Dept. of Insurance and are tied to claim costs. AMY MANNING reported that the trust's surplus continues to grow and has been stable over a five year history. She further reported that the trust anticipates an increase in interest and pharmacy rebates during the current plan year (2020/2021), and the trustees decided to use the surplus for premium rate increases for this plan year. AMY MANNING reported that the actuary had recommended a 4.9% increase in premiums as of 10/1/20, but the board took a 1% renewal and 3.9% out of surplus;
 - d. The five-year trend for Idaho medical renewal rates (inflation) shows claims averaging 6% to 8% increase every year. The III-A renewal rate five-year trend is -1% to 3%, showing that the trust is performing well with lower stable rates' and increased surplus;
 - e. AMY MANNING stated that the trust recommends agencies always budget their renewal at 10% each year for trend; and when renewals comes out in June, hopefully they are less than trend;
7. Page 6 has a list of the administrative services including:
- a. The trust contracts with Blue Cross of Idaho (BCI) as their third party administrator (TPA). AMY MANNING explained that the trust "rents" BCI's PPO network, while BCI processes EOBs and does prior-authorization process. She noted that the III-A is self-funded and pays all claims, while paying BCI a maintenance fee; therefore, if any member has a claim or pre-authorization not processed, they need to notify the III-A as BCI does not have the final decision. The III-A staff meet weekly with BCI teams to address any issues or concerns;
 - b. Legacy Enterprises consultant, Charlynn Harless, negotiated a low BCI administrative increase for the plan year and a decrease in the trust's specific stop loss fees;
 - c. The trust used a consultant in 2018 to negotiate a better contract with a new pharmacy benefit manager (PBM); AMY MANNING explained that as membership grows, the trust can negotiate better rates. ProAct is the current PBM and the consultants were able to negotiate lower rates than what BCI was offering.
8. Page 7 addresses the impacts COVID-19 has had to the trust. AMY MANNING reported that the III-A was the first benefit trust or insurance in Idaho to start paying 100% for testing.

9. AMY MANNING reported that a 24 hour/7 days a week telehealth line was set up in March available at no cost to its members. An employee, or covered family member, can call anytime and receive a response within 2 hours. AMY MANNING stated that this has been a very successful program.
10. On Page 7 is information on the wellness screenings offered on-site during September, October, and November of 2020. AMY MANNING noted that 92% of agencies participated in the on-site screenings, with 70% of members participating.
11. AMY MANNING reported that during the on-site wellness screenings in 2020, eight agencies also had mental health assessments provided. The goal is to take the stigma out of mental health wellness; she also reported that for future annual on-site wellness screenings, at least one mental health provider will be available for all agencies, with 2 or more providers sent depending on the size of the agency.
12. Page 8 has a list of Administration Updates for the plan year, including:
 - a. All III-A staff completed Mental Health First Aid Certification in September 2020;
 - b. Attended the Self Insurance Institute of America (SIIA) annual conference virtually;
 - c. Updated the III-A website;
 - d. Updated the staffing plan and added a new employee in January 2021;
 - e. The wellness program was enhanced;
 - f. A first responder mental health video was distributed and medical videos have been added to the website;
 - g. The III-A Facebook page was created;
 - h. Continuing to update policies and procedures;
 - i. Continuing to work on helping high cost claimants with cost saving measures.
13. Goals for the 2020/2021 plan year include:
 - a. Working on improving the mental health program. AMY MANNING reported that data has shown mental health has been more in demand over the last year, and that it is now in the top 5 of expenses for the trust.
14. Pages 9 and 10 include testimonials from III-A members.

AMY MANNING asked if there were any questions. **COMMISSIONER HALPIN** asked for the approximate cost of fees that are paid to BCI per employee/month. AMY MANNING stated that while this is proprietary information, it can be shared with the board members in an executive session. She noted that BCI has contracts with 95% of providers in Idaho, as well as providers in every country in the world, and that the III-A rents this network which is much more competitive than other insurance. She added that BCI also uses their own software for processing claims, and between the network and software, these contracts save the trust millions of dollars.

The board thanked AMY MANNING for her annual report.

V. Consent Calendar

The consent calendar was presented for review as follows:

- A. Approval of February 25th, 2021 Meeting Agenda as presented;
- B. Approval of February 11th, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes;
- C. Approval of Unpaid and Paid Bills Lists;
- D. Review of YTD Monthly Revenue/Expense report.

COMMISSIONER HALPIN made a motion, seconded by **COMMISSIONER AMENDE** to approve the February 25th, 2021 Consent Calendar as presented.

COMMISSIONER THOMPSON called for discussion.

COMMISSIONER HALPIN clarified with CHIEF RILEY that there would be discussion on the supplies and equipment purchased for the St 8 mechanic shop during the Chief's Report.

COMMISSIONER THOMPSON called for a roll call vote:

ROLL CALL VOTE:
Commissioner Amende Yes
Commissioner Halpin Yes
Commissioner Pearce Yes
Commissioner Thompson Yes
Commissioner Washko Yes

Motion carried

VI. Public Input

There was no public input.

VII. New Business

B. Discussion on Meeting Dates in March

COMMISSIONER THOMPSON asked the other board members if the date for first meeting in March should be moved due to members not being able to attend.

The board's consensus was to move the regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, March 11th at 10:00 a.m. to Thursday, March 4th at 10:00 a.m. The meeting scheduled for Thursday, March 25th at 10:00 a.m. will not change.

VIII. Reports

A. Chiefs Report – CHIEF RILEY reported on the following:

1. Lexipol – Continuing to work with Lexipol on revising policies. A webinar with the District's consultant will begin on 3/2 with Admin staff and Union Executive Board members meeting weekly thereafter for 1-2 hours until the project is complete. CHIEF RILEY reported that he hopes to have all policies revised in six months.
2. Growth and Development – Command staff is working on studies of growth both in the District and countywide; have also been working with the Local e-board members. CHIEF RILEY reported that taxpayers want growth to pay for itself, noting that emergency calls are up 17% over the same time last year. CHIEF RILEY stated that our growth is stressing our responders and we need to increase the number of suppression staff.
3. Legislative Items – There was discussion on how property tax levy works, as well as proposed legislation that would require cities and counties to collect impact fees on behalf of fire district. CHIEF RILEY reported on proposed tax reform legislation that if passed would limit tax revenue increases to 3% and agencies only able to collect up to 75% on new growth, for a cap of 4%.
4. Probation – CHIEF RILEY reported that FF/EMT CHRISTIAN AAGESEN has successfully completed his one-year probation this month, and that he will be presented with his helmet shield with his crew as soon as they are back in the station.
5. Mechanical Shop/Equipment – CHIEF RILEY stated that he feels the mechanic supplies/equipment have already paid for themselves, noting that the Fleet Mechanic was able to avoid a costly \$30,000 in repairs for only \$1,500 by catching an issue that had been missed by contracted shop. There was discussion on the contracted shop cost of \$125/hour for repair/maintenance of District fleet; and that having this work done in-house has already saved a lot of time normally spent moving apparatus back and forth from the shop in Spokane Valley.

COMMISSIONER WASHKO noted that there are many benefits to having our own employee taking ownership of the maintenance and condition of our fleet. There was further discussion on the size of the apparatus bay at St 8 and getting quotes for lifts.

B. Commissioner Reports

COMMISSIONER THOMPSON asked if FIRE MARSHAL DRECHSEL has been working with the Twin Lakes Village homeowners association. FIRE MARSHAL DRECHSEL reported that he had worked with them on becoming a Firewise community, noting that grant funds are no longer available. There was discussion on hydrants located in the Village with FM DRECHSEL reporting that all the hydrants work, but many are low to the ground and difficult for fire crews to open. He noted that he has suggested fire sprinklers be installed, as well as some road improvements for apparatus.

FIRE MARSHAL DRECHSEL also reported that a list of hydrant discrepancies goes out each year to each water district, including those hydrants that are difficult to open due to their height. There was further discussion on requesting that water districts correct these issues but FM DRECHSEL noted that he estimates a cost of \$2,700 each for those districts to put in new hydrants. There was discussion on the fire district's enforcement being limited to the hydrant working.

COMMISSIONER THOMPSON asked that he join FM DRECHSEL when he meets with the Village water district.

IX. Adjournment

The regular meeting was adjourned upon the motion of **COMMISSIONER THOMPSON** and as seconded by **COMMISSIONER PEARCE** at 11:00 a.m.

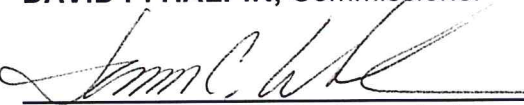
COMMISSIONER THOMPSON called for the vote and all were in favor of the motion.


TERRY J. THOMPSON, Chairman


DENNIS L. AMENDE, Commissioner


DAVID P. HALPIN, Commissioner


MICHAEL R. PEARCE, Commissioner


JAMES C. WASHKO, Commissioner

I certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of a duly called meeting of the governing body of the Northern Lakes Fire Protection District held in accordance with all applicable legal requirements, including Idaho Open Meeting Law, on the 25th day of February 2021.

ATTEST BY:


Valerie Knapp, District Secretary

