

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

REGULAR MEETING

November 10th, 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

OTHERS PRESENT: Fire Chief Riley, Division Chief Mather, Division Chief Dill, Fire Marshal Drechsel, Secretary Knapp, Luke Michael, Jarrod Pitts, Mike Duke, Mike Avilla, Chris Larson, Jerry Rose, Elizabeth Rose, Cody Palmer, Ryan Alltus, Matt Usher, Doug Duncan, and guest.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

COMMISSIONER THOMPSON led the Pledge.

III. Amend Agenda

There were no amendments to the agenda.

IV. Consent Calendar

The consent calendar was presented for review as follows:

- A. Approval of November 10th, 2021 Meeting Agenda as presented;
- B. Approval of October 26th, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes;
- C. Approval of Unpaid and Paid Bills Lists;
- D. Review of YTD Financial Report for October

COMMISSIONER HALPIN made a motion, seconded by **COMMISSIONER AMENDE** to approve the November 10th, 2021 Consent Calendar as presented.

COMMISSIONER THOMPSON called for discussion. There was no discussion.

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

V. New Business

A. Resolution 21-10

A resolution entitled *Declaring Certain District Personal Property as Surplus to be Disposed of* was presented for review. FIRE CHIEF RILEY reported that staff has identified personal property including a refrigerator, a snow plow, and a paper shredder to be declared as surplus and disposed of. A description of each item, including estimated value, was presented as Exhibit A to the resolution for review. FIRE CHIEF RILEY noted that the refrigerator had broken hinges and has been replaced in the St 1 crew quarters; that the snow plow purchased in 1998 has started to rust and has been replaced; and the paper shredder no longer works.

COMMISSIONER PEARCE made a motion, seconded by **COMMISSIONER WASHKO** to approve Resolution 21-10, *Declaring Certain District Personal Property as Surplus to be Disposed of*, as presented.

COMMISSIONER THOMPSON called for discussion.

COMMISSIONER WASHKO clarified with **CHIEF MATHER** that the District will try to sell the snow plow for its estimated value of \$1,000. **COMMISSIONER THOMPSON** clarified with **CHIEF MATHER** that the plow is just under 8' wide.

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

B. Approval of Revised Employee Policy

The revised District Hiring Policy #018 was presented for review. FIRE CHIEF RILEY reported that language in the Hiring Policy was revised to reflect the change to using National Testing Network now that the District is no longer doing its own testing process. He also noted that the changes have been reviewed by the Local 4045.

COMMISSIONER WASHKO clarified with FIRE CHIEF RILEY that the revised policy is not yet in the Lexipol format.

COMMISSIONER THOMPSON clarified with FIRE CHIEF RILEY that the language for lateral hiring process was in the prior policy, but has been moved to a new Standard Operating Guideline (SOG), noting that a copy of the SOG 513, District Hiring Procedure, was included in the board's packet for review as well.

COMMISSIONER WASHKO clarified with FIRE CHIEF RILEY that lateral hiring was bargained for in the labor agreement. There was discussion on lateral hires not having to be paid a probationary firefighter wage, but still on one-year probation with no seniority upon hire. UNION PRESIDENT LARSON noted that a new lateral hire would be paid a salary based on their firefighter and EMS certification vs. the probationary wages, but would have longevity based on their hire date with the District. **COMMISSIONER THOMPSON** clarified that a new lateral hire would still be on probation for a year, just not being paid the probationary wages.

COMMISSIONER PEARCE made a motion, seconded by **COMMISSIONER AMENDE** to approve the revised District Hiring Policy #018, as presented.

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. Reports

A. Chiefs Report – Was presented for review and FIRE CHIEF RILEY reported on the following:

1. Operations Issues – With the levy not passing, the need for additional staffing has not changed. In addition to the increased call volume, the District currently has four

personnel off due to injury leave, including three on one shift, and found out recently that there will be one more taking injury leave in the next few weeks. FIRE CHIEF RILEY reported that there is funding for one additional firefighter budgeted for in the current fiscal year, but there has been discussion by admin staff on finding funding to add another two positions for a total of three, or one on each battalion. He noted that he will be looking at equipment and programs funded in the budget to reallocate to personnel costs instead; and, that while this won't offer immediate relief to the crews, it will help.

COMMISSIONER WASHKO questioned if an option might be to finance the new apparatus due to be delivered next spring instead of paying for it with capital reserves. FIRE CHIEF RILEY stated that the reserve funds are already in the operating budget, but could be reallocated to personnel costs.

COMMISSIONER HALPIN clarified with FIRE CHIEF RILEY that the additional firefighter position budgeted for is not a replacement for one of the staff currently on injury leave; and, that the reallocation of funds for two more would result in three new positions, or a total of 39 firefighters, increasing daily staffing from 12 to 13.

There was discussion on planning for an academy if hiring three additional firefighters and how that schedule would work.

There was also discussion on the recent IFCA GIS study on the District's current staffing, infrastructure, and call volume indicating another station is needed at Garwood and further out on the prairie.

2. Future Funding Options – FIRE CHIEF RILEY stated that there are other options for funding additional personnel including:
 - a. Another attempt at a permanent override levy on the ballot;
 - b. Asking voters for a temporary (2 year) override levy which requires a simple majority to pass, but then a temporary levy would have to be voted on every two years;
 - c. Applying for a SAFER grant through the Fire Administration with a performance period of 36 months that would cover personnel costs 100%, but then if the District can't fund those positions after the three year period, would have to lay-off firefighters. There was discussion on having to build a new station prior to the grant award, before knowing if the grant would be awarded.

FIRE CHIEF RILEY reported that the staffing need is still critical, and that the District has surpassed last year's number of calls by the beginning of November this year. He also reported that there were five emergency calls in Hayden at the same time last Friday afternoon, noting the demand on our personnel will just keep increasing. **COMMISSIONER WASHKO** noted that mutual aid is also becoming harder to come by and coming from farther away.

COMMISSIONER THOMPSON questioned if the District applied and was awarded SAFER grant funding, could use current St. 3 until a new station can be built; there was further discussion on using temporary housing as well.

COMMISSIONER WASHKO clarified with FIRE CHIEF RILEY that if the District could not find the funding for those additional personnel once the SAFER grant

performance period ended, the District would have to close a station and lay-off personnel.

COMMISSIONER PEARCE clarified with UNION PRESIDENT LARSON that the SAFER grant application opens in January 2022, and would be awarded in August/September 2022. There was also discussion on the timeline between the grant award and having to hire is only 180 days, then the 36 month period of performance begins. UNION PRESIDENT LARSON reported that the SAFER grant will award \$350 million nationwide with more than 1,000 fire agencies applying. There was further discussion on a recruitment and retention grant that can be applied for after the SAFER grant funding period ends, but that it is difficult to qualify for this grant.

3. District Audit – The auditor was on-site this week to perform field testing; there were no indications of issues. The auditor is still waiting for data from PERSI and expects to have the audit report complete in February.
4. Personnel – Currently have three personnel from one shift (Blue) on extended injury leave, but will be moving a firefighter/paramedic from one shift onto Blue Shift. Two of the three are work-related injuries.
5. Staff/Operational Reports
 - a. **Training Report** - Presented for review. CHIEF MATHER reported on the following:
 - i. Quarterly performance evaluation training to be completed by the Batt Chiefs on each shift beginning in January.
 - ii. Have had numerous donation offers recently of structures to be used for training burns; unfortunately, none were found to be viable.
 - iii. The training tower improvements are nearly complete with just a few more things to do.
 - iv. Will be assisting Selkirk Fire this week in Sandpoint on their oral interview panel for a new Deputy Fire Chief.
 - v. Upcoming outside trainings include active shooter training for the RTF teams in Post Falls in December.
 - vi. Apparatus:
 - a) Fire Boat 590 (V-20) has been taken off Hayden Lake for the winter, and has been shrink-wrapped. **COMMISSIONER HALPIN** clarified with CHIEF MATHER that the boat is being stored at the airport where the KCSO keeps their boat.
 - b) All vehicles are being prepped for winter operations. There was discussion on the District Fleet Mechanic doing the service, but the shrink-wrap was done by a company in Post Falls.
 - b. **EMS Report** – Presented for review. EMS CHIEF DILL reported on the following:
 - i. Working through additional maintenance issues with the ambulance fleet. KCEMSS has had recent challenges in getting parts, and while the first-out ambulances are good, have had trouble keeping a back-up unit.

- ii. Worked with the Local 4045 on revisions to the District Hiring Policy and SOG 513, District Hiring Procedure. Now that this revised policy has been approved, will be able to move forward with NTN and a list of eligible candidates.
- iii. Will be holding an in-house Paramedic Eligibility test later this month with two candidates scheduled to test. Working on enrollment with Central Washington University whose Paramedic Program is tentatively scheduled to begin in spring 2022, but may have complications with clinical sites for the students due to COVID restrictions.
- iv. Training:
 - a) Next quarterly training will take place after Christmas;
 - b) Instructors from University of Utah for EMS training still not traveling due to COVID restrictions.
- c. **Fire Marshal Report** – Presented for review. FIRE MARSHAL DRECHSEL reported on the following:
 - i. Approved a 4,200 sq. ft. hangar (Timberland). **COMMISSIONER WASHKO** questioned if growth at airport has affected our response capability. FIRE CHIEF RILEY reported that he and CHIEF MATHER will be meeting with the airport director to discuss accessibility issues. He noted there is no consistency with the gate system at the airport, e.g. some gates use a Knox key, but some gates require an access card, while still others use a code. FIRE CHIEF RILEY stated that there would be an issue if we responded to an emergency and had to force a gate open. **COMMISSIONER WASHKO** clarified with FIRE CHIEF RILEY that the airport is staffing an AARF truck, but their staffing is 21 hours/week.
 - ii. Approved annexation of 48 acres into city of Rathdrum for future development.
 - iii. Approved 26 new residential permits in unincorporated areas of county (not within city limits).
 - iv. Three fire investigations in October including a shop fire, a garage fire, and a house explosion in Rathdrum.
 - v. Completed 15 hazardous fuels assessment for FireWise program on the backside of Hayden Lake.
 - vi. Winterization has been completed for all stations.
- 6. Bureau Report – For October was presented for review.
- 7. Overtime Report – For October was presented for review.
- 8. Run Report – For October was presented for review.

B. Commissioner Reports

COMMISSIONER HALPIN clarified with **COMMISSIONER THOMPSON** that there had been discussion on moving board meeting dates, but the consensus was to wait until after the first of the year to make any decision. It was noted that the next board meeting is scheduled for Wed., 11/24 at 10:00 a.m. due to Thanksgiving, but that the meetings in December are the regular schedule, or 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 10:00 a.m.

VII. Public Input

JERRY ROSE of Hayden stated that he and his wife, ELIZABETH ROSE, were disappointed that the levy vote failed to get the super majority needed to pass last week. MR. ROSE stated that they have always supported the District and would support it again if doing another levy vote in the future. He stated that he doesn't think the public understands how badly a 3rd staffed station is needed and would like to see another levy attempt made by the District with more information getting out to the public in advance. MR. ROSE thanked the firefighters for all their hard work.

The board thanked JERRY and ELIZABETH ROSE for their support.

JARROD PITTS introduced himself and stated that he has been a firefighter/paramedic at the District for ten years. He stated that he appreciated FIRE CHIEF RILEY approaching the board with options for funding additional personnel this fiscal year. He reported that morale at the District is the worst he's ever seen, and that the failure of the levy override to pass made that even worse. He stated that additional funding for more staffing would provide relief to the current members, providing better service with more apparatus available, and also instill pride in the members. He reported that there are just not enough personnel responding to emergencies, and with so many personnel on injury leave it is just adding to the staffing issues.

JARROD PITTS reported that he wants to be a dedicated employee, but that with the department unable to grow, he has already started looking for other employment opportunities in spite of not wanting to leave the District. He noted that the staffing issues have been a problem for a while, with the pandemic just bringing these issues to light. He stated that he also believes many voters just don't understand the issues the department is experiencing with their staffing, and needing to keep up with growth. He encouraged the board members to move forward with funding options.

COMMISSIONER WASHKO stated that the District is already far behind national standards and agrees that we need to move forward with finding funding that doesn't reallocate from purchasing new equipment. MR. ROSE clarified with **COMMISSIONER WASHKO** that the District's minimum staffing of 9 per shift already does not allow for 3-man engines on a regular basis. There was discussion on mandatory callback and JARROD PITTS noted that the District doesn't have a base of employees for mandatory overtime to not cause more stress to existing employees.

The board thanked JARROD PITTS for his input.

There was further discussion by the board on moving forward with funding options to hire additional personnel, educating the public on the District's needs, and voter turnout in the November election. There was also discussion on the cost to educate the public about the levy election; the District spent \$30,000 and the Local 4045 spent \$50,000.

I. Adjournment

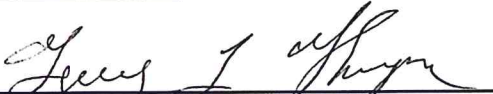
There being no further business to be brought before the board, the regular meeting was adjourned upon the motion of **COMMISSIONER THOMPSON** and as seconded by **COMMISSIONER WASHKO** at 10:53 a.m.

COMMISSIONER THOMPSON called for discussion. There was no discussion.

COMMISSIONER THOMPSON called for a roll call vote:

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

Motion carried


TERRY J. THOMPSON, Chairman


DAVID P. HALPIN, Commissioner


JAMES C. WASHKO, Commissioner

DENNIS L. AMENDE, Commissioner


MICHAEL R. PEARCE, 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 10th day of November 2021.

ATTEST BY:


Valerie Knapp, District Secretary

