SOUTH KING FIRE & RESCUE

SPECIAL COMMISSIONERS MEETING
Retreat
Station 68
February 15, 2017

Commissioner Gates called the meeting to order at 0900 hours with Commissioners Fossos, Rickert. Fuller and Thompson present. Board Secretary Lauri Perry recording.

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Rickert.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Fuller noted that he is glad to be here today and looking forward to the discussion.

Commissioner Thompson stated that he is excited for the discussion today and to talk about the future of the department.

Rickert reported that he is glad to be here today to develop our strategies on moving forward.

Commissioner Fossos noted that he is glad to see everybody here today, he is looking forward to a progressive agenda, South King Fire & Rescue continues to lead the way.

Commissioner Gates stated that he is happy to be here today and is looking forward to today's meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

OVERVIEW of 2017 PROJECTS AND CHALLENGES

Chief Church welcomed Local 2024 E Board and thanked them and the Administration for being here today. He also thanked A/C Plumlee for his many years of dedicated service, he will definitely be missed.

Chief Church added that we are an incredible busy department, highlighting the following things are involved with:

- Last year we responded to 20,250 calls and if the call volume continues as it has the past month, we will be responded to approximately 23,000 calls this year.
- We have seen a number of changes in the Administration based on recent retirements.
    - New Chief of Operations

  - New Chief of Training
  - Two (2) new Battalion Chiefs
  - Two (2) new Deputy Chiefs
  - New Captains
  - New Lieutenants

- In March we will be hiring eight (8) new firefighters, this equates to us hiring 71 new firefighters since January 2006, and we have seen lots of changes in the department.
- This year we have the promotional process for Captains and Lieutenants
- The Front Office will be hiring a new AP Person, to replace Susan, who is retiring in March
- The Training division will be going through the Pro Board reaccreditation process
- Bond
- IT Division is working on the new Tablets for EMS reporting, this will be implemented in Ops this summer
- Some of our personnel is involved with training for the IEMC trip to Emmitsburg
- We have already began working on the 2018 budget
- The Legislature has begun the 105 day session and we are trying to stay on top of a few major bills that are moving through the Senate, especially SB 5607, which is the levy swap, it will have a very hard impact on Fire Districts and RFAs.
- Plus our normal day to day stuff.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Chief Church thanked A/C Chaney for all of his work on the SLP and thanked the Commissioner sub committee consisting of Commissioners Rickert and Fuller for their input. A/C Chaney added that once the plan is adopted by the Board, we will take the top 5 and prioritize them and each time changes are made to the plan we will send a copy to the Commissioners. After some discussion it was decided to have the Board adopt the plan at the February Board meeting. A/C Chaney added that copies of the adopted plan will be sent to all of the stakeholders and a mini version of the plan will be created and available for the public.

SUCCESSION PLANNING

HR Administrator Mary Stevens passed out and discussed a staffing and retirement projection report, which shows how many personnel we have in each division and how many people are retirement eligible. Mary added that 3 of the 8 SLP items for Human Resources are regarding succession planning and how to prepare our personnel and prepare our department for some major changes. There are a lot of specialty projects that our personnel do and if they were to retire, we have to be prepared to have someone continue the special projects, for instance sewing, chainsaws, mapping program, when our personnel retire, they take a lot of knowledge with them.

Chief Church added that the department did a lot of hiring in 1981 and 1986, so this is why we are looking at so many retirements around the same time. We have a lot of work ahead of us.

Chief Church noted that he is excited to see new Assistant Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs that are engaged and Battalion Chiefs that are very excited and engaged. The department is definitely going through some growing pains and changing.

Mary mentioned that we will never be able to replace Chief Church, but we will have to hire someone for the Chief position. The way she sees it, there are two (2) options, 1 – promote from within if someone is ready, the Board of Commissioners would appoint the person for that position or 2 go outside to hire by doing a nationwide or statewide search. To hire a firm to do the process for us via a nationwide search to hire a Chief is typically very expensive and we don't control the process. We should begin a year in advance of Chief Church retiring so December 2017; first off we need an updated job description and qualifications.

Commissioner Gates added that we need a job description and the statement of qualifications that we are looking for, he would like for Commissioner Thompson, Chief Church and Mary Stevens to work on these two things and report back to the Board around the end of March. After some discussion it was noted that there are typically two (2) different Chiefs, 1 that understands politics or 1 that is the good old Fire Chief, you typically don't find both of these traits in one person. It was noted that the new Chief needs to understand politics, budget and the legislature. This is the only position in the department that the Board hires. After more discussion, the Chief announced he was looking at retiring in December of 2018...but is also possibly willing to leave the door open. He wants to see how things go this next year or so.

At 1018 hours the meeting recessed for a 10 minute break

At 1028 hours the meeting is back in session

FUNDING FOR THE FUTURE

Chief Church discussed the funding for the future; with SB5607 passing the Senate and headed to the house, this bill will definitely have an impact on us, if we don't look at an alternative funding measure. The Senate knew that there could be impacts to some fire districts or they wouldn't have incorporated a reimbursement clause for those that get prorationed, however the Districts have to apply for reimbursement, it not guaranteed and if you receive any reimbursement, you have to wait till the following year. The EMS 50 cents could also be impacted as only 30 cents of that is protected.

Chief Church reported on the following:

- We have identified that we are 5.2% away from hitting the highest levy since 1986 per RCW (which will be our 2009 level of $15,525,149,787). Once we hit that level, which I anticipate occurring in 2017 and collected in 2018, we will then be limited by the 101% lid…which will likely occur with 2018 values collected in 2019. The strategies, which could include:
    - We could utilize 2017 and 2018 to educate our community on the benefit charge. We could then target a run for the Benefit Charge in 2019 (April or August).
    - If the Benefit Charge were to pass in 2019, we could implement in 2020 and eliminate one year's collection of the M&O Levy (our current levy runs from 2017 through 2020). This would then set the district up for solid funding 2020 through 2025, with a renewal (a 50% plus 1 simple majority) in 2025.
    - If the Benefit Charge were to fail, then the Board and Administration would have to analyze how close the election was…and consider running it again (perhaps November of 2019). If it were to fail badly, then I would suggest running the M&O Levy in April of 2020 to buy more time and to keep our current operations funded.
    - If the M&O Levy were to fail, I would suggest analyzing how close the election was and determine if it should be run again in the Fall of 2020…or if a simple Lid Lift (recapturing the full $1.50 and allowing growth in revenues above the 101% for a 6-year period covering 2021 through 2026) should be run in its place.
    - The Departments long term answer to future funding is either Benefit Charge or a Significant M &O Levy.

Commissioner Thompson noted that we should set up a focus group to look at the benefit charge so we are ready to move forward at the right time.

CURRENT STAFF AND FUTURE STAFFING

Chief Church reported that he would love to see another aid car in service or a new station opened to help with the call volume, as we are getting hammered with a large increase in calls for service; however we just don't have the funds. He added that to add an aid car, A63 it would cost $1.5 million, to staff Station 60 it would cost $2 million, and to have four (4) person engine companies, it would cost nearly $4 million. Basically, it would cost $7-8 million a year to meet our staffing needs and goals; the only way to get there is to run a Benefit Charge in 2018 or 2019 or a significant M & O Levy.

In 2016, we responded to over 20,000 calls and we are seeing another increase in calls so if the early trend in 2017 continues we could respond to 23,000 calls this year. We need more units on the street, Aid 62, Aid 64 are getting beat up. We need Aid 63 added and it would be great to have 2 aid cars out of Station 62.

A/C Pennington added that in looking at our call volume increase maybe need to look at overlapping our response zones as we could be looking at 23,000 calls this year, based on the call increase that we have already seen this year.

There was some discussion about where the increase in calls is coming from, an area of our district, new construction of multi-family residences or…..

There was also some discussion about looking at impact fees for new development, this would definitely help us prepare with additional resources.

A/C Pennington noted that the past few years the fire service has started to recognize there is/could be a PTSD issue. We have always tried to be ahead of this, for instance there was information in training tracker; we have put out information on thing things to look for if someone needs help, it is really important to look out for each other and follow up with them. We also have several other methods that our employs can talk to specialists such as our Employee Assistance (EAP) Dr. Stepherson, First Choice and Enduris has also started a program. Our Battalion Chiefs are also a very good resource to check with their crews after stressful or traumatic calls.

At 1146 hours, we took a 20 minute break for lunch.

At 1206 hours the break was extended for 5 more minutes.

At 1211 hours meeting reconvened.

MERGERS, ANNEXATIONS AND REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITIES

Chief Church applauded Local 2024 President Layne Winter and E board for reaching out to VRFA and Dave for reaching out to Burien Fire Department in regards to mergers or annexations.

Chief Church explained the difference between merger, annexation and what it takes to form a Regional Fire Authority.

Last time we looked annexing into VRFA, there was about a $1.5 million shortfall. Commissioner Thompson added that last time we met with VRFA it appeared that their Governance Board didn't want to change how their board was formed; there was lots of discussion that followed.

BOND ISSUE UPDATE

D/C Mataftin reported that 3 of the aid cars are in service, with 2 more to be put in service in about a month. Staff vehicles are here and South King Fire & Rescue logos will be put on them and they will be put in service.

In regards to the boat, last year we applied for a Port Security Grant for a new fire boat, (unfortunately, we weren't awarded a grant) the 2017 application process will be opening very up soon and we understand that it will be a very condensed time frame to apply, which is good news because we have everything done and ready to go. Last year we applied for a $2.5 million grant, we are going to pare it back to a $1.5 million grant, if we are awarded the grant; we have to match 25% of the grant. Several of us will be going to look at a few boats in Bellingham to see if they meet our needs. In our application we need to focus on presenting our needs for a new boat, we are hoping to receive letters of support again this year.

The engines are about to start in production line, we will be sending 4 personnel (2 firefighters and 2 mechanics) back to the factory in March to ask questions as the process begins, the engines should be here in the fall.

Stations 67 and 63 are under construction, with construction at station 67 ahead of schedule, the contractor is making good progress, they have a number of walls and ceilings opened up, they are waiting for some clarification from the Engineers, they have run into a few things that were not shown on the plans.

The project manager that was assigned to the Station 63 project up and quit, we have a meeting with them tomorrow, to see what is happening, the contract states they have 150 days to complete the project, so the clock is ticking.

In regard to the complementary Energy Audit that was requested, we had Johnson Controls come out and basically the complimentary energy audit that we kept hearing about consisted of a walk through at Station 62, and they advised us that we definitely needed to do an Energy Audit and noted that the truck bay desperately needed to be insulated, light bulbs and etc. that was the extent of the free energy audit. The next step for a real energy audit will cost up to $50,000, at this time, we will not be moving forward with this as it wasn't part of the original bond proposal and we don't have the funds to pay for all of the recommendations that they will be coming back with.

The permit for Station 66 has been submitted to the City of Des Moines.

The permit for Station 61 has been submitted to King County.

Chief Church reported on the property located at 35100 Pacific Highway, we have completed the Phase 1 study and are moving forward with the Phase 2 Environmental Study, it should be completed by March 15th. At the February 21st Board Meeting, we will have the first reading of Resolution 524, to repurpose the funds to purchase the property followed by a Public Hearing on March 8th and the final reading of Resolution #524 will be done at the March 28th Regular Board meeting, the property needs to be purchased prior to April 7th.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Commissioner Fossos thanked staff for their time today adding that it is important to look to the future and to plan for the future.

Commissioner Thompson appreciated openness and dialog today, in regards to our future we have a lot to work to do to secure impact fees, Federal Way and Des Moines are growing and there are a number of multi housing projects in the works. Impact fees are important; we are behind the curve we need to get into their compressive plan process so we can secure impact fees, as the developments impact our services. Also if SB5607 passes the House, we are going to get hit really hard. Commissioner Thompson thanked everyone for being here and their input.

Commissioner Gates appreciated all of the discussion today as we continue to plan for the future.

At 1312 hours the meeting recessed.

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CHAIR/COMMISSIONER VICE CHAIR/COMMISSIONER

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BOARD SECRETARY