SOUTH KING FIRE
March 25, 2025
Station 68 and Virtual

Commissioner Baruso called the regular meeting to order at 1700 hours with Commissioners Vadino, Burrus, Fuller and Gates in attendance. Board Secretary Lauri Perry recording.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Deputy Chief Crossen.

To listen to the full meeting, please visit our website.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Baruso asked for a Motion and second to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes from February 25, 2025. Commissioner Burrus moved approval of the minutes from the Regular Meeting of February 25, 2025. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Fuller. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Gates had no comments.

Commissioner Vadino had no comments.

Commissioner Burrus reported that during the process of hiring the Interim Fire Chief, we tried something that I don't think we've ever done before in the District. We included some extra people in the process, we had HR, Labor, a Battalion Chief and a District Chief. We included more people as far as getting input on the process and at the end of it, it seemed like everybody on the Commission was pretty thrilled with how that worked out. We got some input that I don't think we would have gotten if it had just been the five of us listening. I know we've had some discussion on not only do we want to do that again, but we want to bring in that input at an earlier stage of the process. I just figured out a couple of days ago it was after the agenda was already published that in our committee for the hiring process for this new Chief, we didn't include labor; for me that was just an oversight. I'm even the person that read the motion and I missed it. I'm hoping that at some point before we end tonight's meeting that we can address that situation and find out; you know for me it was an oversight. But let's have a real discussion on whether or not we want to include labor into our committee.

Commissioner Fuller had no comments.

Commissioner Baruso thanked everyone for coming to tonight's meeting; it's a sunny day, the first one for the year. Commissioner Baruso also thanked the department and all the agencies for their work that we're doing out here and to know the piggyback a little bit on Commissioner Burrus; you know we will do the right thing to find the right fire chief. It's going to take some time, so I ask for your patience as we work through this. We want to make it a correct and a comprehensive search. We plan to do this because I know that we don't want to go back out. We don't want to go backwards, we always go forward and so to be able to do that we have to. Everything has to fit right and we want to make it right but also takes everyone's effort to do that and patience. So just please let the process flow like Commissioner Burrus said. We're going to make mistakes; we can correct

them if we can, but know that we hear the membership of Local 2024. Everybody is working for the same goal to find the next leader of this fire department.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mark Freitas asked a few questions and made a few comments:

- The question about the Fire Chief position has already been addressed, however he hears very little out on the streets.
- He has read the Audit Report
- He has read the article in the Federal Way Mirror
- He asked what the Commissioners are going to do about it (audit findings)?
    - Is there going to be reimbursement?
    - Legal proceedings for theft of public property?
    - Sanctions?
    - Fees paid by Church (former Chief Allen Church) to protect Brandon (son)?

Executive Director Ganem replied that the Board took action earlier this year. I believe in January they made a motion to direct us to notify Mr. Church of our intent to collect, which we did on March 14th. So that is currently in motion, more to come. We have no have no further information at this time.

- Turn out times

Deputy Chief Crossen replied that we have talked about this at the Admin staff level; it's something that we need to take to the Board. As you know, turn out times are the same ones as when you were on the Board, it has actually been a topic of discussion in the last month. DC Crossen met with the Data Team last week and had conversations about response times.

- Station 362

Local 2024 President Bastin thanked the Board for including him in the Interim Fire Chief process. If we are allowed to participate in the Fire Chief process we look forward to working with you guys again.

Mr. Rita Saro reported to make sure that we talk about some of the public outreach for the (inaudible) position.

COMMISSIONER COMMITTEE REPORTS

Commissioner Gates reported that the Budget, Finance and Audit Committee met twice during the past month. February 26th was the Exit Interview with the Auditors; a copy of the Audit Report is in your packet. We also met on March 18th and that report is in your packet.

Commissioner Vadino reported that the Hiring Committee met and it's on the agenda to be discussed later.

LAKEHAVEN EASEMENT

Director Lee shared the short story: Lakehaven had some work done during the construction of their new building and their utility easement is sitting on our access easement and there is no agreement

in place. After several discussions with Lakehaven and having the land surveyed, we came to agreement that they would pay us (district) $75,000 for us to redraw the easement lines. Commissioner Burrus made a Motion to accept the easement agreement. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Vadino. Motion carried.

LOCAL 2024 FACILITIES ASSISTANT MOU

Commissioner Burrus made a Motion to approve the Local 2024 Facilities Assistant MOU. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Vadino.

Commissioner Gates noted that he will be voting against both of the MOUs. Not that he doesn't think they are needed or whatever, but he found out today after a phone call with Director Ganem. He had a couple of suggestions and found one small error, which was not a big deal. But he was told that because the Union had already voted on this, no changes could be made, and he strongly disagrees with these things being voted on by the Union (first). When they get to the Board, it's too late to make any changes or any suggestions. I mean all you're asking us to do (tonight) is rubber stamp them. The Board has to approve these because they may involve budgetary considerations. They may involve change in contract language, but we've had no chance for input on anything here.

Commissioner Burrus added that we talked a little earlier today and he believes as we move forward, an easy solution would be that before the Union actually votes on an MOU that it is presented to the Commissioners and we approve or disapprove and then they can vote on it. So, change up the order a little bit and then we can make some minor changes without going through the whole voting process, which we all know is lengthy. Motion passed 3 in favor and 2 against.

LOCAL 2024 MIH MOU

Commissioner Burrus made a Motion to approve the Local 2024 MIH MOU. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Vadino. Motion passed 3-2.

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM REPORT

Executive Director Ganem thanked former Commissioner Freitas for his comments. In October or November during the budget presentation you talked about community and service and response times. Under the circumstances of the last couple of years we have moved away from focusing on "why we are here". We are here to serve the community and do what's right by the community. We are working hard to improve our service levels as our firefighters are extremely busy and our call volume is far more than it was when you served as a Commissioner.

Executive Director Ganem's Staff Report:
He and Fire Marshal Nichols met with Rebecca Martin at the Federal Way Chamber of Commerce to partner on some initiatives. One has to do with healthcare which Deputy Chief Defenbaugh will work with the chamber on. The other is focused on more economic development and bridging the gap between what new businesses understand their public services provide for them.

At the end of February, we received a 30 day extension notice for the 320th property sale which pushes the closing date to April 2nd. We are keeping our fingers crossed that this is the only one, but they could possibly extend another 30 days. We are watching this closely so we can move forward with a number of major projects. As soon as we have the check in hand, we will begin the planning

phase for Station 62. The quickest way for us to be able to add resources is to free up space at Station 62. With Administration and support staff moving to the Olympic Building, this will create more room for firefighters.

Executive Director Ganem and Finance met with Bond Counsel and underwriting last month. The reason why we met with them is we are actually 10 years into the 2015 Bond. There's something called a 'call date' which is the date in which the bonds can be restructured, refinanced, sold back or bought back. They are recommending based off where we are at with today's interest rates that we could actually refinance the Bonds and save our taxpayers about $2,000,000.00 over the remaining 10 years of the Bond.

We also need to upgrade Station 62, purchase apparatus, and purchase property for the next fire station. Director Lee is working behind the scenes with some preliminary conversations with certain stakeholders in our community to look at where our next fire station is going to be. This is exciting stuff because we haven't built a fire station in almost 40 years.

We have talked about our operational staffing levels and Deputy Chief Smith has worked with the BCs and other stakeholders to develop a plan. The plan (which I support) stays within our budget abilities. Deputy Chief Smith should be moving forward with the plan later this week, providing some relief within our abilities to do so. This is perfect timing for this new plan to be implemented as last year we developed an annual hiring timeline for firefighters based on when the Academy begins. We are just starting the interview process for hiring new firefighters.

A commissioner inquired about our involvement in FIFA in 2026. Deputy Chief Smith noted that right now we are in the planning and preparedness process for any sort of catastrophic event. The agencies that have been taking the lead is Emergency Management through the Washington Military Department via Seattle Fire Department. At this time, we have been attending meetings, but it has predominantly been through our hazardous materials team and maritime operations.

Commissioner Burrus asked if there is a way we can do a printer friendly version of the Board Packet as it was 64 pages? It's great to see the pictures and stuff, but it was like $50.00 for me to print all of this.

MARCH BUDGET

Executive Director Ganem noted that we are three months through the year which would put us at 25% and we are currently at 21.90%; we are currently 2.65% under budget. We also have some vacant positions that need to be filled (which accounts for the positive budget position).

Finance Supervisor Barrett read into the record the list of expenditures for the month of March.

Mid-Month Utility Warrants (#120284-120305) totaling	$82,924.02
Accounts Payable Warrants (#120306-120391) totaling	$1,800,488.86
Payroll Direct Deposit Document for 215 indiv. DD0066604-006818 totaling	$1,587,029.79
Payroll Electronic Federal Tax Payment totaling	$337,898.62
Medical Claims as of March 18, 2025	$238,596.99
TOTAL approval	$4,046,938.28

APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS

Commissioner Baruso requested a Motion and a second to approve tonight's vouchers. Commissioner Gates moved approval of the vouchers. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Fuller. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 1750 hours Commissioner Baruso reported that the Board will convene into Executive Session per RCW 42.30.110 (1) (i) to discuss with legal counsel representing the agency matters relating to agency enforcement actions or discuss with legal counsel representing the agency litigation or potential litigation to which the agency. The governing body or member acting in an official capacity is or is likely to have a party with public knowledge regarding discussions likely result in an adverse legal or financial consequence.

Joining the Board in Executive Session will be Executive Director Ganem, Executive Secretary Perry and legal counsel. Executive Session will end at 1835 hours unless extended.

At 1835 hours Executive Session was extended until 1845 hours.

At 1845 hours Executive Session was extended until 1900 hours.

At 1900 hours Executive Session was extended until 1915 hours.

At 1915 hours Executive Session was extended until 1925 hours.

At 1925 hours Executive Session was extended until 1930 hours.

At 1930 hours Commissioner Baruso reported that we are out of Executive Session and have resumed the Regular Meeting.

Commissioner Vadino moved to extend the deadline as to issuance of a report pertaining to the Districts investigation of time and attendance records to Tuesday, May 27th, 2025. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Burrus. Motion passed, there was no opposition.

The meeting adjourned at 1932 hours.

COMMISSIONER (CHAIR)

COMMISSIONER (VICE CHAIR)

COMMISSIONER

COMMISSIONER

COMMISSIONER

BOARD SECRETARY
SOUTH KING FIRE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER