SOUTH KING FIRE
December 21, 2023
Station 68 and Virtual

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Retired Chief Plumlee.

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

SWEARING IN OF COMMISSIONER GREGORY BARUSO

Judge Dave Larsen performed the swearing in of Commissioner Greg Baruso to Position 4.

SWEARING IN OF COMMISSIONER CRAIG BURRUS

Judge Dave Larsen performed the swearing in of Commissioner Craig Burrus to Position 5.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 1713 hours the Board adjourned into Executive Session per RCW 42.30.140 (4) (b) to plan or adopt the strategy or position to be taken by the governing body during the course of any collective bargaining, professional negotiations or grievance or mediation proceedings or reviewing the proposals made in the negotiations or proceedings while in progress. Joining the Board in Executive Session will be Interim Chief Van Valkenburg and Executive Director Ganem and Legal Counsel. At this time we will recess for 5 minutes to get everyone transferred into Executive Session. We anticipate Executive Session lasting for 20 minutes. Action may or may not be taken after Executive Session. At the end of Executive Session we will take a 2 minute recess to get everyone transferred back to the Regular Meeting.

At 1738 hours Executive Session was extended 10 minutes.

At 1748 hours Executive Session was extended 10 minutes.

At 1758 hours Executive Session was extended 10 minutes.

At 1808 hours Executive Session was extended 10 minutes.

At 1820 hours the Regular meeting reconvened.

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM REPORT

Interim Chief Van Valkenburg noted that staff reports were in your packet and asked if there were any questions. Some staff was excused from tonight's meeting due to the upcoming holidays.

Executive Director Ganem joined Interim Chief Van Valkenburg up front.

Executive Director Ganem provided a brief highlight: Almost two years ago now, we convened under less than ideal circumstances to evaluate a path forward. The pressures of another leadership change, were coupled with the pandemic and vaccination requirements; the loss of valued members only intensified matters for us. With your decisions at the time, you put a two-year plan in place. You supported the Organizational Health Assessment (OHA) to better understand the environment. Born from the OHA you approved the Strategic Bridge Plan to chart a path forward. You participated in the hiring of an Operations Chief. You managed the process to sell surplus property to use the funds to finish what we started with infrastructure upgrades and to avoid asking taxpayers for more. And this past Fall, you conducted an open and fair process to select our next Fire Chief; which you did this month. These are just the highlights from the past 24 months. There is so much more, but collectively you are fulfilling your responsibilities as our elected officials.

Commissioner Thompson and Commissioner Berger: A leader is defined as an experienced and trusted advisor, someone who is willing to share their knowledge and experience to help others. Someone who provides wise counsel and guidance. Someone who is hard to find, difficult to part with, and impossible to forget. You both fall into these categories. You are both leaders, and we will miss all of you and all of those things about you.

As Sir Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of the Boy Scouts told his scouts "try to leave this world a little better than you found it". Gentlemen, I can say for certain, you are leaving South King Fire better than when you found it. Thank you.

Interim Chief Van Valkenburg read and presented a plaque to Commissioner Thompson thanking him for all he has done at South King Fire.

Executive Director Ganem read and presented a plaque to Commissioner Berger thanking him for all that he has done to South King Fire.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Gates asked for a Motion and second to approve the following minutes:

- Regular Meeting Minutes from November 28, 2023.
- Special Meeting Minutes from December 1, 2023
- Special Meeting Minutes from December 2, 2023
- Special Meeting Minutes from December 7, 2023

Commissioner Vadino moved approval. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Thompson. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Berger noted that it has been a pleasure and a privilege to be able to serve the communities of Federal Way and Des Moines for the last three and three quarter's years. Thanks for the unique experience he's enjoyed working with excellent staff and feels honored. Commissioner Berger added thank you very much, he has appreciated working with his colleagues, it's a good group. Happy Holidays.

Commissioner Thompson wished everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and have a joyous 2024. Commissioner Thompson also thanked everyone for the recognition. It's been a lot of fun.

Commissioner Vadino thanked Commissioner Thompson and Commissioner Berger for their service and looking forward to new Commissioners. Merry Christmas as well.

Commissioner Gates echoed what has already been said. Thank you, both for your service and Happy Holidays, to everyone.

PUBLIC COMMENTS
There were no public comments.

COMMISSIONER COMMITTEE REPORTS
Commissioner Gates noted there were no Committee Reports.

RESOLUTION 641 – ADOPTING REGULAR MEETING DATES FOR 2024
Interim Chief Van Valkenburg read Resolution 641 into record. Commissioner Thompson so moved approval of Resolution 641. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Vadino. Motion carried unanimously.

BRIDGE PLAN – FUNDING RECOMMENDATION HIGHLIGHTS
Executive Director Ganem noted that through all our report-outs on the Strategic Bridge Plan, it has been our objective to report out by the end of the year where we are at with the funding analysis. The purpose of tonight's brief discussion is on the Funding pillar and the strategic objectives that we set out.

By the end of the year, we planned to research our peer agencies, tax law and exemptions, and assess the different funding options for us moving forward post 2024; Project our performance during an economic downturn and model taxpayer affordability; Develop recommendations and identify the resources required to pursue whatever recommended funding mechanism we are going to suggest or recommend; And of course, gain alignment, union involvement, and Board approval.

The team has been busy gathering a lot of data and information on the processes on the Benefit Charge, tools, and formulas. We have assessed the different funding options for us, and we have modeled out what the scenarios look like after the M&O Levy expires next year.

We have entered into an agreement with Puget Sound for utilization of their Fire Benefit Tool that several agencies use. We have access to parcel data and the Finance and Data teams have already received an introductory training on the tool. Our data is in the system and our teams are currently working and sifting through it (data) and learning the tool. We have also contracted with Kassie Swenson, our public relations consultant, on community engagement and funding education strategies.

The budget that you approved last month included two new FTEs, one for Finance and one in Communications for the sole purpose of up-staffing in advance. We have started the development of internal materials on the Fire Benefit Charge, and extended our agreement with Waldron into next year to carry out the objective in the Strategic Bridge Plan.

The Benefit Charge requires 60% approval, and it is good for six years. Once it is established, you can renew it for 50% approval and down the road seek permanent approval with a 60% approval. It will

drop the property tax collection to $1.00 per $1,000 AV; the Benefit Charge makes up the difference which we set the amount that is needed to fund our budget. The Fire Benefit Charge can supplement up to 60% of our total operating budget. Most of our neighboring fire departments try to stay around the high 30% to 40% of their budgets.

Moving forward, we will create the formation of an internal workgroup to create subject matter experts on the Fire Benefit Charge, this will happen in January. The SME trainers will start to educate internally first. Once our core group is confident about all of the ends and outs of what the Benefit Charge is and means, then we will conduct broader training. We will then formalize the timeline which will include everything from education to election. We will add the online Fire Benefit Tool to our website so that taxpayers can see what it means for them. We will hold all the public meetings as required by the RCWs and then move forward with Commissioners Resolutions in April to be on the ballot in August.

Commissioner Thompson made a Motion that the District proceed with the work required to place the Fire Benefit Charge on the August Primary Ballot in 2024. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Vadino. Motion passed unanimously.

CHIEF VAN VALKENBURG CONTRACT

Commissioner Gates noted that we have before us tonight the Chiefs Employment Agreement to approve or not approve. Commissioner Thompson moved that we approve the Fire Chief Employment Contract. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Vadino. Motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GANEM CONTRACT

Commissioner Gates noted that as he stated at the November Regular Board Meeting, Executive Director Ganem has done an excellent job on the Budget and a lot of other things. Commissioner Thompson moved that we approve the Employment Agreement Contract for Executive Director Ganem. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Berger. Motion passed unanimously.

DECEMBER BUDGET

Executive Director Ganem reported that we have wrapped up the year in a really good financial position, which is always good this time of year. We have ended the year at 97.49% or 2.51% under budget.

Finance Specialist Lorraine Young read into the record the list of expenditures for the month of December.

Mid-Month Utility Warrants (#118602-118623) totaling	$170,550.93
Accounts Payable Warrants (#118624-118727) totaling	$1,260,124.20
Payroll Direct Deposit Document for 185 indiv. DD003072-003259 totaling	$1,423,264.44
Payroll Electronic Federal Tax Payment totaling	$307,119.99
Medical Claims as of December 19, 2023	$150,617.11
TOTAL approval	$3,311,676.67

APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS

Commissioner Gates requested a Motion and a second to approve tonight's vouchers. Commissioner Thompson so moved that we pay the bills. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Vadino. Motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 1904 hours the Board adjourned into Executive Session per RCW 42.30.110 (1) (c). To consider the minimum price at which real estate will be offered for sale or lease when public knowledge regarding such consideration would cause a likelihood of decreased price. However final action selling or leasing public property shall be taken in a meeting open to the public.

Joining the Board in Executive Session will be Chief Van Valkenburg and Executive Director Ganem, Executive Secretary Lauri Perry, Legal Counsel, Matt Anderson and Evan Schneider. At this time we will recess for 5 minutes to get everyone transferred into Executive Session. We anticipate Executive Session lasting for 20 minutes. Action may or may not be taken after Executive Session. At the end of Executive Session we will take a 2 minute recess to get everyone transferred back to the Regular Meeting.

At 1931 hours the Regular Meeting reconvened. Commissioner Gates noted that we are out of Executive Session.

APPROVAL OF PURCHASE AND SALE AREEMENT

Commissioner Berger moved approval of the real estate Purchase and Sale agreement with the Trammel Crow Company for the sale of the Districts 19.05 acre property of vacant land located on S 320th Street, Federal Way. Commissioner Berger corrected the actual title of the company which is a subsidiary of Trammel Crow is TC Northwest Development Inc. Commissioner Thompson seconded the Motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Thompson requested a Point of Personal Privilege.

In August of 1969 I started my volunteer service here in this very bldg., King Co Fire District 32, Redondo-Mirror Lake Fire Department, as a resident volunteer while attending Bates Tech College Fire Service Training Program!

In this very room, I sat through many fire commissioner's meetings and usually was the only person in the audience for the most part. Learning the ropes of what Fire Commissioners did and the roll they played in the community; the Commissioners at the time were, Rod Hershey, Jerry Grothouse (the Training tower is named in his honor, as he was a proponent of training and Tom Eagling, Chair of the Board. Later on, after the death of Commissioner Grothouse, Bill Martin (Lakehaven Water Supt) was appointed to fill the unexpired term and later elected to full terms, until 1999; when he decided not run again. I was elected to the Board in 1999, by that time District 32 had merged with Federal Way Fire Dept. King 39.

Prior to the merger of District 32 with Federal Way Fire, in 1972, it was a long-standing goal of the districts to work towards achieving a Class 2 Fire Insurance Rating for the community! Which through strong community support of Levy Lid Lifts to raise revenues sufficient to hire more career fire fighters and Bond Issues to upgrade the department Facilities and Apparatus, the Washington Survey and Rating Bureau bestowed the coveted Class 2 Fire Insurance Rating to the department on April 1, 2005! It took 33+ years for Federal Way

citizens and businesses to reap the benefit of much lower Fire Insurance Rates! An Insurance Rating which they now continue to benefit from.

Important Historical NOTE: *Federal Way Fire Department was the First* ***Fire District*** *in the State of Washington to achieve a Class 2 Fire Insurance Rating by the Wash Survey and Rating Bureau!! Thank you to all the former volunteer and career firefighters and our forward-thinking longtime Fire Commissioners, Doug Clerget, Billy Maynard, Jim Osborne, Jerry Grothouse, Dean Gullikson, Rod Hershey, Bill Martin and Roger Hershey, Mark Frietas and John Rickert. Jim Fossos, Jerry Harris, Gary Bollinger and Bill Gates for setting the vison, goal and course and to all the voters in Federal Way who were and continue to be strong supporters of our Fire Department to provide the many tax dollar resources needed to reach and maintain such an epic milestone in the history of the department!! I'm humbled and most proud to have been a part of the process as a volunteer fire fighter and as an elected Fire Commissioner to make the Class 2 Insurance Rating Classification a reality!!*

Our department, its members and community owe a huge gratitude of thanks to the many citizen volunteer fire fighters from the former Fire Districts, 22, 26, 30, 32 and 39 who were the foundation building blocks of the fire department we have today! The volunteer program was disbanded when the state safety rules required increased training standards which required more personal time and the community was growing and responses became too many for volunteers to keep up; some stations were responding to 1200 calls a year! So Federal Way Fire Department set the goal and evolved into a full time career fire department.

I have served the citizens of Federal Way, Des Moines and Unincorporated Lakeland North and Lakeland South for 24 years. My focus and dedication was and has always been to provide the best level of service to the citizens that was affordable and sustainable with the major goal of providing response times of 4-6 minutes which has evolved to 4-10 minutes 90% of the time! The response times have changed due to increased growth and traffic congestion!

Fiscal responsibility and sustainability has been a hallmark goal of all of the Board of Commissioners and Fire Chief administration while focused on efficiencies and long-term planning to achieve operational goals so as to better serve the residents and visitors within South King Fire boundaries!

My challenge to the members of the department today is to not be Ducks in the beanery quaking about why doesn't the dept do this or that; why this or that; quaking here and quaking there with others only causes organizational fibrillation; the Org Health Assessment is prime example where some of the ducks did not participate or complete the assessment that was the communication vehicle that would be used to improve or provide direction in which to make our organization better and stronger to meet the future needs of the department and community. To those who completed the survey you took the time, effort to rise above the pool of ducks and sought to soar with Eagles.

The Eagle, with its keen eyes symbolizes courage, strength, immortality, and grit, but is also considered "king of the skies" and messenger of the highest! My helmet is off to you, the Eagles of South King Fire, you have grit, you set goals with a focus on achieving them, you rose above the quaking ducks, provided your valuable insight into issues that needed to be addressed and you have endorsed the strategy of change that makes South King Fire the greatest fire department in the region. My most sincere admiration and appreciation for your striving to be an Eagle and working toward achieving those goals through a persistence and discipline to stay on the path for change for the better!!! To those ducks still quaking, learn from your fellow firefighters who have taken flight to fly above the duck pond towards making a positive difference and stop the organizational fibrillation!

One last challenge to all the employees, fire fighters and officers, that I have learned in my 73 years of life and 56 years in the fire service in many positions and responsibilities: Remember where you came from and remember those who helped you achieve your goals; reach back, help your fellow crewmates and others to soar with you as an Eagle!

Always Do the Right Thing – Because it is the Right Thing To Do!

IN CLOSING

I practice today what I learned while in Scouts, earning my Eagle rank. ***Always Do My Best****, to do my duty to God and my country, and live life by the 12 Scout Laws! The most important advice was from my dad: Leave things better than when you found them and treat others the way you want to be treated!*

Thank you for allowing me to be your Fire Commissioner for 24 years and for your friendship, trust, support, respect and soaring with me, an Eagle!

Stay Safe and Merry Christmas and a Joyous 2024 to all!

The meeting adjourned at 1943 hours.

William Gates
COMMISSIONER (CHAIR)

Carol Jan
COMMISSIONER (VICE CHAIR)

COMMISSIONER

COMMISSIONER

COMMISSIONER

BOARD SECRETARY

SOUTH KING FIRE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER