

NORTH HIGHLINE FIRE DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS MEETING



January 25, 2021

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the regular North Highline Fire District Fire Commissioners' Meeting for January was called to order via GoToMeeting (virtual online meeting) at 6:02 PM by Commissioner Liz Giba with Commissioner Julie Hiatt and Commissioner Dominic Barrera participating. Also attending via GoToMeeting were Alexander Beherndt and Sean Fitzgerald from the State Auditor's Office (SAO), Assistant Chief Ray Pettigrew, Chief Mike Marrs, and Shauna Sheppard.

Chief Marrs led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Hiatt moved to accept the meeting agenda as presented. Commissioner Barrera seconded. Motion carried (3-0).

Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Beherndt delivered the final 2019 audit results, which included changes to Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) for 2019. Per the auditors' suggestions, changes were made to conform with the new calculation formula, which was introduced for 2019. The 2019 Annual Report on the state's website now reflects the accurate OPEB calculation and utilizes the new state calculating spreadsheet, which will be used in future Annual Reports.

Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Hiatt moved to accept the minutes of the December 28, 2020 regular meeting as presented; Commissioner Barrera seconded. Motion carried (3-0).

Accounts Payable

Commissioner Hiatt moved to approve the January 2021 accounts payable vouchers as follows:

- 2101101 to 21010106 in the amount of \$370,683.23 - (January month-end vouchers)

Commissioner Barrera seconded. Motion carried (3-0).

Correspondence

- Chief Marrs reported that we have received a few e-mails regarding the Fire Benefit Charge.

Public Comment

- None

Commissioners' Report

Commissioner Giba has been communicating with Bong Sto. Domingo about securing more masks and hand sanitizer from the county. Captain Metz will contact him to arrange a time to get the items.

Local #1461

- None

Financial Reports

The Board received copies of the December 2020 Treasurer's and Cash Flow Reports.

(A) Chief Marrs is pleased with where NHFD finished 2020 financially. Commissioner Hiatt and Chief Marrs will be meeting this Thursday, January 28th, 2021 to review personnel percentages. They also hope to find ways to cut down overhead by reducing the time it takes to calculate the monthly invoice and streamlining payments between the two districts.

(B) In regard to the audit, Chief Marrs noted that the accounting processes in place are sound. We receive updates and training from the BIAS program software as a part of our annual membership. However, the Annual Report training was canceled, and communication of accounting changes has been difficult due to COVID-19. The confusion has been cleared up and the Annual Report has updated on the state's website.

(C) Commissioner Giba asked about the Due & Subscriptions budget. We are more than 300% over budget because our 2021 dues were paid in 2020.

Chief's Report

Chief Marrs reported on the following:

- Contract - Negotiations are going well. We will likely have the new Collective Bargaining Agreement done in the next few weeks.
- COVID-19 Update – (A) One firefighter was out approximately four weeks with COVID-19. He has fully recovered and is back to work.
- (B) COVID-19 vaccinations continue to roll out and many of our firefighters who have received both doses. About 10% of them have experienced mild symptoms after their second dose. Both vaccines are good, although no definite numbers are being given at this time.
- (C) As a part of the county-wide effort, 25 firefighters volunteered to be COVID-19 vaccinators. The plan has been to turn the high-volume testing sites into high-volume vaccination sites. King County will also be focusing on vaccinating residents of adult family homes, skilled nursing facilities and retirement homes. Two firefighter/EMTs on staff have nursing licenses. They and the firefighter volunteers will also administer vaccinations at adult family homes with 6-8 residents. There are approximately 30 in our

area. We have connected with all of them and created a database so we can vaccinate as we receive the vaccine.

- (D) Commissioner Hiatt asked which vaccine our firefighters received as she was wondering if one brand had stronger side effects than the other. Chief Marrs said that both were given, and it is unclear if one brand has more side effects.
- (E) Three mutations have been confirmed in the US (UK, the South African, and Brazilian strains). They are 30-50% more contagious and will likely dominate the original COVID-19 strand.
- (F) Administrative staff are not considered essential. This is a problem as we provide an essential government function. The entire fire department must receive vaccinations as soon as possible to ensure community service. There are frustrations across King County about who is being vaccinated. Law enforcement and fire departments are concerned about officers, firefighter, EMT, and public safety as a whole. Commissioner Hiatt asked how commissioners can help. Chief Marrs suggested lobbying state legislators and the Director of the State Department of Health to vaccinate all fire department personnel. Commissioner Barrera thought our lobbying would carry more weight if commissioners did not try to secure vaccinations for themselves. Commissioners Hiatt and Giba agreed. Chief Marrs will draw up a draft letter and submit a proposed letter to the commissioners as soon as possible.
- (G) Commissioner Hiatt asked when the general public would start receiving vaccines. Chief Marrs replied that the general public comes after Tier 1A (healthcare workers); Tier 1B (residents of nursing homes, skilled nursing homes, and congregate care living in adult homes), and the next tier of essential workers (including police officers and fire department administration). He will send the link that outlines each Tier and how they are categorized. It is a bit convoluted, not clearly defined, interpreted by each county, and does not include a timeline for the roll out of each phase. To have 70% of King County vaccinated by July, 16,000 people need to be vaccinated per day. Currently, only 14,000 are receiving the vaccine each day. The limiting factors are the number of vaccines being shipped from the federal government to the state health departments and from the state to county health departments, and the limits of the infrastructure system.
- (H) Washington State comes in #5 in the nation for the fewest hospitalizations and deaths. Dr. Duchon, Dr. Sayre, Dr. Rea, Dr. Kudenchuck and King County are doing a phenomenal job.
- (I) Commissioner Giba asked about North Highline's numbers. Chief Marrs stated that our positivity rate is higher than most of the county with a rate of 6,270 per 100,000 residents. Burien is moving in a positive direction with a rate of 262 per 100,000 residents. That is down from over 450 per 100,000 residents so we have made great strides. However, our goal is 25 per 100,000 residents so there is still work to do. Hospital capacity is at 83% and we want it to be below 80% and the number of COVID patients is 7.1% and we want that to be below 10% so we are doing very well there.

Attorney's Report

- None

Unfinished Business

- The 2021 Fire Benefit Charge appeals deadline is Friday, February 19, 2021. The Appeal Hearing will be held at regular meeting on Monday, February 22, 2021.
- Website Update – We transitioned to new platform – Weebly.com.

New Business

- None

Good of the Order

As there was no further business, Commissioner Hiatt moved to adjourn. Commissioner Barrera seconded. Motion carried (3-0), and the meeting adjourned at 7:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Secretary of the Board



Chairman, Commissioner



Commissioner



Commissioner