

# **NORTH HIGHLINE FIRE DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS MEETING**

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**October 25, 2021**

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Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the regular North Highline Fire District Fire Commissioners' Meeting for October was called to order via GoToMeeting (virtual online meeting) at 6:00 PM by Commissioner Liz Giba with Commissioner Dominic Barrera and Commissioner Julie Hiatt, who joined mid-meeting, participating. Also attending via GoToMeeting were Chief Mike Marrs, Assistant Chief Ray Pettigrew, Assistant Chief Wayne Metz, Captain Ray Desmarais, and Shauna Sheppard.

Chief Marrs led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Barrera moved to accept the meeting agenda as presented. Commissioner Giba seconded. Motion carried (2-0).

## Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Barrera moved to accept the minutes of the September 27, 2021 regular meeting as presented. Commissioner Giba seconded. Motion carried (2-0).

## Accounts Payable

Commissioner Barrera moved to approve the October 2021 accounts payable vouchers as follows:

2110101 to 2110108 in the amount of \$355,447.48 (Month End Vouchers) Commissioner Giba seconded. Motion carried (2-0).

## Correspondence

- None

## Public Comment

- None

Commissioner's Reports

Commissioner Hiatt has gotten some bids on new NHFD Commissioner clothing. The items are heavier weight than the current commissioner gear, reasonably priced, and Unisex options are available.

Commissioner Hiatt will send the information to Shauna Sheppard, who will forward them to Commissioners Barrera and Giba.

Commissioner Giba reported that NHUAC's October meeting focused on King County Executive Dow Constantine and his opponent in the upcoming election, Washington State Senator Joe Nguyen. The topic of NHUAC's November 4th meeting will be safety in White Center and will include Chief Marrs, Fire Marshall Chris Ricketts and Jim Chan of King County's permitting department. A link to the meeting will be available on the White Center Now Blog.

Local #1461

- None

Financial Reports

The Board received copies of the September 2021 Treasurer's and Cash Flow Reports. Chief Marrs reported that all financials are tracking well.

Chief's Report

Chief Marrs reported on the following:

- COVID-19 Update – Dr. Rea recently reported that numbers have been slowly declining and King County's vaccination rate is above 80%. Booster shots have been approved for all three vaccines. Testing indicates vaccine antibodies start to drop at six to eight months so waiting until then to get a booster makes sense. The flu shot should be a priority because the flu can lower immunity to COVID. For those who got the J & J vaccine, there really is a benefit to getting either the Moderna or Pfizer booster because the antibody production increases exponentially.
- Vaccination Mandate Update – We have three unvaccinated firefighters who were members of the North Highline Fire District employment pool prior to the Interlocal Agreement. One is working in an administrative capacity. One received a religious exemption and is on modified duty. His situation will be reviewed every two weeks. Meanwhile, he is conducting all work away from others to minimize potential exposure at the station. The third firefighter did not request a medical, religious exemption, or leave of absence. There appears to be no option but terminate his employment. Commissioner Barrera asked about a weekly COVID testing process. Chief Marrs responded that we conduct a standardized, daily health screen.
- Chief Marrs attended the Westside Seattle Public Safety and Seattle Southside Chamber of Commerce meetings last week. The fires in White Center over the past few months were discussed. He explained that despite the rumors, only one of the fires was caused by arson. The others were accidental or the result of careless behavior, but not arson. Inspections were discussed, but many aspects including enforcement and keeping costs down for tenants are not resolved. The authority and responsibility for conducting fire code inspections belong to King County. Chris Ricketts of the King County Fire Marshal's Office said they would conduct their due diligence to follow up. However, according to Assistant Chief Pettigrew, our usual point of contact with King County is on leave and the climate surrounding our dealings with the county can be ascertained by one interaction. At the county's request, Assistant Chief Pettigrew completed an inspection and found some issues. Rather than using our established county channel, he was asked to report the issues through the Citizen Portal. Commissioner Giba shared

that she was had spoken with someone at the county who was hoping we would take over the fire code inspection process. Chief Marrs said was a brief time that we did inspections, but King County Fire Marshals' Office took over the process. Today, we conduct only tactical-type inspections to help firefighters learn about the buildings. We do not do fire code inspections because we do not have the resources to conduct them, we lack authority to enforce compliance, and we need to avoid potential of liability. We are working on improving fire safety prevention and awareness. Commissioner Hiatt commented that clarifying the roles of the different agencies would be a good start.

- It was decided to hold a special meeting on Wednesday, November 10<sup>th</sup> at 5:00PM to discuss the 2022 budget and the 2022 Fire Benefit Charge.
- Four new cameras have been installed and are active at Stations #18 and #19.
- Hiring Process Update – Six candidates are scheduled for the January 2022 academy. They will keep us even with retirements and COVID changes. We plan to have three more in the August academy because we are limited to the number of available spots.

Attorneys Report

- None

Unfinished Business

- None

New Business

- None

Good of the Order

As there was no further business, Commissioner Barrera moved to adjourn. Commissioner Hiatt seconded. Motion carried (3-0), and the meeting adjourned at 6:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



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Secretary of the Board

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Chairman, Commissioner



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Commissioner



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Commissioner