

NORTH HIGHLINE FIRE DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS MEETING



July 22, 2019

The regular North Highline Fire District Fire Commissioners' meeting for July was called to order at 6:00 PM by Commissioner Julie Hiatt, with Commissioner Dominic Barrera in attendance and Commissioner Liz Giba attending via conference call. Also in attendance were:

Carolyn Eikchler
Gerald James
Cathy Kennedy
Mike Marrs
Ray Pettigrew
Stephanie Poliakoff

Bob Price
Manuela Rojocuebas
Barry Rubin
Shauna Sheppard
Leanne Thompson
Rebecca Wells

Chief Marrs led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Dominic Barrera moved to accept the meeting agenda as presented. Liz Giba seconded.
Motion carried (3-0).

Meeting Minutes

Dominic Barrera moved to accept the minutes of the June 24th regular meeting as presented.
Liz Giba seconded. Motion carried (3-0).

Accounts Payable

Dominic Barrera moved to approve the accounts payable vouchers as follows:

- 19070101 to 19070106 in the amount of \$248,528.27 (July Month End Vouchers)
- 19070201 to 19070201 in the amount of \$6,000.00 (LEOFF 1 Other Medical)

Liz Giba seconded. Motion carried (3-0).

Correspondence

- None

Public Comment - The following community members spoke about the July 4th fireworks tragedy in the Boulevard Park area.

- Leanne Thompson lives across from the drug and alcohol rehab. Residents of the rehab light fireworks that hit her home, property, driveway and yard. Another neighbor drives erratically in their neighborhood and lights fireworks long after the 4th of July. She has called on several occasions with no result. The neighbor continues to be problematic with fireworks. It is a year-round problem.
- Carolyn Eikchler (206-767-9121) lives at 10223 14th Ave So 98168. She has lived in the neighborhood for 41 years. The fireworks law needs to be enforced in the community. Windows and yard damage have continued to be a problem throughout the years, and it continues to get worse year over year. The public supports the fire department and wants to work together to resolve this massive firework infringement on our community.
- Cathy Kennedy thanked the fire department for its fast response time, but something must be done about fireworks. She lost everything. Her husband, home, car, and fur babies are all gone.
- Gerald James is a neighbor of the Kennedys. This could have happened to any of us. We are all at risk and those doing this need to be held accountable. The elementary school prohibited people from lighting fireworks on school grounds, but that could have been a relief area to perhaps avoid this issue. Mr. James went on to state, "we used to have King County presence in Boulevard Park and we currently have none. We are on our own. We do not see them in our neighborhood, and we are now seeing the result of that lack of presence." Safety and firework education need to be addressed with those who are lighting off fireworks. "What can be done?"
- Rebecca Wells mobilized this group. She sent an email to King County Councilmember Joe McDermott about the fireworks problem in Unincorporated King County. Ms. Wells read her email aloud. The bottom line is, "It is out of control. It is like a war zone here." There should be a county-wide ban on fireworks. It is time to act on this issue. Mrs. Wells also read Mr. McDermott's response saying that he supports a fireworks ban. The email thread between Ms. Wells and Mr. McDermott is on file with the meeting minutes.
- Stephanie Poliakoff and Barry Rubin are new to the area. They live on 17th and 104th. Ms. Poliakoff expressed her concern over this area's firework problem. She stated that, "the area is changing, and this is getting beyond unreasonable and we will not tolerate this!" Mr. Rubin added that he walks their dogs regularly and the siege "needs to be addressed and real change needs to happen and enforced." Coordination and support are required. This community has fallen into this lost pocket."
- Manuela Rojocuebas lives on 14th Ave. He thought last year was bad. "This year, after 25 years living in the area, is the worst. This is crazy."

In response, Chief Marrs addressed the importance of the fireworks issue to NHFD. He explained that he is also Chief of Burien's District 2 and shared some history. When the City of Burien incorporated, one of the first action it took was to adopt a fireworks ban. The Fire Marshal went to the City Council and supported the ban.

July 4th is predictably the busiest day of the year for the fire district. We up staff, partner with the King County Sheriff, and work collaboratively with municipalities to provide support and assistance. Although we do not have the authority to write tickets, we try to educate to prevent and minimize major problems.

We have a good pulse on the calls we are seeing. It is worse in North Highline. Ms. Wells asked for clarification of the call numbers. Chief Marrs said the ratio was a 3-1. The ban does reduce the calls. It is better to have a ban in place.

Carolyn Eikchler asked if the unincorporated area has a ban on specific fireworks. Chief Marrs explained that there is a difference between legal, "safe and sane" fireworks and illegal fireworks. Fines, police enforcement, and education impact the use of fireworks in the community. Ms. Eikchler asked if firework stands are legal and Chief Marrs said because they sell "safe and sane" fireworks they are legal. However, use of the fireworks is only legal on certain days, July 4th specifically. Calling the King County Sheriff is the best recourse.

Mr. James said he misses Steve Cox and wishes there had been sheriff present at this meeting. Chief Marrs explained that public turnout at NHPD meetings is minimal and there was no invitation for a deputy to be present. Attending Fire Commissioners' meetings and NHUAC will add further support to the groups' efforts because NHUAC meetings are a good place to share information and voice positions. Convincing the King County Council to change King County's fireworks law will require organizing to ensure voices are heard.

Commissioner Giba thanked Ms. Wells and the group and said that Mr. McDermott's response to their email sounds very positive. Hopefully, the community's very valid concerns give him momentum with the King County Council. Major Jesse Anderson is the new commander of Precinct 4 of the King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO). Major Anderson will be at NHUAC's September 5th meeting, here at the North Highline Fire District conference room at 7 pm. Everyone is welcome. This will be an opportunity to get his perspective and ask for his support.

Commissioner Barrera said that this means a lot to him because he is also a member of the Boulevard Park community. It was heartbreaking to see the Kennedy's home. The fireworks trash was incredible. He supports a ban in the urban areas.

Mr. James asked if schools would open access to their property to light off fireworks. Commissioner Hiatt suggested that attending a school board meeting might be the best way to communicate these ideas. She noted that NHPD commissioners are members of the King County Fire Commissioners Association (KCFCA). Given Mr. Kennedy's death and that people flock to North Highline to light fireworks, she suggested she would be asking KCFCA to work on a county-wide ban. She lives on 4th Ave SW. There are 5500 parcels in our district. It seemed that people at every 3rd or 4th house were setting off fireworks. KCSO was issuing citations that night, but there were so many people it was tough to manage everyone. Organizing a professional fireworks display might mitigate the influx of personal fireworks.

Commissioner Giba suggested that we take action to support a fireworks ban. Perhaps we could write a letter of support to Mr. McDermott offering to collaborate on legislation. Commissioner Barrera suggested that since Mr. McDermott is running for re-election, so he is probably attending many public events.

Mr. Rubin asked what the next steps are because they want to stay on top of things, so they do not fall through the cracks. Commissioner Hiatt stated that the King County Fire Commissioners Association will meet on August 7th at Angelo's Restaurant in Bellevue. Commissioner Hiatt suggested emailing her directly if they would like to attend.

Chief Marrs noted that it would take a year or more to apply a new law based on the State Fireworks Law (RCW 70.77.250). Commissioner Giba will also share it at the NHUAC meeting on September 5th, 2019. Stephanie Poliakoff will follow-up with Councilmember McDermott. Mr. James thanked NHFD leadership for its response and willingness to partner with the group because "we need help!" Leanne Thompson said she now has hope and thanked the commissioners and the fire department.

Commissioners' Reports

Commissioner Hiatt thanked King County District #2 for their participation in Jubilee Days. She also thanked all the volunteers and staff that assisted in closing off the streets in preparation of the parade. She added a reminder about the King County Fire Commissioners' meeting next Wednesday, August 7th.

Commissioner Barrera reported: None

Commissioner Giba reported (1) Vintage Housing's 298-unit apartment complex on 1st Ave S is nearly full--only one 1-bedroom unit is vacant. Based on the information Vintage shared last year, it could be home to as many as 1,400 residents. (2) King County will be holding a public meeting at Seola Gardens on Thursday, July 25th, 2019 from 6:00-8:00PM to preview the county's proposed Comprehensive Plan on land use. It looks like it will include additional housing projects and increased population density. The county's information states that the added density will not have an effect on fire or police. It is not clear how they reached this conclusion. NHFD was not asked for its opinion.

IAFF Local #1461

- None

Financial Reports

The Board received copies of the June 2019 Treasurer's and Cash Flow Reports.

Chief Marrs reported that this month's vouchers include the June invoice from King County District #2 for shared expenses. Our expenses for 2019 are tracking. We will be reviewing the July payments for Districts #2 and #11 to ensure the financial models are holding true and tracking as projected.

Chief's Report

Chief Marrs reported on the following:

- Update on contractual consolidation – Everything is on track. The Patch Committee will meet on Wednesday, July 31, 2019.
- Lisa, our account manager at Hawthorne Accounting, has received 6 months of financial data. She will review the data and update Chief Marrs.

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- Update on new engines – During extensive acceptance testing by the repair garage, a problem with one of the pumps was discovered. We are working through warranty standards with the pump and engine manufacturer.

Attorney's Report

- None

Unfinished Business

- None

New Business

- State of Washington Board of Volunteers credit voucher – Dominic Barrera moved to have Julie Hiatt sign the refund invoice on behalf of Liz Giba, Chairman of the Board of the North Highline Fire District, for an additional refund for membership for 2019 in the amount of \$210.00. Liz Giba seconded. Motion carried (3-0)
- King County Finance & Business Operations – Interlocal agreement for fire protection services whereby Dominic Barrera moved for Julie Hiatt to sign this agreement on behalf of Liz Giba, Chairman of the Board of the North Highline Fire District. Liz Giba seconded. Motion carried (3-0).
- Discussion took place regarding the reply from King County Councilman Joe McDermott to Ms. Wells supporting a ban of fireworks in unincorporated King County. A copy of the e-mail thread is on file with the meeting minutes.
- The board further discussed supporting the fireworks ban, enhanced enforcement actions, and penalties for the responsible parties like that of the Burien Fireworks Ordinance that was passed earlier this year and will go into effect next year. Commissioner Giba will draft a letter to Mr. McDermott and enclose Burien's ordinance and the portion of the State's Fireworks Law that specifies local variations do not take effect for a year.

Good of the Order

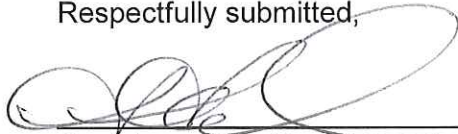
- Chief Marrs noted that Awesome Kids Day, Jubilee Days, and the parade made for a busy weekend for the crews but were great ways for us to connect with our community.
- Discussion was had on the new engine open house and moving the event to a later date.
- A request was made to remove the 2018 True-Up and 2018 Employee Liability Front Load Liability Expenses from the BARS budget to accurately reflect the Interlocal agreement budget for 2018.

Executive Session

None

As there was no further business, Dominic Barrera moved to adjourn. Liz Giba seconded. Motion carried (3-0), and the meeting adjourned at 8:41 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Secretary of the Board



Chairman, Commissioner



Commissioner



Commissioner