

Board of Commissioners Meeting

August 25, 2021

Chairperson Cameron called a regular Board of Commissioners meeting to order via zoom at 5:30pm. The following attended:

Commissioner Hallanger	Commissioner Headley
Commissioner Olson	Commissioner Hutcheson
Chief Neves	DC Sanders
DC Huff	FA Ballinger
Public: Don Sharer, Jeff Wilson, Russ Collier	

Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting:

A motion was made by Commissioner Hallanger to approve the August 11, 2021 board meeting minutes as is. Commissioner Headley seconded the motion. No further discussion. Motion carried.

Public Comments:

None

Awards & Recognition:

None

Verbal Reports:

911 Public Authority: Commissioner Headley reported on the effects of COVID-19 and staffing. The new facility/site is progressing well. They are still working on the permit process for the tower at station 22.

Citizens Committee Update: Don Sharer, one of the people that served on the citizens committee, gave a report on the groups findings. He shared that he, and the rest of the committee, were extremely impressed with our diverse revenue stream and minimal reliance upon property taxes to support our overall budget and mission. He finds that to be a very unique circumstance for an entity like ours. Overview of the things the committee discussed, agreed upon and are recommending to the Board:

- There's a funding shortfall to maintain services, many capital purchases and replacement needs that can't be funded with the current revenue, increase in costs, inflation, etc. which can't be kept up with due to the 1% maximum increase in property tax and changes in the law which impact the fire department (ex: mental health law mandate with no funding).
- Need to work hard to educate the public. Keep the message simple and concise. Hone in on a message to get community support. There is a general lack of knowledge by the citizens on what all C2FR does, how frugal C2FR is with tax dollars and how far C2FR

has been able to stretch every dollar.

- Committee recommends a \$.43 lid lift to get to the maximum of \$1.50 per thousand as allowed by law (with current levy rate being \$1.07). This amount may need to be adjusted to not exceed \$1.50 depending on next year's levy rate.
- A permanent lid lift is the committee's recommendation.

The Board thanked the committee for their time and effort in this process. The Board is in agreement and directed staff to proceed with researching and starting the process of a permanent levy lid lift with further discussion to come on the details (timing and dollar amount). Staff reminded the Board that this can only be voted on during the August or November election, with due dates for this to be on the ballot several months prior to which every month we chose to run it.

Written Reports:

None

Action Items:

SWAT: The Lower Columbia SWAT Interlocal Cooperative Agreement was included in the Board packet. Chief Neves is looking for approval to get involved with SWAT. If we are going to be involved, we need to submit a letter of intent so the Interlocal Agreement can be modified. This is no long term commitment with the ability to give 90 days' notice if it is decided that it is not beneficial for us to be involved.

Concerns were raised by the Board. Why is Longview Fire not participating? Is there really a benefit to our citizens/district? Annual cost of this program when we already have budget challenges. However, the Board also knows it is beneficial to support law enforcement whenever we can and we can potentially have better skills to deal with certain call types.

A motion was made by Commissioner Headley to authorize Chief Neves to submit a letter of intent to Lower Columbia SWAT. Commissioner Olson seconded the motion. No further discussion. Motion carried with Chairperson Cameron voting no.

Chief's Report:

- Attended press conference with DNR at Olympia Airport, their temporary airbase, to provide fire suppression on the west side of the state.
- Working on obtaining quotes for the station 21 remodel. Will bring to the next meeting.
- Overview of mental health calls recently and the impact of changes for law enforcement.
- Lots of people out on wildland deployments.
- Chief Neves will be leaving for a wildland deployment tomorrow for an unspecified amount of time.

Payroll:

A motion was made by Commissioner Hallanger to approve payroll totaling \$400,934.34 for warrant numbers 61854-61863 and EFT's dated August 20, 2021. Commissioner Olson seconded the motion. No further discussion. Motion carried.

Vouchers:

A motion was made by Commissioner Hutcheson to approve vouchers totaling \$45,118.31 for warrant numbers 61864-61893 dated August 27, 2021. Commissioner Headley seconded the motion. No further discussion. Motion carried.

Announcements:

- Joe Gardner has given his resignation from the Cowlitz County Board of Commissioners to become effective September 3, 2021. No information on a replacement yet.
- Chairperson Cameron will be out of the area for the next several meetings, but does plan to virtually attend most of them while he's away.

Executive Session:

Chairperson Cameron recessed the regular meeting at 6:25pm to enter into Executive Session to discuss labor negotiations (per RCW 42.30.110(1)(g)) for approximately 30 minutes.

Chairperson Cameron closed the Executive Session and re-opened the regular meeting at 6:53pm.

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Cameron at 6:54pm.

Chairperson

District Secretary