



WORKSHOP AGENDA
Chelan Fire and Rescue
Commissioners WORKSHOP
Friday, January 8, 2016 at 9:00 A.M.
232 East Wapato, Chelan, WA



Commissioners in attendance: Tom Peters, Russ Jones, Robert Gervais

Staff in attendance: Chief Tim Lemon, Secretary Carol Kibler

Others: see sign in sheet.

Call to order at 9:00 A.M.

- Flag Salute

Workshop discussion:

AFG – Ladder Truck:

- Working on writing the grant.
- Chairman Peters attended a webinar and learned more about grant writing.
- While each of us are in review please check consistencies and accuracies.
- We are applying for \$870,934 in grant funding our portion will be \$43,546.
- We can add more to our cost sharing portion if necessary and go over the 5% matching funds. The total estimated cost of the ladder truck is \$914,000.
- We have Fortier, Miltenberger and Baker reviewing the narratives.
- Thank you Dale Rodman for the research work done on the aerial ladder.
- The deadline application submittal is January 15, 2016.
- We will also be working on a grant for SCBA equipment.
- When the ladder truck fails the drift test we no longer will be able to use it and will not be able to fund a replacement aerial ladder apparatus.

Volunteer Stipends:

- Chairman Peters did an analysis on volunteer wages from comparable fire districts.
- Chairman Peters found that districts do not reimburse their volunteers with consistency. Wage ranges vary from paid hourly to points paid.
- Chairman Peters' opinion is to not pay volunteers hourly.
- Discussed firefighter and lieutenants wage designation wage differences.
- Chief Lemon explained the stipend system is a reimbursement for fuel and clothing.
- Chief Lemon stated the firefighter and lieutenant respond to the same incidents.
- Chief Lemon didn't think the call volume warranted a raise in reimbursement.
- The volunteers can only collect a net of 20% that a career firefighter gets paid.
- Commissioner Jones asked if the volunteer firefighters were asking for more money.
- Chief Lemon has not heard anyone asking about more money.
- Volunteer Wages will go on the regular meeting agenda.
- **2016 Goals and Objectives:**
- Chief Lemon reviewed the 2015 Objectives as completed. See Document 15-001
- Chief Lemon reviewed the 2016 Objectives. See Document 16-000
- Formulate a plan to rent Chelan County Fire 1 helicopter.
- Fire wise assessments – Pursued and discussed with the Cascadian group. The objective could be met with the grant through Cascadian. The fire district can assist and promote fire wise.
- Commissioner Jones would like to explore operations for marine combat.
- Research providing an incentive to mitigate repeating false alarms.



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- An addition workshop to address equipment that would access fires that start on the Butte.
- The Butte area where the fire started this last summer is not in our fire jurisdiction.
- Add to the objective list - Utility ATV

Chairman Peters – what about mitigating the repeated 911 calls from the adult care facilities. Is this subject worth pursuing?

Chief Lemon reviewed the subject. We have the option to scale back. We aren't getting overly beat up on those calls.

Chairman Peters asked if we could review increasing our mechanic contractual services. He would like to add a mechanic assistant part time position and if we increased the volume of service and revenues we could hire a part time position. Increasing mechanic services will be added to the objectives for 2016.

Chief Lemon informed the board that residents in the Bear Mountain area are serious about getting a fire station in the area and will soon approach the board with information.

Dale Rodman stated while he was researching information for the aerial ladder he discovered that up to two million people visit the Lake Chelan area in the summer time. Is there a mechanism we can tap into to receive funding from these visitor's? No

Evan Woods would like to see that the communications budget remain. We will need to continue to upgrade and replace radios and repeater communication. Chief Lemon stated we receive around \$10,000 through Rivercom911 tax agreement.


Shawn Sherman – PPE structure gear found a saving; Tech Gen Gear allows our noncombat firefighters to be fitted with black PPE gear. The cost is \$700 instead of \$2,500.


Chairman Peters thanked everyone for coming and taking the time.


Adjournment: The workshop closed at 11:40 a.m.

Chelan County Fire District 7 Commissioner:


Tom Peters, Chairman


Robert Gervais, Commissioner


Russell Jones, Commissioner


Attest: Carol Kibler, Secretary

2015 Fire Management Thoughts

by Mike Sherer, Chelan

Listed below are five peremptory management actions which could significantly improve fire suppression in the Lake Chelan area during our summer threat period.

1. Meteorological Forecasting:

Background: In the case of the Chelan Butte fire this summer (2015), the fire started about 0530 and even though helicopter assets were in the area at the Chelan airport (two miles away), no flights were allowed until all maintenance checks, refueling, pilot rest, briefings, and bureaucratic authorization were satisfied. The result was a waste of much of the firefighting day and ultimately catastrophic destruction of much of the Chelan area. Also, the fire departments own forecasters had predicted the dry lightning the day before.

What should be done?: When the forecast is for dry lightning or the potential for it in the near term and airplane firefighting assets exist in the area; **conduct maintenance checks, briefings, pilot rest, fueling, authorization well before the anticipated threat time so the aircraft can fly at first light to attack new fires.**

2. Lake shore Firefighting:

Background: A fully dedicated fire boat does not exist on Lake Chelan. The idea was explored in years past but never achieved. This past summer, several homes (perhaps thirteen), were destroyed which were right on the south lake shore. No help was available from the lake side. Additionally, in 2003, I lost a home on Lake Chelan and the when FD-7 responded to the fire there was no equipment available to pump directly out of the lake even though the home was within 15 feet of the seawall on the lake.

What should be done?: **A fully capable fire engine should be placed on a local barge in a timely way, barged up to the threat site, and fully engage the fire in the vicinity of homes by drawing water directly from the lake.** Home owners could contract for the service to pay both the barge owner and the owner of the fire engine to fight for their own homes. The availability of such a fire fighting barge to flood the threatened lakefront properties before the advancing fire might have saved some if not all of the homes destroyed this past summer. Some sort of boat/barge should be available to fight fires on Lake Chelan.

3. **Prepositioned assets:**

Background: We have several seasons around the lake. Apple harvest, cherry harvest, and fire season. During cherry season, there is a central dispatcher for helicopters in the state to fly to a growers cherry orchard experiencing rain and blow the cherries dry **promptly** before the cherries split. The dispatcher has several helicopters that are on call, some ready to fly, and can immediately respond to the farmer's need to limit crop damage.

What should be done?: **Create a central dispatch system for helicopters during fire season.** Doesn't a lightening fire on the butte or in the mountains that could end up as a Wolverine fire and destroy homes, businesses, lives, careers, livestock, etc. deserve the same emphasis as cherries?

Also, why not **preposition hardware used for firefighting in local lay down areas where an incoming helicopter could quickly latch and snatch a bucket, etc. to immediately start fighting the fire.** We have prepositioned fire extinguishers/sprinklers in our homes and businesses and the Chelan PUD stockpiles power poles locally so they are at the ready during emergencies; so why not some prepositioned pumps, helicopter buckets, etc. right here in Chelan?

4. **Bureaucracy:**

Background: Right now it seems like the local firefighters quickly exhaust their resources, then turnover the fires to the Type 1 thru 3 teams in order to acquire more assets, etc. This results in large fires due to bureaucratic delays. Too often the public has been exposed to the phrase, " fire is a natural part of our environment." After the burns, no immediate logging is allowed in burn areas. This results in downed dead timber to litter the forest floor over the next few years which provides massive dead and dry fuel for the next fire.

What should be done?; **Open up all burned areas for salvage logging to remove the fuel from the inevitable future fires.** Using the changes noted above, the fires should be rapidly put out to prevent widespread catastrophic damage to people, forests, animals, and the economic engine of our county.

Responsible individuals and agencies must generate lessons learned and corrective action from every fire. These lessons learned should be used to change procedures, policies, etc. to better perform the following year. We in the Chelan area see the same mistakes year after year at the community and county's expense.

5. **Chelan County:**

Background: Presently, Chelan County officials observe as the local fire fighters, and national teams fight fires within the county boundaries. These fires often turn into massive burns (i.e. Wolverine) which destroy historic places (Domke Lake Resort), timber resources, private homes, utilities, etc. and then generate destructive follow on

mudslides. The national teams wrap up and leave the area after a huge fire but Chelan County is left to deal with the aftermath.

What should be done?: **Chelan County should insert themselves directly and actively in the firefighting business by doing the following:**

- a. **Assume the responsibility to initiate action to put out fires, where feasible, on public lands in Chelan County.**
- b. **Establish lay down areas within Chelan County with key equipment in a cache to fight fires.** For instance, have the helicopter water buckets and handling gear for in the lay down area so all one has to do is fly the airframe and crew to the fire site, **stopping nearby**, to grab and go at the fire cache as necessary.
- c. **Revenue Stream.** Work with county taxpayers to install a funding source for all the above.
- d. **County Prosecutor:** Direct the Chelan County Prosecutor to research all law reference to verify no legal impediment exist that prevents Chelan County from being directly involved in fighting wildfires within the county borders. If for any reason any state law prevents this then initiate action thru our state representatives so such action becomes legal.