



**CHELAN  
FIRE and RESCUE  
LRP Minutes  
March 28, 2019 @ 11:00 a.m.**

**Commissioners in attendance:** Russ Jones, Phil Moller and Jay Witherbee

**Staff in attendance:** Fire Chief Timothy Lemon, Deputy Fire Chief Mark Donnell, Assistant Fire Chief Brandon Asher, Admin Office Manager Carol Kibler and Assistant Faye Barker.

**Others in attendance:** See sign in sheet.

Chairman Jones called the meeting order at 11:00 a.m. and announced the flag salute.

**Staffing:**

Commissioner Moller stated he would like to schedule a town hall meeting to invite the community to see the succession plan and then move forward with the plan.

Commissioner Witherbee would like to have an open meeting to see what the community thinks and invite the volunteers and staff for their input as well. We would need to include what we are looking for in a Fire Chief and perhaps other topics too. Commissioner Witherbee thinks we should stick with the succession plan but would like to hear what the citizens have to say.

Chairman Jones is not sure that the community would understand without being educated on the fire district's concepts.

Chief Lemon stated the succession plan was put in place knowing Deputy Fire Chief Donnell would step into the Fire Chief position for a few years and then Assistant Fire Chief Asher would step up as the Fire Chief. The current administrative staff is educated and has the ability to continue with the district's direction and plan that is in place. Financially we can maintain two Chief Officers. If we do hire an outside Fire Chief the cost of the search would be \$12,000 - \$24,000 and a new Fire Chief would bring changes that may initially be disruptive to the organization. Anytime you hire a new Fire Chief there is going to be organizational change and sometimes members will leave. Fire Chief Lemon doesn't disagree with community input but recommends hiring from within and staying with the current succession plan as it is the most financially cost effective and least disruptive process.

Deputy Chief Donnell stated the lack of direction from the Board of Fire Commissioners on this issue makes planning difficult. Deputy Fire Chief Donnell stated he would be committed to the Fire Chief's position with the support of the Board of Fire Commissioners. We have, in-house, people who are qualified to do the job, we have a plan in place, we just need direction from the Board of Fire Commissioners to move forward.

Lt FF Shawn Sherman stated the Local Union 4816 stands behind the current succession plan.

A round table discussion on having a town hall meeting and succession planning took place.

Chairman Jones stated we would move forward with the current succession plan, work on a two year contract with Deputy Fire Chief Donnell for 2020 and 2021. Commissioner Witherbee agrees.

Chairman Jones stated we need to seek funding for 2022 and would like to cut the Administration back to one Chief Officer. This was what some community members think we should do because we have too many chiefs.

Fire Chief Lemon disagree with reducing the number of Chief Officer to one, the district is too large of an operation to be handled by one Chief Officer. Between elected to axillary members we are a 101 person department.

Chairman Jones tabled the town meeting until we get through the funding section.

The Board of Fire Commissioners are in agreement of the current succession plan, but feel the community and members should weigh-in and hear the plan.

Commissioner Witherbee stated his goals are to adopt a budget for 2020 and 2021 based on revenue levels. Commissioner Witherbee would like the information to be presented to the community.

Chairman Jones stated if we don't increase our revenue by 2023 we will be cutting staff.

#### **Apparatus:**

Chief Lemon reviewed a new rating system for apparatus based off a point system that is commonly used in the fire service. The system rates different impacts to apparatus on a scale of 1 to 5 in each area, the higher the agitate score the sooner the apparatus should be considered for replacement. Chief Lemon is working on the SOG for the apparatus point system. Chief Lemon stated the current apparatus will be graded annually by the Fleet Manager, Fire Chief and other members of the department.

Chief Lemon stated the budget has never been set up to fund apparatus replacement and our current revenue stream is not strong enough to start doing it now without new revenue. Chief Lemon stated we have three engines that will need to be replaced in the very near future. To adequately fund an apparatus replacement account we need \$200,000 a year for the next 10 years. Chief Lemon noted some departments go out for bond issues to replace equipment and apparatus. Chief Lemon stated we have been successful with situational purchasing of used apparatus and the \$200,000 a year is based off new apparatus. Our current Fleet Manager has done a great job in keeping our fleet in service and well maintained. We constantly are looking at where we can save and be cost effective.

#### **Funding:**

Chairman Jones stated his focus is on 2022-2023, at this time we would need to seek additional funding. Funding would be for two additional firefighter/EMTS at a cost of \$120,000 each (\$240,000), \$200,000 a year for apparatus and \$60,000 for Volunteer Services. The Fire District would ask the community for a \$500,000 increase at about \$0.21 per \$1000 of assessed value. Commissioner Moller thinks the community would accept the increase.

Chief Lemon agreed that we need an increase in our revenue to keep the district from sliding backwards and to provide safe staffing levels for the initial response force. Chief Lemon state we need to provide four firefighter on-duty using career staffing and qualified volunteer staffing along with one Duty Officer. Hiring two more firefighters will provide three career firefighters per-shift, guaranteeing two on duty at all times. The third and fourth positons would be filled with qualified volunteer members. Currently we do drop to one career member on duty at time. Chief Lemon also stated we will need to evaluate the volunteer program and how much we are spending vs what we are getting back out of it in emergency response and district coverage. The results of the evaluation needs to be articulated to the community as we move forward.

Chairman Jones reminded everyone that the Fire District, by law, can only receive 1% increase annually from the previous year's taxes. Currently we are moving backwards! Chairman Jones wants to make this a point of discussion and understanding to the community and voters.

Commissioner Moller wants to make sure the volunteer program(s) we currently have in place will continue.

Deputy Chief Donnell stated we are putting funding into the volunteer programs and if we don't see the benefits from the programs, we need to look at different paths to accomplish our mission. We do provide a safe initial operable response staff; we need to find what will work for our area. We can't continue to do what we are doing if it is not working and providing the service levels needed.

Chief Lemon stated the Board of Fire Commissioners need to seriously look at running the lid lift this year. We need new revenue sooner than later or the community will begin to feel the strain and cut back in service.

Commissioner Witherbee would like to find out what other agencies will be going to the voters for and when.

The Board of Fire Commissioners want to schedule a Town Hall meeting for Tuesday, April 16, 2019 from 6 pm to 8 pm at Senior Center to present our Long Range Plan.

Chief Lemon summarized the talking points that have been discussed to include:


1. Filling the Fire Chief's position will be through the current succession plan. Deputy Fire Chief Donnell will be offered the position and then Assistant Fire Chief Asher will move up when Chief Donnell retires.
2. Staffing goal is to have four members on-duty with a Duty Officer on Call. With the intent to hire two more firefighter/EMTs to provide three career personnel assigned to each shift and to further augment the shift with qualified volunteer member to maintain four personnel on-duty as much of the time as is possible. The three additional firefighter/EMTs should be planned for in the future to bring the on-duty career staff to four assigned to each 24 hour shift.
3. Apparatus/equipment fund should have an annual contribution of \$200,000 dollars for the replacement of apparatus and equipment.

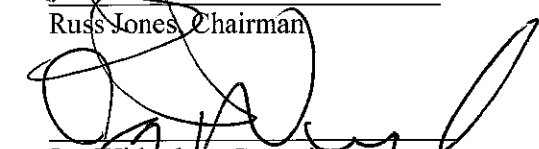
4. Fire Levy: Funding request will need to be presented to the public sooner (later this year) then later. Bearing in mind that voting to approve new funding one year the funding still will not be collected and available until the following year.

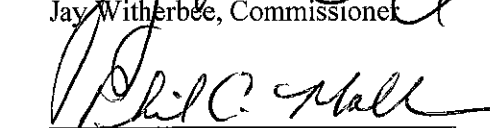
Commissioner Witherbee wants to continue to pursue discussing future collaboration efforts with the adjacent fire districts and EMS.

**Adjournment:** There was no more business before the board the meeting closed at 12:20 p.m.

**Chelan County Fire District 7  
Board of Commissioners:**

  
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Russ Jones, Chairman

  
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Jay Witherbee, Commissioner

  
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Phil Moller, Commissioner

  
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Attest: Carol A Kibler, District Secretary