

South Bay Fire Department – Citizen's Advisory Team Meeting Minutes

August 13th, 2015

Underlines indicate action items

List of Attendees: Todd Eckstein, Cora Morley Eklund, Commissioner Engle, Carol Fry, Susan Goff, Dick Kistler, Bill Pedersen, Camille Pedersen, Chief VanCamp

I. Call to order.

Camille Pedersen opened the meeting of the Citizens Advisory Team at 6:15 PM on 13 August, 2015 at Station 83, the North Olympia Fire Station.

I. Approval of minutes from last meeting

Minutes from the May meeting were previously approved.

II. Open issues

- 1) Camille opened the meeting and handed out copies of the handouts for the upcoming election. She reported that the “Pro” statement to change the number of commissioners from 3 to 5, has already been completed as well.
- 2) She stated that she would solicit volunteers via e-mail for people to write letters to the Olympian in support of the upcoming proposition.
- 3) Camille briefly discussed the Open House idea that had been raised at the last meeting and the need to form a planning committee if we still wanted to have the Open House. She stated that she would talk to Sandra about the event since Sandra was one of the key proponents.

III. New business

- 1) Commissioner Engle discussed the recent Workshop that helped to get the 3 new Commissioners up to date on the New Station project. Tom then briefly discussed the status of that project: The Special Use permit had been approved, but they would need additional funding to move forward. (See more detailed info under Additional Comment and Updates below.)
- 2) Chief VanCamp discussed the current burn ban and the current fire danger caused by the unprecedented weather this last summer. He discussed how SBFDF was working with the County Fire Marshalls and County Commissioners, and how they worked together to get the burn ban imposed earlier than normal this year. He also stated that they continue to have weekly TELECONs with other Fire Chiefs.

- 3) Chief VanCamp also discussed the 4th of July fireworks, and the relatively low number of incidents. He attributed the low number to the positive media attention which continued to address the possibility of fires due to the dry conditions.
- 4) Camille discussed the construction of a training center in the old South Bay station. The prior FD8 Board had approved \$500,000 for this purpose. Work on construction has been delayed pending acquisition of required County permits. The new facility will provide on-shift training of the various aspects of Fire Response and Rescue.
- 5) Bill Pedersen brought up fire safety with regards to using chain-saws in this dry weather, and he suggested that everyone bring a fire extinguisher with them if they need to use their chain saws this summer.
- 6) Chief VanCamp briefly discussed the survey responses that he's received this summer on "Survey Monkey", and said he was encouraged by the responses to date. (See up-dated information under Additional Comments and Update below.)
- 7) The meeting was then turned over to Battalion Chief Armstrong and Volunteer Captain LaDue who provided a demonstration of the Command Vehicle, the Jaws of Life, and other equipment, before taking members on a tour of the Station. Citizens were very impressed by the station and all the volunteer fire fighters we met.

Additional (After Meeting) Comment and Updates from Camille

Comment: Bill and I, along with other citizens from the east side of the district, attend Board meetings in order to keep current on FD business. We need to be able to fulfill our responsibility to keep citizens informed of current issues, and to keep the Board informed about what's happening within our team.

All citizens are welcome, but we know that not everyone can attend. So, **to keep you informed**, the information below covers **events since this CAT meeting** as well as more **detailed information about topics discussed at this CAT meeting**. **If you have comments, concerns, or ideas**, please come to a meeting or contact the Chief or Board members. **They state that they welcome feedback from the public.**

Survey

The responses have been tallied. In general, about half of respondents agree with a name change and about half disagree. The Board will review the responses, focusing more on the thoughtful comments expressed, and not just the numbers. Those who want a name change strongly favored the less expensive options of doing it gradually.

New Fire Station

Regarding bullet #1 above, construction of a new station on 78th Avenue NE, the detailed dollar figures are as follows: Per 2014 estimates, the total cost for this project

is \$3,245,533. The amount spent so far is \$664,533, which leaves \$2,581,000 needed to complete this construction. Of this, the district currently has \$1,180,992 saved in a Capital Facilities Project Fund for this purpose.

New Staffing Problem

On September 1, commissioners met to discuss a serious staffing concern, which had recently come to their attention. Over a relatively short period of time, we have lost 11 senior volunteer members, including very experienced Battalion Chiefs, Captains, etc. We do have new volunteers being trained, but it would be dangerous for them to respond to emergencies without senior staff supervision.

Consequently, the district is not currently able to guarantee that both the North Olympia and South Bay stations can be fully staffed on **nights and weekends**. There may be times when one of these stations would have to be closed. And, of course there will be no staffing at any time at the third station on Johnson Point Road.

Note: Daytime staffing at North Olympia and South Bay stations will continue because that is done by professional, paid fire fighters.

At the September 1 meeting, several options were discussed. The Board has asked staff and volunteers to work together to find a short-term solution to this problem which all can agree on, and to present that plan to commissioners for their review and input.

Cell Tower

Since before the merger, prior FD7 commissioners have been working with Verizon on a plan to construct a cell tower at the North Olympia station location. This is needed in order to facilitate wireless communication in emergency situations.

The County has not yet issued any permits because they have problems with some plan details, so those issues will need to be addressed.

When there is a county-approved detailed site plan in place for citizens to review and evaluate, citizen input will be solicited, and there will be a County hearing before this plan can be implemented. It will be a long process.

The next meeting will be on the 12th of November at 6:00 PM at the South Bay station.

IV. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned **at 7:45 PM.**

Minutes submitted by: Todd Eckstein

Minutes approved by: Camille Pedersen