

Whatcom County Fire District No. 11
Board of Fire Commissioners
3809 Legoe Bay Road, Lummi Island, WA. 98262
June 11th, 2021

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Bill Lee at 3809 Legoe Bay Road, Lummi Island, WA 98262 called the Special Meeting for June 11th, 2021 to order, at 9:00 a.m.

*****Meeting took place over Zoom due to the covid-19 pandemic*****

PRESENT: In attendance were Commissioner Bill Lee, Commissioner Wendell Terry, Commissioner Steve Kopanos, Asst Chief Michael Lish and Board Secretary Lisa Lish.

GUEST: EMS Div Chief John Granger, Firefighter Rep Chris Immer, Firefighter Sam Bowman, Firefighter Alissa Daschbach, Firefighter Nick Kluge, Leslie Dempsey, MJ, and one unidentified phone number call in.

NEW BUSINESS: Chairman Lee expressed concern that the process and the reasons for going into executive session may seem confusing and perhaps unnecessary to some. Chairman Lee stated that the Board of Commissioners can go into executive session for certain reasons. General comments followed. No actions were taken by the Board.

Commissioner Kopanos gave a back ground on the steps the Board must take in regards to complaints and the laws (rcw 42 & 52) the Board must follow. When a complaint is made it is at the discretion of the accused if the complaint is discussed in open public meeting or in executive session per rcw 42.30.110(1)(f). Any action of the Board must take place in an open public meeting. Commissioner Kopanos also explained that the comment section of the Board's meeting is for public comment not for public debate. There are no laws that require public comment, although allowing public comment is a standard practice of the Board.

Commissioner Lee expressed that his biggest concerns were not who was going to be the next Chief but rather the current financial needs of the district. Commissioner Lee asked Asst Chief Lish "Do you feel that from right this moment, through the process of hiring a chief when we are able to do that, that you are able to work with the Board as it is constituted?" Asst Chief Lish responded "Absolutely." Commissioner Lee Thanked him and apologized for the question and stated "That as a Board member I had no alternative."

Commissioner Terry stated the he felt the best decision for the district would be on June 22nd, 2021 for Asst Chief Lish to be Acting Chief until the end of the year. Commissioner Kopanos clarified that Asst Chief Lish was the current Acting Chief and that there isn't a time limit on it. No further action was taken.

Chairman Bill Lee asked for a motion to enter into executive session per RCW 42.30.110(1)(h).

Motion: Commissioner Wendell Terry made motion, "To enter into executive session per RCW 42.30.110(1)(h)." Motion seconded by Commissioner Steve Kopanos, AND PASSED 3-0.

Executive session:

At 9:40 a.m. the Board of Commissioners went into executive session Per RCW 42.30.110(1)(h). It was announced to the public that the executive session would last 10 minutes returning at 9:50 a.m.

At 9:50 a.m. Secretary Lisa Lish informed the public that the Board would remain in executive session for 15 additional minutes returning at 10:05 a.m.

At 10:05 a.m. the Board of Commissioner returned to their meeting.

Firefighter Alissa Daschbach asked if it was okay to speak. Commissioner Kopanos stated "it was fine, it's an exception but we've okayed it." Alissa thanked the Board for their service and commitment to the community. She asked that the Board speak in a language that was more understandable for the public including the volunteers. She asked that the Board reach out to the volunteers and community while going through this process. Commissioner Kopanos responded that they are hearing what has been said but that he wasn't sure the process allows them to reach out beyond enabling comments. Commissioner Lee asked for people to reach out if more clarification or explaining is needed. Alissa thanked the Board for letting her be heard. The Board thanked Alissa for her comments.

Asst Chief Lish asked for the floor. He said that things are in place to continue to serve the community as we do. Asst Chief Lish reiterated that we have a Chief and his term ends on June 22nd, at that time the Board has asked him to be the Acting Chief. Asst Chief Lish encourage the volunteers to be patient with the process and stated that he was in agreeance with the Boards current direction. Commissioner Lee thanked him for his comment.

Asst Chief Lish thanked the volunteers who have spoken their support of him being named the next Chief of the district.

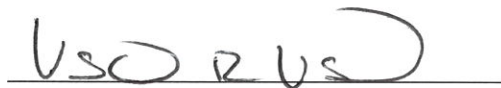
Firefighter Rep Chris Immer thanked the Board for clarification and making it easier to understand and that he supported the Board. Commissioner Lee thanked him for his comment.

Firefighter Sam Bowman expressed concern over the statement Commissioner Lee made in reference to people bring legal action upon the district earlier in the meeting. Sam voiced his support for Asst Chief Lish, and stated that Michael is the leader now. Commissioner Terry and Commissioner Lee thanked him for his comment.

Leslie Dempsey stated that she was very impressed by the professionalism by the Commissioners during this complicated situation and is impressed with how they have communicated in this meeting and that this will be carried out in an appropriate way.

Motion: There being no other business to come before the Board of Commissioners, Commissioner Wendell Terry moved and Commissioner Steve Kopanos seconded, to adjourn the meeting, AND PASSED 3-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:28 a.m.



Lisa Lish,
Board Secretary



Commissioner Steve Kopanos



Commissioner Bill Lee



Commissioner Wendell Terry

Approved at the Whatcom County Fire District # 11 Board of Commissioner Meeting on July 13th, 2021.