

**NEHALEM BAY FIRE AND RESCUE DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

MARCH 9, 2023 3:00 PM

**36375 Hwy 101 N.
Nehalem, OR 97131**

Zoom Meeting ID 973 0561 8915 Passcode: 562244

I. CALL TO ORDER

President John Handler called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m. Board members present for the roll call were Treasurer John Steele, Vice President Mike Sims, Secretary Charles Bridge, and Director Bob Forster. Other district personnel present were Fire Chief Chris Beswick and Executive Assistant Kristen Coyle.

In attendance was one member of the public, the three NBFRD career firefighters (two off-duty), and one NBFRD volunteer; another volunteer attended via Zoom.

II. WELCOME TO VISITORS

A. PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments were offered.

B. READING AND APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 16, 2023

Handler asked the Board members if they had any corrections or comments after reviewing the minutes from the February 16, 2023 Board Meeting.

Bridge made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; Forster seconded the motion. Handler called for the question; motion passed unanimously.

III. FINANCIAL REPORTS

The Board reviewed the Bills Paid, Visa Charges, and the YTD Profit & Loss vs. Budget reports for the month of February. Beswick responded to board questions concerning an EMS equipment purchase.

Steele made a motion to approve the February 2023 financial reports as presented; Bridge seconded. Handler called for the question; motion passed unanimously.

IV. STAFF REPORTS

A. FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT

Beswick presented February's call volume; there were 46 calls for the month. Beswick noted the call volume has been light, and the District had no significant calls related to recent weather events. Historical call volume and the monthly ambulance response time was also provided.

Beswick provided a district volunteer update. He noted the district's fire academy has begun with a class of six recruit FFs.

Beswick noted that the escrow account for the new Type III engine lease has been closed. He indicated that costs factored into the agreement included \$22,682 for outfitting the engine with the necessary equipment. As these expenses were paid out of the material and services appropriation instead of through the escrow account, the Lease company will reduce the next lease payment by the unused amount. Beswick responded to board questions concerning the timing and amounts of the lease payments.

Beswick noted that the minutes of the City of Nehalem's City Council meetings identify the placement of a reservoir at the District's St. 11 property on Hwy. 53 is the most feasible solution to the city's on-going water problems; the minutes were passed out to the board members. Beswick noted that no members of city staff or city council have approached him concerning this solution. Off-duty Captain Frank Knight III shared his knowledge of the situation from working with the landowner of the proposed Twin Lakes Development. Volunteer Firefighter Dan Weitzel shared his knowledge of the situation from his role at the Manzanita Public Works Department. Board discussion ensued concerning the possible origins of this solution, the nearby proposed development, County involvement, and a future training facility on the property.

Beswick noted the district has been having on-going problems with its phone system; the system is outdated and is no longer supported. Staff is in the process of replacing the system with a VOIP system; incremental monthly telecommunication costs are estimated at \$155 for the system.

Beswick reminded the Board the district is required to send an action plan to the Secretary of State's municipal audit division regarding the internal control deficiency noted in the Auditor's management report to the board of directors. Handler explained the deficiency to those in attendance. The issue is a lack of segregation of duties due to limited headcount, and he described mitigating controls in place to reduce risk. A letter detailing the plan accompanied the packet for Handler's signature.

Beswick noted that the Cannon Beach fire chief had recently inquired if the District would be interested in a merger. Beswick indicated he responded it would be a hard sell to NBFDRD, as the benefits to the District are not readily apparent. Beswick indicated he told the Cannon Beach Chief such benefits would need to include a reduced tax rate and solutions to the District's ambulance issues. Beswick noted no further conversations regarding the topic occurred. Beswick noted at one point Rockaway Beach Fire District informally approached him concerning merger. Board members expressed opinion that a merger has little benefit to the district.

Beswick ended his report by noting the F-250 Beach Rescue Replacement has been ordered; he was given a wait time of 8 weeks – 8 months. The 1314 Engine is advertised for sale; no bids have been received, and the closing period is in mid-April. The District's Mavic Pro drone was sold to one of the drone volunteers.

B. TRAINING REPORT

The board packet contained Division Chief Jesse Walsh's training report. Beswick highlighted trainings with the new Type III engine, the annual CPAT testing, and the water team training during the recent snow event. Chief Walsh elaborated on the airbag training mentioned in the report.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. VOLUNTEER LENGTH OF SERVICE AWARD PROGRAM

As a follow up to the February Board meeting, Beswick held two sessions with volunteer personnel to solicit feedback for the customizable elements of the LOSAP. The board packet contained an outline of plan elements and its key components. Beswick responded to board questions concerning the number of quarterly points for contribution eligibility as well as the number of years service for vesting. Volunteer Lieutenant Leisha Mizze-Riggert and Weitzel expressed their interpretation of volunteer feedback to the plan. In response to a board question, Coyle indicated the incremental administrative time to manage the plan would be less than an hour per quarter. Discussion ensued; board members expressed interest in including plan contributions in the FY 2023-24 budget.

Forster made a motion to take the next step to enroll in OFDDA managed LOSAP effective July 1, 2023. Sims seconded the motion. Handler called for the question; motion passed unanimously.

B. SALE OF BEACH RESCUE VAN *(not part of published agenda)*

Beswick note the van sale will not be pursued until the F-250 vehicle is in service.

C. BOB'S CREEK FIRE RESPONSE REIMBURSEMENT *(not part of published agenda)*

Beswick indicated he spoke with the property owner regarding the outstanding item; the owner indicated a willingness to work with the District to pay a portion of the invoice; she was unenthusiastic about a lien but expressed interest in the fire contract program.

Coyle read key points contained within Board Policy 2.1- Fees and Cost Recovery. Beswick reminded the board the bill amounted to almost \$10,000. Coyle also reminded the board there is a separate board policy concerning fire contracts. Coyle pointed out that the property in question differs from the other properties currently under a fire contract, as it is 160 acres of wildland without a residential structure. Beswick noted that response apparatus was able to utilize old logging roads to reach the wildfire in question; however, the property roads do not meet District road access guidelines. Discussion ensued; topics included the possibility of a reduced fee, ODF misrepresentations to the property owner regarding the cost for fire response, and allocation of collections amongst the District and the responding mutual aid partners.

Bridge made a motion reduce the billing by 50% with a term due in full within six months; Forester seconded. Handler called for the question; motion passed 4-1 with Sims voting nay.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. UPDATE OF STATION 11 AND STATION 13 FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS

Beswick noted the fire alarm system at Station 13 needs replacement. He solicited bids; the lowest bid provided was in the form of a range, plus additional permitting, and design review. Beswick estimates that the final cost will be somewhere between \$9,500 and \$11,000. There would be a separate fee for monitoring. As board policy 1.14 states that the Board must authorize purchases greater than \$10,000, he recommends that the board make a motion to authorize the expenditures necessary to upgrade the current fire alarm systems.

Sims made a motion to authorize the purchase of a replacement fire alarm system up to \$11,000. Steele seconded the motion. Handler called for the question; motion passed unanimously 5-0.

B. RESOLUTION TO SET SALARY SCHEDULE FOR FY 23/24

Beswick distributed Resolution 23-03 - A Resolution Setting Salaries and Benefits for District Employees for Fiscal Year 2023-24. He noted annually the salaries are adjusted for cost-of-living increases. The schedule presented reflects an 8.7% COLA over last year's salaries based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the Pacific area.

Steele made a motion to adopt Resolution 23-03 – A Resolution Setting Salaries and Benefits for District Employees for Fiscal Year 2023-24 as presented; Sims seconded. Handler called for the question; motion passed unanimously 5-0.

C. FIRE CHIEF POSITION

Handler noted the board packet contains Chief Beswick's letter of resignation from his position. The letter states that Beswick has accepted a position in Washington State, and it provides an effective date of April 7, 2023. Beswick conveyed his high regard for the District; and he explained his resignation is not due to his dissatisfaction with the District, but rather a means to be closer to his family.

Forester made a motion to accept Beswick's resignation effective April 7, 2023; Steele seconded. Handler called for the question; motion passed unanimously 5-0.

Handler thanked Beswick for his service. He noted the board has several options to fill the vacant position such as advertising the position or promoting from within.

D. APPOINTMENT OF BUDGET OFFICER (moved up from published agenda)

Handler noted that since the resignation falls during the budget season, a Budget Officer for Fiscal Year 2023-24 needs to be appointed. He explained Coyle has expressed her willingness to do the budget. Coyle stated she will rely on Beswick and firefighter staff to provide her with the District's operational response needs.

Sims made a motion appointing Executive Assistant Kristen Coyle as the Budget Officer for the 2023-2024 budget; Forster seconded the motion. Handler called for the question; motion passed unanimously 5-0.

E. ADOPTION OF FY 23/24 BUDGET CALENDAR

The board packet included a timeline for the FY 2023-24 budget process; the process begins in March and ends in June. Handler named the five budget committee members (in addition to the 5 board members). Coyle highlighted the budget meeting dates.

Forster made a motion to adopt the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget Calendar as presented; Sims seconded. Handler called for the question; motion passed unanimously 5-0.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS / COMMENTS

Handler circled back to the fire chief vacancy, and he expressed his desire to see a promotion from within. Bridge expressed reservations with going outside to fill the role. Forster offered his opinion that internal personnel would be just as qualified as an outside candidate. Beswick noted that Capt. Knight has expressed interest in the position, and he meets the qualification for the positions. Handler solicited feedback from volunteers and staff in attendance. Weitzel affirmed his support for Knight's appointment as Chief; he indicated other volunteers have voiced to him their support for Knight.

Handler suggested establishing a contract with Knight for an interim chief position using the existing fire chief contract as a guide. Knight's comments were solicited; he affirmed his interest in an appointment to an interim chief position, and he expressed his desire to have as much overlap with outgoing Chief Beswick as possible.

Bridge inquired if the appointment of a three-month interim position means that the District would look to fill the position from the outside. Handler explained that a three month interim appointment would give Knight an opportunity to determine if it is a role he would like to take on permanently. Should Knight decide the position is not a good fit, the District would start the process over. If he does feel like it is a good fit, the position could roll into a permanent one.

Steele expressed reservation about establishing the permanent chief role at the meeting. He proposed the interim appointment, and he requested to know if any other officers expressed interest in the position. Division Chief Walsh noted he is not interested in the Chief Position; he explained would like to see the District choose the most qualified candidate for the position, which may require an outside search. He noted that he has told of his willingness to step into an interim chief role for a short duration.

Steele reiterated his position that he would like to see the board discuss the permanent position in another meeting. Other directors noted they did not expect today's meeting would decide a permanent chief position. It was noted during the District's last chief vacancy, the District did open the search to outside candidates. It was noted that the terms for three of the directors will end at the end of June.

Bridge made a motion to offer a three-month interim fire chief position to Knight; Steele seconded the motion. Handler called for the question; motion passed unanimously 5-0.

Handler asked Knight if he would accept the position. Knight accepted the position; he expressed that he liked the idea of the interim appointment, and he affirmed Walsh's opinion that the District should fill the position with the right person for the role. He noted that he was the only other internal candidate that went through the previous chief interview process.

Handler noted the interim position administrative details need to be worked out. Using Beswick's contract as a guide, Handler noted the areas to be addressed. Beswick suggested the board hold a special meeting to review the details of an interim chief contract. Criteria for public meeting executive sessions was discussed.

VIII. REVIEW / SET NEXT MEETING DATE


A special board meeting to discuss the interim fire chief contract was scheduled for Thursday, March 16, 2023 at 3:00 PM. The next regular board meeting was set for Thursday, April 13, 2023 at 3:00 PM.

Sims commended the District for the academy class size. Comments were made regarding the Tillamook Headlight Herald's recently published article about the district.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Handler adjourned the meeting at 5:04 PM.

MINUTES APPROVED BY BOARD
April 13, 2023



John Handler, President

ATTEST: 

Charles Bridge, Secretary