

YAKIMA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT 4
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING
July 14, 2008

The meeting convened at 4:30 p.m. at East Valley Fire Station 40. Those present were Commissioners Joe Gendron, Les Riel and Dan McNulty. Others present were Deputy Chief Riel, District Secretary Michelle Rosen, East Valley Fire District Personnel, and audience members.

Chairman Joe Gendron called the meeting to order and conducted the Pledge of Allegiance.

REVIEW AND UPDATE ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY MANUAL

There was immediate discussion between the Board members initiated by Commissioner McNulty regarding the terminology used in reference to all the procedures that are under review. It was confirmed that there are four sets of manuals at the district – Commissioner Standard Operating Procedures, Standard Operating Guidelines, Rules and Regulations, and the District Administrative Policy Manual; of which, the latter is the manual currently under review. The Board agreed to rename the Administrative Policy Manual to the *Administrative Standard Operating Procedures*. District Secretary Rosen noted that this title change needed to be corrected in Chapter 1.

Chairman Gendron continued the meeting by stating that the last meeting adjourned at making revisions to Chapter 3.

Prior to continuing with Chapter 3, both District Secretary Rosen and Deputy Chief Riel suggested that additional clarification was needed with regard to changes discussed at the June 23 Special Meeting for Chapter 2, 2.4.1, "How to Report a Problem." Deputy Chief Riel stated that the suggested changes were in conflict with his contract. After brief discussion, Commissioner Riel suggested that a disclaimer be added to the policies stating that any contract language supersedes policies. Deputy Chief Riel suggested the following wording for a disclaimer: "*Unless otherwise noted in a contractual form.*" The Board was in agreement to the suggested wording.

There was additional discussion regarding changes made in the June 23 Special Meeting with regard to 2.4.1 Reporting Procedures, paragraph 3 referencing the District's Officer Management Team. Deputy Chief Riel stated that a complaint would not be brought to the Officer Management Team, rather it would be brought through the chain of command. By stating that complaints could be brought to the Officer Management Team, it gives them authority over the Chief, the ranks, and Board of Commissioners. He added that the Officer Management Team is not part of the command structure. The Board agreed on the following revision to 2.4.1 Reporting Procedures, "*OR If the alternatives stated above are unsatisfactory to you, then you can immediately direct your questions, problems, complaints, or reports by first following the chain of command and then to the Board of Commissioners.*"

Deputy Chief Riel provided copies to the Board of suggested revisions for Chapter 3 based on union contractual language.

Audience member Jacqui Walker asked what rank D.C. Riel currently fell under and if he was receiving an increase in pay due to his acting chief status. He responded that he is Deputy Chief, and is currently working in the Acting Chief role and receiving an acting stipend per specific language in his deputy chief contract.

On page 2 of D.C. Riel's suggested revisions, *hourly employees* was changed to read *career non exempt employees*.

The Board agreed that the discipline form that D.C. Riel presented at the June 23 Special Meeting will be added to the appendix of the Administrative SOP's.

The Board agreed that *Compensation for Deputy Chief* be stricken from D.C. Riel's suggested revisions. The following wording will be inserted: "*See contract as approved by the Board of Commissioners.*"

There was extensive discussion regarding weekend duty, overtime, compensatory time, the possibility of eliminating capping comp time, and a memorandum of understanding implemented by former Chief Gay unbeknownst to the Board. The Board requested that Deputy Chief Riel obtain a copy of the memorandum in question. There was also extensive discussion regarding the one (1) hour per day that career staff is being paid for their work-out time which amounts to five (5) hours of overtime pay. Deputy Chief Riel noted that this issue needs to be negotiated in their contracts. It was requested that District Secretary retrieve the contract for review at this time while on the subject matter. It was determined that the contract coincided with policy with regard to compensatory time accrual and the cap of 240 hours.

Commissioner Riel noted that on page 6 of D.C. Riel's suggested revision of Chapter 3, it should state that the wage for Deputy Chief is "*as per contract.*"

With regard to *Volunteer Stipends/Paid Call Firefighter Pay*, Deputy Chief Riel noted that his suggested changes reflected all information and changes he was able to locate that had been made by former Chief Gay and previous items approved by the Board. Commissioner McNulty initiated discussion with regard to the volunteer \$5 per event stipend pay and felt that it needed to be increased. Commissioner Riel felt that it should remain at \$5. After additional discussion by the Board, audience member Jacqui Walker questioned if the Board was going to raise the event stipend pay to \$9. Chairman Gendron responded that it was not going to happen at this time, but it could be something for the Board to consider in the future. Commissioner Riel explained that what it boils down to is the district is paying for the recruit to go to "school" -- the district is supplying the cost of the physical exam, the classes, the turnout gear, etc. for individuals to potentially become a career firefighter. D.C. Riel submitted that individuals don't leave the program due to the lack of stipend pay, but rather that it doesn't fit into their lifestyle.

With regard to *Vacations*, Chairman Gendron stated that in the future, he would like to see a policy implemented that does not allow the Chief and Deputy Chief to be gone at the same time if at all possible. Commissioner Riel added that if it does occur, the Board should be notified.

The Board concluded review of Deputy Chief Riel's suggested revisions for Chapter 3 and D.C. Riel noted that he will make the requested changes and provide a new draft for the Board to review.

Commissioner McNulty questioned the use of the word "volunteer" referencing Chapter 4, Employment. It was agreed that the wording would be changed to *volunteer recruit*.

Deputy Chief Riel suggested the addition of requiring a high school diploma or GED to 4.1.4 Volunteer Recruit. The Board was in agreement and it will be added as Item 2.

4.2 Employee Appraisal, Item A-1 was changed from "...and then will continue on a biannual basis" to "...and then will continue on an annual basis."

4.2. Employee Appraisal, Item A-4 was changed from "...will be used to determine biannual pay increases" to "...will be used to determine annual pay increases."

4.2 Employee Appraisal, all references to an employee's "anniversary date" was eliminated.

4.4.2 Policy, Item 3, was changed from "*By review of the candidates qualifications & performance by the Officer's Management Team*" to "*By review of the candidates qualifications.*"

Chairman Gendron asked when/if the district eliminated testing for positions. Deputy Chief Riel responded that the district has not eliminated testing, but did deviate from it due to the rapid need of personnel.

Chairman Gendron called for a 5 minute break at 5:52 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 6:02 p.m. with review of 4.5 Motor Vehicle Records Check. Deputy Chief Riel discussed a prior issue that occurred in the district with regard to an individual who received a DWI, they were allowed to continue their training, and had it swept under the rug with no consequences, and expressed his concern that this situation occurred. The Board noted that this was an obvious breach of policy and issues such as this need to be brought to the Board.

Deputy Chief Riel directed the Board's attention to the Chapter 5 revision he submitted to the Board for their review during the June 23 Special Meeting.

There was discussion regarding the requirement for the Chief to either be first aid trained or EMT certified. Commissioner Riel submitted that this issue would have to be revisited after the Board meets with a consulting group to determine what type of Chief the district is looking for. The Board concurred that the description of the Chief's position will be tabled until the time they meet with a consulting group, at which time it could be revised.

Deputy Chief Riel noted that the descriptions for the District Secretary and Deputy Chief positions had been previously reviewed and approved by the Board.

With regard to 5.2.6, Item 3, it was determined that it should revert back to the original wording of "*Knowledge of business computer practices to include, spreadsheets, word processing, financial, and database management*" eliminating specific software programs which would hinder the Board every time a new program was added to the position.

Items 4 and 5 in Deputy Chief Riel's suggested revision of 5.2.7 were eliminated with regard to holding various certificates.

Commissioner Riel questioned the need for leaving the Training Officer description in the policies. Deputy Chief Riel responded that it is better to leave it as part of the policies in the event the position is ever filled.

Commissioner McNulty questioned if there was a time limit for individuals to get off probationary firefighter status. D.C. Riel responded that they target for one year, but every individual has different work loads and commitments. The focus is to make sure the individual is staying active, moving forward and working toward the completion of probation. There was discussion regarding this process and if there needed to be something in policy with regard to a timeline for completion of probation. It was determined that there should not be a written policy regarding this issue.

Chairman Gendron questioned if the district was participating in cadet internship. Deputy Chief Riel noted that it is still in the policy manual in the event that the district re-establishes this program. D.C. Riel felt that the district is not large enough to support this program and that interested highschoolers should be referred to the program at YV Tech.

Chairman Gendron questioned the EMS support group description. D.C. Riel noted that this program supports individuals such as Russ Heaton and finds that it is advantageous for holding on to experienced individuals. Commissioner Riel questioned if these individuals are required to make nine (9) calls a month. D.C. Riel indicated that this is not a requirement. He added that these individuals are encouraged; however, to attend and participate in drills and work on the support equipment.

Deputy Chief Riel explained that the photographer description was created specifically to remove any liability aspects from the department, to clarify that they are not a member of the department and that they have no protection or liability coverage by the department.

With regard to the Chaplain program, D.C. Riel explained that district has three individuals that are listed with the department, but that they are not active as far as meeting their training requirements, etc.

Chairman Gendron continued with a review of the EMS organizational chart. D.C. Riel noted the change to Station 40 with regard to a back-up Captain. He explained that former Chief Gay had appointed Jeremy Tucker to this position and added that it has worked out very well for the district and has served a good purpose with the additional personnel.

D.C. Riel continued with a review of the response flowchart and redundant officer flowchart.

GENERAL DISCUSSION – Limited between Board and Staff – NO PUBLIC INPUT

There being no general discussion, the meeting continued.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner McNulty entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting with Commissioner Riel seconding. The meeting was so adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

ATTEST:

Chair of the Board

District Secretary

Vice-Chair of the Board

Commissioner