

**GRANT COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT #7  
P.O.BOX 1449  
SOAP LAKE, WA 98851**

**BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS SPECIAL MEETING  
STATION #1 155 HWY 28 WEST  
LAKEVIEW  
JANUARY 10, 2024**

Commissioners Present: Nelson(remote), Renken, Burts

Firefighters Present: Chief Baker

Guests Present: Kirk Sheppard, Kyle Duffey, Julie Gillespie, Amber Leenhouts

The meeting is being held in accordance with Governor's Proclamation 20-28-8.

The meeting was called to order at 1830 hr.

All rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Comm'r Nelson asked for the Oath of Office to swear in the new Office Administrator/District Secretary Amber Leenhouts. Outgoing District Secretary Jane Chambers administered the Oath and Amber Leenhouts officially became the new Office Administrator/District Secretary for Grant County Fire District #7.

Roll call. Commissioner Nelson, Commissioner Renken and Commissioner Burts are present. Quorum established.

Comm'r Nelson opened the floor to welcome public comment.

Kyle Duffey, 20846 Delta Rd NW, said he was curious how Lynne Nelson would remain a Commissioner when she doesn't reside in the area anymore.

Comm'r Renken and Comm'r Burts both said that her main residence is still in the area. Duffey went on to say that he stopped by the Auditors office and that is not

the way that they described it. Didn't she say something about a different time zone?

Comm'r Nelson said that she is currently on vacation in AZ and taking care of personal family matters. She still resides in Soap Lake and will return for the February meeting. Mr. Duffey went on to ask if she was working in Omak because the Soap Lake School District said she was driving a school bus up there.

Comm'r Renken said that he will look into the legal ramifications of working outside of the area.

Chief Baker wanted to recognize that Comm'r Nelson recently lost her husband and has been in Omak to process his estate.

Kirk Sheppard of 21146 RD A NE, made a comment that it is illegal for Comm'r Nelson to attend meetings via remote/telephone. That was put in place by the Governor during his Emergency ruling and that is now passed. For her to get credit for attending a meeting she has to physically be here, not attend by telephone.

The Chief made a Point of Order that this is not for debate but for public comment. The comment will be taken into consideration.

Public comment was closed.

Comm'r Nelson moved on to Approval of the Agenda; Comm'r Renken moved to approve the agenda, Comm'r Burts seconded, Comm'r Nelson passed.

Comm'r Nelson moved to Approval of the Consent Agenda; Comm'r Reken asked to have a few minutes to review the minutes and the District credit card purchases.

Comm'r Renken moved to approve items A, B, and C on the Consent agenda with the exception of D regarding Petty Cash, of which there is none. Comm'r Burts seconded, Comm'r Nelson passed.

Comm'r Nelson asked for the Chief's Report. Chief Baker provided a copy of the GCFD7 Annual Report to each Commissioner. **Copy included in minutes.**

This report was also shared with the City Council. The District ended the year with 611 incidents, compared to 488 incidents in 2022. Training hours for the year were 1577.5. Our fleet has improved in 2023. We started out the year with an average age of 43 years old and we have reduced the fleet's average age to 23 years old, while increasing pump capacity and water carrying capacity.

There are two new applicants who have been approved by the membership. One is in attendance, Julie Gillespie. She has passed her background check and has

completed 100% of her required training. Comm'r Renken moved to accept Ms. Gillespie's application, Comm'r Burts seconded. Comm'r Nelson passed. The other applicant is not present, Coley Olson is a local resident who works for the City of Soap Lake. She is interested in helping the community. She has passed her background check. Comm'r Renken moved to accept Ms. Olson's application, Comm'r Burts seconded. Comm'r Nelson passed.

Comm'r Nelson asked to go ahead with the Secretary's report.

Former Secretary Chambers stated that the County was unable to process STAR reports for Grant County in time for this meeting. Comm'r Renken read a copy of the letter from Carrie Heston explaining this. **Copy included in minutes.**

Therefore the financials are not accurate but are based on the expenditures and revenue since the last meeting and should be relatively close. Those are shown on the white board in detail, totals are outlined in red. **Copy of this included in minutes.** Amber and I (Jane Chambers) wrote down what we thought would be close, +/- 5% of the true figures.

RESERVE : \$33,095.82

GENERAL FUND : \$201,008.36

EMS LEVY FUND : \$1,303.73

Comm'r Nelson said that was good and we can only go off of the information we have.

Chief Baker gave the EMS Billing report : \$24,059.00. This is a low number due to the billing process taking a long time. 97% of our billing is to Medicare and Medicare. We have been approved to bill through Medicare. Medicaid is supposed to be approved any day. Total billed to date is \$128,528.50. In the month of December we received \$11,495.00.

There wasn't any Old Business that required attention. Comm'r Nelson went on to New Business. Discussion and possible action on approving Resolution #01102024-A: A Designation of our Fire District Office Administrator into the role. Comm'r Renken read the Resolution for the meeting. Chief explained that this is a formality to ensure that anyone we do business with that may require verification of her role at the District, this Resolution would act as such.

Comm'r Renken moved to accept the Resolution #01102024-A, Comm'r Burts seconded, Comm'r Nelson passed.

Comm'r Renken moved on to Discussion and possible action on approving money in lieu of Medical Benefits for the Office Administrator Resolution #01102024-B.

Comm'r Reken read the Resolution for the meeting. The Commissioners understood and had no questions. Chief Baker said that this Resolution was written to make sure the County will show these monies as 'In Lieu of Medical Benefits' and not as salary so that if at any time the District needs to activate medical benefits, this will show as a separate line item. This will show as income and the Secretary will be responsible for the taxes.

Comm'r Renken moved to adopt the Resolution #01102024-B, Comm'r Burts seconded. Comm'r Nelson passed.

Comm'r Nelson moved on to Item C. Discussion and possible action on an employee evaluation process. Chief Baker handed out a document suggesting how the District will evaluate an employee. **Copy included in minutes.** Chief Baker's name is on this particular one because there is an executive session to discuss performance of a public employee and contract negotiations.

Comm'r Renken said that this form seemed pretty standard and asked if this was intended to be used if an employee was not 'making the cut'. Chief Baker said it would be intended to be part of the employee review process. This helps to provide a means to review employee conduct.

Chief Baker's contract is currently expired and up for review and negotiations. This is intended to be an example if the Commissioners would like to utilize it. This could also be utilized to evaluate all paid employees within the District as well as the volunteers.

Comm'r Burts pointed out that the format is standard and he is familiar with these kinds of employee review forms. Comm'r Nelson is in favor of this format as well. Comm'r Burts said it shows a consistency that all employees are evaluated the same way.

Comm'r Renken moved to accept the evaluation process paperwork that Chief Baker provided, Comm'r Burts seconded; Comm'r Nelson passed.

At 1931 hr, Commissioners entered an Executive Session to discuss employee performance and contract negotiations.

General meeting reconvened at 1944 hr.

Comm'r Renken moved to table the discussion to allow for time to review the performance with intention of continuing the current contract for Chief Baker, noting also that he was approved for an increase in salary in a previous meeting, beginning January 1, 2024. Comm'r Burts seconded, Comm'r Nelson passed.

Announcements and Upcoming events, the next Commissioners meeting is February 14th, 2024 at 1830 hr. Chief Baker made an announcement in response to public comments made earlier, Chief provided them with a handwritten note directing them to **RCW 42.30.230, subsection 5** that clearly states "*Specifically permits members of the governing body to attend their meetings by phone or other electronic means to allow for real-time verbal communication*".

Agenda item request is the continuation of the executive session.

Comm'r Burts moved to adjourn the meeting, Comm'r Renken seconded, Comm'r Nelson passed.

Meeting adjourned at 1950 hr.