



**Board of Commissioners  
Minutes of Regular Board Meeting  
February 6, 2024**

**PRESENT**

Chair Micah Rowland  
Vice Chair Michael Fearnough  
Commissioner Jim Kenny  
Commissioner David Chan (arrived at 8:30 p.m.)  
Commissioner Mark Laurence  
Commissioner Chris Teofilak  
Commissioner Ed Widdis  
Brier Liaison Paula Swisher  
Mountlake Terrace Liaison Jesse Hoffman

**STAFF**

Fire Chief Thad Hovis  
Deputy Chief Bob Eastman  
Assistant Chief Shaughn Maxwell  
Communications Director Leslie Hynes  
Human Resources Director David Cullen  
Chief Financial Officer Chris Bothwell  
Executive Assistant Melissa Blankenship

**GUESTS**

Local 1828 President Pat Moore  
Attorney Richard Davis

7:00 PM

In Person at Headquarters and Zoom Virtual Meeting ID 861 5293 4763

**MEETING WAS AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDED**

**1. CALL TO ORDER (7:00 p.m.)**

Vice Chair Fearnough called the regular meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (7:01 p.m.)**

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (7:02 p.m.)**

**Motion**

Jim Kenny

Motion to approve agenda as presented.

Second:

Chris Teofilak

Motion passed 6-0;

**4. CONSENT AGENDA (7:04 p.m.)**

**Motion**

Chris Teofilak

Motion to approve consent agenda as presented.

Second:

Mark Laurence

Motion passed 6-0;

- a. Payroll Summary and Authorization for December 2023
- b. Payroll Summary and Authorization for January 2024
- c. Claims Voucher totaling \$1,377,360.69

**5. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES (7:06 p.m.)**

**Motion**

Mark Laurence

Motion to approve meeting minutes as presented.

Second:

Ed Widdis

Motion passed 6-0;

- a. January 2, 2024 Regular Meeting
- b. January 16, 2024 Regular Meeting

**6. PUBLIC COMMENT Notice: All public comment are public records and may be subject to disclosure pursuant to the Public Records Act, RCW Chapter 42.56. (7:08 p.m.)**

None.

**7. FIRE CHIEF REPORT (7:17 p.m.)**

Fire Chief Thad Hovis provided updates on the following:

- Nurse Navigator Program.
- Captain Sean Torey retired on February 1, 2024.
- Jake Hepper promotion to Captain.
- February 8 Fire Station 22 Neighborhood Night Open House.

- ACT Program update and recognition - Report by Shawneri Guzman.
- Recognition of Laurel Sprague and Shaughn Maxwell with Community Lifesaver Coins.

## **8. LEGAL REPORT (7:22 p.m.)**

Attorney Richard Davis reported on the following:

- Worked on employment issues, OPMA , Public Records Act guidance for the RFA.
- Consulted on records requests.
- Fire Marshal project guidance.
- Property Acquisition review.
- Added Attorney of Counsel, Brian Snure to the firm, but the Snure Law Office will still operate independently of CSD.

## **9. UNION REPORT (7:27 p.m.)**

Local 1828 President Pat Moore reported on the following:

- Members were heading to Olympia for a Legislative Conference in February then would be headed to Washington DC.
- Shared that members were participating in a variety of trainings.
- Congratulated Captain Sean Torey on his retirement and Jake Hepper on his promotion to Captain.

## **10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS (7:32 p.m.)**

- a. Continued Discussion on Fire Marshal/Fire Code Official Duties within South County Fire Boundaries - Assistant Chief Bob Eastman

Assistant Chief Eastman shared that in the research staff has been done to date and based on their interpretation of RCW and IFC – 2018 it appeared the RFA had the duty and responsibility to perform all Fire Marshal/Fire Code Duties within the RFA incorporated boundaries. There was more work and research to be done including further consultation with legal. AC Eastman stated that this was a complex issue as there were existing/pending ILAs for Fire Marshal Services, impacts to regional partners, and budget implications. Staff continued to work through the issues and did not have any additional items for the Board at this time.

- b. Amendment to SCF Policy Article 400.180.0 Vacation - for Discussion - Human Resources Director David Cullen

Human Resources Director David Cullen shared that the RFA had a structural incongruity in the amount of vacation hours that could be accrued and carried over from year to year between our two labor agreements and the Vacation Policy to which our administrative staff were subject.

Director Cullen shared that staff recommended that the Board approve a motion to amend SCF Policy Article 400.180.02 – Vacation by adding the proposed language:

“Uniformed personnel subject to this policy shall be granted vacation hours in accordance with the schedule identified in the prevailing agreement with IAFF, Local 1828-S. Assistant Chiefs and direct reports to the Chief may sell back up to 240 hours.”

Commissioner Kenny inquired about why the maximum carryover was limited to 410 hours to which Director Cullen stated he did not know. Commissioner Kenny stated that one reason to have limits was to encourage staff to take their vacations. Commissioner Kenny then asked why we were considering treating the senior members of administrative staff differently than the rest of the administrative staff to which Mr. Cullen stated was a good question but this amendment was designed to help those who were unable to take vacation and couldn't sell enough hours or, for those who were switching roles, to not lose their hours.

Commissioner Widdis stated that he saw this as a band aid as the higher you rose in rank the less vacation you could take even though you were accruing more.

The issue was referred to the newly formed Finance and HR Committee for further discussion.

## **11. NEW BUSINESS (7:50 p.m.)**

- a. Establish 2024 Benefit Charge Appeals Deadline and Appeals Board - Chief Financial Officer Chris Bothwell

### **Motion**

Jim Kenny

Motion to adopt Resolution 02062024-02 A  
Resolution to Establish the 2024 Benefit  
Charge Appeals Deadline and Appeals  
Review Board.

Second:

Chris Teofilak

Motion passed 6-0;

- b. 2024 General and Excess Liability Insurance Policy Renewal for Action - Chief Financial Officer Chris Bothwell

CFO Bothwell shared that the RFA had two insurance policies that insured the organization for most risks. The policies renewed annually and were currently due for renewal. The proposed renewals included a few notable changes, none of which materially changed the risk to the organization. The overall policy cost increase was approximately 4.2% and the Adopted Budget was sufficient to fund the renewals.

The Board raised questions about high earthquake insurance costs and the need for it moving forward. CFO Bothwell stated that he would look into this before the next

renewal period.

**Motion**

Chris Teofilak

Authorize the Fire Chief to sign renewal contracts for General and Excess Liability policies through February 1, 2025.

Second:

Mark Laurence

Motion passed 6-0;

- c. Public Comment Policy and Protocol for Discussion and Potential Action -  
Chair Micah Rowland

Chair Rowland opened the discussion by asking the Board to propose ways in which they could improve procedures and practices to address negative public comment incidents.

The Board discussed issues with limiting public comment to be only in written form and limiting comment to items appearing on the agenda. The Board reviewed the current Bylaws and Chair Rowland proposed modifying the Bylaws to reflect a temporary adjustment in public comment procedure.

Commissioner Kenny and Liaison Swisher were opposed making changes to policies based on one person's previous behavior during public comment.

Vice Chair Fearnough stated that he would like consideration of protection in the room since policy change was not adopted.

**Motion**

Micah Rowland

Motion to amend the Bylaws to state that Oral public comments be temporarily suspended and all public comment must be in written form.

Second:

Mark Laurence

Motion failed 2-4; Nays: Fearnough, Kenny, Teofilak, Widdis

**Motion**

Micah Rowland

Motion to amend the Bylaws to specify that public comment be limited to items on the current meeting agenda.

Second:

Motion died for lack of Second 0-0;

## **12. COMMITTEE UPDATES (8:30 p.m.)**

### **a. Capital Facilities**

Commissioner Kenny stated that the Committee has not yet met so there was no report.

### **b. Finance and Human Resources**

CFO Bothwell stated that the first meeting was set up for the 14th at 1:00 p.m.

### **c. Intergovernmental**

Ed Widdis was selected as Chair and stated that everything discussed at the meeting was covered tonight and there was no additional information to report.

### **d. SNO911 - Commissioner Michael Fearnough**

Commissioner Fearnough had been appointed to the SNO911 Board.

## **13. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS (8:40 p.m.)**

Commissioner Widdis provided an update on the visit to Olympia for WFCA Fire Commissioners Day.

Chair Rowland stated that he would be out of town on business until Monday of next week.

Commissioner Chan shared he was late to our meeting as he was attending the City of Edmonds Council Lunar New Year Proclamation event.

## **14. EXECUTIVE SESSION (8:50 p.m.)**

Vice Chair Fearnough called a 10 minute recess at 9:30 p.m. then an executive session at 9:40 p.m. for 15 minutes to Review the Performance of a Public Employee Pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(g) and To Consider the Selection of a Site or the Acquisition of Real Estate by Lease or Purchase Pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(b)(c) with no action to be taken at the conclusion.

The Board meeting was called back to order at 9:55 p.m. and the executive session was extended for 20 minutes.

### **Motion**

Ed Widdis

Motion to call the meeting back to order at 9:55 p.m.

Second:

Mark Laurence

Motion passed 4-0;

- a. Review the Performance of a Public Employee Pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(g)

- b. To Consider the Selection of a Site or the Acquisition of Real Estate by Lease or Purchase Pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(b)(c)

**15. ADJOURNMENT (9:50 p.m.)**

**16. AGENDA DISCLAIMER - Members of the public are advised that times listed on the agenda are approximate and that items on the agenda may be addressed sooner or later than the time specified.**

Without objection, the Regular Meeting was adjourned at 10:16 p.m.

Approved by:

*Michael Fearneshough*  
Michael Fearneshough (Feb 21, 2024 10:19 PST)

Michael Fearneshough  
Board Vice-Chair

Presented by:

*Melissa Blankenship*

Melissa Blankenship  
Executive Assistant to the Board of  
Commissioners

South County Fire strives to provide accessible opportunities for all members of the public. Please notify the Board Executive Assistant at 425-551-1251 or [mblankenship@southsnofire.org](mailto:mblankenship@southsnofire.org) at least 48 hours prior to any South County Fire meeting if any accommodations are needed.