

**YAKIMA COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 4
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING
September 30, 2021**

The meeting convened at 3:00 pm at East Valley Fire Station 40. Those present via Zoom were Commissioner David Ramynke, Commissioner Les Riel, Commissioner Ben St. Mary Administrative Director Jennifer Huitt, Lieutenant Sean McDonald, Lieutenant CJ Erickson, Firefighter Blake Reeves, and Firefighter Avery Rooks. Those present at Station 40 were Chief Dale Hille and District Secretary Katelynn Hogan. No public attended the meeting.

OPENING OF MEETING

Commissioner Ramynke called the meeting to order and the agenda was approved as circulated.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - RCW 42.30.110 (1) (g) To evaluate the qualifications of an applicant for public employment or to review the performance of a public employee. After that we will be in Closed Session as well per RCW 42.30.140. (4)(b) that portion of a meeting during which the governing body is planning or adopting the strategy or position to be taken by the governing body during the course of any collective bargaining, professional negotiations, grievance or mediation proceedings, or reviewing the proposals made in the negotiations or proceedings while in progress.

Chairman Ramynke announced at 3:05 pm that Chief Hille, Sec Hogan and the board would go into Executive Session and Closed Session until 3:30 pm. Chairman Ramynke reconvened the meeting at 3:30 pm.

Chairman Ramynke let Lt. McDonald know that his request was discussed for further Leave of Absence. The board stands behind it's original decision to not grant a further Leave of Absence and light duty is also not offered. Commissioner Riel commented that this was one of the hardest decisions that the board has had to make. The governor has tied our hands with the mandate and since we are such a small district and we need a full crew it was a very difficult decision to make. Lt McDonald said it was a tough one to hear too.

Chairman Ramynke stated exemptions had been received by FF Durand, FF Rooks, and FF Schlotfeldt which have been discussed and accepted by the board.

OLD BUSINESS

Chairman Ramynke began the discussion regarding vaccination accommodations by stating FC Hille had compiled an analysis detailing impacts that accommodations would have on the district which include:

- Health and Safety of the firefighters
- Health and Safety of the public
- Communal Living and daily interaction (cooking, sleeping, responding to calls, station cleaning)

Chairman Ramynke asked for any comments from fellow Commissioners regarding accommodations. Commissioner Riel stated again it was a very difficult decision. Chairman Ramynke stated based on the analysis it is a hardship for the district and made a motion that no accommodations be made for FF Durand, FF Rooks, and FF Schlotfeldt based on the hardship it would create for the district. Seconded by Commissioner Riel. Chairman Ramynke added In analyzing whether or not an accommodation can be made the board and the fire chief evaluated the duties, responsibilities and the working conditions of the firefighters and EMTs. Relevant factors in this analysis include documentation of daily and direct contact the EVFD has with the public during medical services, the workplace environment when around the station, engines and other apparatus, eating and sleeping together at the station, frequency of changing personal protective equipment in congregate settings. Trying to protect everyone and to do it, do it safely and consistently. The EVFD board and fire chief find it would pose an undue hardship on the fire district therefore the motion had been made to deny the requests for accommodation. Commissioner Riel seconded the amendment to the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried. Commissioner Riel asked FC Hille if he would have contact with all of the individuals involved including if things change. FC Hille confirmed he would have one on one discussions with them and send them a letter that details the rationale. Commissioner Riel asked that everyone be reminded that there are still 2 days left to be vaccinated if they change their mind. FC Hille stated this is probably the

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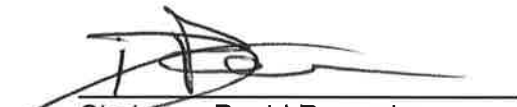
hardest thing he has had to deal with in his entire career researching and speaking with other fire chiefs. He thanked the board for the diligence and willingness to look at all the factors.

GENERAL DISCUSSION - Limited to between the Board and Staff only – **NO PUBLIC INPUT**

Lt. McDonald requested a formal letter from the district. Commissioner Riel confirmed that would be done. Chairman Ramynke asked Lt. McDonald if it was still his intention to resign and Lt. McDonald responded that he did not know at this time. Commissioner Riel wished quick healing, safe travel and the best of luck to Lt. McDonald.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business Commissioner Riel made a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 3:43 pm.


Chairman David Ramynke


Commissioner Les Riel

Attest:


Vice-Chairman Ben St. Mary


District Secretary Katelynn M Hogan