

MINUTES
SAN JUAN COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #4
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Special Meeting
May 24, 2022

Chair Duane Bordvick called the Special Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners for SJCFD #4 to order at 9:00 A.M. The meeting was held with most participants in-person at the Station 41 Fire Hall and a Zoom meeting was open for public participation. Chair Bordvick attended by Zoom and no members of the public participated by Zoom.

Those present were Commissioners Duane Bordvick, Rebecca Smith, and Cathy Doherty; Fire Chief Adam Bigby; Paramedics Caleb Pal, Michelle McDarmont and Nicole O'Bryant; EMT/Firefighter staff David Rucker; EMT Representative Monico Mackinnon; Firefighter Representative Renee Koplan; Logistics Monte Midkiff; and Secretary Kim Herrenkohl. (Note: Monico Mackinnon and Renee Koplan are both EMTs and Firefighters for the District.)

Chair Bordvick asked if there were any changes to the agenda and there were none.

Chair Bordvick expressed his appreciation to all of the staff and volunteers. He highlighted the purpose of the meeting and expectation that strategic planning sessions are to look for opportunities for improvement and enhancement to our processes and services and he appreciated everyone's participation.

Chair Bordvick turned the meeting over to Chief Bigby who explained how the day would progress with meeting sessions in the Training Room at Station 41 and tours of the 4 fire stations and Hummel Lake property.

UPDATE TO STRATEGIC GOALS

Chief Bigby had provided everyone with a copy of the agenda, pages 7 thru 12 of the recently received Washington Survey & Rating Bureau (WSRB) report, and five-mile coverage area map of Lopez Island for later discussion. The Chief's goals were to provide an update based on last year's strategic goals which had focused on equipment; discuss opportunities for improving the District's fire protection rating based on the results of the recent WSRB survey; tour all of the District's facilities; and then obtain everyone's input to prioritize the District's facility needs for short and long-term planning.

EVALUATE OUR PLANS - For Apparatus, Equipment, Training & Personnel

The Chief presented a power point with detailed slides.

Apparatus -

As part of last year's strategic planning meeting, the two work groups identified apparatus priority lists which included replacing Aid 44, Medic 48's rig and Tender 42 and group 2 also included replacing Engine 42. The Chief also mentioned the priority list from 2019 and provided an update.

Priorities from 2019 – Included a new Aid car, new engine & fast attack rescue.

Updates –

A new ambulance is on the way; an engine committee is in place but has been put on-hold due to other priorities such as the county-wide radios which should go live soon and the District is in the planning stages for a fast attack rescue vehicle.

Engine 42 still needs to be replaced. After last year's strategic planning meeting, the 1989 Engine's pump went out and replacement pumps were no longer available. So the District purchased a used apparatus (white) Engine which is now at Station 42. We also surplused the old 1966 Engine. While we are down an Engine, we currently have a reserve engine.

Priorities from 2021 - Updates:

- A new ambulance is on the way.
- A new Medic rig is currently on order and we hope to have it in service by early Fall. Medic 48's old rig was recently taken out of commission due to electrical and lighting issues. The Chief recently received a grant for all of the radios for the new Medic rig.
- We submitted an AFG grant application to replace Tender 42 but have not yet heard if our application will be awarded.

The Chief displayed a list of all of our Fleet and it was noted that knowing your fleet is an important factor in determining your facility needs.

The Chief briefly highlighted aspects of each apparatus and some accomplishments since last year's strategic planning meeting. Of particular note, several fire engines have had their pumps rebuilt because they were leaking and causing rust which impacted the pump transmissions so this will give them new life. Aid 44 will be surplused after the new ambulance arrives and we will keep the old brush truck so that we have two on island this summer to see how that works.

There was a discussion about WSRB's preferred replacement schedule for different types of apparatus. The age of the District's apparatus is considered when WSRB determines the District's fire ready condition. Commissioner Smith acknowledged that voters have expressed how important the fire rating is for insurance purposes.

Equipment

EMS Equipment Priority List from 2021 - Included LifePak 15 (two older units), gurneys which are okay for now but we will need more if we get a new ambulance and transport ventilators in each ambulance & equipment to limit lifting injuries.

Updates: We signed a service agreement for all five LifePak machines; gurneys are still serviceable & the new ambulance has the capability for wireless charging of the batteries; we obtained two ventilators via Dr. Corsa; and the EMT Association has been researching lift assist ideas.

Medic O'Bryant suggested looking at an auto lift gurney system. The Chief stated they have pros and cons; cost about \$20,000 - \$25,000 not including the need for a new gurney, topography can be an issue with these systems, and everyone would need training. It was mentioned that in the new ambulance, the vendor accidentally put in the electrical work for an auto lift that we did not have to pay for which could reduce the overall cost by perhaps \$10,000 if we decide to add a lift system later.

EMT Mackinnon mentioned that some EMTs have had difficulties working with the thermometers and Medic Pal stated said that this item is on the committee's list.

Medic Pal also stated that we should keep equipment and other items from ambulances planned for surplus for future needs or if needed for the new ambulance.

Firefighter Equipment Priority List from 2021 – Included bunker gear, extractor washer, extrication tools, new & better saws for smaller apparatus, and better lighting at scenes.

Updates: New Bunker gear has been purchased and is in service and we have applied for an AFG grant to purchase everyone a second set. The extractor washer and a dryer are in service and while extrication tools will be a high priority moving forward they were not budgeted this year but perhaps we can buy a lightly used set. One chain saw has been purchased and the need for more scene lighting is part of the Engine Committee's focus since a new Engine would have some lighting.

Logistic Midkiff mentioned the potential for using electric saws for some applications. It was also stated that the order time for gas chainsaws is currently about 4 months. A committee could be formed to discuss chainsaws before making purchasing decisions.

EMT/FF Mackinnon added that there is a need for better and/or better maintained wildland hand tools.

The group discussed different sized fire hose stating that 2 ½ hose is an attack hose, not a supply hose and that per WSRB, our hose needs to be 3 ½ inches or larger to help our fire rating. There was discussion about 4 or 5 inch supply lines but 5 inch lines are very heavy, especially with water. The Chief would like to have further discussion about **adding 4 inch supply fire hoses to the equipment list.**

Firefighter Koplan mentioned that the District should consider green tools when making purchasing decisions. The impact to the District's budget always needs to be considered and there may be potential outside groups that could be found to help support funding green fire department expenditures. The Chief stated that electric fire engines are brand new to the market and this could potentially be a more long-term goal which could set the tone for future generations

Medic O'Bryant thought that we are deficient on cribbing and it was stated that Rescue has some new cribbing.

There was also a discussion to **add small generators for the engines to the equipment list** which could be a part of lighting equipment discussion.

Training

The Chief highlighted that Medic O'Bryant is in charge of EMT training and is now a Senior EMS Instructor who can teach a variety of classes and courses on Lopez.

Medic McDarmont is in charge of firefighting training and is currently working with a consultant, Jordan Pollack to put together our formal training program. Medic McDarmont and Mr. Jordan Pollack are also working on the training needed for the Rescue group which can be a challenge to keep everyone fully trained.

A Flagger training program has been researched and the certified classes are a lot of work which may be more than what the District needs. It all depends on whether we want or need our volunteers to be certified. Jason Kramer, a local community member, **may be a certified flagger trainer so we should reach out to him to determine if he can give District staff and volunteers specific flagging training.**

If anyone hears of or knows of any training needs, please bring it to the Chief's attention.

All of the San Juan Islands Fire Chiefs have been discussing island-wide training and they are starting with Wildland training which requires certification training once per year and staying in shape.

There was not much new to report on a live fire facility as there is no such facility close by. Potentially, the refineries have training facilities and there might also be mobile units state-wide. There will be more discussion on this during the Facilities section of the meeting.

The Chief wants to prioritize firefighter training needs and we are making progress on our training goals.

Personnel

The District hired David Rucker into the new full-time Firefighter/EMT position last month and he is already making significant improvements. Welcome Dave!

HOW WE DETERMINE FIRE & EMS SUCCESS:

The District tracks response times and reports them to the Commissioners at each meeting. The report also notes the Response Standards for making the initial response contact.

EMS monitors and discusses patient outcomes every month with our Medical Control Officer, Dr. Corsa. The District also receives feedback from patients, bystanders and coworkers.

Community support and feedback is very important. Not all residents observe the District in action so it is important to interact with the community in as many ways as possible. Residents are very aware of the District's Washington Survey and Ratings since it impacts their property's insurance premiums. The District posts the number of incidents on Fire Station 41's board which is visible to people passing by. We partner with Health agencies such as the Lopez Clinic and Hospital Board and the Chief writes an article for their *HealthMatters* newsletters. The District is working on providing a Firewise program to Lopez residents.

Volunteers must attend drills and training as a method of internally assessing skills, knowledge and need for additional training.

The District assesses each Fire incident's resolution, homeowner satisfaction, witness & bystander feedback and accomplishment of industry standards.

It was mentioned that most agencies adopt the NFPA Response Standards which states that, for Rural Areas, there are less than 500 people per square mile which most of Lopez meets. Also, that a minimum of 6 staff/volunteers respond to each fire incident and that the initial response time is 14 minutes.

REVIEW WASHINGTON SURVEY & RATINGS BUREAU (WSRB) RESULTS -

The Chief presented the District's recent 2022 WSRB report and highlighted the percentage credit ratings. WSRB rates the following categories: Apparatus, Equipment, Water Systems, Training, Staffing, Age, Maintenance, Documentation and Communications.

The age of some of our apparatus negatively impacted our rating. And while we have preventative maintenance performed on our apparatus, the SJC Public Works mechanic that we use is not certified.

For equipment, the Chief noted that we could gain more points if we had larger supply hose. A small area that we can work on is our master stream devices. Also, we need to make sure that the right equipment is being maintained on the correct apparatus and rigs. We do annual pump testing and have good document.

While we do Officer training, our documentation of the training was not sufficient. The Chief believes that we are doing a good job training our recruits and we are keeping track of the number of training hours per volunteer. We need to balance our training so that we recruit and maintain our volunteers. While we have a record of each training event noting participation, **we need better descriptions about the training that was provided.** Medic McDarmont mentioned the training needs for Firefighter 1 and Firefighter 2.

It was noted that for WSRB, it takes three volunteers to count as 1 full-time staff firefighter. The Chief stated that the District does not have enough staff or Officers and that we need to do recruiting.

The District has not performed pre-fire planning since 2016 and he had not been aware that it was an annual requirement.

The District is close to getting down to a rating of 6, so each improvement, even small amounts, will help us during our next rating. While WSRB normally rates Districts every 5 years, our rating review was one year late this time. Also, if the District has big changes between ratings, such as a new fire hydrant area, we can send the information to WSRB.

FACILITIES DISCUSSIONS WITH TOURS BEFORE AND AFTER WORKING LUNCH

Fire Stations & Hummel Lake Property – Tours & Discussions

The Chief showed slides, including photos of each station and its parcel. A summary of points discussed before and during the tours of each facility are noted below:

Station 41 – It was mentioned that when the station was built, it was with the ability to house people downstairs as there is a kitchen and bathroom so that people could be housed overnight. The Chief wondered about the potential to buy the green space at the corner of Fisherman Bay & Lopez Roads to add space for an additional facility. The Chief thinks that we need to have six bays at this location but we only have three. It was mentioned that a potential goal for purchasing the Hummel Lake Road property was to provide additional bay space. The Chief stated that we would need to have ADA compliance if we have volunteer or staff living quarters.

Station 42 – San Juan County Public Works is trying to re-zone an adjacent property which would provide us with the opportunity to submit our own application to have our property designated for Fire Station, if needed. The County is okay with us using their property for training purposes. There have been requests that this facility have wash-up facilities but we currently do not have any water at this location. It would be good to consider having lodging at this facility. We could maintain a portable generator which could be moved as needed. This property has a lot of potential to better serve the south-end of the island. Also, we could continue to use the existing building while we built a new one. SJ County is upgrading their adjacent property and is working with the District on a new possible water system. This would allow for bathroom and cooking facilities and fire hydrants at the building for a consistent water source.

Station 43 – It is a small lot (.70 of an acre) but it is a key location close to the ferry dock. The facility has two bays. One drawback to the facility is the water that leaks under the bay doors when it rains due to the prevailing winds. There is no water or sewer on the property but the facility does have electricity and heat. There is a fire hydrant across the street.

This property also adjoins another SJ County property which they have used as a gravel pit. The County may have decommissioned the property as a gravel pit and might be interested in selling it. It is a large six acre parcel and it would provide the District with the ability to use it for training, building a new building as well as a live fire training center. There are grants available for Regional fire facilities. The District could sell the existing Station 43 and property which has a view of the water.

Station 44 – The property is almost an acre and is located on Center Road very close to the School. The facility has two bays. It was discussed that the site would not allow

septic due to its wetland status but there is a well on-site. The quality of the well is not known. It was also noted that the sewer district line to the school runs right in-front of the station. This site also has value if it was ever determined to be not needed. The idea was floated by the Chief to partner with the school to build a classroom/station on school property so that this facility could have all utilities, including sprinklers which was a deficiency noted in our WSRB report.

Hummel Lake Road – This property was bought at the end of 2020 when the District was hiring a new Fire Chief. It is two acres with a two-bedroom and two-bathroom house with several out-buildings. Commissioners Bordvick and Smith were involved in the original decision to purchase the property and understand that it provides the District with a lot of potential options. Commissioner Smith does not think that the property would require re-zoning to be used for a Fire Station or other changed purpose and stated that it is within the Urban Growth Area and could be sub-divided.

The house has a lot of potential to use as is, or as a combined use training room, office space, and lodging. Or the house could stay as is and a new Fire Station could be built on the property.

Also, one of the out-buildings could be turned into separate living quarters for temporary housing of Per Diem Medics or trainers if you added water, septic and insulation.

The property borders Charlie Lane which may or may not provide a second way onto and off of the property. Additional research would be needed.

The property has a septic system but could also join the Fisherman Bay Sewer District.

FACILITY NEEDS -

The Chief's slide outlined that there are points available to improve our WSRB rating by having sprinklers and modern construction with appropriate seismic rating. Operationally, we need the appropriate number of bays, the ability to decontaminate equipment & personnel and plan for the future by having living quarters. All designs would need to consider L&I, OSHA & ADA compliance.

The Chief showed building layout slides of newer Fire Stations from around the state including the new Gray's Harbor Fire Station with two drive-thru bays, two half-bays and living quarters. It was noted that they continue to use the old building for offices which includes a vestibule for public entry.

Any new building needs to fit into the community. One issue to consider in a new building is to be able to collect apparatus wash water in one of the bays.

The Chief shared some ideas about the District's current facilities for consideration:

- Station 44 – Eliminate this station or have a school option. Is this station needed? With the 5-mile radius requirement for insurance, what value does this station have? With discussion, it was noted that this is a good location for a tender, an aid unit and a great location for a student program.
- Station 43 - Have a two bay station with offsetting buildings. A question was raised about whether or not the District has a mutual aid agreement with the WA State Ferry for having fire suppression within certain distance of the dock. This would need to be researched.
- Station 42 – Have four bays with a bathroom and clean-up area. This station is our farthest out station and should have an engine, tender, wildland unit and possibly an aid unit. It could also be utilized for volunteer housing and community meetings.
- Station 41 – Building new bay space would allow higher ceilings and give more options when designing apparatus. It would also allow for updated fire and EMS decontamination equipment and storage. If we can buy the Church's corner property, then we could build drive thru bays and renovate the existing Station 41 building. This option would give enough space to allow the reuse of the existing structure, which could be a money saver if the building meets seismic requirements. There may be enough space on the existing property to do this but it eliminates a lot of training ground for an already small space.
- Hummel Lake – Is a blank slate. The District could build a fire station that fits into the community. However, the site is not as visible as the current station (41) and removes us from the community center.
- Every station should have generators that provide adequate backup power for both department and community use such as to run medical equipment.

WHAT IS NEXT?? WHAT IDEAS??

The Chief's final slide covered:

- Needs assessment
- Lay the groundwork
 - Utilities assessment
 - RFP for architects - 2023 budget?
 - Prep for voter approved Bond - Community presentation

Some general questions or ideas for consideration included:

What is the District's need for housing? How would the staffing change if we had housing such as having the Medic at the station 24/7 during their shift?

If you have resident Medics, would it increase walk-in patients because the public expects them to be able to access care on-site. If you are a single Medic at a Fire station by yourself, would there be safety concerns?

Is the recent increase in population on Lopez going to stay long-term? Will we continue to have this type of growth?

Are we building to meet where we expect to be in 25 years? We could consider making any new building scalable so that it meets our current needs but could be built onto for future needs. This would likely help the community accept the project and get them engaged in the project.

EMT Mackinnon suggested that the Fire & EMS needs more public relations and mentioned that Commissioner Doherty does CPR training at the schools.

Commissioner Doherty mentioned how the clinic did a fund raiser to build onto their facility years ago where they put a thermometer sign out front showing the fund-raising goal amount and the current level of donations.

Commissioner Doherty mentioned having generators at each or some of the fire stations that could be used as a resource to the community in emergency situations. The District could advertise that the public can always come to a fire station to power their nebulizer or phones during extended power outages.

Firefighter Koplan recommended that with any renovation or new building the District must include residence quarters. Commissioner Smith stated that we always get asked by applicants where they can live if they were hired as well as where to stay during interviews.

Medic Pal asked about the number of calls at each location. This information would be helpful in assessing where to improve facilities.

Can or should we add a bay to Station 44 if the existing building is not seismic? Or would it be better to build a separate building that is not attached? Two benefits to this site are that we possibly have water and sewer.

We probably can't build anymore on the Station 41 property unless we buy some property from the Church. Or if we split up the District's facilities by building at Hummel Lake where one facility would be for EMS and one for fire, for example.

It was mentioned that there are benefits to co-locating public safety with the Sheriff's Office being downstairs at Station 41.

Commissioner Smith's thoughts about making changes to these stations or property:

1. Station 42 – Would depend on what Public Works will do with their adjacent property.
2. Station 43 – Would depend on what the county wants to do with the adjacent gravel pit property.
3. Station 41 – Would need to have a discussion with the Church about their property.

Logistics Midkiff stated that it sounds like the District needs to do feasibility studies.

The need to start shopping these ideas out to the public to bring them into the discussions was mentioned. Issues to be discussed could include bay heights, exhaust issues, inviting the community to see the facilities (outreach), contacting a green group, and letting the community know what our needs are. The flow would be to inform the community about what the District's needs are, tell them what the draft plan is for addressing the needs, and in the end, this is what services and facilities the community would receive. Sending out a newsletter was mentioned.

The order and funding of projects would need to be considered such as would the District do one station at a time and then move onto the next which would probably take place over the Chief's full tenure? Or do one Bond and undertake all building projects over a shorter time period?

Commissioner Smith mentioned that when the District did the recent EMS levy, it was with the expectation that it would be able to cover some small improvements, equipment, etc. But for big capital projects, it is more appropriate to go out for a GO Bond.

The Chief commented that we first need to make more long-term decisions about whether or not we are going to keep Station 41. If we are, then we can get a priority plan for making improvements. If we decide to build a new building or adding onto the existing building, we will need to ask the voters. There was a question about where the District would locate its offices and put its stuff while the station was being renovated.

Other specific comments related to Station 41 were shared:

- If we keep Station 41, we would need a system to remove (vent) exhaust from apparatus. The Chief stated that this is on his list.
- There are unknowns about the seismic rating for the structure and we might have to improve the building seismically depending on the nature or size of any remodels.
- The training room is too small and storage is too small.
- The weight room keeps getting cut into.

- We need to focus on employee and volunteer needs.
- Use Station 41 differently by moving the weight room downstairs, using the training room for decontamination, or use downstairs for the training room.
- Are the internal stairs to downstairs still there?
- In general – if we are keeping Station 41, we need more space. We have the space at Station 41 but we are renting a good amount of the footprint out. Further discussion would be needed.

Medic Pal suggested using the Hummel Lake Road building for office space. And Commissioner Smith stated that this would give us time to decide what to do with the Hummel Lake property.

EMT Mackinnon stated that the District should consider more conservation efforts such as recycling trash and energy conservation.

A question was asked about the old baseboard heaters at Station 41 and it was stated that OPALCO came out and did an assessment for the lighting.

A question was raised about whether or not we need an aid vehicle at the south-end station as there may not be enough calls to warrant it. It would be valuable to see the data. It was stated that maybe the 2007 ambulance should be kept. The internal exhausting issue with Aid 44 is a well-known issue and no one wants to use it. That ambulance is past its useful life and will be retired.

The Chief thanked everyone for their time and help on this project. The reevaluation of our strategic plan is important to be sure we are still heading in the right direction. We will be working throughout the year to fill identified needs and make plans to lay the groundwork for our facility needs. This is also an important step in the budgeting process that begins next month.

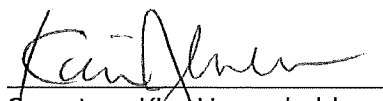
Commissioner Bordvick adjourned the meeting at 3:22 PM

NEXT MEETING:

- Regular Meeting – June 21, 2022 at 4:00 P.M.



Chair Duane Bordvick



Secretary Kim Herrenkohl