

**MINUTES**  
**SAN JUAN COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #4**  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**Special Meeting**  
**August 2, 2022**

Chair Duane Bordvick called the Special Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners for SJCFD #4 to order at 4:07 P.M. The meeting was held with all participants in-person at the Station 41 Fire Hall and a Zoom meeting was open for public participation but no members of the public connected by Zoom.

Those present were Commissioners Duane Bordvick, Rebecca Smith, and Cathy Doherty; Fire Chief Adam Bigby; and Secretary Kim Herrenkohl.

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

The Chief mentioned that he has been involved in Fire Department capital projects at other jurisdictions and stated that they take a long time to plan and construct.

There was a general agreement that the meeting would primarily focus on Station 41. The Chief stated that he would like to discuss the timeline for projects that would impact the need to provide the San Juan County Sheriff's Office, our current downstairs tenant, with notice. It was also mentioned that we would not want to ask the Sheriff's Office to move out soon since we have to first do a lot of planning so we won't need the space to be empty right away. The Chief stated that he has had a general conversation with the Sgt. downstairs about the District's potential plans.

Commissioner Smith stated that during the Strategic Planning meeting, she heard that the medics and volunteers need more training space and she asked the Chief if he thought that the downstairs area would meet our needs. We also discussed the opportunity to use the Hummel Lake property for training. If we think that Station 41 the best location then we should discuss giving the Sheriff's Office some warning.

The Chief summarized the needs as he sees them:

1. Expanding the meeting room;
2. Expanding apparatus space to have one more bay and a taller bay; and
3. Have living quarters for trainers, per diem medics, etc.

Commissioner Smith stated that she thought that the downstairs area should accomplish #1 and #3 on the Chief's list.

The Chief handed out preliminary mocked-up drawings of Station 41:

- The upper floor which moved the offices and Apparatus Bays and meeting room.

- The downstairs which included the weight room, three bedrooms, kitchen and three bathrooms.

The Chief commented that he had noticed that the building's walls were built with reinforced support.

Commissioner Doherty asked if we should invite an architect to review our draft plans to determine if we could make the changes that are included in our preliminary drawings or other plan ideas. The Chief stated that he did not think that there is significant enough change requiring a full architect design before we get started with our planning efforts.

The Commissioners and Chief discussed the need to give an appropriate amount of notice to our tenant and when we would be far enough along in the process to have that discussion with the Sheriff's Office. The Chief asked the Commissioners about discussing our plans with the Sheriff's Office and telling them that we will sign a year lease for 2023 and the Commissioners agreed.

Commissioner Smith asked about Department of Agricultural financial support since she had used them for a construction project at Hamlet House. The Chief stated that he had talked with them in the past and due to our island population's average income, we would only qualify for low interest loans, not grants, and the process is quite involved.

There was discussion about hiring an architectural firm that is familiar with Fire Districts to do a limited input review and preliminary planning effort. It was stated that they also know about different types of funding opportunities, permitting, and the amount of change to a building that would classify as a renovation versus "new build" which would require additional permitting. The Chief stated that he thinks that we could retain an architectural firm for around \$10,000 to review one specific property and mentioned the TCA architect firm.

We would only need to use a more specialized architect firm to design and manage the project if you are doing a major redesign and renovation. But if it is a simpler renovation, then the Chief may be able to manage the construction vendors. If we hired a local contractor to manage the subs for a large Fire Department project, the contractor might not know about specific Fire Department needs such as for concrete work and other specific building materials. We are not budgeted to hire an architect this year but the Commissioners said that it seems like we need to get this project started sooner rather than later.

Based on the Chief's preliminary mocked-up design, Commissioner Smith stated that it looked like the project could be done in stages. When asked, the Chief stated that he would recommend starting with the downstairs renovation portion first and that he could manage that portion but could not manage the additional bay portion of the project. The Commissioners are looking to the Chief for his expertise in determining if

this additional bay space is sufficient for the Fire District's needs at this location. For the office part of the upstairs portion of the project, it was estimated that the Chief would be moved out of the Hummel Lake property by then and the District could move the offices to the Hummel Lake property while the upstairs is being renovated.

The Chief shared some additional things to think about and consider which are:

- To make sure that we are being energy efficient such as installing low flow toilets and good windows.
- If bays are attached to the station that also has resident housing, there must be a sprinkler system.

Commissioner Smith wondered if the church has a strip of land that they would sell us to enhance our ability to drive around the building with our large apparatus, if needed.

Community involvement in the project was discussed as well as the current belief that the community would not support abandoning the Station 41 property to move the main Fire Station to a different location. The Chief stated that it makes operational sense to keep all main apparatus at Station 41. Also, in an emergency, Station 41 is in a good, central, and easy to find location. The Hummel Lake property is still a community asset and could be used for a number of different purposes. All Commissioners agreed that Station 41 should remain Lopez Island Fire & EMS's main Fire Station. Therefore, it is appropriate and prudent to move forward with the discussed plans to add a new bay onto the Station 41 property and renovate the building to better support the needs of the District.

It was stated that it is probably too early to discuss budget implications for the project until we know more specifics about what we will want and what products and materials will be needed. It was noted that the District is starting the process of developing the 2023 budget.

Commissioner Doherty asked about talking with the staff about the design and the Chief said that he first wanted to obtain the Commissioner's input and then planned on talking with staff about office and other space needs.

The Chief asked the Commissioners how to proceed and Commissioner Doherty stated that getting an architect involved would be a good first step and any information they provide could be used over the next several years and assist us in preparing our 2023 budget. It was commented that the District and Commissioners have discussed the need for renovating Station 41 for many years.

The Chief will ask TCA architects to come up with an estimate for preliminary services which he hopes to have in time for the August Board of Commissioners meeting. The architects should be able to come up with estimates for the draft project.

There was a limited discussion about other District properties which included whether or not to ask the architects to look at other properties in addition to Station 41. Other priorities such as water and bathroom(s) at Station 42 were briefly discussed but it was agreed that we should keep the architect's current focus on Station 41.

It was mentioned that if you were undertaking a number of projects over a few years and you had to ask for public support every few years to fund each project, it could be problematic. Versus asking for public financing support once and having a planned multi-year list of projects.

Commissioner Smith stated that her next priority, after Station 41 is Station 42 to service the south-end of the island. The need for a water source was mentioned and the Chief stated that he has been working on plans with the County and potential discussions with the store. A bathroom with the ability to wash up was discussed and was noted that satellite stations can be a challenge as it is difficult to get people to do the cleaning and maintenance work.

Given the lack of fire training space, the Chief mentioned the County's old gravel pit beside Station 43 on Port Stanley Road.

The Chief thanked the Commissioners for their input and direction on how to proceed with facility improvements at Station 41.

On an additional topic, the Chief informed the Commissioners that our newest Paramedic has been contacted by an attorney from Seattle about a medical incident that she responded to which took place when she was a student. The plaintiff has filed a lawsuit against the doctor and hospital. The Paramedic had asked the Chief if Lopez Fire & EMS would provide her with legal services, if needed. Commissioner Smith stated that when the Paramedic was registered to take the Paramedics course at Harborview, they required that she be a member of the District so it would be appropriate for the District to provide legal service coverage in this situation.

Commissioner Bordvick adjourned the meeting at 5:03 PM

**NEXT MEETING:**

- Regular Meeting – August 16, 2022 at 4:00 P.M.



Chair Duane Bordvick



Secretary Kim Herrenkohl