

Chief  
James R. Bixler

Assistant Chief  
Jay Wiggins



Commissioners:  
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**MINUTES OF OCTOBER 30, 2023  
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS  
SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING**

The special budget meeting of the Pierce County Fire Protection District No. 27 Board of Fire Commissioners was held for Anderson Island Fire/Rescue, based at 12207 Lake Josephine Blvd., Anderson Island, Washington. Board Chair Colleen M. Adler called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Commissioner David Albertson, Commissioner Gordon S. Babo, Chief James R. Bixler, Assistant Chief (A/C) Jay Wiggins, Admin Services Manager (ASM) Ramona Wheeler, and Administrative Assistant (A/A) Elizabeth Vickstein attended the meeting. Also in attendance: Capt. Arron Reynolds, Capt. Jeff Hayes, and Lt. Al Parker.

**REVIEW OF PROPOSED 2023 BUDGET ITEMS:**

Pierce County's projected tax revenue and our projected operational expenses for the 2024 Budget were made available for review and discussion. Chief Bixler reported positively on Pierce County's projections for the 2024 Tax Levy and informed the Board that the District's budget levy certification will include an automatic 10% distribution into the Reserve Revenue Fund, per policy.

The Board reviewed proposed budget expenditures for 2024, with a detailed line-by-line examination of each category with pertinent discussion regarding key items. Changes identified during the meeting will be reflected in the finalized preliminary budget and include the following:

1. After review and discussion regarding current cost of living data and the 2023 Wage and Benefits Survey, the Board approved a 5.4% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) beginning in January 2024 for employees. Volunteer stipends were also increased by the Board.
2. Discussion took place regarding the logistical and budgetary considerations in creating a full-time firefighter position, and the feasibility of moving Capt. Reynolds into that role. Chief shared his view that 2025 may prove to provide a better opportunity to hire professional firefighters and suggested the Board instead consider moving Capt. Reynolds into a Division Chief of Training and Emergency Management position. The Board approved the 2024 change.
3. During review of increasing medical insurance costs, extensive discussion ensued. The Board determined some employees whose healthcare premiums are not currently covered by the District are entitled to reimbursement for insurance coverage up to the current District cap.
4. The Uniform and Clothing line item was recategorized as: "Uniforms /Accessories." It was proposed that the line item be increased to \$11,000.00 to purchase isothermal firefighter jackets for new District members and cover the cost of custom challenge coins. Commissioners approved.
5. The Printing line item has funding proposed at \$1,000.00 to provide funds for outside vendor printing of documents, such as Emergency Medical Records forms.

6. The Board supports creation of new line items: Medical Equipment, Outside Fire Instructor, Vehicle/Rescue Tools, SCBA Fit Testing, Pump Testing, and Shop Tools, and possible fire training academy opportunities. Proposed funding of the new Fire /Props line item at \$5,000.00 will support updating current training tools and scenarios for volunteer firefighters.
7. Disaster Preparedness was introduced as a new designation under Fire and EMS Training Provided to External Parties and received initial funding at \$5,000.00 by the Board.
8. Grounds Supplies will be increased to \$7,500.00 to cover the one-time cost of a new lawnmower.
9. Fireboat Moorage, Electricity, and Propane are facilities line items that have proposed increases that were approved, in anticipation of 2024 price surges.
10. Chief proposed increased budgets for essential Marine and Vehicle equipment repairs, to provide funding for potential fireboat overhaul costs, and expenses to maintain an aging vehicle fleet. Commissioner Albertson recommended the District begin investigating vehicle replacement costs.

The Board indicated commissioners plan to review and approve the proposed 2024 budget at the regular Board Meeting scheduled for November 21, 2023.

**PUBLIC INPUT:**

None.

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE:**

Nov 7, 2023	3:00 PM
Nov 21, 2023	3:00 PM
Dec 4, 2023	3:00 PM ~ <i>Monday</i>
Dec 19, 2023	3:00 PM

**ADJOURN:**

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

**APPROVED:**

**ATTEST:**

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**Colleen M. Adler**, Commissioner

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**David Albertson**, Commissioner

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**Gordon S. Babo**, Commissioner

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**James R. Bixler**, Secretary to the Board