

Chief  
James R. Bixler

Assistant Chief  
Jay Wiggins



Commissioners:

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David Albertson  
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## MINUTES OF MARCH 22-23, 2023 SPECIAL LONG RANGE PLANNING MEETING

The special Long Range Planning Meeting of the Pierce County Fire Protection District No. 27 Board of Fire Commissioners was comprised of an extensive two-day discussion held at 78 WA-115, Ocean Shores, Washington 98569, beginning at 9:15 a.m. both mornings. The special meeting was facilitated by Joseph F. Quinn, P.S., founder of the law firm Quinn & Quinn, P.S. Mr. Quinn has extensive experience representing the Fire Service and has provided valuable counsel and guidance to the District for several years. Commissioner Colleen M. Adler, Commissioner David Albertson, Commissioner Gordon S. Babo, Chief James R. Bixler, Assistant Chief (A/C) Jay Wiggins, and Administrative Assistant (A/A) Ramona Wheeler attended all sessions.

### LONG RANGE PLANNING

#### SUCCESSION PLANNING

Mr. Quinn informally opened the meeting on employment projection and succession management for Pierce County Fire Protection District No. 27 by identifying key leadership positions and potential vacancies. He observed that our Board is comprised of commissioners who have overlapping multi-year terms on a staggered election schedule, which provides governance continuity.

Mr. Quinn then introduced discussion regarding District chief officers and future retirement. Chief Bixler and Assistant Chief Wiggins shared tentative individual plans with the Board, providing a general timeframe for the District in terms of leadership successor requirements.

Planning discussion included a review of the overall capability of the organization and unique challenges presented in successfully providing fire and emergency services on Anderson Island. As facilitator, Mr. Quinn reviewed the competencies succession candidates would need, and the Board discussed the merits of outside candidates versus promoting from within the organization.

#### **Assistant Chief Position**

During both days of discussion, Commissioner Albertson offered the opinion that if the District replaced both positions with outside candidates at the same time, then we run the risk of losing that institutional knowledge. He went on to state the advantages of having someone promoted from within the team into the Assistant Chief leadership role is continuity and that transference of knowledge. Commissioners agreed and the Board identified District officers with skills and competencies who have the potential for professional development as possible candidates for the Assistant Chief position. Mr. Quinn stated the District should be able to complete the selection process within four months and encouraged District leadership to meet with officers individually to determine interest and commitment. Mr. Quinn said the District could also advertise locally, inviting others to apply.

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**Fire Chief Position**

The Board was receptive to Chief Bixler’s suggestion that the Fire Chief position would best be served via an external candidate. As the facilitator, Mr. Quinn briefly reviewed pros and cons of a national search, and the Board acknowledged such efforts can result in high costs with outcomes that are less than ideal. Mr. Quinn then addressed benefits of a local search, stating that living on the island would be an appealing side benefit. During discussion, he recommended advertising locally as well as through state fire service organizations and associations to attract viable successor candidate applicants. Commissioner Adler expressed interest in the Wage & Benefit Survey that is conducted annually by the Washington Fire Commissioners Association and requested the District investigate options to access the data.

**FULLTIME FIREFIGHTERS**

As the discussion Leadership began discussion by sharing challenges of staffing for emergency calls with a volunteer fire department, and the low number of personnel who are available to respond, periodically. A/C Wiggins commented that the District has some volunteers who prefer the fire side and others who prefer EMS. Mr. Quinn provided several options to be considered by the Board, as leadership continues to examine the rationale of whether it would be advantageous for Pierce County Fire Protection District No. 27 to become a combination fire department. He also recommended the District research past call volumes to help inform what shift work might look like to best meet local needs. Ultimately, budget constraints will be taken into consideration as the District determines the feasibility of hiring one or two fulltime firefighters in the future.

**ADMINISTRATIVE STAFFING**

Additional employment needs discussion included a review of the administrative services function in conjunction with growing department staffing and increased coverage needs. The Board recognized the growing department workload and approved upgrading the current part-time administrative assistant to a fulltime position. In addition, the senior administrative assistant steps into the supervisor role under a new title and will work to reassign the administrative workload and appropriate training as needed.

**REMODELING OFFICE SPACE**

While expanding office space and adding a treatment room to the main fire station would be desirable, it quickly became evident during review and discussion that it is not a realistic goal due to several variables. Office space needs were discussed, and a partial solution with no cost to the District was identified.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Building facilities and structures are a critical budget consideration, as the District struggles to maintain an aging fire station that will need to be replaced in the next 15-20 years and an inadequate exhaust system that is over 20 years old. Mr. Quinn also recommended the District research earthquake insurance. Extended financial funding discussion regarding existing District structures and long-term needs ensued, and the District will conduct extensive research as leadership works toward viable solutions. In addition, Mr. Quinn offered to explore the possibility of identifying a grant writer for the District.

## CAPITAL NEEDS | CRITICAL ITEMS

The intent of establishing District goals through long-range planning is to provide for the safety, health, and wellbeing of residents in our growing community. Funding for long-term solutions will be central to our ability to be successful in meeting these pressing needs. Through a combination of judicious use of tax levy revenues and grant funding opportunities, we can succeed in our mission to protect life and property well into the future. Long Range Planning identified the following needs and associated costs.

PRIORITY	ITEM / NEED	ANTICIPATED COSTS
1 2 3	<u>Apparatus</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ U27 utility truck, 4-wheel drive, ¾ ton, crew cab</li> <li>▪ Ambulances</li> <li>▪ B279 brush truck, 1-ton 1994 Chevy pickup</li> </ul>	Cost TBD, dependent upon availability of surplus rig options
A	<u>Strongest Need: 1-2 years</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Whole Station Alerting System                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electrical Circuit Stove Disconnect</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Decontamination Room</li> <li>▪ Front Apron Concrete</li> <li>▪ Asphalt Roofing, Main station</li> <li>▪ Heating System, Main station bay</li> <li>▪ Electric Vehicle Charging Station</li> </ul>	\$30,000  WAC 296-305-02001 requirement; Nominal cost \$100,000 \$30,000 \$5,000 Cost and feasibility TBD
B	<u>Serious Need: 3-5 years</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Power Ambulance Gurney                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A279 Power Gurney Rail Mounts</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Firefighter PPE Bunker Gear</li> </ul>	\$20,000 \$20,000 NFPA 1851 @ 10 yrs; Cost \$250,000
C	<u>Future Need: 5+ years</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ M27 fireboat engines</li> <li>▪ Commercial Generator</li> </ul>	Cost TBD Evaluate replacement need; Cost TBD

## OTHER DISCUSSION

### FUTURE COMMUNICATION ISSUES

District radios for communications were briefly discussed, but no decision was made.

### WISHLIST

A few items that were initially added to the list during an early brainstorming session were deemed to be desirable but not of immediate concern. Adding a treatment room to the lobby area for walk-in patients would provide privacy. Purchasing a used Personnel Carrier Van could provide transportation for the fire crew to offsite training and for other purposes. Future fireboat moorage on a private dock would shorten response time.

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**PUBLIC INPUT**

None.

**2023 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE**

May 2, 2023	3:00 PM
May 16, 2023	3:00 PM
Jun 6, 2023	3:00 PM
Jun 20, 2023	3:00 PM
Jul 3, 2023	3:00 PM ~ <i>Monday</i>
Jul 18, 2023	3:00 PM
Aug 1, 2023	3:00 PM
Aug 15, 2023	3:00 PM
Sep 5, 2023	3:00 PM
Sep 19, 2023	3:00 PM

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business for discussion, the final meeting adjourned at 12:25 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