

**SAN JUAN COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #3
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
ACTION MINUTES
April 13, 2023**

Chair Cardinale called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Frank Cardinale and Dwight Colley

OTHERS PRESENT: San Juan Island Fire & Rescue Staff, members of the public

ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: None

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE: Comments from John McDowell and Maureen See

CONSENT AGENDA:

Minutes – Commissioner Colley motioned to approve the February 14, 2023, regular meeting minutes as written, Chair Cardinale seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Bills and Payroll – Commissioner Colley motioned to approve the Bills and Payroll, Chair Cardinale seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Bills -

Voucher (warrant) March 14, 2023, Fund 6561

Number: 264021 to 264045 in the amount of \$52,040.44

Voucher (warrant) March 14, 2023, Fund 6562

Number: 264046 in the amount of \$3,000.00

Payroll -

Monthly Payroll – February, 2023 \$62,513.08

24 Day Payroll – 02/06/23 to 03/01/23 \$41,787.71

24 Day Payroll – 03/02/23 to 0325/23 \$40,689.96

NEW BUSINESS:

Update on ILA's with Town of Friday Harbor for inspection and investigation services

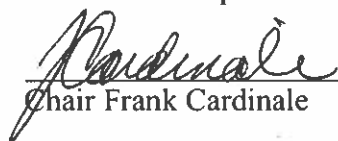
OLD BUSINESS:

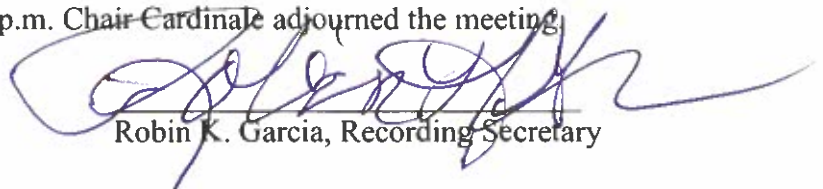
SAFEBoat Financing

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The next regular meeting will be at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, May 9, 2023.

Commissioner Colley motioned to close the meeting, Chair Cardinale seconded, the motion passed unanimously at 3:45 p.m. Chair Cardinale adjourned the meeting.


Chair Frank Cardinale


Robin K. Garcia, Recording Secretary

A letter from John McDowell for the April 13th Fire Commissioners meeting public comment section

Dear Commissioners and Chiefs Collins and Monin

For over five years, we have identified the need for a dedicated local training facility that could accommodate live burns and other identified training needs and scenarios. In fact, five years ago, the then current Commission were prepared to vote on a \$90,000 request to purchase shipping containers and set up a training prop on District 3 property. The Chief at the time asked to postpone the vote and come up with a more comprehensive needs assessment and plan.

Subsequent to that, quite a bit of effort was put in to identifying props and infrastructure to accomplish this goal, including scale drawings and site location. Paid staff members critiqued and refined the plan. It was conceptualized that we would bring in local partners to achieve efficiencies and reduce our own costs. Potential partners included EMS, local fire agencies, Sheriff's office, the Port, etc. Another potential component mentioned was the Addition of a "Safety Town" for educating the island children on numerous topics.

A couple of years ago, if I remember correctly, Fire District #3 made a formal strategic goal to identify the components of the training facility and perform a cost estimate. This goal was never achieved, and subsequently it has never again been set as a goal. To my knowledge, no further time has been dedicated to this by the Commission. If I am wrong on this, I apologize for my ignorance.

Last year, Ops Chief Monin was working with Todd from the Port. The Port identified a piece of their property near the airport in the midst of their new development area that could be leased as a site for the training facility. There was a lot of good discussion about possible extension of infrastructure, and mutual benefits. The Port seemed excited about the project. To my knowledge there was no formalized agreement made. At this time, we have a good relationship with the Port, something that has not always been the case.

It is not clear to me if a training facility is something that the Commission even wants to pursue anymore. I hope that it is, and we will quickly begin formal discussions with the Port about the proposed training site before this opportunity leaves forever. It is possible that they might even guarantee to set it aside for a period of time at no cost, while we identify if we can financially afford building out and phasing in training props.

I think that if we want to accomplish this, the time to move is now, while the Port will still be receptive. Thank you for your consideration to these comments.

John McDowell

Statement from Maureen See 4-13-23

I am here because I considered running for the Fire Commissioner seat to be vacated by Albert Olson. I was encouraged by Albert to run for his seat. I met with both Frank Cardinale and Dwight Colley last year while exploring the role of the Commissioners and their relationship to the department. Both Frank and Albert agreed that a woman's perspective would be a good thing for the Fire Commission.

This year I began attending meetings including a workshop in early March designed to provide an overview of the department's fiscal picture and operations review. I was alarmed at the information presented, and further astonished that the Commissioners did not ask relevant questions about the state of the department.

The department is in crisis: revenue & expenses are growing further apart, volunteers are in short supply, development of an EMS unit within fire is depleting resources, and morale is dangerously low. After the workshop I spoke with all three of you about these issues and more. YOU AGREED the situation was bad. Albert asked me to broker info between the three of you: the need for an Executive Session; AND the need to invite staff into the Session to hear and express their concerns. Instead you had a Special Executive Session (improperly noticed and executed) AND you included the Chief in the Session. You refused to speak with staff. Concurrently, you received a report from the volunteer officers addressing their views that included a vote of no confidence in the Chief. The Volunteer officers requested an Exec Session with you to further explain their points of view. You dismissed it entirely, refusing to meet with them.

You even admitted that you made a decision, or better yet, you cut a deal with the Chief prior to the Executive Session. YOU VIOLATED THE OPMA AND MOST IMPORTANTLY YOU VIOLATED YOUR OATH OF OFFICE. Don't be surprised if a complaint is made to the PDC that could result in fines to all of you AND a reversal of any/all decisions made in the Exec Session.

★ You, the Fire Commission, have consistently shown a lack of leadership, lack of transparency, not only demonstrating complicity with the Chief but you have enabled him in a variety of critical errors. You operated in cloaked secrecy, as if no one noticed. You failed to provide oversight of

the Chief and neglected your budgetary and policy responsibility which has led to the crisis the department now faces.

Chair Frank Cardinale, your personal relationship with the Chief is an egregious conflict of interest. You chose that friendship over the protection of the fire department and that is unforgivable. I ask that you resign from this commission immediately.

After all of this, I have decided not to run for a full term on the Fire Commission. However, I will be submitting my request to finish Albert Olson's term of office, which expires in December 2023. I do so because I intend to be part of the solution not the problem. I believe I can help and heal some of the damage that has occurred on your watch. There is one thing I must insist upon: if you dare appoint the former chair of this commission to complete Albert's term, (HOLD the CONTRACT UP) I promise you there will be repercussions because of this atrocious, blatant and outrageous CONTRACT provided by the Chief, for the Chief, with no regard for the department, and which YOU SIGNED! (Commissioner Colley exception).

My final thought, I cannot imagine why you thought no one was paying attention to your actions, or rather lack of action. That is arrogant. I must remind you that YOU DO NOT REPORT TO THE CHIEF. You report to the voters and we are speaking out.

I want this statement to be attached to the minutes of today's meeting.

Maureen See
4.13-23