



Nederland Fire Protection District

Board of Directors Meeting September 2nd, 2020

- **Roll Call:**

Iain Irwin-Powell	President	present via Zoom
Patrick Richardson	Vice President	present via Zoom
Todd Wieseler	Treasurer	excused
Ray Willis	Secretary	present via Zoom
Henry Zurbrugg	Director	present via Zoom

- **Meeting called to order @ 1908**

- **Motion to approve Agenda:**

Agenda Approved 4-0-0

- **Motion to Approve Minutes from August 5th, and 12th.**
 - **Note that the recording cut off, therefore the minutes are from memory from President Iain Irwin-Powell**
 - Approved 4-0-0

- **Treasurers Report**

Savings	\$722,000.66
Checking	\$11,730.00
Capital Reserves	\$24,675.00
Total Funds	\$75,842
Total Reserves	\$317,553
Total Unreserved Funds	\$423,486

- **Public Comments:**
 - Iain received an e-mail from Dave Bryan:
 - *"I'm very concerned about putting our Chief, with over 20 years experience, on leave during the heart of fire season. We are given very vague information about who is in charge. Was this thought through? Shouldn't someone have been brought in with adequate experience to cover the position, to get us through this investigation? Making the shift officers in charge during a critical time like now, seems negligent. They may be perfectly qualified, but the community is not familiar with their skills to act as chief, and should be very concern. I also am hoping the investigation will be done by an independent resource. The rumors that have been going around since the election, and internal investigation, depending on the conclusion, is going to leave many skeptical. If there is any*

kind of board packet for the next meeting, I'd appreciate it if this e-mail could be included. Thank you for your time

○ **Iain's reply**

○ *I too am very concerned about putting the Chief on leave. This is a very complicated situation, and there are a lot of things that I cannot talk about. The Chief is employed by the Board, which means anything the Board does can become a public record. The Chief had the option of making the initial conversation we had, public, or private. He elected to go private, which means that we cannot talk about anything that was said in that meeting. Our shift officers are incredibly talented individuals, with extensive experience and certifications. I don't think anybody would have put them in charge if they didn't think it was a good idea.*

○ **Lindsey Sweeney:**

○ *I am a 4th year volunteer member of NFPD, and this is a letter from some of our membership.*

➤ *“The Nederland Fire Protection District Volunteer membership supports all life safety investigations, and the actions the Board is currently taking. We support our current leadership. We support our officers and members that hold many years of experience and certifications. We hold them accountable to the same standards as we hold ourselves to. We are there for our community on their worst day. Tonight, we ask that you put our life safety as your top priority. We are members of the community, taxpayers, mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters. We want coming home to our families, something that the community cares about. There are inherent risks involved with being a firefighter, and EMS provider, and we hope we are not alone in working to mitigate these risks. Our membership spends countless hours training, re-certifying, and running calls for the community. This is time away from our families, and loved ones, and the everyday tasks of life. We support the board with the current officer changes. We also recommend that the board contact the other agencies that were involved in the Alpine Explosion incident, NPD, the Haz-mat team, and Bomb Squad, to better understand the risks that we were exposed to”.*

○ **Nancy Kress:**

○ *“Iain's statement at the beginning of this meeting sent some people's imagination to believe that the safety allegations for what Chief Dirr has been placed on leave for are egregious, and horrifying. It is irresponsible to make these implications when the public does not have access to information of exactly what took place. I'm trying to understand the trajectory of how things have gotten to this level today. I have reviewed the meeting minutes from 2018, 2019, and the current ones for 2020, and found no complaints of personnel issues or complaints till early 2020. There was one mention in 2019 that morale was not a problem, possibly indicating that there was a much bigger discussion regarding this topic. There were a tremendous number of mentions about Chief Dirr's efforts trying to raise money, and address safety concerns, such as improving fire codes, and Big Springs Egress. There was a comment made by Iain at the time of his swearing in to become president of the board, where he indicates “A wish to find ways to work together and move forward”. How does the current board*

*intend to move forward, with the contentiousness of the current situation, and effectively make improvements, and achieve- the primary concerns of the safety of the community? I support Henry's statement regarding the need for a Citizens Oversight Board.
Thank you".*

- **Iain's reply:**
 - *"You should review the recoring from September of 2019. Things have been in turmoil for a long time. We move forward by bringing it up, and having honest open discussions about what is going on".*
- **Charlie's reply to Nancy;**
 - *Things were never addressed previously, because we were told that there is no access to the board. The buck stops at the Chief. If we were to contact the board around the Chief, that it is considered insubordinate, and we would be terminated".*
- **Discussion regarding Henry's letter to the Mountain Ear;**
 - Board President Iain Irwin-Powell thought it to be disrespectful
 - Henry wanted to reply to social media comments regarding his support of the Fire Chief:
 - Statement by Henry:
I am supporting the Fire Chief because the board has brough a handful of allegations against him, some weak, some without proof, and some have been dismissed. I maintain my position until due process is done, and we have a clear unbiased result of these allegations
- **Statement from Iain Irwin-Powell**
 - I would like to address questions regarding the operation ability of the Fire Department
 - First, the Fire Department is operationally intact. The Shift Captains have many years of experience, knowledge, skill sets, and they hold a high degree of certifications.
 - Second, everything that is occurring is a Safety issue
- **Discussion regarding the Promotion of the Shift Captains to Operational Chiefs**
 - Henry stated that this decision should have been discussed in a board meeting with all board members present.
 - Iain stated that there was no promotion. The shift captains are performing routine day to day duties, and are in charge of the continuing operation of the department in the Chief's absence
- **Investigation of the Explosion incident at 283 Alpine drive:**
 - The Fire Department has no safety violation reporting policy, especially when it involves the Fire Chief.
 - Obligations of the Fire Department;
 - #1) Safety of all Firefighters
 - #2) Providing the Tax Payers with the service they pay for, which is a well-trained well supported, highly motivated team that saves lives by taking reasonable managed risks.

- Iain Irwin-Powell, and Ray Willis have spent 2 days conducting interviews, with members who were present during the initial call out, and during the investigation conducted by both NPD, and the Haz-Mat investigation team.
- **Henry requests that any further investigation regarding allegations against the Fire Chief, are appropriated and conducted by a 3rd party unbiased investigator**
 - Henry is suggesting the formation of a “Citizen’s Oversight Board”.
- **Discussion regarding Truck inspection by DOT:**
 - DOT found various issues with a number of apparatus
 - 5642 has been pulled out of service.
 - 5601,5641,5603,5617, al have taken their turn going to “Keeter Truck Repair”.
- **Many of our firefighters are going on Wildland Deployment with other agencies.**
 - Captain Abramson is looking into the possibility of deploying our own Apparatus.
- **We have 10 new applicants. Ryan is currently working on a new recruit process, and has elected to hold off on accepting any more recruits till January.**
 - Working on a new process to move them along more quickly.
- **Old/Continuous Business**
 - Gear closet at Station 1 has been cleaned out, and old gear thrown away.
 - Current NFPA standards are very specific about correct sizing. Not mix-matching items. Bunker gear should be kept up to date and replaced every 10 years. If you want to send our new recruits to Fire academy then we need to budget for new bunker gear to outfit them.
 - We passed a Resolution last month to sign a contract with The Human Resources Organization
 - 5623 has been donated to “Indian Peaks Fire.
 - 5625 has been sold, and same buyer is interested in the old Yellow Engine behind Station 2.
 - We have sold the old Military Plow Jeep at Station 2
- **New Business:**
 - Motion to adopt “The Every Goes Home Policy”
 - Motion passed 4-0-0
 - Medical Supplies closet has been cleaned out
 - The “After Accident Review” for 283 Alpine Dr. is scheduled for September 8th.
 - Dan has reached out to Scott Whitehead regarding programming of the APX 7000, but has not heard back.
 - Narcotics and medical bags have been removed from 5622.
 - Command 2 has been set up as a “Quick Response Vehicle”, with an AED, and monitor.
 - Discussion about updating the NFPD Website
 - Iain has found a company called “Streamline” who specializes in websites for “Special Districts”.

*Meeting adjourned at 2201 hrs.
Next Meeting is October 7th, 2020 @ 1900hrs.*