



## Sagle Fire District

1123 Lake Street, Sandpoint, ID 83864-1714 • Phone 208/263-3503 • Fax 208/255-1647 • [www.selkirkfire.com](http://www.selkirkfire.com)

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### SPECIAL BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS MEETING

June 28, 2016

Chairman Fels called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Present were Commissioners Fels, Gilchrist, Charbonneau, Engelhardt and Linscott. Also present were Chief Stocking, Executive Assistant RuthAnn Zigler and members from the public.

A sheet was passed around for members of the public to print their name if they would like to make public comments. The members were asked to limit their comments to three (3) minutes or less.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Discussion with City of Sandpoint concerning the JPA: Commissioner Engelhardt made a motion that the Sagle Fire District Board of Commissioners approach the City of Sandpoint with a proposal for mutual termination of our Joint Powers Agreement and if the City declines the proposal we shall give the City a 60-day written notice of our withdrawal from the Joint Powers Agreement as provided for in Sub-section 4.4.3 and 4.4.4.

There was no second to the motion and the motion died.

Discussion on Sagle's continued participation in the JPA: Sandpoint City Administrator, Jennifer Stapleton introduced herself, Mayor Rognstad and City Attorney Scott Campbell. Jennifer wanted to make it clear that the City of Sandpoint did not call this meeting with the intent of withdrawing from the JPA but rather to get an understanding from the Sagle Board what direction they are headed. The direction Sagle makes will impact the cities budget which is in the process of being finalized. Last year; it was documented for both Sagle and Sandpoint's Boards that there were substantial cost savings by the two entities by entering into the JPA. The cost savings for the City of Sandpoint for FY 2015-16 was \$79,000, and Sagle's was a cost savings of \$39,000 based on a part-time Chief instead of a full-time Chief. Jennifer confirmed that the City of Sandpoint still sees the benefits of this JPA, the cost savings to both entities as well as the redundancy that it brings in personnel and our ability to respond efficiently throughout the region; having professional personnel who are educated and trained in the same manner are a great benefit to us.

Jennifer commented that Westside Fire has been watching our success under the JPA and has indicated an interest and willingness to enter into a JPA with the two entities. The benefits of Westside Fire joining the JPA would be an existing Fire Chief who would become an administrative Fire Chief and a Deputy Fire Chief to Sandpoint and Sagle which would bring further redundancy at no additional costs. The shared costs for

administrative staff under an agreement that includes Westside would be \$86,000 for each of the entities including three administrative staff of a Fire Chief, an Assistant/Administrative Fire Chief and an administrative assistant.

Jennifer confirmed that the City of Sandpoint does not share any concerns relating to performance of personnel, the JPA other than if the Sagle Board has some conflict about that, or reservations that it will have an impact on Sandpoint.

Jennifer commented that there have been a number of requests from a Sagle Commissioner for documents for background information. From an administration standpoint she has concerns on the impact that that these requests have on personnel because with the high number of requests it takes our Fire Chief away from performing his role as Fire Chief to pull these documents.

One option that we may all consider in moving forward is that the renewal of the JPA agreement is coming up later this year, and should we need to look at the role of the JPA Board; possibly change the role of the Board to make them more active to have more communication and transparency with the public.

Commissioner Engelhardt expressed his concern with some of the language in the JPA; Commissioner Fels stated that his concerns may or may not be valid but they will be reviewed.

Commissioner Gilchrist made a comment that the only thing that can happen from this joint action is only good. If there are problems with the JPA, or problems in the administration, etc. then you address the problems you don't just throw the whole thing out.

Jennifer commented that if there are some details in the JPA that need to be ironed out for operational purposes they are certainly open to that, including that as we move forward any potential restructuring on the role of the JPA Board. Based on the cities review there is some refinements that can be made in terms of administrative processes and they are open for that discussion.

Commissioner Fels stated for the record that there may be some administrative issues but feels that with the JPA there has been nothing but benefits to both Sandpoint and the community of Sagle. There has been a huge influx of cultural change within the Sagle Fire District, we have many more resources available, cross training is exceptional and overall have received many benefits from this agreement.

The floor was opened up for public comments and letters read of those who could not be in attendance.

The public comments session was closed and the meeting was brought back to comments from the City of Sandpoint.

Legal Council for the City, Scott Campbell commented on the validity of the JPA and confirmed it is a valid agreement. He also commented on the concerns Commissioner Engelhardt expressed with the use of the Selkirk Fire name and said he called the Attorney Generals office and was informed that when a city or an entity is not using an alternative name with the intent to deceive or to operate without people knowing who the real parties are then it would be illegal, but if it's not with the intent to deceive and they

make it clear that it's these two parties are operating under this name then it is not a problem.

Mayor Rognstad commented that it is comforting to hear from all of the positive feedback from the public in attendance and written letters in for support of the direction Sagle is going. He stated that the JPA has been a huge advantage to the City of Sandpoint, to our citizens and to our firefighters as well. He said it really pleases him that everyone here has recognized the benefits to Sagle. The Mayor commented that he was part of the council when this process was first started, when the mutual aid agreements were developed by Chief Tyler and Chief Goodyear and so has seen this whole thing evolve, and most recently with the JPA in the last year and a half, this is certainly a new step for all of us and it's only natural that there is going to be wrinkles that will need to get worked out. The City of Sandpoint is completely committed and will continue to work on keeping the public informed and engaged in what is happening with the fire department.

Ratification of MOU's for Medical insurance and Contract Extension: The Board was presented with copies of the MOU's for medical insurance and extension of the contract. Commissioner Fels reported that a tentative agreement was reached between the District and the Union and MOU's were signed pending the Union membership approval and the Boards approval to extend the contract for one (1) year with certain conditions.

Commissioner Linscott made a motion to ratify the Medical Insurance MOU. Commissioner Gilchrist seconded and the motion carried.

Commissioner Charbonneau made a motion to ratify the contract extension. Commissioner Linscott seconded and the motion carried.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Linscott made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:33 a.m. Commissioner Gilchrist seconded and the motion carried.