



## PIERCE COUNTY FIRE COMMISSIONERS' ASSOCIATION

MINUTES June 24, 2021

Via Zoom

### **CALL TO ORDER – FLAG SALUTE**

President Tom Sutich called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. no flag salute was held due to meeting virtually. He requested everyone mute their microphone so there's not a lot of background sound. Buckley Fire had a recent loss of Mathew Riggsby who suddenly passed away. Moment of silence in memory of him.

### **WELCOME and THANK YOU TO HOST**

President Sutich thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting.

### **ROLL CALL – SELF-INTRODUCTIONS**

There were 20 people in attendance.

### **PROGRAM – Hilary Franz, Public Lands Commissioner**

Vice President Moffett apologized that Guest Speaker Hilary Franz is unable to attend. She will be speaking at our August meeting.

### **Chief Jim Sharp – 911 Radio Funding Update**

Vice President Moffett introduced Fire Chief Jim Sharp to give an update on the 911 funding issues. Something that the Fire Chief's Association is taking action on and will speak to in a bit. Related to the E911 tax – every phone is charged 70 cents for 911. Gave a brief history of this issue. In the past there were multiple PSAPs in Pierce County and the logical designation for dispatch coordination was through Pierce County DEM. Now we have consolidated and have a single dispatch agency in Pierce County, but SS911 is not the program office, it still lies in the 911 Office at the County. In other counties with a single PSAP, it lies with the PSAP. Other issues with regards to the 70 cent line tax – all of the money goes to Pierce County as designated the 911 office. Historically, a portion of those funds would go out to the PSAPs. That hasn't changed. There are two (2) taxing authorities that fund 911 – 1/10 of 1% goes to SS911. That is not the issue. Strictly speaking about the 70 cents on every phone line. Only about half of that goes to SS911, the rest remains with PC. Loosely related to 911 and communications. 3<sup>rd</sup> debate of how that money should be spent, etc. Law is pretty specific, essentially to be used on the 911 system – system in which person calling 911 is connected, etc. PC currently has a portion of the money going to fund their radio network. Logic is that you need to fund radios as well as call receiving, etc. 1. Where should the 911 office be located now? 2. Should SS911 be provided all of the 911 70 cent tax for 911 services? 3. Is money currently being spent appropriately?

PCFCA has taken a stand on 2 of the issues – believe 911 program office should be moved out of PC DEM and into SS911 since they are the only PSAP in PC. There is redundancy going on between SS and PC and believe there would be efficiency made. Look at it as a merger and combine them. And, in so doing, the entire 70 cent tax should be moved into SS911. Not playing into the diversion issue of how the money is currently being spent. That should be left to the attorney's and accountants on whether that is being done correctly or not. It is becoming a hot topic between SS and PC. Applaud Debbie's work on all of this. Reaching a point to where people are looking for a resolution to this issue. Vice President Moffett asked how much money the 70 cent tax is? Debbie stated the distribution is just under 5 million dollars. Discussion

followed. President Sutich asked Chief Olson if he'd like to add anything? 20 some years in Kitsap, 5 in Clark County and then here and this is the first time to see a separation of E911 funding from the PSAP. Feels it should reside under the stewardship of SS911. SS911 belongs at that table at the State level as they do the work and should have a voice. Vice President Moffett asked where at this point, has the County offered any solution? Chief Sharp stated direction from the Chair to put together a work group to address the issue and bring forth a recommendation. No formal opinion at this time. Self, Chief Fisher along with Lakewood City Manager and Julie Door, City of Puyallup are on the work group. Debbie stated July 28<sup>th</sup> Board meeting will be going for a vote. Commissioner Rankin concern is that Executive is getting more and more reluctant and upset bringing this issue up. SS911 is handling all of the dispatch for PC. Stand behind Chair and Vice Chair that are working on this issue. President Sutich asked if looking for support from the PC Commissioners? Looks like the Chiefs are taking the lead for the Fire Service. Chief Sharp commented that the Police Chiefs are taking the same position as the Fire Chiefs. Important issue for the Fire Commissioners. Decision of your group as to whether or not you want to show support on this. Says a lot that both Police and Fire are in lock step on this. Commissioner Holm asked about the letters sent to PC from the State? Chief Sharp stated speaks to the issue of not spending the money appropriately. Opinions from E911 office at State, Auditor's Office, Attorney General's Office, etc. Have all interpreted the RCW on how money to be spent pretty consistently. All for 911 system. Clear direction from national level as well. Fee diversion can affect grants at the federal level. County audited recently and only one component deemed to be spent inappropriately on the Everbridge system. Because auditor didn't call anything else out that must be ok then. Don't necessarily agree with that logic. Discussion followed. It is a complicated issue and very different opinions on it. Not trying to debate this particular issue. Want to emphasis and put efforts into the E911 office being moved into SS911 and the full 70 cents go to SS911. Chief Olson stated this will be a challenging and difficult work – will take a unified voice. Would appreciate the consideration of the Commissioners, elected officials to support this issue as well.

Commissioner Cathey asked for Attorney Quinn to give an opinion. President Sutich stated instead of doing that, would suggest a motion to support PC Fire and Police Chiefs and SS911 in an attempt to straighten out a situation that has been needing to be resolved for many, many years. Chief Sharp stated the Fire Chiefs had asked Joe Quinn at their last meeting and requested it in writing afterwards. Focusing on going forward, not what's been done in the past. Statue of limitations of 2 years. Eric Quinn stated what Chief Sharp shared is accurate.

Commissioner Rankin made a motion to support having E911 money and office of 911 in County be moved to SS911. Commissioner Dannat seconded the motion. Commissioner Cathey asked how do we educate the County Council on this? Commissioner Rankin stated that is being done by the Chair and Vice Chair. Ask for a no vote and if hear none then will consider a unanimous pass of the vote. MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

The Association thanked Chief Jim Sharp and Chief Olson for being here tonight.

Commissioner Holm stated not addressed, as an Association, that we also send a letter to Chair and Vice Chair that we are in support. Discussion followed. President Sutich asked Secretary Menge to draft a letter of support to the Chair and Vice Chair.

#### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA and TREASURER'S REPORT**

President Sutich asked if there were any changes to the Agenda. It was moved by Commissioner Cathey and seconded by Commissioner Eckroth to approve the agenda as amended and

Treasurer's Report (see copy on the backside of the Agenda) as presented. MOTION CARRIED. Passed unanimously.

#### **MINUTES OF May 27, 2021 MEETING**

Commissioner Linboe moved and Commissioner Rankin seconded to approve the minutes. Any discussion? Hearing none, anyone opposed? Hearing none, the May 27, 2021 minutes as presented were passed unanimously. MOTION CARRIED.

#### **SGT. AT ARMS – NAME BADGES**

N/A

#### **CORRESPONDENCE**

Nothing at this time.

#### **REGULAR REPORTS:**

##### **a) Regional Representative Report – Mike Cathey**

Reported conferences have been happening via Zoom. Hope everyone is signed up that is going to Tulalip. If you have not signed up yet, please do so.

##### **b) Legal - Joe and/or Eric Quinn**

Eric Quinn reported 2 different items – SB1310 – July 25<sup>th</sup> effective creates duty of reasonable care for police officers. Substantial impacts caused to all first responders. A lot of questions will be coming up in the coming months. Need to look at policies with regards to responding to mental health crisis calls. Second item has to do with open public meetings, even though state may be reopening June 30<sup>th</sup> – going into phase 4 proclamation 2028-14 reenacted by 2028-15 – those limitations are still in effect. Only goes away if state of emergency is ended or proclamation 2028 is rescinded.

##### **c) SouthSound 911 – Debbie Grady**

Reported waiting on L&I to sign off on elevator, hoping to get in the next week or so to start moving into the new building. President Sutich stated perhaps look at August for having a tour for the Commissioners.

#### **STANDING COMMITTEES:**

##### **a) Fire Chiefs Association - Dan Rankin / Tom Sutich**

Commissioner Rankin reported they met earlier in June and spoke on the same issue we had. They don't meet again until September.

##### **b) Legislative - Brandon Faust**

Reported there was no legislative meeting.

##### **c) Bates Technical College - Dan Rankin**

Reported haven't heard from them. Suggested moving to DORMANT.

#### **Fund Raising Activities - DORMANT- Ed Egan**

N/A

**d) Annual Picnic/Potluck – Bill Eckroth and Arlene Dannat**

Commissioner Dannat stated the park is set and reserved, has a call in to Stacks Burgers to confirm. Everything moving forward. Picnic will be at 6:00 pm. Denise to put together a flyer.

**e) Annual Banquet – DORMANT - Mike Cathey**

Reported the room is reserved.

**f) Scholarship & Education - Tom Sutich / Stan Moffett**

Vice President Moffett stated if anyone would like to submit for the fall conference to do so. Needs to be submitted two months in advance. If anyone has any suggestions on how to put fund to good use, please reach out to him.

**g) Awards Committee – DORMANT – Margaret O’Harra-Buttz**

**h) Membership – Kevin Gorder**

Not present.

**i) Programs – Stan Moffett**

Reported 2 speakers for August – Hilary Franz and Tori Petus from WFCA office on the new website, etc.

**j) Sunshine - Arlene Dannat**

Reported will send a card to Buckley and also to EPFR for Chief Backer retiring.

**k) NAEFO – Gerry Gustafson**

Reported a number of webinars and still going on. The NAEFO conference will be held in Vegas September 19-21.

**l) Nominating – DORMANT - Dan Rankin**

**m) Audit – DORMANT - Dan Rankin / Margaret O’Harra Buttz**

Reported completed in April for last year.

**n) SS911 Committee – Pat McElligott**

Not present.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**A. Election for 911 Representatives – President Sutich**

VP Moffett – current representative is Pat McElligott and alternate is Tom Sutich. Turned the meeting over to Vice President Moffett.

Commissioner Rankin moved that Pat McElligott remain the 911 representative, seconded by Commissioner Sutich. Is anyone opposed? There being none. MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

Commissioner Eckroth moved Tom Sutich be the alternate 911 representative, seconded by Commissioner Dannat. Is anyone opposed? There being none, MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Nothing at this time.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

Commissioner Cathey stated it would be good to have some discussion points to talk to Council Members on the E911 issues.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned 8:20 at pm.

Submitted by:

Denise Menge,  
Secretary/Treasurer

Website: <http://www.pcfirecommissioners.org/SitePages/Home.aspx>

**2021 Meeting Schedule:**

January 28, 2021 – Remotely via Zoom  
February 25, 2021 – Remotely via Zoom  
March 25, 2021 – Remotely via Zoom  
April 22, 2021 – Remotely via Zoom  
May 27, 2021 – Remotely via Zoom  
June 24, 2021 – Remotely via Zoom  
July 22, 2021 – BBQ/Potluck – Orting Park  
August 26, 2021  
September 23, 2021  
October 28, 2021 – No Meeting – Annual Conference  
November 18, 2021  
December 2, 2021 – No Meeting – Annual Awards