

**To:** General Membership

**From:** Secretary

**Subject:** Minutes of the North Okaloosa Fire District Board of Fire Commissioners  
Monthly Meeting.

**Date:** November 19, 2020

**Members Present:** Craig Shaw, Chairman, Commissioner Group IV  
Todd McGirr, Commissioner, Group I  
Dan Bowers, Jr., Secretary/Treasurer Commissioner, Group II  
Rodney Lancaster, Commissioner, Group V At Large

**Members Absent:** Willie G. Terrell, Commissioner, Group III

**Advisors Present:** Jonathan Holloway Legal Council  
Dennis McMaster Chief  
Annette Rayburn, Administrator

The Meeting was called to order by Chairman Shaw at 5:00 p.m.

**Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer were given.

**Approval of Agenda:** Commissioner McGirr motioned to approve the agenda Commissioner Lancaster seconded the motion. Vote 4/0.

**Approval of Minutes of October 15, 2020:** Motion to approve the minutes as written Commissioner Bowers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner McGirr. Vote 4/0.

Chairman Shaw took a moment to thank former Commissioner Gene Wright for his service to the board and he welcomed new Commissioner Rodney Lancaster.

**New Business:**

**a. Chief Position** – Chairman Shaw said that last month he stated his support of Deputy Chief McMaster to become the new Chief. Commissioner McGirr made a motion to hire Dennis McMaster at the salary of 95k. No second was given. Commissioner Bowers asked what the previous chief's salary was and Chairman Shaw said 75k. Commissioner Bowers said 75k plus insurance and asked Commissioner McGirr you want to hire him at 95k plus insurance? Commissioner McGirr said yes with the current insurance we have. Commissioner Lancaster made the motion that he would like to hire him at 90k which is comparable to the surrounding departments. Chairman Shaw said that in his discussions with Deputy Chief McMasters and all the work he has been doing he does not see a difference between 90k and 95k. His feelings are that he would like the employee to be satisfied when accepting a position. Motion failed with lack of a second. Deputy Chief McMaster said that most of the board know his work ethic. He feels that he will run the department as efficiently as possible. Make no mistake what I am asking for is a lot of money, but you have to consider we have no pension plan or retirement and I have to look to setting

myself up for retirement. I would like to be able to stay with the department another 20 years. Commissioner McGirr again made a motion to hire Dennis McMaster for the Chief position at the salary of 95k per year. Chairman Shaw passed the gavel to Commissioner Bowers and seconded the motion. Chairman Shaw said that he does not want to Chief shop every few years. Mr. McMaster has been here through numerous Chiefs and he has already implemented a lot of things in the last few months that have bettered the department, and these things were not even talked about with the previous chiefs. Chairman Shaw said that he supports Mr. McMaster. Attorney Holloway made the statement that the level of detail that Mr. McMaster brings to the table. This has led to numerous policy changes that would not have happened without Mr. McMaster. Including the payroll changes with the built-in increases. Mr. McMaster does comprehensive line-item detail level spreadsheets and gets to the bottom line on questions we might have. It has been an overall pleasant experience and it has made my life a little easier. Commissioner Lancaster said that he is all about Dennis staying, he is an asset to the department. Whatever its going to take to keep him here. If 95k will do it I'm all for it. Chairman Shaw said that he agrees. We will set our expectations high and expect him to live up to them. Chairman Shaw said that he and Dennis McMaster have spent at least 20 hours in the last couple of months. Commissioner Bowers said that he is not in favor of the 95K. He said that if he was hiring someone that he would like them to prove themselves and give the raise later on. He said that he would be comfortable at 90k and 95k in 90 days. Mr. McMaster said that to make everyone comfortable he would agree to Commissioner Bowers suggestion. Commissioner Lancaster said that he thinks Dennis has proven himself that he has been to the meetings over the last year and Dennis was the one giving the information not Chief Howe. He said that all he remembers Chief Howe doing is reading his Chief's report. Vote 3/1 with Commissioner Bowers voting nay. New Chief Dennis McMaster.

#### **Old Business:**

**a. Contract Update** – Chairman Shaw told the board that there has been no update. Commissioner Bowers made a motion for Chairman Shaw to have standing authority to negotiate and sign ARFF contracts. 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner McGirr. Vote 4/0.

**b. New Truck**- Chief McMaster told the board to review the handout in their folders for the new truck. There are two quotes one with has a non-skid coating on the diamond plate for better traction and the other is the diamond plate. We will be going with a new color the yellow which will match the ARFF trucks. This way we will be different from the surrounding departments. Commissioner Lancaster asked if they had looked into a lease option and the board said that they had looked at that previously. Commissioner Bowers made a motion that we purchase the truck with the non-skid coating. 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner McGirr. Chief McMaster then brought up outfitting the trucks and he suggested that we get some new hydraulic tools the quote is in the folder. Vote for Truck 4/0. Chairman Shaw said that he has been here 10 years and the purchase of the truck was one of his goals. Delivery time on the new truck is 8 to 9 months. Commissioner McGirr made a motion to purchase the hydraulic tools, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Lancaster. Vote 4/0.

**Public Input** – Gene Wright wanted to congratulate the board on the purchase of the new truck. Dave Skarzynski – said that he had to come to the meeting to read the minutes. He would like to be able to get the whole package posted on the website. Chairman Shaw said that they would work on it.

#### **Advisory Reports:**

**Attorney Report**- Attorney Holloway presented a settlement agreement for Kevin Kendrick and no monetary amounts have changed since the executive session. Commissioner Bowers made a motion to sign the agreement and Commissioner McGirr 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. Vote 4/0. Commissioner Bowers asked if the expense was the districts. Attorney Holloway said we will cover what

the insurance company does not.

**Chief's Report** –Chief McMaster briefed the report as follows- personnel which now lists 1 management, 14 paid firefighters, 2 part-time firefighter, 4 relief firefighters, no certified volunteers and 2 support personnel, there were 230 calls for the month October 2020. Chief McMaster reviewed repairs and projects. The bay door that fell on Command 82 has been replaced. Extrication training was held with Eglin, Crestview, Baker, Holt, Blackmon and Almarante. Fire Officer I classes are being held at the station. Holt, Baker and Blackman have sent personnel to attend. He has reached out to Auburn Water to see if there were any available areas for hydrants. Chief McMaster asked to surplus the skid unit from Attack 84, winch from Attack 84 and the lightbar from Attack 84, which he would like to donate it to Almarante. Motion to list the skid unit on gov deals Commissioner Bowers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner McGirr. Vote 4/0. Chief McMaster brought to the board the performance bonus for the personnel and he is asking for an across the board at 1.5%. He does not believe that because of personnel changes we cannot get an accurate performance evaluation. Chief McMaster said that his recommendation would be to cancel the Christmas Party due to COVID-19. Motion to accept the recommendation for the Performance Bonus Commissioner Lancaster, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner McGirr. Vote 4/0. Motion to approve the Chiefs report Commissioner Bowers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner McGirr. Vote 4/0.

**Secretary/Treasurer's Report-** Commissioner Bowers said if you look at the colored graphs it shows our reduced number of bank accounts. We are now getting close to the point of collecting money. If you look at the combined budget and it shows where we are at. Motion to approve the Treasurers report Commissioner McGirr, 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Lancaster. Vote 4/0.

**Commissioner Comments:**

Chief McMaster updated the board on Commissioner Terrell. Chief McMaster told them that he had been transferred to Pensacola to a re-habilitation facility. The pneumonia had taken a toll on him. He is showing improvement.

The board agrees that the Christmas party should be cancelled.

Commissioner McGirr gave an update on the election on the impact fees it only lost by 428 votes. He thinks that this should be brought up again. Dave Skarzynski said that we needed to give out more information.

Commissioner Lancaster said that one of the things that he wants to work on is the ISO rating. Another thing that he would like to see is more manning. He said that he has some ideas on how to try and get peoples insurance under control.

**Set Agenda for next meeting December 17, 2020**

The Meeting was adjourned at 6:57 pm.

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Craig Shaw  
Chairman