

**SKAGIT COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 17**  
**Purpose: Monthly Public Fire Commissioners Meeting**

**February 13, 2023**

Commissioner Wertheimer called the **Regular Fire Commissioners** meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**Present:** Commissioners Wertheimer, Murphy , Chief Cole, Treasurer Davelaar. Secretary Kankaala, Tom Fouts, Juby Fouts, Barb Ohms, John Strathman, Phyllis Bravinder, Rick Rule, Matt Enos

The minutes of January 16, 2023 were unanimously approved.

**Open:** None

**Treasurer's Report:**

Skagit County Treasurer's General Ledger Detail Report  
January Operating Fund cash balance \$ 41,203.99  
January General Investment Fund balance \$ 12235.74  
January Capital Fund cash balance \$136,644.83  
January Capital Investment Fund balance \$ 34,567.75  
Total \$224,652.31

January GIFD expenditures: Expenses \$4,937.79  
Payroll \$4,452.64  
VFF Stipends \$2,020.00  
January Expenditures Grand Total \$ 11,410.43  
January GIFD Revenue Taxes collected \$291.77  
Interest \$ 40.48

January GIFD Total Revenue \$332.25

The following vouchers are approved for payment:

Fire Payments: FP 02-001 through 02-005: \$1,895.24  
Electronic Payments V7011-0201 through V7011-0206: \$ 958.64  
V0591-0201 through V0591-0216: \$1,398.88  
V9371-0201 \$ 685.03  
Payroll Voucher: PR 02-23 \$4,452.64  
January Grand Total Payments \$9,390.43

Above Expenditures and Revenue Report was approved by the Commissioners at their January 13, 2023 public meeting.

**Chief's Report:** [See attached](#) report for a list of drills and responses.

- Two Guemes Island residents have expressed great interest in joining the Guemes Island Fire Department. They are unvaccinated against COVID 19, and have no plans to get the vaccination. The State of Washington has not dropped the vaccine mandate for state employees. Commissioner Murphy believes that GIFD should follow the lead of Seattle, which has dropped vaccine mandates for city employees. Commissioner Murphy has provided a study, stating that the wearing of masks has no effect on the transmission of COVID 19. **Please see the [attached study](#).** Medical Officer Kankaala is concerned that other members of the Guemes Island Fire Department might be uncomfortable with working alongside an unvaccinated member of the fire department. Commissioner Murphy has asked Chief Cole to research the issue of vaccines and masks, and bring a recommendation to the March Commissioners meeting.

**Unfinished Business:**

- **Please see the attached report, regarding the 2023 budget for the Guemes Island Fire Department.**
- The Guemes Island Ferry Crew has rejected the contract proposal from the county.

**New Business:**

- Guemes Island residents Barb Ohms, Phyllis Bravinder, John Strathman, and Rick Rule have expressed concern, regarding the Gwost property at Section Avenue, and Eden's Road. These residents have antidotal information which suggest that the Guemes Island Fire Department does not have sufficient equipment or training to handle what might be chemical waste or contamination on the Gwost property, in the event of a fire on the property. The neighbors are also concerned because that area of the island has been deemed a high risk area, regarding fire, and Section Avenue is a means of egress for the residents residing down and off Section Ave. Rick Rule would like the Guemes Island Fire Department would like a response, regarding whether the fire department deems the Gwost property to be a hazardous property, and to confirm whether there is concern, within the Guemes Island Fire Department, with regards to some of the objects on the property, and the probability that there may be chemical, plastic, or other risk that the Guemes Island Fire Department would be untrained or unequipped to deal with. Rick Rule stated that it would be useful to have the response in writing, in order to forward the response to Skagit County officials.  
No one on the Guemes Island Fire Department is trained to handle hazardous materials. The Guemes Island Fire Department does not have any knowledge regarding hazardous materials on the Gwost property. GIFD does not have the authority to access a private property, to survey a property for risks.  
According to the Skagit County accessor's website, multiple complaints have been received regarding the Gwost Property. Though multiple complaints have been filed, the neighbors of the Gwost property have seen little enforcement action from the county.  
Barb Ohms has provided a map, regarding the fire risk assessment of Guemes Island.

Chief Cole explained to the concerned neighbors of the Gwost property that the Guemes Island Fire Department does not have enforcement abilities. The fire department can only respond if a fire department related incident occurs on the island. Chief Cole researched the issue, and encouraged the neighbors to contact Skagit County code enforcement.

Commissioner Wertheimer has proposed that the Guemes Island Fire Department Commissioners send a letter to the Skagit County Planning and Development Department, regarding the potential of hazardous materials on the Gwost property. [Please see the attached letter.](#)

**Next Resolution will be 461.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:59 pm.

**The next Commissioners meeting will be March 13, 2023.**

Submitted by Eric Kankaala, Treasurer

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Skagit County Fire District 17, Chairman