



CITY OF BLACK DIAMOND
August 20, 2009 Workstudy Agenda
25510 Lawson St., Black Diamond, Washington

Workstudies are meetings for Council to review upcoming and pertinent business of the City. Public testimony is only accepted at the discretion of the Council.

6:00 P.M. – CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL

- 1.) Discussion of Fire Services in Black Diamond – Mr. Ron Taylor
- 2.) Adjournment



A Discussion of
Fire Services
in
Black Diamond

by
Ron Taylor
July 2009



Outline

1. Personal example
2. BD has been very conservative / responsible with spending
 - a. I truly appreciate the carefulness of the City in spending our tax dollars
 - b. No project or department has received funding inappropriately
 - c. It would be a mistake for anyone to interpret my intent as being resentful of any city department or specific spending that has taken place
3. Fire/aid protection is the most basic service a municipality is responsible for
4. Fire/aid protection is deficient
 - a. The fact is that fire protection has been overlooked to a large degree for many years
 - b. We cannot have a contract, an MOU, or an agreement with any fire district and relieve ourselves of the responsibility of this fundamental service
 - i. It is not up to any other entity to look after the planning and best interests of the City proper
 - c. FD44 is doing an excellent job with what they have been given to work with
 - i. Let it be clear that I have no criticism of FD44
 - d. In the fire section of the CFP there is a good deal of verbiage that appears to be lifted out of FD44's own executive summary but does not apply to Black Diamond proper
 - i. Except for Black Diamond, FD44 covers unincorporated rural sections of the county pretty much exclusively
 - ii. FD44's summary cites standards for rural areas (pop. density less than 500/sq mile)
 - iii. The standards for this type of coverage and with volunteer stations are much lower than for staffed stations and incorporated cities.
 - iv. Black Diamond's pop. density is over 700/sq mile which does not qualify as rural
 - v. This gives a false sense of security and does not hold the City to the standards that it should
 - e. The City has stated the policy of having 1.4 on-duty career fire fighters per 1000 population
 - i. Based on existing population of 4200 that requires 6 professional firefighters to be on duty
 - ii. City currently has 2 career firefighters on duty 50% of the time
 - iii. Current ratio is .25 on-duty career firefighters per 1000

A Discussion of Fire Services in Black Diamond
Outline

- f. Station 99 is beyond reasonable life
 - i. Station was built in 1952 and is 57 years old
 - 1. WAC 296-305 identifies minimum expected standards for fire stations
 - ii. Station is simply too small to house any current technology engine
 - 1. e.g. WAC 296-305-06509 requires 3' clearance around apparatus within station
 - 2. Current and upcoming needs are unmet
 - iii. Engine 99 is 28 years old
 - 1. any newer apparatus of adequate size wouldn't fit in the station
 - 2. WAC 296-305 also identifies minimum expected standards of fire apparatus
 - iv. There are no quarters making the station unstaffable
 - v. There are virtually no volunteers to respond from Station 99
 - 1. Few calls are answered from this station
 - 2. The station has been condemned and vacated since January 16th
 - 3. It has been business as usual without the station and no attempt to establish anything temporary
 - 4. I believe that this is indicative of this having been a non-viable station for some time
 - vi. Although the Washington State Rating Bureau at one time rated Station 99 as Class A it really no longer qualifies and would be Class B if rated today
- g. NFPA part 1710 section 4.1.2.1.1 sets a standard response time for staffed departments of 4 minutes for being on scene
 - i. First fire unit arrival
 - ii. First aid unit arrival
 - iii. My own example shows we are falling short of that
 - iv. Dept stats show an average of 7-9 minutes
 - v. Standard also requires full response within 8 minutes
 - 1. ALS
 - 2. full fire response capable of pumping 400 GPM for 30 minutes uninterrupted
 - 3. other FD44 stations would respond but are just too far away to meet standard
 - 4. Importance of quick attacks
 - vi. Section 4.1.2.1.2 sets a standard of meeting the above response times 90% of the time
 - vii. Section 4.1.2.1.3 sets an annual review of response times
 - 1. Is this being done?
 - viii. Section 4.1.2.1.4 requires the governing authority (not FD) to evaluate the response times every 4 years and take steps necessary to achieve compliance

A Discussion of Fire Services in Black Diamond
Outline

- h. Washington State Rating Bureau rates all properties for risk based on available fire protection
 - i. Ratings run 1 – 10 with best being 1 and worst being 10
 - ii. Black Diamond properties rate 6 at best
 - iii. Large areas of City fall to 8
- 5. Deficiency is not being acknowledged or addressed
 - a. Spending is strongly slanted against fire services
 - i. In spite of public safety levy PD operating spending triples FD operating spending
 - ii. PD operating budget in 2008 & 2009 has been about \$1.7M each year
 - iii. FD operating budget in 2008 & 2009 has been about \$500K each year
 - iv. PD does create revenue to the tune of \$300K/year through fines and criminal justice fund (drug seizures, etc.) but we spend \$1.2M more on PD than the FD
 - v. Even Community Development outspent FD by \$400K this year
 - vi. Budgeted improvements (above operating) this year (unless noted) – (not meant to be an exhaustive list)
 - 1. PD weapons \$30K over 2 years
 - 2. PD boat \$56K
 - 3. WD Springs project \$1.3M
 - 4. City Hall & Court remodel \$130K over 2 years
 - 5. PD Technology upgrades \$100K over 2 years
 - 6. PD car replacement \$80K
 - 7. PD records \$250K
 - 8. Boat ramp \$300K over 3 years
 - 9. Railroad Ave reconstruction \$1.5M
 - 10. Morgan Street sidewalk \$200K
 - 11. Aub Blk Dmd overlay \$100K
 - 12. Improve skateboard park \$25K
 - 13. BMX park \$20K
 - 14. FD improvements \$0**
 - 15. Contribution to fire equipment reserve \$1K
- 6. Planning does not address present nor future deficiencies
 - a. Cap. Fac. Plan has NO investment in fire services through 2015
 - b. To meet City policies of staffing and road distance to stations Station 99 and Engine 99 need to be replaced immediately
 - c. To meet City policies of staffing and road distance to stations at least 2 new stations need to be on the drawing board now for the proposed MPD's
 - d. Planning and study needs to be taking place now for apparatus needed to fill new and existing stations

A Discussion of Fire Services in Black Diamond
Outline

- e. Planning/budgeting needs to be under way to bring fire staffing up to present policies and prepare for staffing needs as population and development increases
- f. We are expecting significant commercial growth which takes quite different fire preparedness
 - i. When will we add that ladder truck?
 - ii. Where will we house it?
- g. We are always liable for a failure to perform
 - i. Right to expect minimum LOS
 - ii. Industry standards
 - iii. Local standards
 - iv. Test of reasonableness
- 7. Like streets, utilities, or schools development is a slow and thoughtful process
 - a. We are already behind the curve and must play catch up
 - b. We need to be proactive – not reactive

Narrative

Case History

Should Councilman Bowie have a heart attack, it is a recognized fact that he has 4 to 6 minutes for resuscitation to begin before brain damage and death occurs. The unfortunate thing for him is that it will take our fire services 7 to 9 minutes to reach his home.

In spite of the fact that the latest proposed Capital Facilities Plan sets a goal of all developed areas being within 1.5 miles of a fire station, my neighbor Councilman Bowie and I live 4.6 miles from the nearest and only viable fire station within the city.

On August 16th, 2008 my family had a need to call 911 and request aid to our house. The fire crew arrived on location in just short of 9 minutes. On January 3rd of this year we had another incident in which it was necessary to call 911 and request aid. On this occasion the responding crew arrived in just short of 7 minutes. Using any common computer mapping program the travel time from Station 98 to my address can be shown to be about 10 minutes. You can see that the fire crews are doing a good job, they are just located too far away and being asked to cover too large of an area. This is not even a remote area of the city; this is only one half mile from the city core and the elementary school.

Black Diamond is Financially Responsible

I would like to begin by expressing my sincere appreciation for the fact that the Black Diamond Council and staff are careful and conservative in spending our tax dollars. I do not see the frivolous spending that occurs in so many other jurisdictions so no one should feel that any particular department, program, or staff is coming under fire as I compare statistics. All of the things that we have spent money on in the City have been worthy and well considered. Thank you to the staff and Council for taking this responsibility so seriously.

Fire Service is Fundamental

As citizen's lives and property are at stake, I believe that fire and aid are the most elementary services that a municipality is responsible to provide. Law enforcement is a close second followed by the more mundane things like schools, water, sewer, streets, etc.

Black Diamond Fire Service Deficiencies

Other than the mergers with Fire District 17, and then with Fire District 44, there has been little thought or consideration of our fire services for some time.

Further, it would be a serious mistake to intentionally or inadvertently pass the responsibility for fire services off to a contract, a Memo of Understanding, an agreement or to any entity by any means. It is not up to any other entity to look out for the City's best interests or planning as it applies to this most fundamental service responsibility.

That being said, I believe that Fire District 44 is doing an excellent job with what they have been given to work with. ***Let it be clear that I have no criticism of Fire District 44.***

Staffing

In the City's Capital Facilities Plan fire services section there appears to be a large section of verbiage that has been lifted out of Fire District 44's own executive summary. I must point out that there are elements of that summary that do not apply to Black Diamond.

Except for Black Diamond, Fire District 44 covers a large area of unincorporated King County where the population density is less than 500 per square mile and is defined as rural. The standards for rural areas with volunteer stations are, as you might expect, much lower than non-rural areas. Black Diamond's population density is in excess of 700 per square mile and as such does NOT qualify as rural. Also, the City is covered by a staffed station. Both of these facts put the City into a different category. Citing the standards for rural areas gives a false sense of security while the City should be looking to a set of higher standards, especially in the face of impending development.

The City has a stated policy of having a current fire staffing level of 1.4 on-duty career firefighters per 1000 population. Based on the City's population of 4200, a staff of 6 professional firefighters needs to be on duty at any given time. We currently have 2 professional firefighters on duty 50% of the time leaving us at a staffing level of 0.25 on-duty career firefighters per 1000 population. I do not believe it is reasonable, nor the intent of the stated policy, to consider firefighters outside of the city. The location and response time of out-of-city staff disqualifies them as "first responders".

Station 99

Station 99 is well beyond reasonable life. Built in 1952 and being 57 years old, it is simply too small to house any apparatus of contemporary technology. The Washington Administrative Code (WAC) section 296-305 sets minimum standards for fire stations which far exceed the existing conditions at Station 99. Granted, the code is not retroactive but it offers a stark contrast to what is the currently accepted norm.

An example is that WAC 296-305-06509 requires 3 feet of clearance on each side of the apparatus as it is parked inside the station. I doubt that our Station 99

A Discussion of Fire Services in Black Diamond Narrative

NFPA section 1710 figure A.5.2.1.2.1

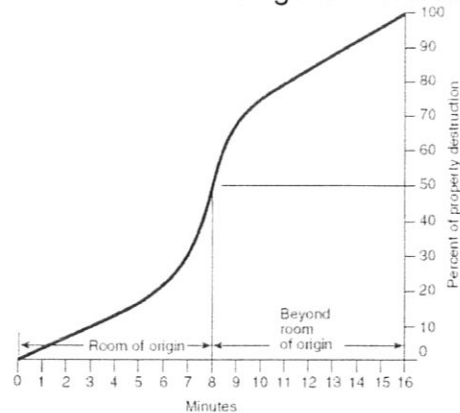


FIGURE A.5.2.1.2.1 Fire propagation curve.

NFPA section 4.1.2.1.2 sets the standard of meeting the above defined response times 90% of the time and section 4.1.2.1.3 sets an expectation that these response times will be reviewed on an annual basis. Is anyone *within the City* doing this?

NFPA section 4.1.2.1.4 requires the governing authority, not the fire department, to do a review of all of the above response statistics at least every 4 years to evaluate compliance. If the statistics fall short of the standards it is incumbent on the governing authority to take the steps necessary to achieve compliance.

Property Ratings

The Washington State Rating Bureau rates all properties for risk based on available fire protection. These ratings range from 1 through 10 where 1 is best case and 10 is worst case. A rating of 1 might find you located across the street from the best equipped most well staffed fire station there is with a response time of seconds. A rating of 10 would equate to, "Fire department? What fire department?"

Black Diamond properties have a rating of 6 at best with large sections of the city falling to 8.

Deficiencies Not Being Addressed

An examination of the City budget and spending reveals a gaping hole in what has been dedicated to fire services.

Operating Budgets

In spite of the existing tax levy that is earmarked as 'Public Safety', police spending is tripling that of fire spending. For the last 2 years police department

A Discussion of Fire Services in Black Diamond Narrative

spending has been at \$1.7 million per year while fire department spending has been at \$500 thousand per year.

While the police department does produce revenue to the tune of \$300 thousand per year through fines and the Criminal Justice Fund (drug seizures, etc.) we still spend \$1.2 million more on police services than we do on fire services.

Even the Community Development department outspent fire department by \$400 thousand this year.

Improvement Spending

Recent monies spent for improvements above operating budgets also reveal a gap in fire spending. Here is a sampling (certainly not an exhaustive list) of recent improvements.

- Over 2 years we have spent \$30 thousand replacing weapons for the police department
- This year we purchased a new police boat for Lake Sawyer at a cost of \$56 thousand
- We spent \$1.3 million on the Water Department Springs Project
- Over 2 years we have spent \$130 thousand to remodel the city hall and court
- Over 2 years we have spent \$100 thousand in technology upgrades for the police department
- This year we have spent \$80 thousand to replace police cars
- We are spending \$250 thousand to acquire a new police records system
- Over the last 3 years we have spent \$300 thousand on the boat ramp at Lake Sawyer
- The Railroad Avenue reconstruction will cost us \$1.5 million this year
- The Morgan Street sidewalk cost this year is \$200 thousand
- The new overlay at the Auburn Black Diamond road is a cost of \$100 thousand
- This year's improvements to the skateboard park cost \$25 thousand

- Work on a BMX park will cost \$20 thousand
- **Fire department improvements: \$0**
- This year's contribution to the fire equipment reserve was \$1000. Buying a fire truck at this rate will take 500 years!

Inadequate Planning

In spite of all these deficiencies, the Capital Facilities Plan provides for *ZERO* investment in the expansion of fire services through 2015, which is the end of current planning. In other words, there is *NO* current plan on the books to invest in fire services.

To meet city policies for station road miles, staffing, and response times Station 99 and its apparatus need to be replaced immediately. In addition there should be 2 new stations on the drawing board *now* to meet the demands that the new MPD's will place on fire services.

Studies and planning need to be taking place to determine the appropriate apparatus needed now and in the upcoming years along with a means of financing them.

Planning and preparation need to be taking place now to bring staffing up to policy levels for both the present needs and the not too distant future.

It must be remembered that a significant commercial growth is expected in the City. This requires substantially different fire protection than for the current residential community that we live in. When will we need to buy that ladder truck? Where will we house it? These are not inappropriate questions to be asking now.

Liability

In this litigious age there is certainly case history for public service providers to be held accountable for substandard levels of protection. While an entity can never be 100% protected from liability, it is certainly important to be able to show that due diligence has been performed in the prediction and provision of services.

Citizens have a right to expect a minimum level of service which is measured against written industry standards (e.g. NFPA), local standards (e.g. WAC), and the test of 'reasonableness' (would another reasonable entity in similar circumstances do likewise).

Conclusion

Like streets, utilities, and schools; fire protection is something that has to be addressed in a long term plan. Financing and upgrading of any of these facilities is something that just doesn't happen quickly.

I'm afraid that we have dropped the ball in regard to fire services and that we are way behind the curve. New demands are crashing in around us and we are in a reactive mode instead of a proactive one. I urge the City take on a renewed vigor in considering fire services, our present conditions, and upcoming demands.



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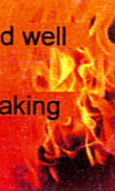
Case History

- Heart attack victims have 4-6 minutes
- Personal experience of aid being 7-9 minutes away
- It is 4.6 miles from a viable station to the City's east boundary
- It is 4 miles to the City core and school
- Normal travel time is 10 minutes
- Fire service is overextended



Financial Responsibility

- Black Diamond is careful and conservative
- No department, project, or staff need feel attacked by this report
- All spending has been worthy and well considered
- Thank you staff and Council for taking spending seriously



Fire is Job 1

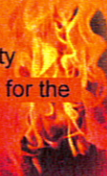
- With lives and property at stake fire protection is fundamental
- Law enforcement a close second
- Mundane services follow like
 - Schools
 - Water
 - Sewer
 - Streets





Fire Service Deficiencies

- Other than mergers there has been little consideration of fire service
- City must retain ownership of fire protection responsibility
 - No contract or MOU absolves the City
 - Not up to any other entity to look out for the City's best interests and planning



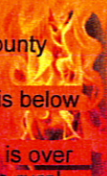
FD44 is stellar!

- Fire District 44 is doing a great job with what they have to work with
- *Let it be clear that I have no criticism of FD44*



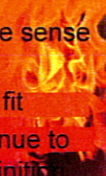
Baseline

- Capital Facilities Plan contains verbiage from FD44's own executive summary
- Several elements do not apply to Black Diamond
 - FD44 covers unincorporated King County area (except for Black Diamond)
 - Population density for most of FD44 is below 500/sq mile and classed as rural
 - Population density of Black Diamond is over 700/sq mile and cannot be classed as rural



Baseline continued

- City is covered by staffed/career station
- These factors put City into a different category
- Citing rural standards gives a false sense of security
- Higher standards are appropriate fit
- Impending development will continue to push City further out of "rural" definition





Staffing

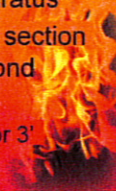
- City policy calls for 1.4 on-duty career firefighters per 1000 population
- Population of 4200 calls for a staff of 6
- The City is staffed by 2 firefighters 50% of the time
- Current staffing ratio is 0.25/1000
- Out-of-city staff cannot qualify as first responders



Station 99



- Beyond reasonable life
- Built in 1952 – 57 years old
- Too small for contemporary apparatus
- Washington Administrative Code section 296-305 sets standards well beyond station's existing conditions
 - Example: subsection 06509 calls for 3' clearance around apparatus



Station 99 continued

- Engine 99 is 28 years old – overdue for replacement
- A new engine wouldn't fit in the station
- WAC 296-305 also sets standards for apparatus and it's equipment



Station 99 continued

- No legal quarters exist at this station
- It cannot be staffed
- Few volunteers respond from Station 99
- Hence, few calls are answered by Station 99





Station 99 continued

- Station has been condemned and vacated since Jan 16th
- Business as usual has ensued
- No temporary arrangements were made
- Reveals a mind set that the station has been non-viable for some time



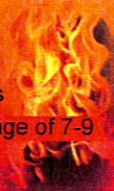
Station 99 continued

- Washington State Rating Bureau once rated Station 99 as Class A
- It could certainly no longer attain that rating
- It would rate as Class B if rated today



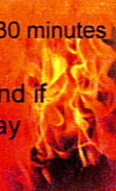
Response Time

- National Fire Protection Association part 1710 section 4.1.2.1.1 sets 4 minute response time
 - First fire engine for fire calls
 - First aid unit for aid calls
 - My case history showed 7-9 minutes
 - Department statistics show an average of 7-9 minutes



Response Time continued

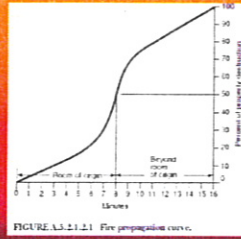
- NFPA 1710 section 4.1.2.1.1 also sets 8 minutes for a "full" response
 - Medics for an aid call
 - Commence pumping 400 GPM for 30 minutes without interruption for fire calls
- Other FD44 stations would respond if needed but are simply too far away





Response Time continued

- Quick attacks are vital
- Fire spreads logarithmically
- NFPA fire curve



Response Time continued

- NFPA section 4.1.2.1.2 requires these response times to be met 90% of the time
- NFPA section 4.1.2.1.3 requires an annual review of response times
- NFPA section 4.1.2.1.4 expects fire authority (not FD) to review response data every 4 years
 - Take steps to achieve compliance



Property Ratings

- Washington State Rating Bureau
- All property rated 1 – 10 for risk
- 1 is excellent fire protection
- 10 is virtually no fire protection
- Black Diamond properties 6 at best
- Large areas of City rate 8



Spending

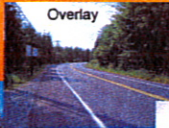
- Public Safety levy
- Spending is quite lopsided
- Police spending triples fire spending
- Police operating at \$1.7 million/year
- Fire operating at \$500 thousand/year
- Police generate \$300 thousand/year
- Spending offset is \$1.2 million





Spending continued

- Community Development alone outspent fire department by \$400 thousand this year



Spending continued

- Improvements (non operating)
 - Police weapons \$30k
 - Police boat \$56k
 - Springs Project \$1.3m
 - Court house remodel \$130k
 - Police technology \$100k
 - Police cars \$80k
 - Police records system \$250k



Spending continued

- Boat ramp \$300k
- Railroad Avenue \$1.5m
- Morgan Street sidewalk \$200k
- Aub/BD road overlay \$100k
- Skateboard park improvements \$25k
- BMX park \$20k
- **Fire department improvements \$0**
- Fire equipment reserve \$1k
 - 500 years to buy a fire truck



Planning

- Capital Facilities Plan provides **ZERO** fire dollars through end of plan in 2015
- No current plan is on the books to invest in fire service





Planning continued

- To meet policies of
 - Station road miles
 - Staffing
 - Response times
- Staff needs to be expanded
- Station 99 should be replaced now
- 2 new stations should be planned for MPD's
- Apparatus replacement/procurement scheduled
- Financing plan developed

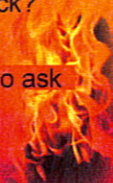


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Planning continued

- We are expecting commercial growth
- Different fire services required
- When will we need that ladder truck?
- Where will we house it?
- These are appropriate questions to ask

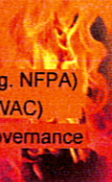


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Liability

- Reasonable expectation
 - All persons have the right to expect a minimum level of performance by public safety agencies
 - Some measures are
 - Following written industry standards (e.g. NFPA)
 - Following written local standards (e.g. WAC)
 - Would another reasonable person or governance perform similarly?



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Conclusion

- Streets, utilities, schools, & fire protection all take time and money to develop
- Planning must be done in the long term
- Black Diamond is behind the curve in fire services
- We are in a reactive position, not proactive



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Conclusion

- City leadership needs to take on a new vigor regarding fire services
 - Consider our current status
 - Consider impending growth & changes
 - Develop specific plans
 - Stations
 - Apparatus
 - Staff
 - Develop short and long range financial plans that support fire service



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Thank you for your
attention!



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