

FCO & BFB Captains meeting

10.00am Thursday, 30 March 2017

Minutes

1. Declaration of Opening –

President Ballard declared the meeting open at 10:05

2. Record of attendance –

2.1 Members present

- Leigh Ballard, Shire President
- Nathan Walker, Councillor

2.2 Staff attending

- Aaron Cook, CEO
- Azhar Awang, Executive Manager Development & Regulatory Services
- Guy Maley, Ranger
- Wendy Russell, Executive Support Officer
- Niel Mitchell, Project Manager Merger

2.3 Fire Control Officers

- Richard Chadwick
- Alastair McDougall
- Mark Hoysted
- David Hayes
- Pip Porter
- Stuart Moyses
- Bill Warren
- Russell Ashley
- John Eckersley
- Barry Hardie
- Brenton Hardie
- Vern Gibson

2.4 Others

- Simon Vogel FESA
- John Bowman Narrogin Police

2.5 Apologies

- Jon Rick
- Kieran Quartermaine
- Daryl Kilpatrick
- Tim Shepherd
- David Walker



3. **Confirmation of minutes –**

The Minutes of the Fire Control Officer (FCO) Meeting held on 27 June 2016
Were confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings.

4. **Business –**

4.1 Chief Fire Control Officer's Report (Richard Chadwick)

- District Officers Advisory Meetings
- Local Emergency Management Committee Meetings

Discussion –

David Hayes is currently working on two new fire trucks one should be ready before next season.

- An electric/ auto rewind reel to be fitted to trucks after delivery (estimated cost \$2,500).
- Communications- could be improved with the addition of some hand held radios. Look into an application through ESL for some hand held radios
- return of radios from Nepowie, one base radio and one truck radio,

4.2 Fuel cards

Comment –

- The program is intended for the members of each Brigade
- Required to be administered by each Brigade Captain
- Shire administration is excluded from participation by the terms of the Grant Program
- Years 1 and 2 of the Scheme must be spent by 30 June 2017
- Enquiries indicate a complete unwillingness by Department of Regional Development to consider a review of the conditions

4.3 ID Cards

Attachment – State Emergency Management Committee handout of accepted identification.

Comment –

- Euan Ferguson, Special Investigator, Waroona Special Enquiry recommended –
The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) to issue a photo identification card to DFES members, members of Bush Fire Brigades, volunteer emergency services, Incident Management Teams .
- Wayne Gregson, DFES Commissioner in a letter of 2 Sep 2016 regarding the recommendation –
Notwithstanding the recommendation, DFES does not have legislative authority for the administration of Bush Fire Brigades. It is therefore appropriate that DFES seek your consent for DFES to issue your Bush Fire Brigade members with an identity card.
- DFES commenced a program of roll out, if Council wished to, but at that time the Shire advised DFES the recommendation would be further considered in early 2017.
- *Emergency Management Act s.71*, gives Police the final say in access to emergency situations, and the authority to act as the hazard management authority.
- They need some certainty that any person or vehicle heading towards an emergency event is actually legitimate –
 - o reports from other places include – fire “tourists”, people attempting to return for inadequate reason after leaving the area, looting etc.
 - o what appears to be a farm unit, with or without a tank on the back is inadequate as identification
 - o Incident Control – can liaise with local Police regarding access

Discussion –

There was discussion on how to identify those who have a valid reason to be at the scene of a fire. All volunteer bush fire brigade members should have an identity card. Even if you have identification if you do not have the required PPE you may not be given access to the fire operations area. Recommended that some PPE be carried in the vehicles.

It was also suggested that a table top exercise be conducted, in order to check our members readiness in an emergency.

It was agreed look into obtaining identification stickers for vehicles that may legitimately be required to be present at a fire.

4.4 Prescribed burn planning.

Attachment – DFES example basic prescribed fire plan package.

Comment –

- Example Basic Prescribed Fire Plan (Basic PFP) package, developed in response to the Report of the Special Inquiry into the January 2016 Waroona Fire (Ferguson Report).
- The package aims to provide prescribed fire practitioners with a systematic approach for the planning and safe conduct of less complex prescribed burns across the state, partially addressing a recommendation of the Ferguson Report.
- For information.

Noted

4.5 Fire reports

Comment –

- Unable to satisfactorily complete the 2015/2016 grants questionnaire as no details were reported by members.
- No reports received for 2016/2017 as yet, although one is known to be coming
- Without the reports, ability to bid and compete successfully for grants is severely hampered

Discussion –

- Alistair McDougall advised that he kept an incident log and that a copy would be provided to the shire.
- Office is able to collate the information for reporting purposes, but need to be advised of the details

The Ranger has copies of incident/fire report books from DFES and he will hand them out.

4.6 Highbury Fire Shed (Pip Porter)

Comment –

- Application was made for both a shed and fire truck to DFES
- Advice received that the Regional Superintendent did not support the application

Discussion – advice was provided that although applications have been made in the past, the applications did not provide adequate documentation including a needs assessment and therefore were not considered. The application this year provided all of the required supporting documentation.

4.7 Burning dates (Bill Warren)

- Requested to be listed for discussion

Comment –

- were reviewed and agreed by both former Shire and former Town in April-May 2016
- Approved by Minister under delegated authority in June 2016
- Published in Government Gazette and Narrogin Observer in July 2016
- Advised at FCO meeting of 17 August 2016
- Currently –
 - o Restricted – 1 October to 1 May
 - o Prohibited – 1 November to 1 March
- Firebreaks – to be in place and maintained from 1 November to 1 May
- Any change of burning periods desired will need to be approved by Council, then the Minister (burning periods) and finally, published in Government Gazette and Narrogin Observer

Discussion – The signs at the entry to the shire have old dates on them Guy Maley to chase them up and have the correct dates put on them.

It was also discussed that no permits should be issued after 1 November

Resolution: moved

“That no burning permits be issued after 1 November each year except to create fire breaks around homes and sheds or exceptional circumstances with the approval of the CBFCO”

Moved – Mark Hoysted Seconded Guy Maley carried

Due to the mild weather it was requested that the restricted burning period be varied for this year.

Agreed that the restricted burning period be varied for this year only and that it conclude on 17 April 2017.

Shire President and CBFCO to arrange under delegated authority of Council.

4.8 Training

Comment –

- Training is being arranged for –
 - o Fire Control Officer Course – FCOs, may be a requirement if BFB Local Law adopted, Council may agree to phase in the training requirements.
 - o Australian Integrated Incident Management System – 1/2 day
 - particularly for incident control
 - free on-line free course available
 - o Basic Fire Fighter Course – to be available to all volunteers
 - o Radio operations – could incorporate into FCO course and BFF course
 - o This training to be available to all residents
- Targeting July and August for delivery
- Fire Ground Operations –
 - o for Shire staff to operate plant at a fire ground – grader & loader the main ones
 - o Staff are not permitted fire front plant operations without the training
 - o Coordinate with Torre Evans and Gary Rasmussen
 - o If there are sufficient places, may be able to open to local contractors etc.

Discussion – There is never a really good time for training but we will aim for July/August

4.9 Draft Bush Fire Brigades Local Law Attachment – redrafted Bush Fire Brigades Local Law

Comment –

- Local Law is required by the *Bush Fires Act*.
- Draft put to Council last year was deferred for further consideration.
- New draft planned to be put to Council 12 April 2017.
- See new draft attached.
- Minimum 6 week period for public comment prior to further consideration by Council.

Noted

4.10 What's App (Stuart Moyses)

- Suggestion to look at another form of communication to FCO's and volunteers such as "What's App" which was used by the Wagin Shire this year with a lot of success.

Comment –

- Dumbleyung also use it
- Was also mentioned at the August meeting last year by Greg Cook and Dave Gossage

Discussion – Shire will liaise the IT staff to look into what resources are required to use with the What's App

4.11 Permits, Protocols, Procedures (Alastair McDougall)

- Requested to be listed for discussion

Comment –

- *Bush Fires Act* –
 - o s.18(6) – requires a permit to be issued prior to burning off
 - penalty for breach – \$4,500 for a first offence, \$10,000 subsequently
 - o s.24B – permit issued may be required to be produced to – DFES officer, FCO, Brigade officer, Police Officer, authorised Shire employee
 - if not produced immediately – the person may be required to identify who did issue the permit
 - if permit not produced within 7 days or person issuing identified – potential penalty breach of \$500
- A number of internal protocols and procedures, were developed for the office, and circulated to FCOs for comment and feedback. The intention was to ensure that office personnel had as much support as possible, had sufficient information when contacted by concerned residents.

Discussion – To ensure that Shire staff are aware of burning happening within the Shire please ensure that copies of all permits are given to the Ranger and Alistair McDougall, Deputy CBFEO.

4.12 Fire Safety (Guy Maley)

- PPE and all other safety equipment (warning beacons, lights and high vis)

Discussion – Need to purchase some more PPE. The Ranger will look into sources when he returns from leave. Brigades to advise him of their requirements.

4.13 Fire Control Officer Appointments

Attachment – current Fire Control Officer appointments

Comment –

- Current appointments are to 30 June 2017 – reappointment required prior to next fire season.
- Appointments need to be renewed.
- Possible application of mandatory training as per draft BFB Local Law if approved by Council.

- Suggestion made that Captain and Secretary of each BFB should be an FCO –
 - o Captain and Secretary are Brigade election/decision – although may be appointed by Council
 - o FCOs are required to be Council appointment
 - o While it may be normal practice that FCO nominees are always appointed, Council must consider a range of factors for FCO appointment
 - o recommend against any requirement in local law or policy that they must be the same
- FCO's not wishing to continue –
 - o Cameron White – advised not wishing to continue October 2016
 - o David Walker – Advised by Nathan Walker
- People prepared to accept appointment as an FCO –
 - o A number of people were approached, but all declined for various reasons
 - o Nathan Walker has advised his willingness
- Nominations are to be presented to Council for appointment –
 - o Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (CBFCO)
 - o Deputy Chief FCO –
 - o Fire Control Officers –
 - Consider not having more than 2 FCOs per Brigade area

Discussion –

Chief Bush Fire Control Officer (CBFCO)

Richard Chadwick was nominated as CBFCO - Accepted nomination

Vern Gibson was nominated as CBFCO - Declined nomination

Richard Chadwick recommended as CBFCO

Deputy Chief FCO

Alistair McDougall was nominated as Deputy Chief FCO.

Alistair McDougall recommended as DCBFCO

Fire Control

As currently listed

Weather Committee

As currently listed

Recommended that if there is more than FCO in a brigade one be the captain and the other the 1st Lieutenant

Requested that a letter of appreciation be sent to David Walker for his service to the community as an FCO.

5. **New business of an urgent nature introduced by decision of the meeting**

5.1 Future Meetings

Could future meetings please be later in the day, not at 10:00 am.

5.2 Ockley BFB

Have an application for funding for upgrading of the fast attack unit to be forwarded to Azhar

5.3 Old Yellow Fire Unit

Richard now owns the old yellow fire truck and it is available if required

5.4 DPAW

Looking into a bigger tank at the airport.

5.5 Inspection of standpipes

All of the standpipes need to be inspected. This should probably be conducted annually.

5.6 Firebreaks

Please let the Ranger know if there are any firebreaks needed

5.7 '000' agreement

We need to look into group calls/teleconferencing. Talk to DFES Regional Officer about what DFES use for group call and teleconferences etc.

Those to be included in any group call arrangement –

- Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
- Deputy Chief Bush Fire Control Officer
- Ranger
- Brenton Hardie
- Nathan Walker
- Pip Porter
- Murray Saunders

6. Next Meeting

Should be held before harvest- about October.

7. Closure of meeting

There being no further business the Shire President declared the meeting closed at 12:37