

**WENATCHEE VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT,
CHELAN COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 1 & DOUGLAS COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 2
MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 13, 2023**

Commissioners: Commissioner Castellente, Commissioner Dormaier, Commissioner Fennell, Commissioner Johnson, Commissioner Zimmerman

Excused Absent: Commissioner de Mestre

Guests: Rock Island Mayor Randy Agnew and Administrator Jim Zumini

Staff: Fire Chief Brian Brett, Deputy Chief Kurt Blanchard, Battalion Chief Pete Rigelman, Hillary Heard and Cindy Blaufuss

- I. Called to Order: 2:00 pm.
- II. Additions and Deletions to Agenda: Two items were added as Unfinished Business:
 - Fire Marshal Services
 - Parade Vehicles
- III. Public Comments: None.
- IV. Consent Agenda: Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve the consent agenda items. There was a second from Commissioner Castellente. The consent agenda items were approved.
- V. Correspondence: The department has installed 83 grabrails and plans to install 17 more. Additional grant-funded grabrails have been requested. The project is receiving positive feedback from the community.

VI. Staff Reports:

Administration: Wildfire Liaison Hillary Heard updated the Commissioners on \$150,000 of grant funding to plant native species along the Methow Street burn scar. This will be a pilot project that may lead to funding opportunities for other areas, such as Broadview.

IAFF: Fill the Boot raised \$6,200 for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. The Local is coordinating early detection and screening clinics for all members of the department and their families. More details will be distributed.

Volunteers: The Volunteers will move their office to Fire Station 1. Open houses are planned at Fire Station 3 with a push-in ceremony and at Station 1 in conjunction with Fire Prevention Week.

VII. Unfinished Business

- Facilities:

Stemilt: The Department will move forward with the purchase agreement with the caveat the purchase will be refunded if the County does not issue an exemption.

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve the purchase of the Stemilt parcel for \$105,000. There was a second from Commissioner Zimmerman. The purchase was approved.

Fire Station 17: Graybeal is designing a new sign for the facility that will include language warning of burn training and helicopter operations. The department will contact area developers to request they disclose burn training and helicopter operations on their real estate agreements.

Fire Station 41: The new owners have requested information, pictures, and artifacts from the former fire station. The Commissioners agreed to loan articles provided they are labeled and documented as belonging to the fire department.

- Apparatus:

Ladder 4: The Ladder is scheduled for pick up at the end of the month. The mechanics are attending the Mechanics Conference in Wenatchee this week.

- Aviation: The FAA has registered Fire Station 17 as a landing zone; an application for Fire Station 11 will be submitted as well.
- Personnel: The Facilities Technician and Mechanic positions are posted and open.
- Fire Protection & Fire Marshal Services: Working to standardize the fire protection agreements throughout Chelan and Douglas Counties. The department may pay more for utilities in some areas as a result. Chief Brett would also like to standardize the fire marshal agreements; he proposes providing the services for 100% of the permit fees. Each entity has established its own fee schedule. This would be a separate agreement, not part of the fire protection agreement.

Commissioner Castellente made a motion to give Chief Brett latitude in developing an agreement for fire marshal services throughout the jurisdiction. There was a second from Commissioner Johnson. The motion was approved.

- Parade Vehicles: The 46 Chevy belonged to Chelan County Fire District 2 before it was annexed into CCFD1. The ladder wagon is believed to be museum owned. Both are being stored at the former Fire Station 3.

Policy Review & Update: Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve the policy updates as presented. There was a second from Commissioner Zimmerman. The policies were approved.

Updated job descriptions will be presented in lieu of policies at the October meeting.

VIII. New Business

- City of Rock Island: The Rock Island Mayor and Administrator said the city is interested in purchasing the former Fire Station 3 at a reduced price; the facility would be used as a community center. They explained Rock Island is a growing community and there is a need for a community facility. The city would seek grant-funding to renovate the facility.

The Commissioners explained the station flooded earlier in the year and it is not in usable condition. The facility is currently being used for parade vehicle storage. A market analysis estimates the value at \$295,000-\$310,000. The department would need to recoup the costs associated with the station, including the recent flood damage.

Commissioner Fennell requested a meeting with the city to discuss the permit process and expenses associated with construction of the new Fire Station 3. Jim Zumini said he would like to review and explain the sequence of events with the engineer, the city's process and timeline. Utility expenses and fees will also be reviewed.

- Fire Benefit Charge Analysis: Chief Brett has reviewed the Fire Benefit Charge database with the consultant. Residential occupancies have been divided into three categories based on size. Those valued under \$50,000 would not pay a benefit charge. Commercial occupancies are divided into five classes. The consultant said it is an equitable distribution.

After voter approval, the Fire Commissioners would set the Fire Benefit Charge annually; it can be up to 60 percent of the budgeted revenue. It is an appealing option to mitigate the one-percent revenue increase, and it is an equitable method to cost share.

Some type of excess levy is needed to maintain current service levels and catch up with inflation.

Chief Brett hopes to distribute a Finance Summary next week that will illustrate the department's finances with a Fire Benefit Charge and a levy lid lift set at 107%.

The Commissioners agreed to a Special Meeting on Wednesday, October 11, and a rescheduled Regular Meeting on October 18. Both will be at Fire Station 1 and begin at 2:00 pm.

IX. Other Business and Good of the Order:

- Commissioners Fennell, Johnson, and de Mestre plan to attend the Fire Commissioners Conference.
- Commissioner Johnson attended the September 11 ceremony and was proud of the department's participation.
- Commissioner Dormaier reported his neighbor was told by the "Fire Marshal" the department would not respond in the event of a wildfire.

X. Adjourn – 4:45

Respectfully submitted, Cindy Blaufuss