

**WENATCHEE VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT,
CHELAN COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 1 & DOUGLAS COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 2
MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 18, 2023**

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

Guests: Mike Hughes

Staff: Fire Chief Brian Brett, Battalion Chief Pete Rigelman, and Cindy Blaufuss

I. Called to Order: 2:00 pm.

II. Additions and Deletions to Agenda: Two items were added as Unfinished Business.

- Campaign Support
- Under Finances, an executive session to review collective bargaining negotiations per RCW 42.30.140(4)(a).

III. Public Comments:

Mike Hughes addressed the Board.

Mr. Hughes stated the Wildland-Urban Interface around the city is problematic and that improvements are not being made. He added there are red-topped hydrants, indicating a fire flow below 500 gallons per minute in vulnerable areas of the interface. The fire department should figure out a solution, or at least be aware of the issue.

Commissioner Fennell explained the fire department has a full-time Wildfire Liaison and several programs to mitigate wildfire risks, including a shake roof replacement grant.

Commissioner Fennell reminded Mr. Hughes that the fire department does not own the hydrants. Battalion Chief Pete Rigelman reviewed the I-Spy fire flow data for the hydrants in question and stated the fire flows in the area are 800-1000 gallons per minute.

Commissioner de Mestre agreed inadequate fire flows would be an issue and offered to follow up on Mr. Hughes' concerns. Commissioner de Mestre provided Mr. Hughes with his department business card that included his personal phone number and email contact information.

Chief Brett will ask the Fire Marshal to follow up with the PUD and have the hydrants painted the appropriate color, if needed.

Mr. Hughes also stated he hosted a public education booth at the KPQ Home Show two years ago and did not receive any support from the fire chief. It was a public safety booth with an emphasis on fire safety.

IV. Consent Agenda: Commissioner de Mestre made a motion to approve the consent agenda items. There was a second from Commissioner Castellente. The consent agenda items were approved.

V. Correspondence: Chief Brett summarized a letter previously received from Mr. Hughes.

VI. Staff Reports:

Administration: Chief Brett reported the memorial service for Ron Roy went very well on Saturday. The Incident Management Team did a great job planning and coordinating the service. Chief Brett and Hillary Heard presented information on the Shrub Steppe project during a Resiliency Roundtable.

IAFF: BC Rigelman reported that 20-30 members received the health scans offered last week; he thanked the department for the use of the Station 4 Training Room. The Local has been invited to bowl with the Sunshine League, a special needs bowling league.

Volunteers: The Volunteer Association assisted with the memorial service for Chief Roy.

VII. Unfinished Business

- Facilities:

Fire Station 3: Chief Brett recommends dedicating Fire Station 3 to the citizens of Rock Island.

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to dedicate Fire Station 3 to the Community of Rock Island. There was a second from Commissioner Zimmerman. The motion was approved.

Stemilt: The department paid \$5,000 in earnest money for the parcel; it will be refunded if a Certificate of Exemption is not approved.

Fire Station 17: The attorney recommends an updated sign that warns burning and aviation operations are conducted at the facility. The department is pursuing an exemption to the 25-foot setback requirement for posting the sign.

Fire Station 1: No bids were submitted for the asphalt project. It will be rebid in the spring.

Improvements are planned for the Conex behind the station to create facilities storage and workspace. There is most likely capacity in the 2023 budget to upgrade the insulation and electrical; costs are estimated at \$18,000. Otherwise, the improvements will be included in the 2024 budget.

Commissioner de Mestre made a motion to authorize up to \$20,000 for upgrades to the Conex at Fire Station 1, if budget allows. There was a second from Commissioner Zimmerman. The motion was approved.

- Apparatus:

Ladder 4: The Department received Ladder 4 at the beginning of October. The change orders totaled \$76,000; the Ladder was ordered without full specifications and the suspension needed lowered to fit into Fire Station 1. The Commissioner had approved up to \$50,000 in change orders for the project. Ladder 10 will likely require change orders to match the suspension and height on Ladder 4.

Commissioner Fennell advised Chief Brett to request the additional funding necessary to meet department needs but stay within budget.

- Aviation:

1MR finished the season with 91.5 flight hours. The primary inspection will be scheduled in the spring. The helicopter tow cart has been ordered.

The flight insurance for 1MR is \$48,000 for \$1 million in coverage. The agent quoted a price of \$62,000 to increase the coverage to \$1.5 million. Commissioner Dormaier recommends contacting the insurance agent regarding an umbrella policy to bridge the department's risk.

- Personnel:

Jay O'Connell has moved to the Firefighter/Facilities Tech position. Ten applications were received for the Fleet Mechanic position. The selection process will begin next week. Commissioner Johnson asked if an EVT Certification is required for the Fleet Mechanic. Chief Brett explained it is not required, but it is a career development path.

- Position Descriptions: The Commissioners discussed the proposed Position Descriptions.

Commissioner de Mestre made a motion to approve the five position descriptions with revisions to the ARFF Division Chief and Fleet Mechanic as discussed. There was a second from Commissioner Johnson. The motion was approved.

- Finances:

Chief Brett presented a draft 2024 budget with a one-percent increase in tax revenue and an estimated \$330,000 in new construction revenue. The 2024 budget is based on the current CBA proposal. Chief Brett reviewed the proposed 2024 facilities projects and the current 2023 projects. A facilities replacement fund has not been established.

A separate helicopter budget will be presented in the spring.

Commissioner Fennell asked about other revenue streams. Chief Brett is working on a fee schedule for Fire Marshal duties in East Wenatchee.

An Executive Session was called at 4:23, per RCW 42.30.140(4)(a) to review collective bargaining negotiations. The Executive Session was scheduled for 15 minutes but extended an additional 30 minutes. The public meeting reconvened at 5:08.

The November 8 meeting will include a public hearing to review the 2024 budget and revenue sources.

- Campaign Support:

A photograph of a political candidate with a department vehicle was posted in his campaign advertising. The candidate was asked to remove the photograph, and he did comply with that request. The Commissioners sent a thank you letter to the candidate for removing the photograph. The photograph was subsequently reposted with the department logo removed.

Commissioner Fennell made a motion to send out a press release stating the department remains neutral with regard to endorsements and any suggestion the department endorses any one candidate is without department authorization. There was a second from Commissioner Castellente. The motion was approved.

VIII. Other Business and Good of the Order: None.

IX. Adjourn - 5:15 pm

Respectfully submitted, Cindy Blaufuss