

**WENATCHEE VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT,  
CHELAN COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 1 & DOUGLAS COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 2  
MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 13, 2024**

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

Absent: Commissioner de Mestre

Guests: Ettore Castellente, Donn Etherington

Personnel: Fire Chief Brian Brett, Deputy Chief Andy Davidson, Battalion Chief Pete Rigelman, Assistant Fire Marshal Scott White, Captain Dustin Armitage, and Cindy Blaufuss

I. Called to Order: 2:00 pm.

II. Additions and Deletions to Agenda: The Executive Session was moved to the end of the agenda. No action will be taken following the Executive Session.

III. Public Comments:

- A citizen commented that the department needs to find ways to lower funding because it creates a burden on households and the public.

IV. Consent Agenda: Commissioner Johnson reviewed the Warrants earlier in the week. He made a motion to approve the consent agenda items as presented. There was a second from Commissioner Zimmerman. The consent agenda was approved.

V. Correspondence: The Broadview neighborhood is planning a Firewise event for May. The neighborhood received a \$5,000 grant from DNR for fuels reduction work.

Washington State Rating Bureau (WSRB) will be on site tomorrow to begin their evaluation of the department.

Work on the Strategic Plan will begin next week with an external stakeholders meeting. The Plan will likely be finished by the end of May.

VI. Staff Reports:

1. Administration: Deputy Chief Andy Davidson reported there were 5,621 calls for service in 2023. Based on the number of calls for service this year, he expects call volume to increase about 7% this year.
2. IAFF: Peter Rigelman reported the State is considering legislation to create a Line of Duty Death Memorial; DNR is the lead agency.
3. Volunteers: The Volunteers staffed the KPQ Home Show and had good attendance.

VII. Unfinished Business

1. Facilities:

Capital Improvement Plan: The department received three proposals to develop a Capital Improvement Plan. Chief Brett recommends selecting DOH Associates.

Commissioner Evenhus made a motion to select DOH Associates to develop the department's Capital Improvement Plan. There was a second from Commissioner Johnson. The motion was approved.

Fire Station 1: Bidding for the concrete replacement project closes tomorrow.

Fire Station 3: The contractor is refinishing the apparatus bay floors this week.

Fire Station 11: Currently soliciting bids to paint the apparatus bays.

Fire Station 12: The duct work project is complete.

Fire Station 17:

- Ardurra was selected to provide engineering services for the proposed helipad.
- The new sign was installed at Station 17.
- Installation of an exhaust removal is planned for the Shop.
- LocalTel is updating their quote for security cameras after meeting with Chief Brett.
- Commissioner Johnson suggested following up on the fencing recommendation.

Station Rebranding: Graybeal is providing a quote to update the signs at all stations.

2. Apparatus: Two 1-ton GMC trucks were ordered from Sangster Motors for use as Rescue vehicles. The engine specifications should be finished next week.
3. Aviation: Northwest Helicopter is completing the final work on 1PR. 1MR is at Northwest Helicopters for its primary inspection. The contract with DNR will begin June 1. Training is scheduled for April.
4. Personnel: The department received eighty-five applications for the Firefighter position. A start date in April is planned.

5. Policy Review:

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve the policy revisions as presented. There was a second from Commissioner Zimmerman. The policy revisions were approved.

6. Finance: Washington State law limits the department's tax revenue to a 1% increase each year which causes the levy rate to decrease every year. Historically, fire districts have requested levy lid lifts to reset the levy rate to recoup the tax revenue generated by increases in the assessed value. Another option is creating a Fire Benefit Charge (FBC). If approved by the voters, the levy rate would be reduced from \$1.50 to \$1.00 per thousand dollars of assessed value and an FBC would be calculated based on the sizes and risks of the "burnable" square footage.

The Fire Commissioners would set the FBC each year. Most homeowners would pay the same or less than their current levy. The database currently has ten commercial categories, one category for single-family homes, and one for multi-family housing. Reductions for fire sprinklers are currently being factored into the database. The FBC is capped at 60% of the budget.

Twenty jurisdictions around the state have approved an FBC. It must be approved by the voters, initially by 60% of the voters and then renewed every six years with 50% approval.

Chief Brett is happy to meet with members of the community to answer questions and look up their parcels in the database to see how the FBC would impact them personally.

7. Executive Session: At 3:10 the Board adjourned to an Executive Session to evaluate personnel performance (per RCW 42.30.110(1)(g)). Twenty minutes was estimated for the executive session; the public meeting reconvened at 3:22.

VIII. Adjourn – 3:22 pm

Respectfully submitted, Cindy Blaufuss