

**WENATCHEE VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT,
CHELAN COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 1 & DOUGLAS COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 2
MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 10, 2024**

Commissioners: Commissioner de Mestre, Commissioner Dormaier, Commissioner Evenhus, Commissioner Johnson, Commissioner Zimmerman

Guest: Ettore Castellente, Fernanda Santos, Angelina Santos, Jefferson Robbins, Jenny Rodas

Personnel: Fire Chief Brian Brett, Deputy Chief Andy Davidson, Battalion Chief Pete Rigelman, Lieutenant Dennis Wheeler, PIO Kay McKellar, and Terri Woods

I. Called to Order: 2:00 pm.

II. Additions and Deletions to Agenda: None.

III. Public Comments: None.

IV. Consent Agenda: Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve the consent agenda items as presented. There was a second from Commissioner Zimmerman. The consent agenda items were approved.

V. Correspondence:

- S&P Global Ratings raised the long-term rating to 'AA' from 'AA-' for Chelan County Fire District 1's existing limited-tax general obligation (GO) bonds. Douglas County Fire District 2 remained at an 'AA' rating as well. The upgrades reflect the expectation that the district's financial health and fiscal planning will remain strong under a shared governance structure.
- The Washington State Auditor is finishing the financial and performance audits for Douglas County Fire District 2 from January 1, 2020, through December 31, 2022. Based on preliminary communications, Chief Brett discussed with the Board the overall results and conclusions for areas examined.

For the Accountability Report, SAO issued a fair presentation of the District's financial statements with its regulatory basis of accounting, concluding that the District complied with applicable state laws, regulations, and policies while providing adequate controls over safeguarding public resources. The audit team noted that the District incorrectly interpreted the RCW pertaining to the surplus sale of the Ladder truck to another government entity and failed to advertise and hold a public hearing.

For the Financial Report SAO concluded that the District presented the financial statements fairly, in all material respects the cash and investments and its changes. The audit team noted a deficiency in controls with the reporting of interfund transfers on the year-end financial statement for 2022. The error was corrected in the annual report with recommendations to verify and eliminate all interfund transfers within reported funds in future reports.

VI. Staff Reports:

1. Administration:

Chief Brett:

- Chief Brett presented Fernanda Santos with the Certificate of Heroism for actions of outstanding bravery and self-sacrifice in the face of imminent danger when she provided a safe escape for herself and her younger siblings during a house fire on November 21, 2023. The Volunteer Association presented a challenge coin and gift cards during the meeting.

Chief Brett reported on behalf of Deputy Chief Blanchard:

- The Emergency Preparedness course is slated to start January 18 with In-Home Survival. Go Bags will be discussed with advice on emergency home kits and sheltering in place. Future classes will be presented once a month through May on Home Fire Safety, Evacuation Levels, Smoke Alarms/Extinguishers, and Wildland Interface/ Defensible Space. All are being provided free of charge with classes located at Station 1 from 6:00-7:30 pm.

Deputy Chief Davidson reported:

- Review of call volume for 2023 with yearend incident counts and a breakdown by Type. 5,590 major incident responses, down from the previous year. Station 10 was the busiest with 1,526 major incidents and Station 1 followed close behind with 1,411.
- Chief Davidson reported the training hours for yearend with 22,000 hours of training in 2023.

Chief Brett reported on behalf of Chief Lindemann:

- Chief Brett advised Ladder 4 is in service with appreciation to Chief Lindemann for all his hard work to execute the buildout.
- Ladder 10 will match Ladder 4, standardizing the department's ladder trucks. Ladder 10 is scheduled for completion in 2025.

2. IAFF:

- Battalion Chief Rigelman reported Guns and Hoses is set for Saturday January 20 at 4:00 pm. Links are available for a portion of the ticket sales to support the Guns and Hoses foundation. A Tug of War between Fire and Police is slated during intermission.
- Galleri Multi-Cancer Early Detection Testing is available for anyone affiliated with the department December 19 at Station 4. A simple blood draw detects several types of cancer in the earliest stages by detecting DNA fragments in the blood.

3. Volunteers:

- Dennis Wheeler reported the Association is working on a higher level of participation as well as a name change to the Scholarship Program with the Community Foundation.

VII. Unfinished Business

1. Facilities:

Station 2: A remodel of the training room at Station 2 is needed to avoid double bunking for fill-in ARFF staffing. Commissioner Johnson advised against moving the training room up into the tower as it is extremely disruptive with the radio traffic and chatter of a working airport. The Board discussed remodeling the training room into a multipurpose room as the cost was nominal. Chief Brett will collaborate with the Port and report back to the Board.

Station 11: The lease with the Chelan County Sheriff is up at the end of May with an expected request for a 1-year extension. The contract will likely be available for the Board's approval at the February Meeting with a 5% increase for the temporary arrangement.

Station 17: A survey has been completed at Malaga with a new sign location found opposite the prior location which meets County specifications; this will result in better visibility. Jordan Kunz will be lead contact on a Request for Statement of Qualifications (RSQ) for the construction of a Helipad to be advertised.

Capital Improvement Plan: Chief Brett has drafted a Request for Qualifications for Architecture Services to develop a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Deliverables include defining the CIP scope, identifying projects, and calculating preliminary cost estimates.

Stemilt: Stemilt parcel closing almost complete.

Exhaust Removal: Station 4's apparatus exhaust system is complete. Station 17 and Station 11 are also in need of exhaust systems.

2. Apparatus:

Ladder 4: Ladder 4 is being acclimated to the community.

Engine 12: Specifications are beginning for replacement of Engine 12. The older KME is nearing its service life, currently used for backup. Reminder Station 12 has low clearance.

3. Aviation:

Annual cost of \$5,500 to increase CIAW's insured value on both 1MR and 1PR to \$2.5 million each. Gallagher has been contacted to increase replacement value as well. Gallagher has not found coverage for lost revenue but will continue to look. Chief Brett reported 1PR is close to completion with Captain Kunz and Firefighter Stone working to get both ships carded for the season. The final budget will be presented to the Board for approval in February.

4. Personnel:

Firefighter Shimek has completed probation. A recognition ceremony is planned for Friday January 26.

Push-In ceremony is in the works for Ladder 4, date to be determined as weather improves.

Department Deputy Chief and Captain promotional processes are in process.

Firefighter position announced January 8. Application packets are due February 15, 2024 with a start date of April 22, 2024. Washington State Fire Training Academy starts May 2, 2024.

5. Policy Review:

Article II, Policy 22 - Mandatory Overtime: The Board agreed to leave the Mandatory Overtime Policy as is with agreement to closely monitor and address any issues.

Commissioner Zimmerman made a motion to approve all six of the Policies as presented with language name change as needed. There was a second from Commissioner Johnson. The policies were approved.

6. Finance: The fire benefit charge was further discussed with an update on the progress presented by Chief Brett. Exception codes were discussed along with website tools that can be utilized for the public to determine individual cost by parcel. Training with the staff on familiarization with the program will be scheduled as well as using the Department's social media outlet to provide information and answer questions. Chief Brett will have more information to share with the Board at the February Meeting.

7. Interlocal Agreement – City of Rock Island Fire Protection

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve the Agreement with a second from Commissioner Zimmerman. The Agreement was approved.

VIII. New Business

1. Interlocal Agreement – Douglas County Sewer District No. 1 Fire Protection

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve the Agreement with a second from Commissioner Zimmerman. The Agreement was approved.

2. Position Description Review

Chief Brett is currently collaborating on the position descriptions. The Board suggested an annual Driver's License verification and a requirement for Battalion Chiefs to maintain their EMT certification.

3. Policy Review Discussion

Tabled until the February meeting.

4. Performance Evaluation

Commissioner Fennell and Commissioner de Mestre worked on the Performance Evaluation form with minor changes to eliminate redundancy. Commissioner de Mestre would like to have the form distributed to the Board including past Commissioner Castellente before the February Meeting. Commissioner Evenhus would like to participate to learn more about the process but has no reference to provide input.

IX. Other Business and Good of the Order:

Personnel met in Waterville on Monday to work on the Douglas County Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The Plan will address wildfire response, community preparedness, hazard mitigation, structure protection and local community needs. The Plan is scheduled for completion by June of 2025.

Chief Brett will explore funding options for electronic reader boards at Stations 1 and 11.

Congratulations to Commissioners Fennell's daughter Lexi, she is a finalist in the 2024 Apple Blossom Royal Court.

Chief Brett would like to schedule a time to celebrate and thank former Commissioner Castellente for his dedicated service.

X. Adjourn – 2:52 pm

Respectfully submitted, Terri Woods