

**WENATCHEE VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT,
CHELAN COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 1 & DOUGLAS COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 2
MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 10, 2025**

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

Absent: Commissioner Evenhus

Personnel: Fire Chief Brian Brett, Deputy Chief Andy Davidson, Deputy Chief Kurt Blanchard, Deputy Chief Brandon Kunz, Battalion Chief Pete Rigelman, Captain Jerry Lopez, Captain Jacob Toevs and Cindy Blaufuss

Guests: Alicia Lopez, Kai Toevs

I. Call to Order: 1:00 pm.

II. Additions and Deletions to Agenda: None.

III. Public Comments: None.

IV. Consent Agenda: Commissioner Evenhus reviewed the warrants this month, no issues were identified.

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve the consent agenda items. There was a second from Commissioner Zimmerman. The consent agenda items were approved.

V. Correspondence: Correspondence includes the Environmental Impact Statement for the Mission Ridge Expansion and local TIF meeting notices. All other correspondence was distributed via email.

VI. Staff Reports:

1. Administration: Chief Brett

- Chief Brett introduced newly promoted Captains Jerry Lopez and Jacob Toevs; Captain Donne Etherington was unable to attend. Each Captain celebrated their promotion at a shift-level badge pinning ceremony with their families.
- The annual alumni event is tomorrow, September 11, at the American Legion. The department will present a plaque to honor retired Fire Chief Vergil Murren.
- There have not been any SAFER grant awards made. The department has made reservations for the April Academy in case the grant application is approved.
- Chief Brett has interviewed more than 60 personnel. When the interviews are complete, he plans to define department culture and update the Mission, Vision, Values document. His goal is to update the document in conjunction with the Fire Chief hiring process.
- The Training Chief is on Administrative Leave. Options for remote or temporary assignments will be discussed.
- Collaborating with Microsoft on an open house. They want to wait until the station is complete. An article outlining our partnership with Microsoft is being drafted for publication.
- Chief Brett will assist CCFD5 with the selection of their new Fire Chief on Friday.
- There have been proactive communications with the Lower Sugarloaf Operations Chief, planning for the potential spread of the fire inside WVFD's boundaries. Helicopter and dozer personnel scouted the area to determine the best location to construct a fire line.
- Chief Brett explained Lifeline wanted to follow up after attending the Fire Commissioner meeting. Crew integration will be scheduled with career and volunteer personnel.

The discussion did not include expanding BLS skills. Commissioner de Mestre would like to see progress on expanded BLS skills.

2. Aviation: Chief Brett

- By the end of August, 96 flight hours had been recorded.

- 1PR flew 20.3 hours in August.

3. Operations: Chief Davidson

- Fire Station 17 was staffed on September 1 and, as a result, there were three promotions to the rank of Captain.
- Call volume is on track with last year. There were 4,162 calls as of September 3.
- The Operations Plan is 85% complete.
- The plumbing to re-tank Tender 17 is complete.
- The transmission on Ladder 10 needs to be repaired, the cost estimate is \$17,000.
- Training tasks have been delegated and reassigned to Chief Brett, Chief Davidson, and the Battalion Chiefs.
- The two Recruits at the State Academy are doing well.
- Neither Ballard nor Lifeline were interested in purchasing Ballistic Vests; the department's vests have been ordered.

4. Fire Prevention: Kurt Blanchard

- The legislation that reimburses the cost of air resources on district fires is scheduled to expire. He is working with Hilary Franz to bring awareness to the importance of this legislation.
- Chief Blanchard is not prepared to make a presentation to the Rock Island City Council on Fireworks yet.

5. Logistics: Chief Kunz

- Getting updated quotes on the security looks on the exterior doors only.
 - He is considering meeting with Richard Hyatt (Chelan County PUD) on his availability to complete security assessments of the department's fire stations.
- Commissioner de Mestre suggested considering secure parking at the stations as well. Chief Kunz said the cost estimate for fencing Station 17 was \$90,000.
- Chief Kunz presented two options for heating the hangar space. One option is for gas heat and the second is a less expensive option for electric heat.

Commissioner Fennell prefers gas heat in the future and requested a cost quote on extending the gas line.

Commissioner Johnson asked what type of heat source is recommended for aircraft and hangars. It needs to be a safe option for the aircraft fuel and fuel truck. Chief Kunz will talk with the architect and follow up next month.

- An Environmental Impact Statement for the Mission Ridge Expansion has been issued. Chelan County has scheduled a public hearing on the project for September 22.

Chief Brett and Chief Kunz have a meeting with the land use attorney next week regarding the Environmental Impact Statement.

The attorney drafted a letter for CCFD1 outlining the district's concerns and requests regarding the project, including the construction of a fire station upon groundbreaking. Commissioner Zimmerman said fire service and EMS were required to be in place before occupancy.

Commissioner Fennell recommends updating the letter and resubmitting it during the public comment period. Commissioner Zimmerman agreed that it needs to be on file before the County Commissioners make a decision.

- A plat hearing is scheduled for property south of Fire Station 17. This could be the trigger-point for adding language to seller's agreements warning that Station 17 is a neighboring nuisance.

Current signage warns 17 is a registered heliport and that burning operations are conducted on-site.

6. Training: No questions.
7. Health, Safety and Volunteer Services: No questions.
8. IAFF – BC Rigelman said the IAFF will be taking over Pinnacle Brewery to raise funds for their Benevolent Fund on the evening of September 25. The fund is used to purchase gift cards that are available for distribution to those in need.
9. Volunteers: There have been a series of good drills and progress among the volunteers. Currently about 40 volunteers attend monthly meetings. Commissioner Fennell updated the volunteers on the Fire Chief hiring process.

VII. Committee Reports

1. Performance Evaluation Committee: The committee sent out a second survey on department culture. The survey results validated the Mission, Vision, Values Statement.

Commissioner Fennell requested one more Commissioner participate on the Committee, and another replace Commissioner de Mestre at the end of his term. The time commitment should be minimal, most of the screening activities will involve the entire Board.

The Commissioners approved the announcement, updated job description, application and timeline. The advertising plan was discussed. The position will be posted on October 15.

2. EMS Committee: No Report

VIII. Unfinished Business

1. Policy Review:

Commissioner de Mestre made a motion to approve the policy updates as presented. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion; the policies were approved.

2. Article III, Policy 06 Use of Firearms:

Commissioner Fennell made a motion to strike the sentence from the policy that reads, "...employees may have firearms in their personal vehicles, which may be parked on department property, provided that the firearm and the vehicle are secured (vehicles with firearms inside must be locked at all times if unattended)." The motion died for lack of a second.

Commissioner de Mestre requested legal review of the policy following changes to RCW 9.41.050 in July 2025.

3. Executive Session: At 2:48 the meeting was closed to discuss collective bargaining negotiations (per RCW 42.30.140 (4)(a)) and to evaluate the qualifications of an applicant for public employment (per RCW 42.30.110(1)(g)). Five minutes was estimated for the session. The session was extended to an additional 67 minutes. The public meeting reconvened at 4:00.

4. IAFF 2025 Firefighter-Captain CBA MOU:

Commissioner de Mestre made a motion to approve the Firefighter-Captain CBA MOU. There was a second from Commissioner Zimmerman; the MOU was approved.

IX. New Business: None.

X. Other Business and Good of the Order:

1. Commissioner Fennell suggested the department add jurisdictional signs along the roadways entering and exiting the WVFD boundaries. Personnel will follow up on this request.
2. A budget workshop was scheduled for 1:00, Friday, September 26 at Fire Station 1.

3. Commissioner Dormaier complimented Fire Station 2 personnel. He witnessed their interaction with an injured patient at the airport.
4. There will be an increase in the cost of dispatch services in 2026.

XI. Adjourn – 4:30.

Respectfully submitted, Cindy Blaufuss