

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

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

Guest: Ettore Castellente

Personnel: Fire Chief Brian Brett, Deputy Chief Andy Davidson, Deputy Chief Kurt Blanchard, Deputy Chief Kelly Lindemann, Battalion Chief Pete Rigelman, Captain Brandon Kunz, Lieutenant Dennis Wheeler, Firefighter Craig Grinde, Harold Mitchell, Terri Woods and Cindy Blaufuss

I. Called to Order: 2:00 pm.

II. Additions and Deletions to Agenda: None.

III. Public Comments: None.

IV. Oath of Office: Commissioner Evenhus completed his Oath of Office.

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

VI. Correspondence: The department received a thank you from the 9-11 Committee for the assistance provided by the Resident Firefighters during the September 11<sup>th</sup> Ceremony in Cashmere.

VII. Staff Reports:

1. Administration:

Chief Brett reported:

- Captain Brandon Kunz and Firefighter Craig Grinde received the department's first Service Awards. The awards were created to recognize exceptional customer service which reflects the department's Mission, Vision, and Values. Captain Kunz and Firefighter Grinde went above and beyond to provide exemplary customer service and represented the department well.
- Chief Brett introduced the newest member of the department, Harold Mitchell. Harold joins Bill Kinsey and Riley May in the Shop.

Deputy Chief Blanchard reported:

- The Chelan County PUD data indicates the hydro flows for Kings Court are 1100-1200 gpm. The data will be verified in the spring and the hydrants repainted.
- Personnel are finishing the occupancy inspections for 2023.
- Chief Blanchard is collaborating with the school districts to initiate a school program targeting third graders.
- He is also developing an Emergency Preparedness course for the public.

Deputy Chief Davidson reported:

- The department responded to a commercial structure fire on Columbia Street, November 22. Fire suppression efforts were well executed because personnel have received common training and are working from one plan. This execution would not have happened in the past. There was a good third alarm response and many of the other responding departments and personnel received training at Fire Station 17. Thank you for facilitating this success.

Deputy Chief Lindemann reported:

- When Ladder 4 was ordered, the specs were incomplete and, once complete, needed reviewed by the Pierce engineers. The engineers identified about 50 items that needed rectified; the suspension was also lowered to fit at Fire Station 1. The result was \$84,000 in change orders.
- Ladder 10 will be identical to Ladder 4, standardizing the department's ladder trucks moving forward. This standardization will cost \$45,000 in change orders. Additional changes may be necessary after the inspection conference but should be minimal. Ladder 10 is scheduled for completion in 2025.

Commissioner de Mestre made a motion to approve a \$45,000 change order for Ladder 10. There was a second from Commissioner Evenhus. The motion was approved.

Chief Davidson said that philosophically, the department builds apparatus that are cost-effective and functional workhorses.

2. IAFF:

- Battalion Chief Rigelman reported the IAFF is partnering with the Wenatchee Wild and Les Schwab on this year's Christmas toy drive.
- All members will have the opportunity to participate in an on-site blood draw to screen for cancers. More information will follow.
- The Collective Bargaining Agreement approved by the Commissioners in November was ratified by the IAFF membership.

3. Volunteers:

- Dennis Wheeler will serve as President in 2024. He reported the Volunteers are hosting a Christmas Party at 4:00 on December 16 at Fire Station 1. All members and families are welcome.

VIII. Unfinished Business

1. Facilities:

Stemilt: The payment for the Stemilt parcel closing costs is being processed.

Station 1: The concrete repair on the Fire Station 1 apron will be rebid in the spring.

Station 3: A meeting with H.B. Hansen is scheduled to discuss their mitigation proposal for the concrete at Fire Station 3. If an agreement is not reached, the department may pursue a breach of contract claim against H.B. Hansen.

2. Apparatus: The work to rebrand apparatus continues.

3. Aviation: Chief Brett met with Northwest Helicopter regarding 1PR. All that remains to complete the helicopter are avionics and test flights. DNR has agreed to increase the availability and flight rates for 2024 and add 1PR to their agreement.

4. Personnel:

Ettore Castellente was thanked for his service as a Fire Commissioner with Douglas County Fire District 2 and Wenatchee Valley Fire Department.

The Logistics Deputy Chief position has been announced. The department also plans to hire one firefighter, and conduct Captain and Battalion Chief promotional testing.

5. Policy Review:

Mandatory Overtime: Commissioner Fennell expressed concern regarding the policy language that gives the Battalion Chiefs the sole discretion to determine “undue hardship.” He is concerned this puts the burden on the Battalion Chief to define hardship. Chief Davidson said he understands the concern, but personnel have generally resolved the staffing issue without enforcing the policy. The Mandatory Overtime Policy was tabled until the January meeting.

Commissioner de Mestre made a motion to approve Policies as presented, with the exception of the Mandatory Overtime Policy. There was a second from Commissioner Zimmerman. The policies were approved.

6. Resolution 2023-005 Regular Property Tax Levy for Collection in 2024

Commissioner Zimmerman made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-005. There was a second from Commissioner Johnson. The Resolution was approved.

7. Finance: Chief Brett updated the financial summary to answer the Commissioners outstanding fire benefit charge questions. The attorney and Department of Revenue have verified that agricultural parcels are exempted from the benefit charge.

If a fire benefit charge is approved, the levy rate would be reduced from \$1.50/\$1000 to \$1.00/\$1000. The uncollected 50 cents would function similarly to banked capacity, allowing the rate to stay at \$1.00. A benefit charge is a more equitable method to collect revenue; it is based on risk, not assessed value. The Commissioners would set the rate each year, and there is an appeal process available to taxpayers.

Chief Brett will continue to clean up the parcel database.

Commissioner de Mestre made a motion that the department pursue a fire benefit charge ballot measure before the May filing deadline. There was a second from Commissioner Fennell. The motion was approved.

8. Insurance: There are two policies insuring the department’s helicopters. The Gallagher policy covers helicopters while in flight, and the CIAW policy provides coverage when not in flight.

While under DNR contract, DNR is liable for damages caused by pilot error. The department is liable for damages caused by mechanical failures; the department would likely have recourse because maintenance is performed by Northwest Helicopter and DNR.

CIAW currently has 1MR insured for \$1 million. The Commissioners agreed the coverage should be increased to \$2.5 million, the estimated market value.

Chief Brett will follow up with Gallagher to learn if flight coverage can be transferred between the helicopters. He will also inquire if the department is insured against lost revenue.

IX. New Business

1. Memorandum of Agreement – Firefighter/Facilities Technician

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve the Agreement. There was a second from Commissioner de Mestre. The Agreement was approved.

2. Interlocal Agreement – City of East Wenatchee Fire Protection Agreement

Commissioner Fennell made a motion to approve the Agreement. There was a second from Commissioner Johnson. The Agreement was approved.

3. Interlocal Agreement – City of East Wenatchee International Fire Code Services

Commissioner Fennell made a motion to approve the Agreement. There was a second from Commissioner de Mestre. The Agreement was approved.

4. Interlocal Agreement – City of Rock Island Fire Protection Agreement

Tabled until the January meeting.

5. Interlocal Agreement – City of Rock Island International Fire Code Services

Commissioner Fennell made a motion to approve the Agreement. There was a second from Commissioner Evenhus. The Agreement was approved.

X. Other Business and Good of the Order:

2024 Board Officer Elections

Nominations for the 2024 Chair were opened. Commissioner de Mestre nominated Commissioner Fennell to serve as Chair for 2024; Commissioner Johnson seconded the nomination. The nominations were closed. Commissioner Fennell was elected Chair for 2024.

Nominations for the 2024 Vice Chair were opened. Commissioner Zimmerman nominated Commissioner Dormaier to serve as Vice Chair for 2024; Commissioner Dormaier declined the nomination. Commissioner Johnson nominated Commissioner de Mestre to serve as Vice Chair; Commissioner Fennell seconded the nomination. Nominations were closed. Commissioner de Mestre was elected Vice Chair for 2024.

XI. Adjourn – 4:41 pm

Respectfully submitted, Cindy Blaufuss