

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

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

Guests: Mike Ingram, Ettore Castellente, Jefferson Robbins, Marilyn Martin, Doug McBride, Jim Bailey, Doug Miller

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

I. Called to Order: 2:00 pm.

II. Additions and Deletions to Agenda: None.

III. Public Comments:

1. Doug Miller asked the status of the department's 2023 Performance Report. Chief Brett expects to finish the report by next month.

IV. Consent Agenda: Commissioner Evenhus reviewed this month's warrants. Commissioner de Mestre made a motion to approve the consent agenda items as presented. There was a second from Commissioner Johnson. The consent agenda items were approved.

V. Correspondence: The WSRB evaluation will likely be complete before the next meeting. Any rating change becomes effective immediately. Chief Brett is hopeful that Douglas County will be upgraded from a 5 to a 4.

Eight volunteer firefighters are graduating from the Volunteer Academy on Saturday; the ceremony is in Chelan.

Chief Torres received a \$1,000 grant to purchase a rescue mannequin for the Training Division.

VI. Staff Reports:

1. Administration: The department hopes to partner with DNR or the USFS on a fuel reduction treatment for the Broadview drainage. Fuel reduction work is scheduled on Methow Street this spring. The Big Springs Ranch is working toward becoming a Firewise Community. A grant amendment was submitted to expand the Roof Replacement project into Douglas County.
2. IAFF: The Apple Sox are hosting a fire versus police charity game on July 14.
3. Volunteers: The department and volunteers will participate during the Apple Blossom and Classy Chassis parades. The Chief for a Day is on April 25.

VII. Unfinished Business

1. Facilities:

Fire Station 1: Pipkin Construction was the only bidder on the concrete replacement project. Their base bid was \$207,622.

Commissioner de Mestre made a motion to award the concrete replacement project to Pipkin Construction for the base bid of \$207,622. There was a second from Commissioner Evenhus. The motion was approved.

Fire Station 3: The punch list and warranty work are complete. The contractor will be notified they may proceed with closing out the contract and requesting retainage.

Fire Station 14: Sensors will be added to improve the Apparatus Bay Doors.

Fire Station 17: On-going projects include installation of an exhaust removal system in the Shop, security camera installation, advertising for the Conditional User Permit, and a quote to fence in a portion of the station and grounds.

Capital Improvement Plan: The process will likely take DOH one year to complete.

Generator Grant: Additional funds have been requested because the quotes exceeded the grant amount.

Station Rebranding: Graybeal submitted an estimate to update the signage at all stations for \$30,118.

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to accept the proposal from Graybeal Signs to update the fire station signs. There was a second from Commissioner Zimmerman. The motion was approved.

Electronic Reader Boards: The department is completing the grant paperwork and plans to move forward with the order as soon as the agreement is signed.

2. Apparatus: The specifications for Ladder 10 will match Ladder 4. Personnel are working to complete the Engine specifications.
3. Aviation: 1MR and the fuel truck are going to Olympia for annual carding. Northwest Helicopter submitted cost-estimates for the Final Phase B and Carding Phase to finish 1PR. Chief Brett recommends authorizing \$200,000 to complete 1PR. Once carded, 1PR can fly on the same contract as 1MR.

Commissioner de Mestre made a motion to authorize \$200,000 for the completion of 1PR. There was a second from Commissioner Zimmerman. The motion was approved.

4. Personnel: Recruit Firefighter Elijah Bovenzi will join the department on April 22; he is scheduled to begin the State Academy on May 2.

5. Policy Review:

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

6. Finance:

A Public Hearing was opened to allow comment before the Board considers Resolution 2024-001 to place an initial six-year Fire Benefit Charge on the August 6, 2024, primary election ballot.

Chief Brett explained the fire department is limited to a 1% increase in the tax levy each year, which is about \$200,000 per year. If approved, the fire benefit charge would be in place for six years and will put the onus on the department to be good stewards of the public's funds.

Mike Ingram asked about the cost savings following the merger. Chief Brett explained that two more fire stations were staffed with firefighters following the merger, increasing the level of service. There were administrative savings and economies of scale.

Jim Bailey asked how the benefit charge would be assessed. Chief Brett explained the fee is based solely on the square footage of burnable space. There is also a process to appeal the fire benefit charge. Mobile homes will see an increase because they tend to have lower assessed values but represent a higher risk; their increase will be approximately \$85 per year. Sprinklered buildings will receive a 10% credit on their benefit charge.

Doug Miller encouraged the Fire Commissioners to update the Regional Fire Authority Plan prepared in August 2022. He commented that the department receives new construction revenue in addition to the 1% annual tax levy increase.

Chief Brett explained agricultural property and undeveloped property will not pay a benefit charge because there is not any burnable square footage. All exemptions will remain in place. The department will enter into agreements to compensate the County Assessors because of the extra work created by the benefit charge.

New Business

1. Resolution 2024-001 Authorization of Benefit Charge

Commissioner de Mestre made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-001. There was a second from Commissioner Evenhus. The Resolution was approved.

Chief Brett said the appeal process will begin after residents receive their tax statements.

VIII. Other Business and Good of the Order

1. Banquet: The annual department banquet is Friday at St. Joseph Church.

IX. Adjourn – 3:55 pm

Respectfully submitted, Cindy Blaufuss