

**WENATCHEE VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT,
CHELAN COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 1 & DOUGLAS COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 2
MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 11, 2024**

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

Personnel: Fire Chief Brian Brett, Deputy Chief Andy Davidson, Deputy Chief Brandon Kunz, Battalion Chief Pete Rigelman, Captain Matt Rise, Lieutenant TJ Gilstrap, and Cindy Blaufuss

Guests: Ettore Castellente

- I. Called to Order: 1:00 pm.
- II. Additions and Deletions to Agenda: None.
- III. Public Comments: None.
- IV. Consent Agenda: Commissioner de Mestre made a motion to approve the consent agenda items. Commissioner Evenhus seconded the motion. The consent agenda items were approved.
- V. Correspondence: The department received a message from the owner of a warehouse on South Columbia Street. He is concerned about the Fire Benefit Charge on the warehouse. He was invited to attend today's meeting and informed there will be an appeal process available later this winter.

VI. Staff Reports:

1. Administration:

Chief Brett:

- Chief Brett introduced TJ Gilstrap who was recently promoted to Lieutenant. He has been a volunteer firefighter for five years.
- The attorney reported that Confluence Health is not obligated to contract with the department for fire protection. Chief Brett will follow up with the attorney on options for the department.
- The Levy and FBC certifications have been submitted to the Counties for collection in 2025.
- The Microsoft contract is signed, and funds three firefighters to staff Fire Station 17 in 2025.

Chief Davidson:

- As of today, the department has responded to 5,867 incidents; an average of 17.5 per day. Personnel were requested for backfill 100-120 times this year; the response is strong early in wildland season and tends to slow down over the summer.
 - The department's incident reporting and staffing software will transition from Emergency Reporting and Vector Solutions to First Due on January 1. It should be more efficient.
 - After incorporating software improvements, the department will be using I-Spy for push-button response once again.
 - The department will receive \$155,000 in shared funding from RiverCom for communication equipment in 2025. Chelan and Douglas Counties, along with the city of East Wenatchee approved adding a fire official to the RiverCom Board.
2. IAFF: The Local has been involved in Christmas activities including Les Schwab Toy Drive and delivering Santa to Pybus. Guns and hoses is scheduled for January 11. There will be two additional bargaining units, the Battalion Chiefs and Shop personnel.
 3. Volunteers: The Christmas party was well attended.

VII. Committee Reports:

1. The Performance Evaluation Committee will solicit input on updating the evaluation form before the document is sent out to the Commissioners.

2. The NCW Chiefs elected Commissioner Fennell to represent the fire service on the RiverCom Board in the event the position is added to the Board.

VIII. Unfinished Business

1. Facilities: Chief Kunz provided a Facilities Update which included information on the proposed maintenance needed at Fire Station 17 and the WVFD Firehouse 5 Project.

Fire Station 17: There are many facilities projects that are needed before staffing Station 17. Two grant applications are being submitted to replace the roof and install a generator (BRIC) and install an exhaust removal system (AFG). A PUD rebate may be available to offset the cost of a new HVAC system. The station needs an estimated \$1 million to complete all the projects. DOH Architects will assist with the plans and bid documents.

The department is encroaching on the County's property on the south and west sides of the parcel. Options include purchasing the property, an easement, or moving the training props.

2. Apparatus: The department currently needs one engine, 1-2 tenders and two brush trucks. Rosenbauer has stock tenders available for \$360,000 plus tax; the price will increase 5% next year. Personnel are impressed with the Rosenbauer tenders. Chief Brett and Davidson recommend purchasing two stock tenders and adding a second engine to the current Pierce order. The Commissioners discussed purchasing used apparatus, or selling 10-year-old apparatus to better stagger apparatus purchases. Pre-pay discounts were also discussed.

Commissioner Evenhus made a motion to approve the purchase of two stock Rosenbauer tenders. There was a second from Commissioner de Mestre. The purchase was approved.

The exhaust systems on Brush 10 and 11 are being modified to work with the exhaust removal systems installed at the stations. Two rescue trucks are in progress at the Shop.

3. Aviation: 1PR has been moved to DNR and will be ready for carding in 2025.

4. Personnel:

- The three Recruit Firefighters completed a two-week driver/operator academy.
- Firefighter Tristan Daniels will attend the State Fire Academy with the three Firefighters starting in January. Microsoft is funding these three positions.
- The BC's will re-evaluate the remaining applicants and recommend three more firefighters for the Spring Academy. The department had not planned to staff Station 17 in 2025, but potential changes in the WSRB rating and insurance premiums have made it a priority. Chief Brett will meet with insurance industry representatives to review and discuss the increases being realized by local homeowners. The Board discussed staffing and funding strategies related to Station 17 and firefighter hiring.

5. Policy Review:

Commissioner Zimmerman made a motion to approve the revised policies as recommended. There was a second from Commissioner Johnson. The policies were approved.

6. Board Elections:

Commissioner Evenhus nominated Dave Fennell to serve as Board Chair of the Wenatchee Valley Fire Department; there was a second from Commissioner de Mestre. The nominations were closed. Commissioner Fennell was elected Chair for 2025.

Commissioner de Mestre nominated Dan Johnson to serve as Vice Chair of the Wenatchee Valley Fire Department Board; there was a second from Commissioner Zimmerman. The nominations were closed. Commissioner Johnson was elected Vice Chair for 2025.

Commissioner de Mestre nominated Phil Dormaier to serve as Board Chair of Chelan County Fire District 1; there was a second from Commissioner Zimmerman. The nominations were closed. Commissioner Dormaier was elected Chair for 2025.

Commissioner Evenhus nominated Dave Fennell to serve as Board Chair of Douglas County Fire District 2; there was a second from Commissioner Johnson. The nominations were closed. Commissioner Fennell was elected Chair for 2025.

IX. New Business

1. Executive Session: At 3:24 the Board adjourned to Executive Session to evaluate personnel performance (per RCW 42.30.110(1)(g)) for an estimated 5 minutes. The session was extended by 25 minutes. The meeting was called back to order at 3:54.
2. IAFF Memorandum of Agreement, Facilities Technician:
Commissioner de Mestre made a motion to approve the Facilities Technician Memorandum of Agreement. There was a second from Commissioner Zimmerman. The Agreement was approved.
3. 2025 Agenda and Meeting Structure: Commissioner de Mestre thanked the Board for temporarily rescheduling meetings to begin at 1:00. The Commissioners agreed they prefer Division reports be submitted in writing in advance of the meetings. The Commissioners also prefer to receive documents via email in addition to posting on the SharePoint Site.
4. Resolution 2024-005 Date and Time for Regular Meetings:
Commissioner de Mestre made a motion to adopt Resolution 2024-005 changing the Regular Commissioner meetings to 1:00 pm beginning in January 2025. There was a second from Commissioner Evenhus. The Resolution was approved.
5. January Meeting Date – Reschedule: The Commissioners agreed to reschedule the Regular January 2025 meeting to Wednesday, January 15.
6. Commissioner Per Diem: The discussion and a draft policy were tabled until the January meeting.
7. Firehouse 5 Project: The original Firehouse 5 was started 26 years ago in Olympia. It is a non-profit organization started by fire service alumni. The alumni meet weekly and repair fire equipment. It is an opportunity for alumni to stay connected to the fire service after retirement. It also preserves the history and institutional knowledge represented by their years of service.

Chief Kunz proposes starting a local Firehouse 5 (WVFH5) using the former Fire Station 3 facility in Rock Island. In addition to the sense of purpose and camaraderie, it would provide an opportunity to maintain the antique fire apparatus. A non-profit organization would be utilized, and the project funded by donations. Representation from the Board, Local, Volunteer Association, and retirees would be included. A draft Resolution reserving the exclusive use of Fire Station 5 is ready for Board consideration. Chief Brett will work on the details of the relationship between WVFH5 and the department.

The Commissioners support the idea of WVFH5, operating similarly to the Volunteer Association caring for equipment and the facility in exchange for the use of the station. Ideally, it will operate independently. Approval of Resolution 2024-006 would reserve the use of Station 5 for their efforts.

Resolution 2024-006 Wenatchee Valley Fire Department Station 5 Designation:

Commissioner de Mestre made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-006. There was a second from Commissioner Zimmerman. The Resolution was approved.

X. Other Business and Good of the Order:

1. There was good attendance at the Chelan-Douglas Firefighter Association meeting honoring Jim Lewis.

XI. Adjourn – 4:33

Respectfully submitted, Cindy Blaufuss