

**WENATCHEE VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT,  
CHELAN COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 1 & DOUGLAS COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 2  
MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 9, 2024**

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

Absent: Commissioner Fennell, Commissioner Johnson

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

I. Called to Order: 1:00 pm.

II. Additions and Deletions to Agenda: None.

III. Public Comments: None.

IV. Consent Agenda: Commissioner Zimmerman made a motion to approve the consent agenda items. Commissioner Evenhus seconded the motion. The consent agenda items were approved.

V. Correspondence: Chief Brett shared thank you messages from the community.

VI. Staff Reports:

1. Administration:

Chief Brett: Chief Brett reported the Open House on Saturday was well attended by 300-400 community members; higher than last year's attendance. The department hosted a women's chainsaw class the same day with good turnout.

The State Fire Academy has asked the department to host this winter's volunteer academy. It provides good regional training, and the department looks forward to hosting. The academy is 12 weeks long, scheduled for evenings and Saturdays.

Personnel met with the Briarwood and Sand Canyon homeowner associations. Both are interested in fuel reduction efforts. The HOA properties are fire risks Chef Brett would like to mitigate before the next fire season.

Deputy Chief Davidson: The 2024 call volume is projected to reach 6,000 by year-end with 65% EMS calls.

Concerns have been communicated to RiverCom regarding the service needs of local fire agencies. The issues include accurate time keeping, improved infrastructure in outlying areas, and a monitored tactical frequency for fire. RiverCom has asked local fire agencies to provide an overview of fire-service needs with short-term financial and strategic plans.

Commissioner de Mestre asked about technology upgrades. Chief Davidson said there will be a Spillman Touch demo tomorrow but the dispatch module in First Due is preferred. Reliable touch-response is necessary to move forward with the accreditation process next year.

Chief Brett and Chief Davidson attended the Chamber Coffee & Commerce meeting this morning; it was a good networking opportunity for the department.

2. IAFF: No report.

3. Volunteers: There was good participation from the Volunteers at the Open House and Chelan-Douglas Volunteer meeting in Lake Wenatchee.

VII. Committee Reports: None

VIII. Unfinished Business

1. Facilities: Chief Kunz prepared a Facilities Update.
  - A meeting with Chelan County regarding the Fire Station 17 lot lines has been scheduled.
  - A grant application has been submitted to replace the Station 17 roof. An additional \$500,000 in renovations is needed to mitigate the mold damage. Options to staff 17 were discussed.
  - Chief Kunz hopes to begin the accreditation process next year.
  - There are 12.5 acres of property available for a fire station at the airport, but that much land is not necessary. The land is not included in the draft budget and Port funding may be available to offset the lost TIF revenue.

2. Apparatus: The department has a ladder truck, engine, and command vehicle on order. The two rescue trucks ordered earlier this year have been delivered.

3. Aviation: Northwest Helicopters installed a new servo on 1PR; it will move to DNR for completion to their specifications. The last two weeks of the 1MR contract with DNR have not been invoiced yet, but the revenue has covered this year's expenses. Chief Brett plans to create a Helicopter Replacement account funded by 1MR and 1PR revenue.

The helicopter insurance has been renewed; 1PR is insured for \$2.5 million and 1MR for \$1.5 million. Increasing the value of 1MR will cost another \$30,000 in premiums; the Commissioners agreed the value should be increased. Chief Brett will negotiate with DNR to increase the daily availability rate to help offset the cost.

4. Personnel: Terry Mathews retired last month. Craig Grinde retires at the end of October and Chris Paul in January.

5. Policy Review:

Commissioner Zimmerman made a motion to approve the three proposed policy revisions and rescind the COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate. There was a second from Commissioner Evenhus. The motion was approved.

6. Finance: Microsoft is willing to fund three firefighters to staff Fire Station 17 until their construction projects are complete and begin generating tax revenue.

7. The department signed an engagement letter with DA Davidson for bond representation. Bond fees are \$20,000 per issue, making re-bonding a better option than over-bonding. Over-bonding can be detrimental to cash flow. A published Capital Improvement Plan is needed before moving forward with any bond process.

Chief Brett is working through the Fire Benefit Charge with both counties. Next year's revenue must also factor in lost revenue caused by TIF districts and multi-family housing tax credits.

## IX. New Business

1. Draft 2025 Budget & Revenue Sources

Chief Brett distributed a draft 2025 budget summary. The assessed value in Chelan County has contracted and Douglas County has not provided estimates yet. It is important the budget sets aside at least 15% for capital and keeps reserves above 40%. Ideally the department will not bond small projects but set the funds aside over 1-2 budget cycles; too much bond debt creates vulnerability in an economic downturn. The draft budget will be reduced by \$1.1 million before being presented next month.

2. Resolution 2024-002 Alternative Fuel Exemption

Commissioner Zimmerman made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-002. There was a second from Commissioner Evenhus. The Resolution was approved.

X. Good of the Order

1. Chief Davidson reported the Technical Rescue Team recently executed a rescue up Eagle Rock. It went very smoothly.
2. The alumni event on September 11 was well attended. It was very informal to provide an opportunity to socialize.
3. A workshop is scheduled for 5:00 pm on Thursday of the Commissioner Conference. Forward any discussion items to Chief Brett.

XI. Adjourn – 2:25 pm

Respectfully submitted, Cindy Blaufuss