



NORTH WHIDBEY FIRE AND RESCUE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Station 25, 2720 Heller Rd., Oak Harbor, WA
Phone: 360-675-1131 Email: Admin@nwfr.org

Meeting Minutes

September 8th, 2026

6:30 p.m.

Approved October 13th, 2026

Call to Order: Chairman Marvin Koorn called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Also in attendance: Commissioner Gerald Smith, Commissioner Robert Miller, Fire Chief Chris Swiger, Deputy Chief Ray Merrill, Battalion Chief Dan Horton, Battalion Chief Ian Walton, and Secretary Natasha Spydell.

Citizen Recognition

Deputy Chief Ray Merrill presented North Whidbey resident Paul Anderson with a certificate of recognition for his quick actions during a recent structure fire that helped contain the fire to the porch area and ensured the home occupants were able to evacuate safely.

Additions to the Agenda

None

Public Comment

None

Correspondence

Washington Fire Commissioners' Association (WFCA) meeting minutes approving healthcare premium increases for 2027 were shared with the board for review.

Personnel

None

Consent Agenda: Meeting Minutes for Special Meeting, August 3rd, 2026, Meeting Minutes for Regular Meeting, August 11th, 2026, Expenditure Approval for the month of August 2026, and Treasurer's Report for July 2026.

General Batch #31G for Vouchers 260801001-260801010 dated 8/05/2026 in the amount of \$11,052.52.

General Batch #32G for Vouchers 260802001-260802018 dated 8/12/2026 in the amount of \$9,179.15.

Payroll Batch #0814P for EFT Transactions 1406-1487 dated 8/14/2026 in the amount of \$69,504.48.

Payroll Batch #33E for EFT Transactions 1492-1497 dated 8/14/2026 in the amount of \$28,767.03.

Payroll Batch #33B for Vouchers 260804001-260804005 dated 8/19/2026 in the amount of \$10,218.76.

General Batch #33G for Vouchers 260805001-260805023 dated 8/19/2026 in the amount of \$12,129.73.

General Batch #34G for Vouchers 260806001-260806017 dated 8/26/2026 in the amount of \$15,095.63.

Commissioner Smith motioned to approve the consent agenda; motion seconded by Commissioner Miller.

Motion carried unanimously.

Unfinished Business:

Budget

Chairman Koorn stated he had some concerns about the 2026 budget position.

Chief Swiger stated the budget was discussed at a staff meeting.

No other questions or comments were made regarding the 2026 budget.

Chairman Koorn stated the board received a copy of the proposed 2027 budget for review, and the first hearing will be during the October Regular Meeting.

Chairman Koorn asked for an additional revenue line that shows the total without the carryover.

Commissioner Smith stated he asked Secretary Spydell to gather some numbers for fuel budgeting.

Chairman Koorn stated some cuts will need to be made in 2027.

The board members will review the proposal and notify Chief Swiger or Secretary Spydell of any necessary changes.

Station Maintenance List

Lieutenant Reinstra stated Station 27 has been prepped for painting and Kingsmen Painting will be out on September 14th to paint. Salish Isle completed the fascia board work and after painting is complete, Galer Gutters will be out to install the gutters.

Commissioner Smith asked about apparatus maintenance and whether both brush trucks were back in service.

Lieutenant Reinstra stated B22 is still out for repairs.

Ambulance Decals

Lieutenant Reinstra stated the work has been completed.

Ault Field Property

Chief Merrill stated an error in the RFQs was brought to his attention and an addendum was sent out and the corrections were made. There were 28 interested parties who asked for the RFQs. The closing date is September 21st, and the review of submittals will begin subsequently.

Commissioner Smith stated the amount of interest exceeded the district's expectations.

Chief Merrill agreed that the interest far exceeded the expectations.

Levy Discussion

Chief Merrill presented a PowerPoint presentation of proposed options for a levy increase and district needs. Different rate increases of \$.70, \$.75, and \$.80 were presented with the amounts of associated revenues of \$3M, \$3.3M, and \$3.5M, respectively. The SAFER grant application results should come out by the end of September. Hiring eight additional duty crew with and without the SAFER grant, and associated costs for that each year were presented. Other district needs for equipment such as SCBA packs, nozzles, and extrication tools were presented.

Commissioner Smith stated he appreciates the numbers but discussed when previous levies were passed, the district does not actually receive the projected/approved amount.

Chief Merrill confirmed that it is a possibility the district will not receive the full amount.

Commissioner Smith asked if hiring eight full-time duty crew is what the fire chief is proposing with a levy increase.

Chief Swiger stated potentially, yes.

Chairman Koorn stated the board will need to digest the information presented and discuss further at a special meeting.

WSRB

Chief Swiger stated he is still in discussion with Jason at WSRB and the district has until December. The district is sending some members to a Fire & Life Safety Educator Class that should help get the rating down for public education.

Commissioner Smith asked if there is an update on the water districts.

Chief Swiger stated he received a couple of responses, but majority are not submitting anything to the state. Water districts are HOAs, so they are not regulated. Chief Swiger stated he does not have contact phone numbers, only emails, so it is difficult to make contact.

Chairman Koorn stated he is in two water districts and can get contact information for them.

Chief Swiger stated he plans to attend the upcoming annual meeting of his water district.

Commissioner Miller stated he can see if he can get some contact information for water districts as well.

Commissioner Smith stated the board previously requested information on where the district can improve and asked for an update on that information.

Chief Swiger stated he will get that to the board.

Drone Program

Lieutenant Valencic stated he sent an email to staff after the last meeting to apologize for the lack of training on his part. Two trainings have been conducted since the last meeting. Brinc is happy to move plans back until March of 2027. Station 21 will cost \$12,000 for electrical and excavation work for a pad. Brinc has provided the district with a subscription to Funding Navigator to utilize for grant applications. The district may want to look into using it for other grants in the future. Lieutenant Valencic suggested pausing the drone program discussion until January to see if the district receives any grant funding, then reevaluate. The cost would be \$20,000 to get the two stations prepped if no funding is received. He discussed the no-pad option with Brinc and they prefer the use of pads for their review purposes of their drones and program.

Commissioner Smith asked how the Starlink test at Station 27 went.

Lieutenant Valencic stated it was determined that Starlink is not a good option, and two satellites were needed just for testing.

Headquarters Fence

Chief Swiger stated the contractor is taking the request back to the homeowner and will update later.

Whidbey Health Contract

Chief Swiger stated he emailed Chris Tumblin today and has not heard back.

Chairman Koorn stated the district may want to consider cancelling the contract if a new one is not negotiated soon. Chairman Koorn requested the item get added to the next meeting agenda.

Service Alternatives Lease Extension

Secretary Spydell stated she received the revised final draft of the lease extension from Attorney Brian Snure. The last item of concern was Section 8C that discusses HVAC.

Commissioner Smith motioned to approve the 2-year lease extension agreement; motion seconded by Commissioner Miller.

Motion carried unanimously.

Audit Exit Meeting

Chairman Koorn stated the 2024-2025 State Audit Exit Meeting was held on September 1st, and it was the cleanest and quickest audit/audit exit meeting the district has had in the last ten years. Chairman Koorn thanked Chief Swiger, Secretary Spydell and staff for all the work and improvements that have been made.

Commissioner Miller agreed the audit exit meeting was very clean.

Schedule Special Meeting

A special meeting was tentatively scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on September 22nd, at the district office.

New Business:

Policy 303 – Seat Belts

Chief Walton stated the policy has been updated with numbers.

Commissioner Smith motioned to approve Policy 303; motion seconded by Commissioner Miller.

Motion carried unanimously.

Fire Chief Report

Chief Swiger stated the 9/11 Anniversary Ceremony will be held at 8:30 a.m. on Friday at Windjammer, with the run following the event. North Whidbey Fire District has the most runners out of all the other agencies, with a total of 14 runners. A picnic will be held at South Whidbey Fire/EMS afterwards.

Commissioner Smith asked if the district is on track to spend all the SAFER R&R grant money.

Chief Swiger stated probably not but should be close.

R&R Coordinator stated that with some amendments it might be possible.

Commissioner Smith asked if training money can be used for the drone training.

Secretary Spydell stated the training line item can only be used for qualified volunteers where certificates of completion or CEUs are awarded.

Deputy Chief Report

Chief Merrill discussed the major response incidents that occurred the previous month, including a structure fire, brush fire, and MVA. Region 3 Task Force will be doing a structure burn in Bellingham in October.

Commissioner Smith asked that for the next local Region 3 Task Force training, the Whidbey News Times receive an invite.

Chief Merrill agreed to the request.

Battalion Chief of Operations/Support Report

Chief Horton reviewed the manpower and incident response reports for the month of August.

Commissioner Smith asked if all physicals have been completed.

Chief Swiger confirmed that all required 1582 physicals were completed.

Battalion Chief of Training and Safety Report

Chief Walton stated he is pushing qualifications and the district has two new rope qualifiers now. Task books are continually being printed. The district has a large academy group set for 2027.

Commissioner Smith asked if duty crew is being incorporated in drone training.

Chief Swiger stated after high-angle ropes, drone and MSAR training will be next for the duty crew.

Recruitment & Retention Coordinator

Coordinator Kohfield stated he would like to start the discussion of marketing goals at the next special meeting.

At 7:35 p.m. Chairman Koorn called the meeting into closed session until 7:45 p.m.

a. RCW 42.30.140(4)(b)

That portion of a meeting during which the governing body is planning or adopting the strategy or position to be taken by the governing body during the course of any collective bargaining, professional negotiations, or grievance or mediation proceedings, or reviewing the proposals made in the negotiations or proceedings while in progress.

At 7:45 p.m. Chairman Koorn called the meeting out of closed session.

At 7:45 p.m. Chairman Koorn called the meeting into executive session until 8:00 p.m.

a. RCW 42.30.110(g)

To evaluate the qualifications of an applicant for public employment or to review the performance of a public employee.

At 8:00 p.m. Chairman Koorn called the meeting out of executive session into regular session.

No decisions were made.

Accounting/Office Manager/Board Secretary Position

Chief Swiger stated after conducting interviews, he recommends hiring Krystle Camacho for the position.

Commissioner Smith was on the panel for the interviews and concurred.

Commissioner Miller motioned to approve Krystle Camacho for hire; motion seconded by Chairman Koorn.

Motion carried unanimously.

Good of the Order

None

Adjourn Meeting

Commissioner Smith motioned to adjourn the meeting; motion seconded by Commissioner Miller.

Motion carried unanimously.

The Regular Meeting of the Board adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Attest:



Natasha Spydell

Board Secretary/Accounting Manager