**NORTH WHIDBEY FIRE AND RESCUE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**
Station 25, 2720 Heller Rd., Oak Harbor, WA
Phone: 360-675-1131 Email: Admin@nwfr.org

# Special Meeting Minutes

October 28th, 2026
9:00 a.m.
**Location:** 770 NE Midway Blvd.
Oak Harbor, WA

*Approved November 10th, 2026*

**Call to Order:** Chairman Marvin Koorn called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. Also in attendance: Commissioner Gerald Smith, Commissioner Robert Miller, Chief Chris Swiger, Chief Ray Merrill, Chief Ian Walton, and Secretary Krystle Camacho.

## SAFER Grant Planning

### NWFR Staffing Cost Comparison

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Option One | | |
| Promote two LT's from within, difference of | $12,588 | X2 = $25,116 |
| Hire two firefighters to replace the LT's | $105,000 | X2= $210,000 |
| Move LT Reinstra to Shift net balance 0, as we already pay him | $0 | $0 |
| | | $235,116 |
| | | |
| Option Two | | |
| Move LT Reinstra to Shift net balance 0, as we already pay him | $0 | $0 |
| Promote two LT's from within | $12,588 | X2 = $25,116 |
| Hire one firefighter | $105,000 | $105,000 |
| Put Floater on shift | $0 | $0 |
| | | $130,116 |
| | | |
| Option Three | | |
| Hire Two LT's | $139,708 | X2=$279,416 |
| Move LT Reinstra to Shift net balance 0, as we already pay him | $0 | $0 |
| | | $279,416 |
| | | |
| Option Four | | |
| Move two Battalion chiefs to shift with a bump in pay to make up for the additional hours worked throughout the year. 2080 vs 2560 | | |
| $53.25 per hour x 2080 = $110,765 plus benefits of 30% = Est. $143,995 | | |
| $53.25 per hour x 2560 = $136,320 plus benefits of 30% = Est. $177,216 | difference of $33,221 | x2 = $66,442 |
| Promoting LT Reinstra to Battalion Chief | difference of $37,509 | $37,509 |
| | | $103,951 |

Chief Swiger presented a cost comparison of the four proposed staffing options developed in collaboration with the other chiefs. He reviewed each option and emphasized the importance of establishing leadership at the stations.

Chief Swiger explained that, under Option 1, he had discussed Lieutenant Reinstra's position with the union. The union will work with the district, but his position will need to be filled at a later date.
Chairman Koorn asked if the proposal is to consider hiring two additional firefighters.
Chief Swiger confirmed that the proposed staffing options would require two additional positions. He reviewed four staffing options and encouraged the board to offer any additional ideas or alternatives for consideration.
Chief Swiger clarified that the names listed on the shift schedule were placeholders and that SAFER-funded personnel would serve as floaters. He noted that Station 22 is currently being rented by Whidbey Health and identified Option 2 as the A-shift proposal.
Commissioner Smith expressed concern about the number of personnel and questioned where they would be housed. Chief Swiger explained that Station 25 has four bunkrooms and that Lieutenant Reinstra's office could be converted into an additional bunkroom for an officer.
Chief Swiger noted that Station 22 is already equipped to accommodate personnel; however, utilizing the station would result in the loss of rental revenue from Whidbey Health. He also explained that the response time from Station 21 to the Sierra Clubhouse is approximately 26 minutes, making it a less desirable option.
Chairman Koorn questioned why Station 25 could not be utilized. Chief Swiger explained that two full-time firefighters could operate the aid unit and engine from Station 25 while addressing coverage needs associated with Station 22. He also suggested temporarily placing a trailer at Station 25 to provide additional accommodation and stated that someone was looking into that possibility.
Commissioner Smith asked about the associated costs. Chief Swiger reiterated that relocating Whidbey Health from Station 22 would result in lost rental revenue.
Chairman Koorn asked whether Whidbey Health could be relocated to Station 21. Chief Swiger indicated that this was not a viable option and emphasized the importance of retaining the district's rental income. He also noted that Station 23 has only one bunkroom, making it unsuitable for the proposed staffing arrangements.
Commissioner Smith questioned the need to hire two additional firefighters. Chief Swiger explained that if the district promotes personnel from within, two additional firefighters would be necessary to maintain staffing levels. He emphasized the importance of maintaining training capabilities without compromising daily operations.
Chief Swiger also discussed the possibility of assigning Chief Walton to a shift, noting his preference for an eight-hour schedule that would allow for continued training opportunities.
Chairman Koorn asked whether there were any additional questions.
Chief Merrill emphasized the importance of evaluating all available options. Chief Swiger acknowledged that several good ideas were presented during the discussion.
Commissioner Smith expressed concern regarding the district's financial situation, noting that funding challenges remained and that the board had not yet fully addressed the levy.
Chief Swiger stated that a decision regarding staffing and station operations would need to be made relatively soon.
Chief Merrill noted that the district's growth is beginning to catch up with its available resources and that the staffing and operational challenges need to be addressed.

**Levy**

Chief Merril stated that the final assessment values from the county are not expected to be received until sometime in November. Once the values are received, he will begin calculating the mil rate.
Commissioner Smith said he had hoped to receive additional information regarding the levy.
Chief Merrill explained that the district has to wait until the county provides the final assessment values before proceeding.

**RFQ Results**

Chief Merrill presented the final Request for Qualifications (RFQ) evaluation results, identifying the top four firms as Carletti, Rice Fergus Miller, TCA, and MacKenzie. He recommended shortlisting all four firms and inviting each to provide an in-person presentation at the district office. Each firm would be allotted 45 minutes for its presentation, followed by a 15-minute question and answer session. Chief Merrill explained that 45 minutes would allow sufficient time to address both the feasibility study and consolidation, as these are separate topics requiring discussion.
Chairman Koorn reiterated that the presentations would be scheduled in one-hour blocks, allowing 45 minutes for each presentation and 15 minutes for questions. He expressed his preference for in-person presentations and questioned whether the district should interview the top four firms or narrow the selection to three.
Chief Merrill noted that a two-way tie in the evaluation results made it difficult to eliminate one of the four firms.
Following discussion, November 13th, 2026, was selected for the presentations, beginning at 9:00 a.m. and concluding at 1:00 p.m. Chief Merrill noted that the overall interview and selection process would take approximately six hours.
Chief Merrill recommended that, following the presentations, the board identify its preferred firm and request an architectural and engineering (A&E) contract proposal based on fair market value. He also asked when the board would determine whether to proceed with one or both feasibility studies.
Chairman Koorn indicated that a decision could be made at the December regular meeting. He also discussed the potential funding of architectural and engineering services, explaining that these expenses would be considered soft costs. Based on his conversation with Jim, he indicated that a separate resolution would not be necessary, as the costs could be incorporated into the bond if approved.
Chief Swiger questioned whether these expenses would fall under construction costs.
Chairman Koorn clarified that architectural expenses would be considered soft costs and could be reimbursed through bond proceeds, based on his discussion with Jim.
Chief Merrill referenced an estimated $500,000 for electrical and construction-related expenses. It was emphasized that proceeding with the proposed projects would depend on voter approval of the bond.
Commissioner Smith stated that the board would be better positioned to determine its next steps after hearing the firms presentations.
Chairman Koorn indicated that further discussion and a decision would be necessary in December.
Chief Swiger asked whether the regular meeting should be moved to the first week of December.
Chief Horton suggested scheduling a special hiring meeting during the first week of December.
Chief Merrill concluded the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) discussion by confirming that he would contact the four shortlisted firms to schedule their presentations for November 13th, 2026, in one-hour

blocks from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. He would also notify the firms that were not selected to proceed in the RFQ process.

**2027 Budget**

Chief Swiger clarified that an error was made in the previous 2027 budget presentation. Wages per the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) are proposed to increase by six percent, rather than the previously reported four percent.

Natasha Spydell reported that, following consultation with the district's attorney, the Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) line item for the employer-paid portion was removed from the proposed 2027 budget. Additionally, $1,504 must be returned to SAFER accruals.

Commissioner Smith expressed concern that the available funds are dwindling. Commissioner Miller added that they are declining rapidly.

Chairman Koorn stated that the inclusion of SAFER line items in the proposed 2027 budget was consistent with what the board had requested.

**At 9:37 a.m. Chairman Koorn called the meeting into Closed Session.**

1. **Closed Session:**
   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 9:54 a.m. Chairman Koorn called the meeting out of Closed Session and into Regular Session. No decisions were made.**

**Adjourn**

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

**Motion carried unanimously.**

The Special Meeting of the Board adjourned at 9:54 a.m.

Attest:

Krystle Camacho

Krystle Camacho
Board Secretary/Accounting Manager