

NEWMAN LAKE FIRE & RESCUE
Spokane County Fire District No. 13
Minutes for December 6, 2023
SPECIAL MEETING – TOWN HALL

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Fire Commissioners of Spokane County Fire Protection District No. 13 met on December 6, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. at Station No. 1, 9324 N Starr Rd., Newman Lake, Washington.

ROLL CALL

Board: Chair Ben Kaiser, Commissioner Eileen Weyrauch, Commissioner Teresa Phelps
Others Present: Chief Daron Bement, Bob Kolva, Kelli Lemley, Carleen and Dave Vanderostyne, Mike Jennings, Rob & Susan Hecker, Toni Halloran, Hal & Cindy Ebel, Donna & Tim Early, Staci Lehman, Jared Ploof, Toby Cadwell, Scott Inch, and 33 other community members.

TOWN HALL MEETING OPENING & INTRODUCTIONS:

Chief Bement introduced himself, the Commissioners, and Admin Assistant Robin Harbin. He read the goal and guidelines for the meeting, (attached). Chief Bement presented a brief Power Point which included department priorities, common misconceptions regarding the levy, history of the general levy, operating costs vs personnel costs, 2024 budget, basic costs regardless of call volume, and options for 2025 and beyond, (thumbnails attached).

OPEN FORUM DISCUSSION:

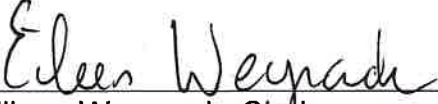
Questions and comments were invited from the community members. Chief Bement answered questions and clarified misconceptions. Many community members expressed concern over the possibility of a 6% increase each year which they feared was giving the district a blank check to increase their taxes 6% each year. Chief Bement explained that the commissioners vote on increases based upon budget needs, but the district can never collect more than \$1.50 per thousand. Some community members questioned the voters pamphlet statement from the con committee which stated the district was planning to hire three new full-time firefighters. Chief Bement stated this is not true; the district currently has three paid positions and may consider bringing on one training captain in the future if the budget allows. Chief Bement also discussed losing the Shift Volunteer and Resident Volunteer programs due to necessary budget cuts and the hope of reinstating these programs with a levy lid lift for 2025. Although Shift Volunteers live outside the community and have the goal of obtaining training and experience to get a full-time paid position with a career department, they commit to covering shifts at the station, ready to respond on calls immediately from the station. Longtime Community Volunteers Bob Kolva and Dave Vanderostyne explained how difficult it is to get volunteers from within the community and the need to restore the Shift and Resident Volunteer programs. Several members of the community stated their concern about a sudden levy increase from \$0.78 to \$1.30 per thousand of assessed property value. They suggested implementing a levy lid lift with a minimal incremental increase each year of the lid lift up to \$1.30 per thousand.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY:


Chief Bement stated he would research the possibility of implementing a levy lid lift with a minimal incremental increase each year of the lid lift. He suggested holding another Town Hall meeting in January 2024 for further discussion after obtaining more information. Bob Kolva asked for a show of hands to see how many attendees use Facebook; many do not. Staci Lehman suggested the department continue sending announcements through the monthly E-Newsletter for the Newman Lake Property Owners Association and invited community members to sign up to receive the monthly E-Newsletter at newmanlakewa.com.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.



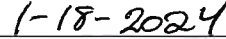
Eileen Weyrauch, Chairperson



Date



Robin Harbin, District Secretary



Date