

NEWMAN LAKE FIRE & RESCUE
Spokane County Fire District No. 13
Minutes for April 17, 2025
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Fire Commissioners of Spokane County Fire Protection District No. 13 met on April 17, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. at Station No. 1, 9324 N Starr Rd., Newman Lake, Washington.

ROLL CALL

Board: Commissioners Teresa Phelps, Ben Kaiser, and Eileen Weyrauch
Others Present: Chief Daron Bement, Captain Josh Ambach, Lieutenant Carleen VanDerostyne, Secretary Robin Harbin, and Community Members Dave and Kathy Pfeiffer. Ashley Carroll and Denise Brooks of Nicholson & Associates Insurance participated remotely via Microsoft Teams.

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda consisted of the meeting minutes for March 5, March 20, and March 25, 2025; Financial Reports; Approval of Warrants #12532 - #12576 in the amount of \$57,361.35; Payroll Taxes in the amount of \$8,187.31; and DRS Pension in the amount of \$3,758.63. Commissioner Kaiser motioned to accept the consent agenda; Commissioner Weyrauch seconded; Chair Phelps called for the vote, which passed unanimously.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT USE AGREEMENT

- Volunteer Rich Peplinski has offered to use his own dozer while conducting firefighting duties for the department. After consulting with the department's insurance provider, Enduris, Secretary Harbin drafted a Personal Equipment Use Agreement in alignment with coverage information and direction provided by Eric Swagerty of Enduris.
- Commissioner Weyrauch motioned to approve the Personal Equipment Use Agreement as written and to be signed by Rich Peplinski and Chief Bement; Commissioner Kaiser seconded the motion; Chair Phelps called for the vote, which passed unanimously.

AUXILIARY REPORT

Auxiliary member Josh Ambach reported the Fire Auxiliary balance remains the same as last month at: \$4,533.62

The Fire Auxiliary met for the first time this year on Monday, April 7th. The annual T-Shirt and Hot-Dog sale is scheduled for Saturday, July 5th from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. On the department's wish list are Class B uniforms and ballistic vests.

CORRESPONDENCE

A thank you note was received from a family in Honeymoon Bay. When their home was in danger of flooding, Chief Bement and Captain Josh Ambach dug out the culverts to successfully divert the water. The residents greatly appreciated this action provided as a community service.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT by Chief Daron Bement

Service Awards Dinner:

We had an excellent turnout for the annual Service Awards dinner held on the evening of March 20th. All agreed the food was great!

Wildland Training; Fire Academy:

The sixteen-week 2025 Fire Academy is in full swing with dedicated recruit participation. Wildland firefighting training has been conducted as wildfire season is upon us. Our firefighters monitor local conditions such as wind speed/direction, temperatures, and low humidity. Brush Truck 13-3 is fully operational and will be put into service once additional equipment is received next week. Brush Truck 13-1 is in full service, with Brush Truck 13-2 to be up and running soon.

Calls, Staffing, Apparatus, Training:

- We had 14 emergency calls in March 2025, as compared to 19 calls in March 2024.
- 2025 year-to-date calls is at 52 as of the end of March; 65 as of today, April 17, 2025.
- One Resident Firefighter is moving to Colorado at the end of May.
- We have brought on three lateral Shift Volunteers who are certified Firefighter/EMTs living in the Spokane Valley area. We will continue to waitlist non-certified applicants until preparation for the 2026 Fire Academy.
- Training has included – Truck Maintenance, EVIP Refresher, and Wildland Practical

CAPTAIN'S REPORT by Captain Josh Ambach

Apparatus:

The surplus 2008 Ford Expedition will be stripped of equipment (with the exception of the slide box) and de-labeled, in preparation for going to auction. Some of the parts may be used on other department apparatus. It will go to auction with a \$5,000 reserve after being listed for sale at \$8,000 with no buyers. The vehicle has 88,000 miles on it. It should be ready to go to auction by the end of the month.

Facilities:

- The broken propane heater at Station 2 is scheduled to be replaced by Conifer Electric. It will be replaced with a smaller but sufficient unit at a quoted cost of \$2,972 with installation.
- The brake unit failed on Station 1 bay door #5. Wayne-Dalton serviced all the bay doors today and informed us about the brake system. All departments with this brake system are having them removed from bay doors as they present a safety issue. Wayne-Dalton will replace the brake system at the base of each bay door with regular wheels. They will also give us a quote for 3-foot-long curtain wand style door sensors to replace our current eye sensors which are not at the right height and would need to have additional eye sensors installed to meet safety requirements.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Insurance Quotes:

Ashley Carroll and Denise Brooks of Nicholson & Associates Insurance were unable to obtain a quote for us from FirePlus in time for the meeting but logged into the meeting via Microsoft

Teams to provide basic information and answer any questions we may have at this time. Nicholson & Associates is an insurance broker in Washington State. Provident insurance, which formerly offered only accidental death and dismemberment insurance for volunteer fire departments, expanded to include auto and property insurance coverage through FirePlus about five years ago. They are out of Pennsylvania and are currently revamping their liability limits in Washington state. Technical difficulties have led to a delay in obtaining quotes for departments in Washington. Ashley compared Fire Plus to our current insurance provider Enduris, a risk management pool. She stated that Enduris has a \$20 million cap in a policy year for all members to share, which is an advantage for a department with high claims, but a negative for departments with relatively few claims as departments with few claims will pay increased rates due to the high claims of other departments in the pool. There is no reward for keeping claims down due to increased safety programs and other preventive measures. FirePlus is an independent policy, not a risk management pool. It has a maximum of \$1 million per claim plus a \$3 million umbrella. Other pros of FirePlus presented include: Vehicle ACV = Agreed upon value with no depreciation; quick payout on claims, typically within two weeks; and coverage for legal counsel and fees on court cases.

Accounting Software Quotes:

After talking with administrative personnel from districts 10, 9, 8, and 4, Secretary Harbin obtained quotes for switching to Vision by Tripleview accounting software. To purchase the software would cost \$19,997.50 with an annual cost of \$5,825.00. Their cloud service was an initial \$8,712.50 after a 25% discount and an annual cost of \$8,712.50. Vision is offering the 25% initial discount on the cloud service as they are encouraging new customers to go with the cloud. If we purchased the software, we could end up in the same situation we are in now with Springbrook, formerly BIAS, who is no longer supporting the on-premise version of their software. Migrating to Springbrook cloud is a one-time fee of \$3,690.00 with an annual cost of \$6,700.00 per year. Technical and accounting assistance with Springbrook has always been excellent, with support provided within minutes. According to administrative personnel using Vision, they tend to reach out for assistance from other districts. Vision stated their goal is to respond to help desk tickets within 24 hours.

EMS Levy Renewal:

Secretary Harbin submitted the EMS Levy Renewal Resolution 2025-4, the EMS Levy Renewal Cover Sheet, and the 2025 EMS Levy Explanatory Statement (approved by Attorney Brian Snure) on March 27, 2025. A public notice has been posted for members interested in participating on a pro or con committee; as of today, no one has responded.

NEW BUSINESS

Comcast Contract Renewal:

Secretary Harbin reported this month's internet/phone bill was nearly twice as much due to the expiration of our discounted rate contract. Checking with other internet options, the following information was obtained: Century Link Business service is not available to the Station 1 address; Wind Wireless is not available as a mountain is in the way; Pterra cannot offer sufficient speeds; Starlink is available at \$165/month plus taxes/fees, but would require a separate phone service. After talking with Michael Garrison Stuber, a two-year contract for \$244.84/month was

signed with Comcast and a reminder was placed on Outlook Calendar to again look at other internet/phone options in January 2027.

2024 Annual Report:

Secretary Harbin completed and filed the 2024 Annual Report with the State Auditor’s Office after review and approval from Chief Bement on April 15, 2025. The total balance of all district funds as of December 31, 2024 was \$1,098,251; the total of all district liabilities, including bonds, loans, and employee vacation and sick pay accruals was \$1,370,629; the total 2024 expenditures of state grant funds was \$7,015.50; and the total 2024 expenditures of federal grant funds was \$1,189.84.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dave and Kathy Pfeiffer were unable to attend the first quarter Community Meeting held on March 25th. They asked how the meeting went. Although there were only about a dozen attendees, good questions were asked, and answers were provided along with other information. We look forward to the second quarter Community Meeting, scheduled for Monday, June 23, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. This is the only date Commissioner Kaiser will be available to meet in June.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

The District will provide the following information to the community at the April 26th Community Clean-up Event:

- Wildfire Community Preparedness Day May 3, 2025, and Wildfire Neighbor Ready Program materials.
- National EMS Week May 18-24, 2025, and EMS information/pin.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.



Teresa Phelps, Chairperson

5-15-25

Date



Robin Harbin, District Secretary

5-15-2025

Date