

NEWMAN LAKE FIRE & RESCUE
Spokane County Fire District No. 13
Minutes for August 20, 2026
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Fire Commissioners of Spokane County Fire Protection District No. 13 met on August 20, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. at Station No. 1, 9324 N Starr Rd., Newman Lake, Washington.

ROLL CALL

Board: Chair Ben Kaiser, Vice Chair Teresa Phelps, and Commissioner Dennis Gleckler
Others Present: Chief Daron Bement, Division Chief Josh Ambach, Training Officer Carleen Beauchene, Secretary Robin Harbin and Community Members Bill Jackman, and Dave and Kathy Pfeiffer; Michael Miller participated remotely via Teams

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda consisted of the meeting minutes for July 4, July 9, July 16, and July 21, 2026; Financial Reports; Approval of Warrants #13393 - #13459 in the amount of \$121,973.05; Payroll Taxes in the amount of \$11,881.14; and DRS Pension in the amount of \$6,413.04. Vice Chair Phelps moved to accept the consent agenda; Commissioner Gleckler seconded the motion; Chair Kaiser called for the vote, which passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE

Appreciation for Our Fire Service: We recently received numerous notes of appreciation for our service, including messages from the following –

- *Chief Frank Soto Jr* - for our backfill and response support during their July 26 large-scale 5-story, 5-alarm incident.
- *Lois and Tim Quinn* – for our mutual aid firefighting participation in saving their home from the brush fire that broke out in Liberty Lake in the early morning hours of July 19.
- *District 10* – for our coordinated efforts and contribution toward fighting Spokane's Old Trails firestorm which started August 1.
- *Cherie Willis* – for our professional emergency medical response, skill, care, and kindness when bringing her husband back from cardiac arrest on Saturday, August 8.

Unfounded Reckless Driving Report: Secretary Harbin presented a message received through the district website, reporting reckless driving by a vehicle with what appeared to be a District 13 sticker. The report has been investigated, and it has been confirmed the vehicle reported does not belong to any member of our district. Robin will notify the sender of the investigation conclusion.

UTGO and LTGO Bond Status: Secretary Harbin stated the response provided to an inquiry on the state of the district's UTGO and LTGO bonds, which will be fulfilled in 2033. The total owed on the two bonds is \$1,297,000.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT by Chief Daron Bement

General Message:

- The WSRB Tender Ops test has been completed, passed and approved. This will bring areas within 5-7 miles of Station 2 down to a PC6, with a PC5 for the areas with hydrants. This is a huge success for our community members. A special thanks to all department members who worked hard to make this possible, including: Michael Garrison Stuber, Kyle Griner, Scott Lasher, Luke Winkler, and others.
- NLFR was an active participant and many volunteers stepped up to assist with the Spokane area fires on Saturday August 1, 2026, what has been called a firestorm. NLFR provided three full crews that day; some stayed out overnight. Chief Bement was Area Coordinator, active at 911 for nearly 16 hours. Volunteers and staff ensured that the district remained covered and crews were prepared at the station to respond. Thanks to everyone that helped out on the frontlines and to those who remained here to protect Newman Lake should it be needed.
- Our units continue to assist with area wildfires. Brush 13-1 and a crew of three just returned from assignment with DNR for Spokane area fires.
- Academy 2026-1 is in the books. Thanks to everyone that showed up to support the recruits.

Calls, Staffing, Apparatus, Training:

- We had a record setting 41 incident responses in July 2026. This is an increase from 26 in July 2025.
- Our year-to-date total calls is 146 as of July 31, 2026.
- We bid Hayden Phelps goodbye and wish him well in his new position with CDA Fire this month. We brought on retired SVFD FF Todd Bellefeuille (B11) as a lateral hire. He has been MOBED out two time already and is a qualified Engine Boss and Radio COMM Tech.
- We have brought in five new volunteers including Todd Bellefeuille. These include volunteer firefighters Blake Christofferson, Iren Davis, Noah Schlosser; and Ashley Bement as volunteer support services.
- We are doing some recommended upgrades to the upper storage area in the Annex to ensure that OSHA compliance is met.
- July training included: Mental Health Awareness; Cougar Lane Fire After Action Review; EMS OTEP Hyperthermia; Salvage and Overhaul; and Tech Rescue – Confined Space Awareness.

DIVISION CHIEF'S REPORT by Chief Josh Ambach

Operations/Training Division Report:

- Our firefighters have had the opportunity to train on vertical roof ventilation for two trainings, utilizing the WSP Training Prop made available to our district at no cost through Brian Oberhauser.
- Our 2026-1 Academy graduates will have the opportunity to test with District 4 on Hazmat and FF1. Upon earning these, we will have a total of 22 Firefighters on our Department with FF1 and Hazmat credentials.
- We are planning our 2027-1 Academy to begin in March. We should have 10 new recruits participating.

2026 Wildland Mobilization Apparatus Revenue:

- Year-to-date in 2026, our wildland firefighter crews have generated **\$129,157.43**, (\$115,517.43 + \$13,640.00 for most recent Autumn Lane DNR fire), for the use of our apparatus on Wildland Mobilizations throughout the state.
- Per Brian Briscoe of WSP, we will see reimbursement payments come in within the next two months. Although there have been many fires throughout Washington this year, the state's goal is to pay all personnel and equipment reimbursements by the end of December.
- Our Wildland Teams are up for MOBE Strike Team rotation with B13-2 and A13-1 this next week and may be deployed.

AUXILIARY REPORT

Per Kelli Lemley, as reported by Division Chief Josh, the Fire Auxiliary balance is \$7,438.73. This balance does not include credit card receipts of approximately \$400.00 from T-Shirt sales at last night's Ice Cream Social. There were roughly 250 attendees at the Newman Lake Property Owners Association annual Ice Cream Social held at the fire station last night, Wednesday, August 19.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Enduris Rescue Boat Insurance Coverage Information:

The question of insurance on a rescue boat was posed at our July 21, 2026 Community Meeting. Secretary Harbin contacted Enduris to inquire about coverage on a potential rescue boat. Joe Davis, Enduris Director of Risk Management and Member Relations, replied that Enduris can cover liability for watercraft under 50 feet. \$120,000 coverage would cost about \$600 to \$650 annually.

NEW BUSINESS

2027 Initial Projected Levy Amounts:

Secretary Harbin presented the 2027 Preliminary Tax Levy estimates received from the Spokane County Assessor's Office after their July assessment. Projections show a potential increase of \$26,087.78 in tax levy increases to the department, (an increase of \$3,641.24 from the EMS Levy and an increase of \$22,446.54 from the Regular Fire Levy).

BVFF Pension Participation Requirements Policy:

Secretary Harbin presented a draft of a District policy of requirements for participation in the Washington State Board for Volunteer Firefighters, (BVFF), Pension Program. Once approved, the policy will be entered into Lexipol for access and acknowledgement by department members. Vice Chair Phelps motioned to approve the BVFF Pension Participation Policy as written; Commissioner Gleckler seconded the motion; Chair Kaiser called for the vote, which passed unanimously.

Five to Seven Year Apparatus Acquisition Plan:

Chief Bement added to the meeting agenda a 5-7 Year Apparatus Acquisition Plan. He asked the commissioners their opinion about purchasing used apparatus/vehicles. Chair Kaiser expressed the constraints of purchasing new apparatus, which include taking 5 to 10 years to receive once ordered, exorbitant costs of around \$1 million dollars for an engine, and the fact that a brand new

engine does not come without issues. If a used apparatus is properly vetted with any necessary repairs already completed, it could be a wise option. It would be good to try to tap into districts with a reliable vehicle rotation schedule. Chief Josh stated the district would only purchase a reliable used apparatus if it is 10 years old or newer. As our two engines are over 30 years old, we will lose points toward our WSRB PC rating and face repair and liability issues if we do not replace the engines within the next 6 years. Given this information, the Apparatus Acquisition Plan was presented as follows:

1) 2026 APPARATUS/VEHICLES

- New Chassis for Brush 13-1 – Remount box onto the new chassis.
- New Command Pickup which can be used as a Command/Communications Wildland Vehicle. This vehicle will be used as Command 1302 and will be able to pull a trailer with one of our UTV's to generate an average of \$1500-\$2000 per day on Wildland MOBES. The current 1302 SUV would become 1325 for Duty Officers, enabling Captain Kolva to have immediate response use of Command C13-3.

2) 2027 APPARATUS/VEHICLES

- Start the bid process to purchase a new demo or stock engine with a sizeable down payment in order to finance half or less than half the total cost of the apparatus. We have applied for an AFG Grant through FEMA to purchase a new engine and should know within the year if it has been awarded.

3) 2028 APPARATUS/VEHICLES

- Replace the oldest tender, 1990 Tender 13-3, which is currently used only in district. A new tender would be equipped with the required spray bars in order to deploy on MOBES at the current Tactical Tender reimbursement rate of at least \$2500 per day. Lincoln County Fire District refurbishes ex-military 6x6 heavy tactical vehicles into rugged off-road water tenders, which would be very practical for use in district and out on MOBES. Hauser Fire runs 6x6 tactical tenders in their district.

4) 2028-2029 APPARATUS/VEHICLES

- Replace current Zodiac inflatable boat with an adequate marine rescue boat, adequate for safe patient rescue and fighting shoreline fires.

5) 2029-2030 APPARATUS/VEHICLES

- Replace other engine which is over 30 years old.

Commissioners expressed their appreciation for this plan. Vice Chair Phelps requested to be informed of all options, vendors/providers, time frames, costs, and funding sources. Chief Bement will communicate the availability of trucks in the pipeline.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Kathy Pfeiffer thanked Division Chief Ambach and Secretary Harbin for providing the WSRB letter and report showing our improved PC rating, which was accepted by their insurance provider to lower their insurance premiums.

Bill Jackman stated that State Farm Insurance does not use PC ratings, which are the Washington State equivalent of ISO ratings. In that case, therefore, WSRB is obsolete. Bill Jackman also commented on Wildland MOBE revenue. He understands that money is needed to operate but asked why our department is providing such resources, depleting our resources here. Chief Bement reiterated that the district retains adequate trucks and people in district when sending teams out on MOBES.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Seasonal Firefighters:

Commissioner Gleckler inquired about the possibility of hiring seasonal firefighters. Chief Josh confirmed there is currently some pushback from our current volunteer wildland firefighters due to the delay in getting paid from the state. Chief Bement reported we will be looking into this as an option. Current volunteers would need to end their status as department volunteers in order to apply as seasonal firefighters since firefighters cannot be simultaneously both personnel and volunteers. The budget would need to allow the expense of seasonal firefighters as the pay and benefits cost would be substantially more than that of volunteers. Although reimbursement is available through the state and DNR, the seasonal firefighters would have to be paid employee wages and benefits for their time on duty whether deployed or not, and there is no guarantee of the number of wildland fires each year.

Banners for Community Meeting Announcements:

Secretary Harbin has obtained three quotes and designs for Community Meeting announcement banners, 1 large, 4 feet by 8 feet, to be placed on Starr Road, and one small, 3 feet by 4 feet, to be placed on Idaho Road. Quotes range from roughly \$800 to \$1200 and include printing the interchangeable pieces needed to change out Day, Date, Month, and Time on the large banner. The interchangeable pieces will need to be cut apart; hook and loop tape will need to be attached to the banner and each piece. An appropriate method will need to be designed for changing out information on the smaller sign to effectively announce Community Meetings to all those entering the District. Secretary Harbin reviewed drafts of initial banner designs with commissioners and will adjust as suggested before proceeding. With effective announcements and the inclusion of some family activities, the district hopes to increase participation in Community Meetings.

2026 WFCA Annual Conference:

Secretary Harbin has registered Chair Kaiser, Vice Chair Phelps, and Chief Bement for the 2026 WFCA Annual Conference scheduled for October 21-24, 2026 in Spokane. Division Chief Ambach and wife, Mandie, have been registered for the dinner only; Chair Kaiser and Chief Bement have plus one guests registered for the dinner. Secretary Harbin has registered Chair Kaiser, Vice Chair Phelps, and Chief Bement for in person at the Snure Legal Conference; she will attend the online class remotely this year.

Annual Department Family BBQ:

Chief Bement stated a department member has offered the use of his giant spit roaster for this year's Annual Department Family BBQ. Commissioners suggested Saturday, September 19, for the annual event to be held at Station 1, possibly around 3PM, details to be determined.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:08 p.m.

Signed by:

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Ben Kaiser, Chairperson

9/17/2026

Date


Robin Harbin, District Secretary

9-17-2026

Date