

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

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Fire Commissioners of Spokane County Fire Protection District No. 13 met on November 13, 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, Secretary Robin Harbin, and Community Members Dave Pfeiffer, and Jerry LeGrand

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda consisted of the meeting minutes for October 11, October 16, and October 22, 2025; Financial Reports; Approval of Warrants #12842 - #12923 in the amount of \$83,635.93; Payroll Taxes in the amount of \$10,819.23; and DRS Pension in the amount of \$3,733.53. Commissioner Kaiser motioned to accept the consent agenda; Commissioner Weyrauch seconded; Chair Phelps called for the vote, which passed unanimously.

AUXILIARY REPORT

Josh Ambach reported the current Fire Auxiliary balance is \$6,692.46. They have a sufficient number of volunteers to proceed with the annual Breakfast With Santa event, which is scheduled for Saturday, December 6, 9AM-Noon. The local 4-H group will be helping out at the event. More gift donations are needed, especially gifts for teens. The fire department is putting together a wish list of items needed to present to the Auxiliary.

CORRESPONDENCE

Robin received a call from Rosalee Allan, a Moab Irrigation Board Member, asking for assistance with their accounting system. Robin replied with an email including BIAS (now SBX) contact information for Moab Irrigation to obtain direct assistance from BIAS (SBX).

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT by Chief Daron Bement

General Message:

- Commissioner Weyrauch and Chief Bement attended the annual WFCA conference in Tulalip October 22-25. Chief Bement made some good connections with other departments in the state.
- Two of our officers, Capt. Jake and Lt. Carleen, are attending the 40-hour fire investigator course this winter.
- Lt. Carleen and Volunteer Connor Hunnel are completing Crew Boss coursework in preparation for the next wildland fire season.
- Our new emergency response management system (RMS), First Due, is being built out by the Admin team to go live in January. Our current system, ESO, expires in February.

Calls, Staffing, Facilities, Apparatus, Training:

- We had 15 incident responses in October 2025; we had 14 in October 2024.
- 2025 Year to date, (YTD), incident responses is at 197.
- Two of our four Resident Firefighters moved out the end of October and have transitioned to Shift Volunteers. We will be posting internally for interest in filling Resident Firefighter openings.
- One Shift Volunteer is moving home to Minnesota the end of this month.
- Two Shift Volunteers have been brought on the past month and are in initial training.
- The new Station 2 heater has been installed and is functioning well.
- The new chassis project for Brush 13-2 is progressing well. It is currently being wrapped and detailed. We will be placing the box on this month and then will send it in for final upfitting and production.
- Training has included – EMS - Trauma; EMS Quarterly CPR/Skills Assessments; Fire Gound Safety; Auto Extrication; and Technical Rescue (Confined Space Awareness).

CAPTAIN'S REPORT by Captain Josh Ambach

Spokane City Fire is using our burn building today and tomorrow. They have invited us to, in turn, train with them at their burn tower. City Fire appreciates the opportunity to use our burn building as it is proving to be the make it or break it point for their new recruits due to the quality and configuration of our burn building.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Full-time Firefighter Comp Time:

Chief Bement proposed that full-time firefighters should earn comp time for hours worked beyond their regularly scheduled shifts. Records show current full-time firefighter shifts are on a rotating schedule and average out to 163-165 hours per month. This does not include call responses or extra duties performed outside of scheduled shift hours. Commissioner Weyrauch pointed out that a 40 hour work week would average out to 173 hours per month. The main goals for our department are to best serve our community with maximum coverage while maintaining financially responsible decisions. We need to address salaries and comp time in relation to positions, not persons. The commissioners requested that the chief's contract be placed on a future agenda for review of average monthly base hours and comp time. Chair Phelps stated our district does not have a growing tax base to support substantial future salary increases. Captain Josh inquired about the goals and standards for our department, noting examples such as Districts 4 and 10 where the base Lieutenant pay is \$90,000. We do not have the same tax base but need to balance our commitment to serve our community with meeting staff needs. We currently have no caps placed on salaries. This may be something to consider. Chief Bement expressed the value of sufficient comp time to allow full-time firefighters to go out on Mobes and not forfeit their salary while doing so. Captain Josh was gone 42 days on Mobes this year, which generated funds for the district. The district is working toward qualifying more volunteers out on Mobes to balance Mobe time for full-time firefighters. As of January 1, 2026, Captain Josh Ambach will be promoted to a Division Chief position, which is an exempt position. Exempt positions do not qualify for overtime but can earn comp time should the department choose to allow it. Unused comp time for exempt positions does not get paid out, whereas it is paid out at separation for non-exempt positions. Chair Phelps proposed the following:

- Full-time firefighter hours should be an average of 173 per month.
 - Full-time firefighters may earn comp time for hours worked beyond 173 hours per month.
 - Maximum comp time earned for exempt positions should be 120 hours.
 - Maximum comp time earned for non-exempt positions should be 80 hours.
 - Maximum carryover comp time for exempt positions should be 80 hours.
 - Maximum carryover comp time for non-exempt positions should be 40 hours.
 - There should be no comp time payout for any employee who fails to use comp time beyond the maximum carryover by the end of the year (use it or lose it).
 - Exempt employees who earn comp time should not be eligible for payout of unused comp time at separation.
 - No-exempt employees should be eligible for payout of unused comp time at separation.
- Commissioner Kaiser motioned to approve the items proposed by Chair Phelps; Commissioner Weyrauch seconded the motion; Chair Phelps called for the vote, which passed unanimously.

2026 Salary & Stipend Schedule – Amended; Division Chief Promotion Details:

- The 2026 Salary & Stipend Schedule, which was approved at the October 16th meeting, was presented with clarifications and added details. The Division Chief position is new as of 2026. The Emergency Response, Training Participation and Special Event volunteer stipends will now be paid out monthly rather than annually. Emergency Response and Training participation stipends will be paid out when the minimum 50% training participation requirement is met. Duty Officers covering recognized holidays will earn double stipends. Call responses on recognized holidays will earn double response credits. Commissioners requested that recognized holidays for volunteer stipends were more clearly defined. This was completed before commissioners reviewed the updates and approved the amended 2026 Salary & Stipend Schedule with their final signatures.
- Chair Phelps noted salary projections for years 2027 through 2030 seem unrealistic for our department. Commissioners requested that the topic of salary caps be added to the agenda for the November 17th budget meeting.

2026 Operating Budget – DRAFT 3:

Robin presented DRAFT 3 of the 2026 Operating Budget which has been updated to reflect the most recent SREC cost estimate of \$10,700, down from the previous estimate of \$15,000. The difference was placed toward the volunteer per call/per training stipend budget as this stipend will now be paid out monthly rather than annually. The final 2026 Operating Budget will be presented at the November 17th Public Budget Meeting, scheduled at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner Election Years, Vacancies, Chair Position Policy/Protocol:

Chief Bement presented Policy 103, which establishes the guidelines and procedures for posting, advertising, and appointing individuals to fill vacant Fire Commissioner positions. He also presented Policy 104, which establishes the procedures and guidelines for the annual rotation of board officer positions. After reviewing Policies 103 and 104, Commissioner Weyrauch confirmed that board officer positions are on a rotation schedule and the rotation schedule will be adjusted to ensure a newly elected or appointed commissioner will not rotate into a chairperson position their first year as commissioner. With that being confirmed, Commissioner Kaiser motioned to approve Policies 103 and 104; Commissioner Weyrauch seconded; Chair Phelps called for the vote, which passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Purchasing Card Policy:

Robin presented a new comprehensive purchasing card policy modeled after an example received from the Washington Department of Enterprise Services after participating in a recent purchasing card webinar. The purchasing card policy applies to all district purchasing cards and cardholders. It establishes processes necessary to streamline card purchasing processes and minimize financial risk for the district. After review of the new Purchasing Card Policy, Commissioner Weyrauch motioned to approve the policy as written; Commissioner Kaiser seconded; Chair Phelps called for the vote, which passed unanimously.

Policy 212 Edits – Fire Chief Job Description:

Chief Bement edited Policy 212, Fire Chief Job Description, to accurately list of qualified positions to maintain. They include: District Administrative Assistant, Volunteer Coordinator, Training Officer, Operations Officer, and Maintenance Officer. He noted the Fire Chief job description is the only one under district policy; the other job descriptions are under district procedures. After reviewing edits, Commissioner Kaiser motioned to approve Policy 212 as edited; Commissioner Weyrauch seconded; Chair Phelps called for the vote, which passed unanimously.

Proposed Division Chief Job Description:

Chief Bement presented a job description for the newly established Division Chief position. After reviewing the job description, Chair Phelps asked Captain Josh about his goals relative to the minimum and preferred Division Chief qualifications. Josh stated he is working on achieving Officer 1 and 2. Once his continued goals are manageable, he will launch into his college career. Josh meets the current NFPA standards and will continue to work on the preferred Division Chief qualifications in preparation for advancement toward Deputy Chief.

WFC Health Care Program 2026 Employer Application:

Robin presented the 2026 Employer Application for full-time employee health insurance through WFC. There are no changes in options from 2025. Commissioner Kaiser motioned to approve the 2026 WFC Health Care Program Employer Application as written; Commissioner Weyrauch seconded the motion; Chair Phelps called for the vote, which passed unanimously.

Commissioner Position No. 1, November 4th Election Results:

Robin reported that it appears Dennis Gleckler has won the election for Fire Commissioner Position No. 1. Kathy Pfeiffer had an impressive number of votes as a write in. The election will be certified by November 25th.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Chair Phelps called an executive session at 3:01 p.m. for 10 minutes per RCW 42.30.110 (1) (g) to review the performance of a public employee. Commissioners Phelps, Kaiser, and Weyrauch, and Chief Bement went into executive session for 10 minutes at 3:01 p.m. Chair Phelps reconvened the Regular Meeting at 3:11 p.m. No decisions were made.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dave Pfeiffer expressed that the community is concerned about all the new apparatus they are seeing. This will be added to the November 17th budget meeting agenda to address concerns.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

- The department Family Winter Festival is scheduled for Thursday, December 18th, at 5:30 p.m. Dinner will be potluck style, to be ready by 6:00 p.m.
- Tonight will be Eileen’s last SCFCA meeting as she is retiring the end of this year.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:17 p.m.



Teresa Phelps, Chairperson

12-11-2025
Date



Robin Harbin, District Secretary

12-11-2025
Date

