

NEWMAN LAKE FIRE & RESCUE
Spokane County Fire District No. 13
Minutes for September 17, 2026
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Fire Commissioners of Spokane County Fire Protection District No. 13 met on September 17, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. at Station No. 1, 9324 N Starr Rd., Newman Lake, Washington.

ROLL CALL

Board: Vice Chair Teresa Phelps, Commissioner Dennis Gleckler; Chair Ben Kaiser participated remotely via Teams

Others Present: Chief Daron Bement, Division Chief Josh Ambach, Training Officer Carleen Beauchene, Volunteer Firefighter Michelle Breach, Secretary Robin Harbin and Community Members Dave and Kathy Pfeiffer; Michael Miller participated remotely via Teams

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda consisted of the meeting minutes for August 20, 2026; Financial Reports; Approval of Warrants #13460 - #13533 in the amount of \$67,529.95; Payroll Taxes in the amount of \$9,985.14; and DRS Pension in the amount of \$5,669.86. Commissioner Gleckler moved to accept the consent agenda; Vice Chair Phelps seconded the motion; Chair Kaiser called for the vote, which passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE

Appreciation for Our Fire Service: We received a note of gratitude from Lee Schwartzenburg for our firefighting assistance on the Broken Lance Fire in Liberty Lake.

Donation from David and Bonnie Noreen: David brought in a check for \$1000 donation to the fire department in appreciation for our services.

WFCA Trusteed Plans – 2027 Employee Insurance Rates: The employee insurance rates will increase nearly 18 percent from 2026 rates. The total employee insurance cost in 2026 is \$75,981.36. The total employee insurance cost in 2027 will be \$89,502.24.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT by Chief Daron Bement

General Message:

- We look forward to seeing everyone at the Department Friends and Family BBQ here at the station this weekend.
- Restating the importance of what occurred in August, it is worth mentioning that 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.
- Kids Day will be October 3rd, from 11AM – 3PM.

Calls, Staffing, Apparatus, Training:

- Last month confirmed department record – July 2026, 41 incident responses.
- August 2026 = 32 responses; 10 total out of district and 6 Mobe assignments
- Increase from 24 in August 2025
- Our year-to-date total calls is 178 as of August 30, 2026.
- We remain committed to staffing and are receiving, on average, 1-2 applications per day for the past month. Most have been placed on a waitlist. We have begun moving people to Applicant status before moving them on to a waitlist for recruitment. Operations and Training have been working on a plan to streamline onboarding in the future. They are looking at doing two to three hirings per year or opening up application windows only one to two times per year.
- July training included: Roof Ventilation; Hands-on Firefighting Skills Drills; ICS and Scene Management.

DIVISION CHIEF'S REPORT by Chief Josh Ambach

Operations/Training Division Report:

- Brush 13-2 Dodge RAM 5500 has been in for a mandatory recall and basic maintenance. A coolant leak was identified. The necessary repair is covered under warranty. However, the parts needed are on back order. Brush 13-2 will be out of service for approximately two to three months as it will remain with the dealer until repairs are completed.
- The 2027 Training and Academy schedules are being developed. Academy will have a maximum of 15 members, allowing for a possible attrition of five.

2026 Wildland Mobilizations Review:

- The wildland fire season is winding down. It has been the best year for teamwork, participation, readiness and dedication of our Wildland Mobilization Team.
- We are beginning to see Mobe Equipment reimbursements come in. As WSP conducts audits, they sometimes only give us credit for a half shift rather than a full day. This may result in a decrease of approximately \$3000 from the total equipment reimbursement requested.
- In response to Commissioner Gleckler's question about obtaining FMAG funds, the Chiefs replied that is not applicable to us as it is federal disaster funding after the fire.

AUXILIARY REPORT

Per Kelli Lemley, as reported by Division Chief Josh, the Fire Auxiliary balance is still \$7,438.73, the same as last month. They held no meeting this month and will meet next month to begin planning Breakfast with Santa and will calculate the additional balance gained from sales at the Ice Cream Social.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Banners/Signs for Community Meeting Announcements:

Secretary Harbin reported the majority of the sign making companies recommended going with hardboard signs rather than banners for Community Meeting Announcements as they are much more durable and long lasting. As the department is looking at refurbishing the current sign on Starr road, we may look at expanding or modifying it to allow a large hardboard sign to be displayed on it. Chief Bement and Division Chief Ambach will find out what is necessary to post a sign on Idaho road and if a permit will be necessary to modify or enlarge the sign on Starr road.

NEW BUSINESS

2027 Operating Budget DRAFT 1:

Secretary Harbin presented the first draft of the 2027 Operating Budget which is based upon Preliminary Tax Levy estimates received from the Spokane County Assessor's Office after their July assessment, a total of \$1,201,239. After budgeting \$100K to go into Capital savings funds for future major apparatus and building needs, and \$79,600 for the non-voted LTGO Bond payment, the remaining budget is divided by department as follows:

▪ LEGISLATIVE EXPENSES	\$42,400
▪ STAFFING & VOLUNTEER EXPENSES	\$645,450
▪ OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATION EXPENSES	\$125,450
▪ FIRE SERVICE EXPENSES	\$69,700
▪ EMS SUPPLIES AND PPE	\$12,500
▪ FACILITIES EXPENSES	\$41,700
▪ VEHICLES EXPENSES	\$43,939
▪ TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION EXPENSES	\$40,500

Apparatus Acquisition Presentation:

Chief Bement and Division Chief Ambach presented a sustainable vehicle response plan to address current capability gaps and upgrade the district's fleet. The proposal highlighted three key vehicle acquisitions:

- **Command/Wildland Support 4x4 Pickup:** The Chiefs requested authorization to purchase a new or low-mileage used full-size 4x4 pickup to replace the operational limitations of Command 1302. This vehicle will serve as a dedicated platform for rough-terrain wildland incidents, Strike Team Leaders, and communications support. Outfitting costs are estimated at \$10,000–\$20,000. By pulling a UTV trailer on wildland MOBES, it is projected to generate an average of \$1,500–\$2,000 per day in revenue.
- **Brush 13-1 Chassis:** The plan includes purchasing a new chassis for a 5500 Brush upfit to remount the existing box. The combined cost for the pickup and the brush chassis is estimated at \$160,000.
- **Type III Engine:** The Chiefs recommended initiating the process to acquire a Type III Engine through the Sourcewell pre-bid contract process, which requires zero money down initially. Delivery is anticipated for late 2027 or Q1 2028, with multiple financing options available (including a 5-year loan through Spokane County or a 10-to-20-year private equity loan).
- **Funding Strategy:** The district currently has \$202,115 in the Capital Apparatus Outlay account and expects approximately \$150,000 in reimbursements from 2026 Wildland Mobes. With a proposed \$50,000 allocation budgeted for July 2027, total available capital funds will reach \$402,115 by mid-2027. Subtracting the \$160,000 needed for the two trucks leaves \$242,115 in capital reserves, which can be further boosted by an estimated \$70,000 by selling an older engine. No bond or levy would be obtained for the proposed purchases. Current interest rates for financing a new fire engine are approximately 4.3 to 5.0 percent.

Chief Josh will clearly communicate the reasoning, purpose, and goals of the new trucks to the community. The Command/Wildland Support 4x4 Pickup and the Brush 13-1 Chassis can be funded by the revenue already generated from Wildland Mobes and will enable the district to generate more Wildland Mobe revenue in the future. Chief Josh is confident a RAM 1500 is preferred for the district's purpose over a RAM 2500 as it has the shorter box needed on Wildland Mobes.

After review and consideration, Commissioner Gleckler motioned to approve the purchase of a new chassis for Brush 13-1 and to replace Command Vehicle 1302 with a 4x4 Pickup at a maximum cost of \$160,000 for both; Chair Kaiser seconded the motion; Vice Chair Phelps called for the vote, which passed unanimously.

SBX Transfer of Funds for Imprest Payments out of Fund other than F32:

Secretary Harbin explained that the district accounting system, Springbrook Express, SBX, reflects all payments made out of the Imprest Account, Account 2, as part of Fund F32, even if they come out of another fund. This creates balancing issues when completing monthly reconciliations. In order to resolve all current and future bank reconciliation issues which result whenever Imprest Account payments are made out of any District fund other than Fund 32, Resolution 2026-12 was presented to authorize internal SBX transfers to be made for proper balancing of accounts from now forward.

- **RESOLUTION 2026-12 Authorizing SBX Transfers for Imprest Payments out of Funds Other Than Fund F32**

After review, Commissioner Gleckler motioned to approve Resolution 2026-12 as written; Chair Kaiser seconded the motion; Vice Chair Phelps called for the vote, which passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS - None**GOOD OF THE ORDER****WFOA Conference October 21-24, 2026 Agenda; Meals/Mileage Per Diem:**

Secretary Harbin provided copies of the conference agenda as well as Meals/Mileage Per Diem forms for signature for Commissioners Kaiser and Phelps.

Annual Public Budget Meeting:

The annual public budget meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, November 18, at 6:30 p.m.

2027 Personnel Wages Budget:

Commissioner Gleckler questioned the 2027 personnel wages budget for employees, which is approximately \$360,000. Secretary Harbin verified this is accurate. Employee taxes and benefits for 2027 are estimated at an additional \$162,000.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:51 p.m.



Ben Kaiser, Chairperson

Date



Robin Harbin, District Secretary

Date