

Chelan County Fire Protection District No. 5
250 West Manson Blvd.
Manson, WA 98831
Workshop Meeting of Commissioners
Thursday, January 18 @ 4:30 pm

Commissioners Present: Fred Weiss, Chris Willoughby and Dan Baker.

Others Present: Chief Arnold Baker, District Secretary Reggie Trusel, Training Coordinator Raynor Baker, Assistant Chief Kermit McClellan, Firefighter Volunteer Efren Alejo and Aaron Richmond.

Call to Order: Chairman Weiss called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. The Flag salute commenced.

Levy Lid Lift 2024:

- Honoring Commissioner Starkweather
Chairman Weiss shared with the Board, a memorial photo of Commissioner Dana Starkweather that displayed a quote from Oliver Wendell Homes; “To Reach A Port We Must Sail Sometimes With The Wind And Sometimes Against It, But We Must Not Drift Or Lie At Anchor”. Chairman Weiss reiterated the quote as being inspirational and as a department there are different ways to go about meeting our goals, doing nothing is not the way to progress.
- Recap 2025 Budget \$1,717,618.00
Chief Baker displayed the budget breakdown to the Board and explained options in running a Permanent Levy versus a Term; he explained he modified the budget from last meeting with a 1% increase instead of 3% and reduced the dollar amount of add-ons. The Board and attendees discussed the long-term pros and cons keeping in mind the accessed home value fluctuations. The Chief displayed the 2005 Levy details with the Board and gave examples of what the department’s reserve fund would look like at the end of the new Levy 6 years term. They also discussed the projected equipment replacement cost. The Chief asked the Board what *they* would want to have in reserve funds, six years from now? He displayed different Levy scenarios ranging from .75 cents to .79 cents.
Commissioner Weiss asked the Chief for a simplified printout for years; 2025-2030 cost/revenue projections that also reflect reserve fund amounts for each of those years. Terry Labrue asked to see a different type of graph to show comparisons with different rates. He also requested a yearly bottom line operating expense budget without equipment cost?
The Board discussed importance of “ballot-language” and explaining the “Why”.
The consensus from the Board for a Levy amount discussed was .75 cents.

Volunteer Efren Alejo: Shared the relevance in helping educate the Spanish community in what the departments dollar needs/goals are for the future. Emphasizing the importance to communicate our message in both English/Spanish. Efren offered to help relay Levy information to the Spanish community as needed.

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- School Levy Takeaway – Terry LaBrue
Terry explained his history working with the School District Bond Levy and the relevance in translating “attorney language” to wording that the community can better understand.
He also added the significance of social media and the many platforms now available to help with our communication to the community. He suggested establishing the “need” and providing a “solution” will help the community see our value and build trust on both sides. Terry discussed some options in building relationships with community groups and suggested sending out a survey to the public.

Levy Goals

Chief Baker displayed updates, Discussion notes.

#1

- Engine-51 (downtown) replacement in 2025. E-51 will be 30 years old in 2025. For WSRB we need a new truck every 15 years. E-52 was built in 2009. Ideally, we need a truck in 2024.
- Have \$640,000 reserved from current levy. Need the new Levy to fund additional \$285,446. Total cost w/tx \$925,446
- **1 time \$285,446 cost**

Communicate the focus as necessary equipment to maintain insurance rating.

Assistant Chief Kermit McClellan voiced his concern in additional training needed in CAFS operations for “structural firefighting”. He reiterated training is the key to competency.

#2

- Deputy Chief/Training Officer Position.
Add 2nd Full-time officer position – Deputy Chief/Training Officer, will have the responsibility over all training and department operations, starting 2025.
- **Annual cost, 1st year \$122,631 salary & benefits, total levy term \$803,777**
Communicate training is key to competency, certification, and critical component of insurance rating.

#3

- Incentive Compensation
The District has made expectations of training to Certified levels. Incentive compensation beyond basic Firefighter 1. These certifications impact the ability to

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lower fire insurance rates heavily (WSRB). In conjunction with certification is attendance to drills & response. Compensating for high attendance.

- Salary Survey to comply with not exceeding 20% nominal. 29 C.F.R. § 553.106
- Use 20% nominal as an incentive tool.
- **Escalating annual benefit, \$1,282,354 total for 6 years**

Communicate nominal compensation for volunteers.

Assistant Chief McClellan discussed with the Board; Command Duty possible solution that would help alleviate some of the shift issues. He and volunteer Aaron Richmond shared ideas that could help cover more shifts by making the Command Duty Officers part-time employees. The goal is to have the officer group stay under the Salary Survey threshold and to also cover all shifts needed.

Commissioner Willoughby suggested bringing on *two* new lieutenants – two for each station could potentially help offset command shifts as well as give more coverage on incidents. Brief discussion regarding Commissioner Willoughby concerns with Officer earnings regarding; Stipend, Points, and hourly Command Shifts.

#4

- B-53 Brush truck replacement – refurbished used (Non-essential, Type 6 brush trucks are easier to drive for new people, smaller to fit in tight locations)
- **One time cost of \$175,000**

Communicate brush trucks are valued resources for fighting wildfire, this is a used refurbished truck for good value.

#5

- New Type 3 Wildland Interface Engine – 2-Ton chassis, 1000-gallon tank, Compressed Air Foam System (CAFS) Water Pump & Compressor. Highly effective for protecting homes from Wildfire. Planning to complete with the DNR grant chassis.
- **One time cost of \$299,714**

Communicate Wildland Interface Engines are the most efficient tool to protect homes in a wildfire.

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#6

- Full Time-Volunteer Classroom Coordinator-ST52
Once the Resident/Training Classroom building is completed in 2026, plans for a 3rd Full-time fire officer as a Volunteer Coordinator with responsibility over the resident building, maintenance in the training center, and recruitment of new volunteers starting 2027.
- Annual cost, 1st year 2027, \$126,455 salary & benefits, levy term \$528,975

Communicate the community's continued need for volunteers, we need to step up the recruiting, on-boarding, initial training, and management of the resident program.

Chief Baker reiterated the department logged 2,089 training hours in 2022 and increased to 3,140 hours in 2023.

#7

- Replace Command Truck – The pump unit has become less reliable than needed. 2006 pump unit, re-chassis in 2016. Could reuse chassis and could get new pump slip in unit.
- One time cost of \$180,000

Communicate improved efficiency of quick responding duty officer. Current truck is developing reliability issues.

#8

- Providing the Legislature funds- ST52 Resident/Training Classroom building: Operating costs for insurance, utilities, supplies and building maintenance will increase.
- Escalating annual cost, \$249,094 total additional for 5 years

Communicate improved use of volunteers by having some take shifts and staffing the station for quicker response.

#9

Contingency Plan

- Added \$100,000 per year to ER&R
 - Vulnerability of cost overruns in construction

Communicate we are building out the station, living quarters, and training classroom on grant funds. Need contingency if grant funds fall short.

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The 9 projects listed;

5 projects have a one-time cost totaling \$1,190,160, annual average \$198,360

5 projects have annual costs totaling \$3,464,200, annual average \$577,367

Annual average total \$775,727. Additional grants will be pursued. But due to competitive process for grants, they cannot be expected for operating revenue.

- Communicating to Win
Chairman Weiss suggested reviewing the Liz Loomis “Communicating to Win Ballot Measures” notes, he advised 52 helpful points.
- Team Assignments-Working towards Levy Committee and updating Gantt chart.
- Handout
- Next Levy Workshop will be decided at the February Regular Commissioner Meeting February 14, 2024.

Adjournment: Commissioner Weiss closed the workshop meeting with no additional business before the Commissioners, the meeting adjourned at 6:50 pm.

Chelan County Fire District 5 Board of Commissioners:

Commissioner Chairman Fred Weiss

Chris Willoughby

Commissioner Dan Baker

Attest: Regenia Trusel
District Secretary