

King County Fire Protection District No. 27

Minutes

A Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of King County Fire Protection District No. 27 was held on June 16, 2026, at Station 152 located at 4301-334th Place SE, Fall City, Washington, 98024. The meeting was also available remotely with online video and audio conferencing.

Chairman Meredith called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m.

Present:

Chairman Daniel Meredith - Teams
Commissioner Lilly Hansen
Commissioner Kristopher Belfield
Fire Chief Will Aho
Assistant Chief Brian Culp
Secretary Melinda Wall

In Attendance:

Lt. Joe Springer - Teams	Cpt Scott Fleming - 1:50
Lt. Noah Fleming - Teams	FF Greg Lussier - 1:50
FF Marcus Noble - Teams	
FF David Johnson - Teams	
FF Parker Dumas - 1:45	

BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR:

Public Comment Period

Lt. Springer commented that we have been doing this for a long time, trying to move towards a goal and he expressed concern that progress toward a defined objective has been slow. Yesterday, they met with Chief Aho and AC Culp to discuss the contract for services costs; it was a good meeting unfortunately the cost came in higher than anticipated. He conveyed the desire to have a stated goal from the Board. Commissioner Belfield responded that goals were discussed during negotiations of the one-year extension of the CBA, however based on the numbers presented there is a significant difference.

NEW BUSINESS:

2027 Budget Planning

Commissioner Belfield presented the "Future Service Delivery Options" document, noting that it reflected his personal perspective and not that of the Board. The following outline was discussed:

- **Financial Overview;** District's primary revenue source is property taxes, which is subject to statutory growth limits. The District is currently operating under a voter approved 6-year levy lid lift, which permits an annual limit factor of the greater of 3% or Seattle CPI-U. After 2029, the District reverts to the statutory 1% plus new construction.
- **Projected Revenues Surplus / (Deficits);** a conservative and moderately optimistic chart illustrated the potential for deficits beginning in 2028 in the conservative modeling, and 2030 in the moderately optimistic modeling.

- **Options for Future Service Delivery**

Commissioner Belfield discussed the pros and cons of the following service delivery options.

- 1) Maintain Current Structure; negotiate two-year extension to the chief services contract with Eastside Fire & Rescue and the firefighters collective bargaining agreement for two years through 2028.
- 2) Return Chief Services in-House; end the chief service contract with Eastside and conduct a search to hire a Fire Chief and Deputy Chief.
- 3) Full Contract for Service with Eastside; to provide all fire suppression, administrative, and leadership services.
- 4) Pursue Regional Fire Authority (RFA); explore joining or forming a Regional Fire Authority with neighboring jurisdictions.

Commissioner Belfield stated we need to ensure that our community has the highest quality emergency services at the best cost possible and also ensure that our members are satisfied with the compensation

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and support they are receiving in order to have a healthy organization that can sustain into the future. He recommended that the Board continue with option 1 for the interim period, and then move forward with the RFA option 4 as our next goal.

Chairman Meredith stated that he supports joining a larger organization. This approach will ensure that we maintain our level of service and have continued integration with our regional partners. The goal of sharing costs with more people should provide equitable cost sharing across the region. He also recommended continuing with the chief services contract and moving towards the RFA model that appears to be taking shape.

Lt Springer, speaking on behalf of the bargaining group, stated we made good progress last year. He stated that our members provide the same level of service and perform the same work as neighboring departments but do not receive comparable opportunities or compensation. Chairman Meredith responded that a contract has been under consideration, we just don't have the funding to proceed.

Chief Aho reviewed the preliminary cost analysis for Fire District 27 regarding a potential contract for services with EFR and also provided the Board with a salary and benefits comparison for review. They used the minimum 2.5% CPI-U and the maximum 5% CPI-U. It was shown that the District's salaries and benefits would increase \$675,600 based on EFR's contract with the 5% CPI-U.

Chief Aho stated that the cost drivers that EFR have established are proportionally shared across all of the partners. They are actively analyzing if there are areas that can be modified during this current budget cycle. EFR's budget for 2027-2028 is expected to be finalized in October. Discussion ensued.

The discussion shifted to the Regional Fire Authority (RFA) process. Chief Aho stated that if the agencies considering formation of an RFA choose to include a fire benefit charge, the measure would require 60% voter approval. If another agency later annexes into the existing RFA, that agency is only voting to join the existing RFA and would require a simple majority of 50% plus one to pass.

Chief Aho briefed on the fire benefit charge model and stated that you have to look at each individual's parcel size to determine their fee, in addition if you have a commercial building they would have a higher rate factor.

After discussion, Commissioner Hansen stated she supported extending the current chief services contract with EFR, while continuing to pursue the RFA or a full contract, unfortunately the current cost for a full contract is too far apart.

Commissioner Belfield reiterated that the best path forward is to figure out a way to distribute the costs over a broader tax base and the RFA seems to be the best option, the contract for service is another option, but there is too much of a difference right now.

Chief Aho stated that North Bend and District 38 clearly understand this is something much bigger and much better, and they want to engage in participants who are interested early on. The current discussion for them is a potential vote in April of 2027, if it passes, and the RFA is up and recognized as a legal entity by July 1, then revenues would be collected beginning 2028. Fire District 27 could potentially place a measure on the ballot in early 2028 to join the RFA.

Commissioner Belfield asked whether Fire District 27 would retain its assets if it joined an RFA. Chief Aho explained that the District could either transfer its assets to the RFA or retain ownership and lease its building to the RFA. He provided an example in which a fire district transferred all assets to an RFA, while a city transferred most assets but retained ownership of certain fire station buildings and properties under 100-year lease agreements.

Commissioner Belfield also asked how commissioner representation would work within an RFA, including whether District 27 Board members would automatically transition to the RFA Board and how representation would be reduced over time. Chief Aho stated that District 27 would continue to exist if needed for purposes such as outstanding bonds and community representation. Determining the number of representatives that District 27 would have on the RFA, would be determined by the language of the RFA, District 27 would have at least one representative on the RFA Board.

The duty crew left the meeting to respond to an alarm at 2:02 pm.

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Discussion ensued regarding the potential for an RFA model to provide long-term funding stability for the regional area and whether Fall City's taxpayers could benefit from reduced taxes over time.

The Board discussed the EFR Chief Services contract. Chief Aho stated there are two one-year extensions to the current contract. A written notice to extend the contract needs to be provided by July 31, 2026. Secretary Wall stated she would add this to the agenda for the July meeting. The Board concurred that the intent is to continue with the contract.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Executive Session was not needed.

Adjournment:

With no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Meredith at 2:13 p.m.

Attest:

Melinda Wall
District Secretary

Melinda Wall

Chairman

Kelly H
Commissioner

Kurt Beltrami
Commissioner