Clark-Cowlitz Fire Rescue
Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting Minutes
911 N 65th Avenue, Ridgefield

January 22, 2026

Present:
Commissioners Stanley Chunn, David Town, Larry Bartel, Jade Bourke, Ken Ayers. Chief John Nohr. ACs Eammon Ryan and Mike Jackson. Recording Secretary Kathy Streissguth.

Meeting called to order by Commissioner Chunn at 4:00 p.m.

Flag Salute.

CALL FOR LATE AGENDA ADDITIONS
None.

MINUTES
Motion by Commissioner Bourke to adopt the January 8 minutes as presented. Second by Commissioner Town. No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS
Letter of appreciation from a patient for EMS and transport services provided on New Year's Eve.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS
City of Ridgefield Councilmember Katie Favela shared there were no major updates to report. The new council members will be sworn in at the January 22 meeting.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Clark County Fire Risk Management Group
No report.

Fairgrounds Fire Facility Board
Chief Nohr shared items discussed at the January 14 meeting. The water hammer issue on the fire side has been repaired. The lighting upgrade project is complete with much improved visibility. Will be receiving a rebate from CPU for a portion of the project. Issue with the NE parking lot flooding during heavy rainfall. Contractor is scheduled to remove the tree root blockage and repair the vault. The carpet to concrete project is scheduled for the fire station areas. Discussed updates to the fire interlocal agreement. FD6 will provide the response engine for two years starting in 2027. Responsibility will revert to CCFR in 2029.

Finance Committee – Town/Bourke
The Finance Committee exit conference with the State Auditor regarding the 2024 financial and 2023-24 accountability audits has been moved to February 26 at 3:00 p.m.

Local BVFF – Chunn/Ayers
No report.

WFCA Region VIII – Bartel
The next WFCA Board meeting is Saturday, January 24.

Cowlitz Indian Tribe – Contract Liaison Bartel/Bourke
No report.

EMS District 2 – Bourke
Commissioner Bourke reported on the January 12 meeting. The service contract with AMR for January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2029 was signed. Amended the bylaws to change their Board to consist of 5 members to include an additional small city and a fire district rep. The fire commissioner position will rotate between the participating fire districts. FD3 will be the fire rep for 2026-27. The City of La Center will hold the second small city position. The workgroup has been formally changed to a 6-person advisory board. Next meeting on February 9.

Port of Ridgefield
Commissioner Bartel shared issues discussed at the January 21 meeting.

Commissioner Updates
None.

STAFF REPORTS – Q4-2025

Admin/Logistics – AC Peeler
AC Peeler attending Medical Program Director Marc Muhr's retirement event. Written 2025 annual Administrative Services and Logistics report provided.

Operations/Training – AC Ryan
AC Ryan covered highlights of the annual 2025 Operations and Training report. Touched on major achievements in training and response operations. Chief Nohr and AC Ryan commended the crews for their high skill level, teamwork, and the superior skills of the specialty groups. Commissioner Bartel expressed his appreciation to the crews for providing excellent customer service no matter how busy they might be.

Community Risk Reduction/CARES – AC Jackson
AC Jackson recapped the fourth quarter reports for CRR and CARES. Exceeded anticipated revenue for both CRR and the CARES program. Discussed crisis unit response times and their potential impact to overall response statistics. The chiefs will look into. Two community paramedic positions openings remain to be filled for the co-responder program. All behavioral health positions are filled. Working on locating opportunities to ensure stable funding.

Finance – Kathy Streissguth
November year-to-date finance report provided for review. The December report is in process and will be available at the next meeting. Commissioner Chunn made a point to highlight that the Board expenditures only make up 0.33% of the overall budget.

CHIEF'S REPORT
Discussed the 2025 ambulance response statistics and the plan to add a second unit to respond out of Station 26 in Dollar's Corner.

Legal has reviewed and proposed changes to the $411,000 architectural services contract with Aetta Architects to continue with the Station 29 construction project. Presented to the Board for review. The last RFQ award to Aetta Architects (formerly Johansson Wing) as the architect of record happened in 2020 with the option of a 3-year renewal. Will be going out for another RFQ with a shorter period later this year. Requesting retroactive approval of the award extension at the next meeting. Discussion on best practices for architect and engineering service selection per the State Auditor, MRSC, and legal counsel recommendations. Per the State Auditor, RFQ for architectural services should be conducted more frequently.

Motion by Commissioner Bartel to authorize Chief Nohr to sign the architectural services contract with Aetta Architects for the Station 29 project. Second Commissioner Ayers. Discussion. Commissioner Bourke would like the opportunity to review the contract before it's signed. Call for the vote. Commissioners Chunn, Ayers, Town, Bartel for. Commissioner Bourke against. Motion carried. Copy of the executed agreement will be provided.

Scheduled a workshop to discuss public debt bonding, construction, and timelines for the station builds during the February 12 meeting. Jim Nelson (DA Davidson), Deanna Gregory (Pacifica Law Group), and Karl Johansson (Aetta Architects) will present information.

Recapped the hiring activities. The HR manager and Payroll Accounting Assistant will start the last week of February. Interviewing Finance Manager candidates on January 30.

Will provide backfill coverage to VFD tomorrow during a firefighter memorial service event.

Chief Nohr was in Olympia earlier to testify on HB2326, a bill that would allow any fire district in the state that is partially overlaid with another entity with an EMS levy to run an EMS levy in the rest of their district. This directly impacts Clark FD3, which has a small portion of the district served by North Country EMS (EMS District 1). It's 11% of their land value with 1,500 residents. With a population of 48,000, this means, by State law, that small area is denies the remaining 46,500 residents the option to approve an EMS levy if they wanted to. Commented that even the people who are against all taxes understand why this is being asked for. Thursday, January 29 Chief Nohr and Commissioner Bartel will attend the annual WFCA Legislative Day in Olympia. FD3 will also attend. The swearing in ceremony for FD6 Chief Dave Russell will also occur on January 29 at 3:00 p.m. ACs Ryan and Peeler plan to attend.

Chief Nohr will attend tonight's City of Ridgefield Council meeting. They will hold an executive session to discuss acquisition of property for a fire station.

Discussed the L&I appeal hearing for the trench rescue incident held earlier in the day. Meeting went well. Because of the mitigation plans implemented, anticipating the fine will be reduced or eliminated.

Discussed options on how to find out about grand openings and partner agency events that the district may be interested in attending.

Commissioner Bartel asked why the Board policies are on the member's only side and not public facing. Chief Nohr will check with legal.

Discussed the volume of negative press in the media lately covering firefighters not doing good things. Chief Nohr expressed his appreciation for the CCFR crews constantly doing great things. Discussed response to crash alerts, which is a new call type generated by vehicles and phone apps. Shared an example of outstanding customer service with one of the crews following up on an unable to locate crash alert by visiting the owner's home for a wellness check.

STRATEGIC PLANNING
Chief Nohr advised it's time for a new plan. Proposed a rough timeline to hold session in late April and May. Will request input from partner agencies, employees, and the community. Researching options and suggesting we hire a consultant to facilitate citizen input listening sessions. Discussion. Board supports the idea.

LOCAL 3674 BC UNIT CONTRACT
A tracked changes version of the agreement was sent to the Board for review. The unit has adopted the agreement. Advised there is an upcoming BC test to fill a vacancy, reinstating the unit to four members. Discussion. Motion by Commissioner Bartel to adopt the Local 3674 BC Unit Contract as presented. Second Commissioner Bourke. No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

LATE EDITIONS TO THE AGENDA
None.

CITIZEN COMMENTS
None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION
None.

No further discussion. Meeting adjourned at 5:08 p.m.

Attest, John Nohr
Fire Chief/District Secretary