

Board of Governance Meeting Minutes Valley Regional Fire Authority



Meeting Date: January 14, 2025
Time: 5:15 p.m.
Location: 1101 D St NE, Auburn, WA 98002

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Backus called the Valley Regional Fire Authority (VRFA) Board of Governance Regular Meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

A. Flag Salute

Chair Backus led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Roll Call

Chair Nancy Backus, Vice Chair Troy Linnell, Member Vic Kave, Member Kerry Garberding, Member Lynda Osborn, Member Larry Brown (Excused), Member Bill Thomas, Member Tracy Taylor, Member Eric Petersen, and Alternate Hanan Amer.

Staff members present included Deputy Tim Day, Deputy Chief Rick Olson, CFO Mark Horaski, HR Director Sarah Borden, Legal Council Brian Snure, and Clerk of the Board Stefanie Harper.

C. Announcements, Proclamations, and Presentations

Chief Thompson recognized Member Osborn for her 18 years of service as a Board Member of the Valley Regional Fire Authority.

Chair Backus was honored for her 15 years of service as a Board Member of the Valley Regional Fire Authority. Chief Thompson presented her with a VRFA 15-year anniversary coin in appreciation of her dedication.

D. Appointments

There were no appointments.

E. Agenda Modifications

There were no agenda modifications.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS, CITIZEN INPUT, AND CORRESPONDENCE

A. Public Hearings

There were no public hearings.

B. Audience Participation

There was no audience participation.

C. Update from IAFF Local #1352

There was no update from IAFF Local #1352.

D. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

II. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**A. Finance Committee**

Member Backus stated that the Finance Committee met this evening and recommended the Board approve Claims and Payroll, and approve the addition of two Social Workers, increasing the staffing level.

IV. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

There were no Board Member reports.

V. STAFF REPORTS

Chief Thompson provided the Board with the following update:

In 2025, VRFA aims to build on its successes. Last year, VRFA responded to 16,194 calls—a 2% increase from 2023—marking the first time in agency history that calls exceeded 16,000.

Regarding wildfires in California, VRFA deployed an engine, a captain, three firefighters, and a strike team leader alongside other Zone 3 agencies. Crews have been actively protecting structures and successfully saved over 20 homes within the first few hours. Their spirits remain high, and we take great pride in their efforts and the larger firefighting community.

FBC notices will be mailed this week.

Station design remains on schedule and within budget. Station 36 is set to break ground in May, with invitations for BoG members expected in late April.

For the first time, a VRFA chief has been nominated as President of the King County Fire Chiefs Association, so he will be fulfilling that role in 2025!

In partnership with other fire departments, VRFA will participate in a recruitment event aimed at reaching those interested in joining the fire service, at Green River Community College on May 10th.

Four recruit firefighters will soon graduate and begin a two-week post-academy training at VRFA.

VRFA is exploring consultant options for the next strategic plan. Once a consultant is selected, a schedule will be set to develop this foundational document.

In exciting news, Accreditation Manager Noah Chang has been credentialed as a Fire and Emergency Service Analyst by CPSE, making him the 11th person in the world to achieve this distinction.

With a busy year ahead, VRFA is eager to move forward and continue its mission.

VI. CONSENT ITEMS

All matters listed on the Consent Agenda are considered by the Governance Board to be routine and may be approved by one motion.

A. Minutes

The minutes of the December 10, 2024, Regular Meeting were reviewed.

B. Vouchers**1. Claims**

Check numbers 212451 through 212518 in the amount of \$723,860.63 and electronic payments in the amount of \$61,514.87 totaling \$785,375.50 dated January 15, 2025.

2. Payroll

Payroll electronic deposit transmissions in the amount of \$2,355,219.30 for the period covering December 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024.

Alternate Member Amer requested clarification regarding the vote count for two motions/resolutions presented in the December BoG meeting minutes. Clerk Harper confirmed the vote count was accurate.

There being no further discussion or questions, Vice Chair Linnell moved, and Member Osborn seconded the approval of the Consent Items.

Board member Vic Kave stated for the record at the February 13, 2024, Board meeting that his vote on consent agendas excludes any vote on the payment of his post-retirement medical benefit from which he abstains, so Board member Kave has abstained from Voucher # DFT0011463.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 9 - 0

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

IX. RESOLUTIONS & MOTIONS**A. Staffing Level Increase**

DC Day stated that staff is seeking authorization to expand the CARES Team by hiring two additional social workers, increasing the team from two to four, excluding the two temporary, grant-funded positions focused on opioid use disorder. To address the growing and persistent demand, CARES staff and VRFA leadership recommend these additions, along with an internal team reorganization, to be completed before the end of Q3 2025.

Member Taylor expressed her support for the addition of two new positions.

Member Kave inquired about the stated lack of budget impact and how the positions would be funded. DC Day explained that GEMT budget projections were significantly higher than expected, and additional reimbursement submissions are anticipated to yield a larger return. Kave followed up to confirm that this would not affect the FBC.

Chair Backus asked about the impact on the staff vehicle fleet. DC Day responded that the matter is under review and will be presented at a future meeting.

There being no questions or discussions, Vice Chair Linnell moved, and Member Kave seconded to authorize Chief Thompson to hire two Social Workers, increasing the staffing level and complete any internal reorganization associated with those hires.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 9 - 0

X. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

There was no information or discussion

XI. EXECUTIVE OR CLOSED SESSION

There was no executive or closed session.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business for the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 5:36 p.m.

Dated this 11th day of February 2025

Nancy Backus
Nancy Backus
Chair

S. Harper
Stefanie Harper
Clerk of the Board