

Board of Governance Meeting Minutes Valley Regional Fire Authority



Meeting Date: October 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 (Excused), Member Bill Thomas, Member Tracy Taylor, Member Eric Petersen, and Member Hanan Amer.

Staff members present included Chief Brad Thompson, Deputy Chief Tim Day, Deputy Steve Zehnder, CFO Mark Horaski, HR Director Sarah Borden, and Clerk of the Board Stefanie Harper.

C. Announcements, Proclamations, and Presentations

There were no announcements, proclamations, or presentations.

D. Appointments

DC Day introduced Emily Robinson, our CARES intern from UW.

E. Agenda Modifications

Under Resolutions & Motions, Chief Thompson will be presenting the Strategic Plan.

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 reported that the Finance Committee met this evening and recommended Board approval of Claims and Payroll.

IV. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

There were no Board Member reports.

V. STAFF REPORTS

Chief Thompson provided the following update:

Thank you, Member Amer, for one year of service and Member Kave a very happy birthday.

VRFA has entered negotiations with IAFF Local 1352 for the Firefighter and Captain contract, with sessions ongoing.

Six recruits are progressing in academy, building the foundational skills they'll need in their careers. Captain Alvarado is overseeing the class and representing VRFA with professionalism among 13 participating agencies. BC Herman will assume the role of academy lead starting with the next class, we are very proud of their work. Five candidates are currently in background for the February 2026 academy.

Nicole Eby has taken on a new role as Accounting Supervisor, an advancement that recognizes her professionalism and dedication. The Accounting team, which hasn't grown since VRFA's inception, will soon be adding new Accounting Specialists.

Two VRFA members are currently deployed on wildland assignments as Base Camp Managers — Miller in Oregon and Groenhout in Eastern Washington.

Deputy Chief Day and CFO Horaski met with the Auburn City Council during a study session to present an updated impact fee schedule. Chief Thompson and DC Day will meet with the Pacific and Algona councils in the coming weeks.

VRFA's business contact database is being updated to ensure business owners can be reached quickly during incidents at their properties. While providing updated contact information is not required, it's very helpful when owners are not on-site during emergencies.

BC Gary Barker celebrated 33 years of service this month. Before joining Auburn Fire in 1992, he served four years in the U.S. Navy. Over his career, he has served as a Firefighter, Captain, Battalion Chief, and program manager, contributing greatly to Technical Rescue and helping countless firefighters prepare for promotions.

Deputy Chief Day provided a Capital Facilities update:

Station 36 foundations have been poured, and vertical framing is up. Steel will be delivered soon, and roofing will begin October 31st.

Station 38 is in final design and expected to go to bid in Q1 2026, with construction beginning in Q2/Q3 2026. Work is underway on the southwest corner of the property, coordinated with the City of Pacific while permit reviews are in progress.

Headquarters will have its pre-application meeting with the City of Auburn tomorrow. The project will be bid alongside Station 38 to gain better exposure and more favorable pricing. Though similar in schedule, Headquarters will be quicker due to being remodel only.

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 September 9, 2025, Regular Meeting were reviewed.

B. Vouchers**1. Claims**

Check numbers 213076 through 213165 in the amount of \$1,155,871.70 and electronic payments in the amount of \$1,046,758.25 totaling \$2,202,629.95 dated October 15, 2025.

2. Payroll

Payroll electronic deposit transmissions in the amount of \$2,681,515.02 for the period covering September 1, 2025, to September 30, 2025.

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

Board member Vic Kave stated for the record at 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 # DFT 0012997

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 8 - 0

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

IX. RESOLUTIONS & MOTIONS**A. 2025-2030 Strategic Plan**

Chief Thompson presented the 2025–2030 Strategic Plan, stating the new plan reflects input from community members and stakeholders, as well as members of the VRFA. Chief Thompson also noted that VRFA has accomplished significant goals outlined in the previous plan, and this new version focuses on continued progress through five key initiatives.

Business Practices will focus on streamlining internal processes and improving the tools and software that support VRFA's members, with the goal of becoming more proactive in how the organization serves its internal customers.

Professional Development establishes a clear pathway for succession planning and career growth throughout the agency.

Communication will remain an ongoing focus, as VRFA continues to evaluate and strengthen how information is shared internally and externally.

Service Delivery will ensure VRFA's outward-facing programs continue to meet the needs of the public today and in the future, with an emphasis on efficiency and adaptability.

Community Risk Reduction reinforces VRFA's dedication to prevention and education, taking a deeper look into the work of the Fire Marshal's Office and the evolving needs of the community.

Chief Thompson described the plan as a comprehensive and forward-looking roadmap with minimal upfront costs, noting that the agency's vision statement has been refined to better reflect VRFA's future direction.

There being no further questions or discussions, Vice Chair Linnell moved, and Member Kave seconded to approve the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 8- 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 5:33 p.m.

Dated this 12th day of November 2025

Nancy Backus
Nancy Backus
Chair

Stefanie Harper
Stefanie Harper
Clerk of the Board