

# Board of Governance Meeting Minutes Valley Regional Fire Authority



**Meeting Date:** February 10, 2026  
**Time:** 5:00 p.m.  
**Location:** 1101 D St NE, Auburn, WA 98002

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## I. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Backus called the Valley Regional Fire Authority (VRFA) Board of Governance Regular Meeting to order at 5:00 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 Tim Fairley, Member Bill Thomas (excused), 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, Legal Counsel Brian Snure, and Clerk of the Board Stefanie Harper.

### C. **Announcements, Proclamations, and Presentations**

Chief Thompson introduced Kaylyn Foster, who has joined the Finance Team as an Accounting Assistant.

Five probationary firefighters who recently completed the recruit academy and are currently participating in post-academy training as they prepare to begin their shift assignments were also introduced.

Chief Thompson recognized member Kerry Garberding for his 10 years of service and leadership, noting specifically his gratitude for his thoughtful questions and active engagement in the work of the organization. He thanked Kerry for consistently demonstrating a strong commitment to the health and safety of VRFA firefighters.

### D. **Appointments**

There were no appointments.

**E. Agenda Modifications**

Chief Thompson informed the Board that an item had been added to the original agenda under Section X: Information and Discussion. He noted that the printed agendas reflected this modification.

**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**

President Eliason addressed the Board and thanked members for their unanimous approval of the IAFF Local 1352 Firefighter and Captain Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2026 through 2028, approved in January. He shared that the membership appreciates the work that goes into the process with Administration and values the continued support from the Board of Governance. He added that the Local looks forward to continuing its strong working relationship with both the Board and Administration.

**D. Correspondence**

There was no correspondence.

**II. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**A. Finance Committee**

There is no Finance Committee at this time.

**IV. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS**

There were no Board Member Reports

**V. STAFF REPORTS**

Chief Thompson shared that the start of 2026 represents a year of transition, while reaffirming that VRFA's primary mission remains the guiding north star. The organization is navigating several changes at once and, while things may feel unsettled at times, the systems and structures in place will allow clarity to emerge as progress continues.

Five probationary firefighters from Recruit Academy #21 have returned and are completing post academy activities, including wildland certification training, before beginning shift assignments on February 15th. VRFA also welcomed five new recruits, who recently completed onboarding and have begun approximately five and a half

months of academy training, with the recruitment committee already preparing for upcoming hiring processes.

Several firefighters are also nearing completion of their JATC programs, reaching the designation of journeyman firefighter after roughly three and a half years of training, making them eligible to participate in specialty teams. Several programs, including Technical Rescue, Respiratory, and HazMat, currently have openings and some teams will be relocating as part of a thoughtful review. In addition, Captain promotional exams are underway.

Deputy Chief Day provided an update on Station 36, noting the site is very active and beginning to look like a fire station. Utility work continues, steel has been installed where the generator and fuel systems will be located, and masonry work began today. Plywood is now in place where the apparatus bay doors will be installed, and the project remains on track to be operational on schedule.

Station 38 is the next project moving forward, with VRFA working closely with the City of Pacific on permitting. The process is progressing well and will occur in two phases, beginning with a smaller project that is out to bid for the water main work along Ellingson Road. DC Day thanked Mayor Kave for his assistance with this effort.

The Headquarters project will be bid alongside Station 38. Final design work is underway, and VRFA continues coordinating with the City of Auburn on permitting items. The project is expected to go out to bid in March or April.

Work also continues on Station 31, with VRFA collaborating with multiple consultants as planning progresses, including coordination with the Department of Ecology regarding the PFAS issue.

**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**

1. The minutes of January 13, 2026, Regular Meeting were reviewed.

**B. Vouchers**

**1. Claims**

Check numbers 213415 through 213487 in the amount of \$843,500.07 and electronic payments in the amount of \$1,351,693.78 totaling \$2,195,193.85 dated February 11, 2026.

**2. Payroll**

Payroll electronic deposit transmissions in the amount of \$3,532,864.98 for the period covering January 1, 2026, to January 31, 2026.

There being no further discussion or questions, Vice Chair Linnell moved, and Member Amer 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 # DFT 0014292.*

**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. Lumen Contracts for Service**

CFO Horaski stated that Lumen is our provider of data and voice communication connectivity. These contracts provide for Direct internet Access for two of our existing facilities, along with the two new fire stations. Each contract term is for a period of thirty-six (36) months.

There being no discussion or questions, Vice Chair Linnell moved, and Member Garberding seconded to approve the Lumen contracts.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 8 - 0****B. 2026 Fire Benefit Charge Appeals**

CFO Horaski stated Under RCW 52.26.250, the VRFA Fire Benefit Charge Appeals Board reviews appeals from taxpayers who disagree with their current year FBC amount and provides recommendations to the Board of Governance. For the 2026 tax year, eleven appeals were received and reviewed, with recommended adjustments outlined in the attached report.

It was also noted that several aircraft hangar parcels were incorrectly classified as residential in the FBC database rather than commercial, as listed by the King County Assessor. Staff recommends correcting the classification of all such parcels for the 2026 tax year, regardless of whether an appeal was filed.

There being no discussion or questions, Vice Chair Linnell moved, and Member Taylor seconded to approve the recommendations of the 2026 FBC Appeals Board, and to reclassify aircraft hangar parcels from Residential to Commercial .

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 8 - 0**

**C. Organizational Chart Update**

Chief Thompson stated the updated organizational chart reflects the addition of two (2) Social Worker positions, approved by the Board of Governance in 2025. It also includes the reorganization of the Health, Safety, and EMS Division to align with the responsibilities and oversight by the CARES Program Manager and Lead Social Worker, as well as the reorganization of the Budget and Finance Division to reflect the roles of the Accounting Supervisor and Accounting Assistant.

Additionally, position titles within the Public Information Division have been updated to better represent current responsibilities and expanded community engagement efforts, now titled Community Outreach Lead and Community Outreach Specialist.

Discussion ensued.

There being no discussion or questions, Vice Chair Linnell moved, and Member Taylor seconded to approve the recommendations of the updated VRFA organizational chart.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 8 - 0**

**X. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION**

Chief Thompson provided the Board with an update on VRFA's accreditation status. He noted that while no motion or formal action is required, the process requires the Board Chair's signature to change VRFA's designation from an accredited agency to an applicant agency, allowing the reaccreditation process to begin.

The reaccreditation process will begin this week and is expected to take approximately nine months if it proceeds as scheduled. The letter presented enables VRFA to initiate this step.

**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 5:27 p.m.

Dated this 10<sup>th</sup> day of March 2026

Nancy Backus  
Nancy Backus  
Chair

S. Harper  
Stefanie Harper  
Clerk of the Board