Board of Governance Meeting Minutes
Valley Regional Fire Authority

Meeting Date: May 12, 2026
Time: 5:00 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 5:00 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, Member Tracy Taylor, Member Eric Petersen (virtual), and Member Hanan Amer.

Staff members present included Chief Brad Thompson, Deputy Chief Tim Day, CFO Mark Horaski, and Clerk of the Board Stefanie Harper.

C. Announcements, Proclamations, and Presentations

There were no announcements, proclamations, or presentations.

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

Mr. Gergalo & Mr. Brown from NCS Carpenters Union were in attendance and shared with the Board their concerns with a local Construction agency.

C. Update from IAFF Local #1352

There was no update from IAFF Local #1352

D. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

I. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Finance Committee

There is no Finance Committee at this time.

IV. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Member Taylor shared her gratitude to Cory Wallace on his recent teacher appreciation outreach. She also shared her congratulations to Jordan Gustafson on the announcement of his promotion to Battalion Chief.

V. STAFF REPORTS

Chief Thompson opened by wishing a happy birthday to Members Fairley.

Chief Thompson acknowledged the significant time and resources required to conduct promotional processes, and thanked the staff members who work to develop testing materials and ensure the processes remain fair and objective.

He also expressed his appreciation for those participating as candidates, noting the professionalism and commitment demonstrated throughout the process. He also shared his admiration for employees who put themselves forward for evaluation and promotion, recognizing the courage, vulnerability, and spirit of selfless service required to participate.

An update was provided on the ongoing firefighter recruitment process. Following last month's entry level oral boards, where firefighters interviewed 280 candidates, VRFA will conduct Chief's Interviews throughout the coming week. The goal is to hire six recruits for the fall academy. Due to the competitive hiring environment, more than 60 candidates will be interviewed to establish the eligibility list.

Chief Thompson also recognized several recent promotions, including Jason Herman to Community Risk Reduction, and Jordan Gustafson and Guy Smith to Battalion Chief.

Deputy Chief Day provided an update on VRFA's capital facilities projects. Station 36 remains on schedule, with construction expected to be substantially complete by the end of June. Site work will continue through the summer, with the station anticipated to become operational in August. Plans for a grand opening and community welcome event are also underway.

For Station 31, VRFA recently met with the Department of Ecology to begin discussions regarding the known PFAS contamination on site. DC Day noted this meeting marks the beginning of a longer process to determine the requirements necessary before construction moves forward.

It was also reported that a contractor has been selected for the Ellingson Road water main project, which will provide service to Station 38. A total of 10 bids were received, and a notice to proceed is expected to be issued in the coming days.

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 April 14, 2026, Regular Meeting were reviewed.

B. Vouchers

1. Claims

Check numbers 213642 through 213716 in the amount of $650,190.57 and electronic payments in the amount of $1,261,670.66 totaling $1,911,861.23 dated May 13, 2026.

2. Payroll

Payroll electronic deposit transmissions in the amount of $2,959,749.48 for the period covering April 1, 2026, to April 30, 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 DFT0015022

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. St. 38 & Admin HQ Bid & Contract

DC Day presented the Board with a preliminary update on the Station 38 and Administrative Headquarters bid process. The process was conducted in accordance with applicable public works requirements and was managed by TCA Architecture, VRFA Project Manager Carly Palmer, VRFA Counsel Brian Snure, and Deputy Chief Day. Bid advertisements were published through multiple channels, and bids were opened on May 5th following the issuance of four addenda and mandatory pre-bid conferences.

VRFA received four bids for the combined projects. Following an initial review by staff, TCA, and legal counsel, two bids were determined to be responsive and eligible for consideration. Additional review is currently underway to determine the lowest responsible bidder. A request for authorization to award and execute a contract once that determination has been finalized was made.

There being no further discussion or questions, Vice Chair Linnell moved, and Member Garberding seconded to award the St. 38 & Admin HQ projects to the lowest responsible bidder and authorize Fire Chief Thompson to execute the contract.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 9 – 0

B. Resolution No. 216 – RMB

CFO Horaski stated to qualify for the Retiree Medical Benefit, employees must be at least 53 years of age, have 25 years of DRS service credit, and may receive the benefit for up to twelve years. The RMB was last updated in 2024.

The proposed update increases the monthly benefit from $835 to $936, aligning it with the current retiree medical premium. In addition, the resolution was increasing flexibility by allowing retirement date adjustments of up to six months by mutual agreement, removing the requirement that adjustments occur within the same calendar year, and eliminating the benefit penalty waiting period when the VRFA requests a retirement date change.

Additionally, the proposal increases benefit availability for non-civil service employees by one position when all other slots are filled, more closely aligning benefit availability with the organization's workforce composition while providing potential salary savings.

Member Kave stated that because he was a beneficiary of the post-retirement medical benefit addressed in the proposed Resolution, he recused himself from discussion and voting on this item.

There being no further discussion or questions, Vice Chair Linnell moved, and Member Garberding seconded to approve Resolution No. 216.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 8 – 0

XI. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

There was no information or discussion.

XII. EXECUTIVE OR CLOSED SESSION

CFO Horaski requested an executive session, under RCW 42.30.110(1)(g), to include himself and members of the Board. The session was anticipated to last 10 minutes, with no action upon return to open session.

Member Peterson, who was attending the meeting virtually, stated that he would not participate in the executive session because he was unable to secure a private location from which to attend.

Chair Backus convened the executive session at 5:17 p.m. The session concluded at 5:27 pm. The Board returned to regular session at 5:29 p.m., allowing additional time for excused members to return to their seats.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business for the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

Dated this 9th day of June 2026

Nancy Backus
Nancy Backus
Chair

S. Harper
Stefanie Harper
Clerk of the Board