Special Board of Governance Meeting Minutes
Valley Regional Fire Authority

Meeting Date: November 3, 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 Special Board of Governance 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 (excused), Member Tim Fairley, Member Bill Thomas (excused), Member Tracy Taylor, Member Eric Petersen, and Member Hanan Amer.

Staff members present included Chief Tim Day, Deputy Chief Jason Herman, HR Director Sarah Borden, CFO Mark Horaski, legal counsel Brian Snure, and Clerk of the Board Stefanie Harper.

II. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

A. Presentation of Preliminary Budgets

CFO Horaski presented the preliminary 2027 budgets, highlighting key accomplishments from 2026, including the leadership transition to Fire Chief Tim Day, the opening of Station 36, construction of Station 38, headquarters renovations, continued progress on the Strategic Plan, and the ongoing reaccreditation process. The Washington State Auditor is also scheduled to conduct the annual audit before year-end.

The VRFA continues to navigate inflationary pressures while maintaining efficient service delivery. Staff conducted a thorough review of the budget, identifying opportunities to reduce expenditures and offset rising costs in areas most affected by inflation.

Revenue through the third quarter is exceeding projections, supported by increased impact fees, Muckleshoot Tribal Casino contributions, and GEMT revenue. Expenditures remain generally on track, although increased wildfire deployments will require a year-end budget amendment in December.

For 2027, the Fire Benefit Charge (FBC) is proposed to increase from 43.51% to 45.03% of operating expenditures, representing approximately $5 more per month for the average homeowner, partially offset by a lower debt service levy.

The regular property tax levy rate is projected at $0.745 per $1,000 of assessed value. No changes to regular staffing levels are proposed.

Budget increases are primarily driven by negotiated wage adjustments, benefits, required bunker gear replacements, equipment needs, facility operations, and rising costs for utilities, insurance, and regional services. Staff reviewed expenditures throughout the budget to identify savings and offset inflationary pressures while maintaining service levels.

The proposed 2027 budget includes the purchase and equipping of two replacement aid cars, funded through previously established reserves without impacting the Fire Benefit Charge (FBC) or property tax levy. Assigned reserves continue to be managed to support future capital needs and minimize unexpected impacts on operating revenue.

The remaining bonds from the VRFA's 2008 issuance will be retired in 2027. The second issuance of the voter approved $96.5 million bond authorization has been postponed from 2026 to 2027 to better align with project expenditures. This delay will temporarily reduce the debt service levy, resulting in a net decrease to the total fire service property tax levy in 2027.

Capital projects planned for 2027 include completing Station 38 and headquarters renovations, beginning construction on the replacement Station 31, installing an SCBA compressor at Station 34, and upgrading security and access systems at older stations. A budget amendment will be presented to the Board following the second bond issuance to incorporate the additional funding and related expenditures.

Discussion ensued.

III. EXECUTIVE OR CLOSED SESSION

There was no executive or closed session.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business for the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 5:31p.m

Dated this 10th day of November 2026

Nancy Backus
Chair

S. Harper
Stefanie Harper
Clerk of the Board