



BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

SNOHOMISH REGIONAL FIRE & RESCUE

SRFR Station 31 Training Room / Via Zoom

163 Village Court, Monroe, WA 98272

May 16, 2025, 1730 hours

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Elmore called the meeting to order at 1730 hours. In attendance were Commissioner Edwards, Chairman Elmore, Vice Chairman Fay, Commissioner Schaub, Commissioner Steinruck, and Commissioner Waugh; and via Zoom was Commissioner Alsin. Additionally District Secretary Snure was an excused absence.

PUBLIC COMMENT

N/A

UNION COMMENT

IAFF representatives thanked the Commissioners for having this meeting and asked that the local be a part of the decision-making process. Snohomish would be a great addition to our agency, and they encouraged the Commissioners to have conversations with their group. There is a yes or no option, and there is also a third option to form a committee and have the discussion.

SNOHOMISH COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #4 PROPOSAL

Chairman Elmore commented that this proposal came out of a lot of conversations, and we asked them to present their proposal in writing. He thanked Snohomish County Fire District #4 for putting this proposal together. Operationally we are sound working together, and their proposal is intriguing. We are on a tight timeline as applications for the fire chief position will close next week, and we currently have a strong pool of candidates.

Commissioner Schaub commented that we have an accelerated timeline so that the new chief will have some time with Chief O'Brien. We are confident in the process, and we want to be transparent. Anyone who wants to be fire chief should go ahead and go through the process. We appreciate the thoughts from Snohomish County Fire District #4.

Chairman Elmore commented that he spoke with District Secretary Snure, and if we were to accept the proposal from Snohomish County Fire District #4 he would need to recuse himself, as he represents both organizations.



Commissioner Edwards commented that we are invested in the recruitment process, and he would prefer not to bring in an interim chief. He encouraged any interested candidates to go through the process.

Vice Chairman Fay thanked the members for their thoughts as we move through this process, and he supports the process we have in place. He appreciates having a third party guiding us through the recruitment process, to help us find the best candidate. This is a great starting point, and he would like to see any interested candidate go through the process. There have been some pushbacks to the accelerated process. We would like to continue discussions on how we can get the two departments to work together.

Commissioner Waugh thanked everyone who has reached out to discuss this topic. He commented that he is a big supporter of a merger. This comes at an interesting time, and he appreciates this evening's Special Meeting. This can be the beginning of a more solid plan. No matter what else happens, we need to have a standing committee meeting monthly on how we can work together towards a merger, if that is what Snohomish County Fire District #4 would like to do.

Commissioner Steinruck commented that we are in a critical situation, and our goal is to hire the right person for the culture within our organization. We have talked about the concept of a merger, and it is a process where we need to be sure we are good partners. The new chief will be critical for our organization. He appreciated the offer from Snohomish County Fire District #4, however he supports the idea that we continue with the recruitment process that we have started.

Chairman Elmore commented that we need to consider the optics if Fire Chief Waller were to apply for the position. This could appear to his team that he is planning to leave.

Commissioner Alsin asked if the two locals have had some good discussion about this letter. He would appreciate hearing insight from both locals, as there could be a lot of value hearing their perspectives.

Chairman Elmore commented the intent is not to make any decision this evening, and it will be on the next meeting agenda. He would appreciate a concerted message from each labor group. It is very important to have our commission groups form a committee and continue discussions.

Commissioner Schaub commented that it is his understanding that the entire Board is in favor of a merge.

District #4 Commissioner commented that they wish we could go about it differently.

Commissioner Waugh commented that he is interested in a complete merger. We need to develop a plan to move forward with our organizations.



Vice Chairman Fay commented that there is a lot of work that goes into preparing for a merge, it is a long-involved process.

Chairman Elmore agreed that full integration is ultimately the goal. It would be very healthy to form a committee between the commissions.

District #4 Fire Chief Waller commented that he has full confidence in the internal candidates, and he is not planning to apply for the fire chief position. It would place him in an awkward position, and he is very happy with Snohomish County Fire District #4.

IAFF representative Ray Sayah commented he doesn't know why we are in such a rush. We have great leadership in place who can handle things. We could put the recruitment process on a brief hold and discuss this opportunity further.

Chairman Elmore commented that there is an early termination fee with GMP Consultants, if we choose to do so.

Commissioner Schaub commented that our logic was to have Chief O'Brien here when the new chief comes on board so that they could have some valuable conversations. The new chief will be aware that the entire Board is interested in merging with Snohomish County Fire District #4.

Commissioner Alsin commented he is curious, what would happen if we did accept the offer as proposed, if both locals were supportive. If Chief Waller stepped in and didn't work out, would we still have the list of final candidates to work with.

Chairman Elmore commented that after the first five months, we would have to work with legal to develop a contract for Chief Waller to remain in the Chief's role.

Vice Chairman Fay commented that an interim candidate would have to go through an entire year to see how they fit within the organization.

Comments from the local stated that this could be an exciting opportunity for our organization. A lot of our younger members are in support of a merger.

Commissioner Alsin commented that there is a lot of value in keeping the doors open and asking good questions as we step forward with an open mind.

Chairman Elmore commented that we will add this topic to the next agenda, and we will make the final determination at the next meeting on May 28.



Commissioner Waugh asked the Board to bring back with their yes or no vote their thoughts on what the committee structure would look like. He also asked Snohomish County Fire District #4 commissioners to provide their feedback as well. We want the committee to be inclusive.

Chairman Elmore commented that he welcomes phone calls if there are any questions on this topic.

REMINDER:

Next Regular Commissioner Meeting on Wednesday, May 28, 2025 at 1730 – Station 31 Training Room/Zoom

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Elmore adjourned the meeting at 1817 hours.

Commissioner Davin Alsin

Commissioner Jeff Schaub

Commissioner Rick Edwards

Commissioner Rick Edwards

Commissioner Jim Steinruck

Chairman Troy Elmore

Commissioner Roy Waugh

Vice Chairman Randy Fay