



COMMISSIONERS AGENDA

**GENERAL MEETING 10/06/2026
5:00 PM at Station 5-8**

CALL TO ORDER:

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

BOARD ADDITIONS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

09/15/2026 regular meeting

PUBLIC COMMENT:

GENERAL DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Current Financial Situation
2027 Draft Budget Discussion
State Support
L&I Fire Program
EMS Levy

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The Board will be going into executive session pursuant to RCW 42.30.140 relating to collective bargaining issues and negotiations.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

ADJOURNMENT:

NEXT MEETING: Regular Commission Meeting: October 20, 2026 at 5:00 PM, Station 5-8



COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Creighton called the meeting of September 15, 2026, to order at 5:00 pm. Today's meeting was held in-person. Also present were Commissioner Butkus, Commissioner Frazier, Commissioner Montgomery, Commissioner Ward, Chief Searles and Secretary Norma Brock.

Pledge of Allegiance

BOARD ADDITIONS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA: A MOTION was made by Commissioner Montgomery to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Butkus SECONDED. Motion carried UNANIMOUSLY.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A MOTION was made by Commissioner Butkus to approve the regular meeting minutes from July 18, 2026. Commissioner Ward SECONDED. Motion carried UNANIMOUSLY.

APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS:

73152-73173	\$ 60,659.73	General Bills
73173-73187	\$1,220,290.09	Payroll, Benefits, Taxes
73188-73221	\$ 331,645.04	General Bills
	\$1,612,594.86	TOTAL

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Montgomery to approve the vouchers totaling \$1,612,594.86 as presented. Commissioner Butkus SECONDED. Commissioner Frazier asked for a report on how much money was spent on the training facility, how much more there is to spend, and what our original budget was. Motion carried UNANIMOUSLY.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Fire Chief Clint Volkof Fire District 6 in Union, spoke about the recent loss of a board member. There was a seven-day gap between the loss and funeral. The family specifically asked for the ladder truck with the large flag. Chief Volk came to express gratitude from the family and from the district for making that happen. He is appreciative to the Chief and staff as well as the crews.

President Schreiber spoke about Chief Searles actions and progressive forward movement in the past seven months. With the recent financial deficit, they are appreciative of how well Chief Searles is handling this process. The crew have nothing but thanks to say that Chief Searles is working for the team. There is trust and respect for his efforts. He will have further comments at the next public comment section.

CHIEFS REPORT: Chief Searles spoke briefly about the Stretch Island Bridge. It has damaged and we were notified officially of a decrease in load capacity for crossing the bridge. Emergency Vehicles are no exception. At this time, our current response is to continue with medical and command vehicles. If we get a fire on that side of the bridge, we will use brush trucks to protect and slow the fire to the best of our abilities. We are in communication with Mason County DEM regarding a potential for a fire board form Pierce County. We are also looking at the idea to place an apparatus on that side of this island except, we are unable to get a truck on the other side safely. Two members of our Board live on the other side and understand the dilemma. The frustration comes when construction and propane apparatus are still crossing the bridge despite the weight restrictions. There is no specific date to start the repairs. Garbage pickup has been an issue. Central Mason

administration worked with Mason County Garbage and came up with a plan. There will tentatively be a large dumpster placed at Station 52 for 24 hours so residents can dump their garbage. Commissioner Montgomery heard residents will be lining their cans up at Loop Road across from the store for pickup. Commissioner Frazier suggested we talk with Mason County Garbage about an written agreement. The residents will need to hear directly from the Garbage Company on what the clear direction is for garbage pickup. There are roughly 180 lots with some full-time and some part-time residents. Estimated 100 garbage cans and 100 recycle cans for pickup on Thursdays. Commissioner Butkus agrees with Chief Searles that it is too big of a liability to cross the bridge with a large truck. The Board fully agrees with Chief Searles' plan of action. We have had a couple Public Education events since last meeting. We are back at the local schools and at the school football games. About one week ago, Firefighter Davey finished probation.

Chief Zipperer spoke about the crew's hard work training at the facility and practicing drafting. There was a great turnout at the training facility for the Mason County Commissioners. Commissioner Frazier thanked Assistant Chief Zipperer for his help providing the visit. And thank you to Donnie for providing the flag.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Norma said the next Audit will begin shortly. This will start our new schedule of single-year audits beginning with 2025.

FINANCE REPORT: Current Financial Review: Chief Searles talked about our revenues being at 37%. We are a little slow with receiving our revenue compared with where we should be. For expenditure, we are dead on per the budget. At this point, we are staying the course with what is outlined. We are looking to end the year in the positive. Commissioner Frazier asked when the new levy funds will start to come in. We should see those funds in April 2027.

COMMISSIONERS REPORT/COMMENTS: Spoke briefly about upcoming events.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: The Board will be going into executive session pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(g) to review the performance of an employee. The board will be meeting with all five Commissioners and Chief Searles for 15 minutes. There may or may not be any action taken afterwards. The board will be going in at 5:22 pm. Assistant Chief Justin Zipperer and Executive Secretary Norma Brock were requested to join the meeting. At 5:37 pm the executive session was extended 5 more minutes. The meeting ended at 5:42 pm.

The Board returned from the Executive Session. Commissioner Butkus MOTIONED that Interim Fire Chief Brandon Searles shall be appointed to permanent Fire Chief effective today, September 15, 2026. The checkpoints will stand as written in his interim contract. Commissioner Frazier SECONDED. Chairman Creighton stated he approves of this move. Motion carried UNANIMOUSLY. Congratulations.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: 2027 Draft Budget Discussion: Back to the Board workshop, some of the challenges we will be facing include our GEMT Funds that will stop coming in monthly as of June 30, 2027. They will shift to annual payments. This is roughly a \$1 million dollar hit we will be taking in 2027. We have a 2% labor cost increase. Our medical cost came in with an 8% increase. This is far less than some other plans. We have experienced a decrease in call volume which means a decrease in Ambulance Revenues. Part of this is due to outside smaller agencies doing more of their own BLS transports. As a fire district, we have always struggled year after year with a reserve fund and an ending balance. We need to address this to move forward. Commissioner Butkus recognizes that long before he came on as a

commissioner, it was recognized we need a reserve fund as well as first half of the year operational funds. This is not working and it's time for a change.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: The Board will be going into executive session pursuant to RCW 42.30.140 relating to collective bargaining issues and negotiations. The board will be meeting with all five Commissioners, Chief Searles, Assistant Chief Justin Zipperer, and Executive Secretary Norma Brock for 30 minutes. There may or may not be any action taken afterwards. The board will be going in at 5:51 pm. The board extended 30 minutes until 6:21 pm. The board extended 15 minutes until 6:36 pm. The board extended 15 minutes until 6:51 pm. The board extended 20 minutes until 7:01 pm.

The board returned from the Executive Session. The Board has come to a decision and read a statement. The Commissioners have just had a detailed discussion of our current financial situation and due to a \$2.5 million dollar deficit, we have directed the Fire Chief to reduce our staff by 17 personnel. Personnel will be notified immediately and given 30 days' notice. We are further directing the Chief to begin impact bargaining.

NEW BUSINESS:

Agree to Open Impact Negotiations: Since the Union has already agreed to impact bargaining, with the agreement from the board, we will be moving forward with impact bargaining.

Change in Meeting Schedule: Resolution 414 to change the meeting schedule was presented. Commissioner Butkus MOTIONED to accept resolution 414 as presented, setting our meeting schedule to twice a month, the first and third Tuesday, 5:00 pm at Station 58 in downtown Shelton. Commissioner Montgomery SECONDED. Motion carried UNANIMOUSLY.

PUBLIC COMMENT: President Jacob Schreiber spoke. Jacob read the names of the 17 individuals being laid off. Jacob shared his stance about the choices and layoffs. Jacob feels there is a failure of financial fiduciary. He spoke about the financial choices made throughout the previous years. We will need to evaluate our communities and the current staffed stations. We need to think about the medical responses and how we will be managing these moving forward. Currently, there is an attorney who has been hired as well as two other sources to evaluate our finances. The IAFF Board has been speaking with Washington State Department of Health. The Union asked the board to forfeit their stipends until these financial issues have been corrected. The Union has been reaching out to other organizations to try and find employment for potential layoffs. The Union currently has faith in the Fire Chief and no confidence in the Board of Commissioners. The members who were present from the Union body shared their sentiments as they agree with President Jacob Schreiber.

Chairman Creighton said we plan to work hard to correct these issues.

GOOD OF THE ORDER: None

ADJOURNMENT: A MOTION was made by Commissioner Ward to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Frazier SECONDED. Motion carried UNANIMOUSLY. The meeting was adjourned at 5:46 pm.

Next regular meeting is 5:00 pm, October 6, 2026, at Station 58.

Chairperson Mike Creighton

Commissioner Nancy Montgomery

Commissioner Pete Butkus

Commissioner Kevin Ward

Commissioner Kelly Frazier

Executive Secretary Norma Brock