

Kitsap County Fire District #18
Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes
August 12, 2026
Poulsbo Fire Department
Poulsbo, WA

REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE:

David Ellingson	Commissioner	Jim Ingalls	Commissioner
Jeff Uberuaga	Commissioner	William Whiteley	Commissioner
Darryl Milton	Commissioner	Jim Gillard	Fire Chief
Shane Anderson	Deputy Chief (DC)	Nichole Sawyers	Administrative Director (AD)
Michael Miller	Public	Kevin Vay	Battalion Chief
Trevor Holmberg	Firefighter		

Call to order: Meeting was called to order by Commissioner Ingalls at 4:00 p.m.

Approval of agenda:

Commissioner Ingalls moved to approve the 08/12/2026 agenda. Commissioner Ellingson seconded. Motion was carried with a unanimous vote to approve the 08/12/2026 agenda. Passed.

Public Comment: No comment

Executive Session: At 4:02 p.m. Chief Gillard requested a 10-minute executive session pursuant to RCW 42.30.140 relating to collective bargaining issues and negotiations to be held at the end of the regular meeting.

Action Items:

1. **Consent Agenda:** All matters listed within the Consent Agenda have been distributed to each member of the Commission for reading and study, are considered routine, and will be enacted by one motion of the Commission with no separate discussion. If separate discussion is desired, that item may be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the Regular Agenda by a Commission Member or by citizen request.
 - a. July 20, 2026 Special Meeting Minutes
 - b. July 22, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes
 - c. Vouchers: The following warrants and electronic payments are approved for payment:
 - i. Capital fund checks 8045 through 8047 totaling \$129,685.54
 - ii. General fund checks 7993 through 8044 totaling \$251,178.63
 - iii. Electronic payment transactions 1715 and 1736, totaling \$1,931.19

Commissioner Ellingson moved to approve the 08/12/2026 consent agenda. Commissioner Whiteley seconded. Motion was carried with a unanimous vote to approve the 08/12/2026 consent agenda. Passed.

Discussion Items:

1. **Impact Fees:** Chief Gillard reported that the City of Poulsbo is awaiting a draft interlocal agreement regarding the process for collecting Impact Fees with the start date to be 01/01/2027. Chief Gillard met with the County Administrator to gather feedback regarding the future of Kitsap County implementing impact fees. Chief Gillard commented that the conversation was respectful but seemed to have some hesitation with moving forward; it was suggested that a third party conduct an analysis. It was reiterated that impact fees are not an expense for taxpayers or the county. The administrator will present these points to the commissioners for further consideration. A meeting has been scheduled with Commissioner Orin Root of South Kitsap to provide education on the benefits of impact fees. Commissioner Milton requested clarification on how impact fees are issued; Chief Gillard explained that fees are assessed once the occupancy certificate has been granted. Commissioner Ingalls inquired about potential support from neighboring districts, to which Chief Gillard responded that greater assistance must come from commissioners, rather than fire districts. Commissioner Uberuaga asked if a delineated boundary exists regarding impact fee zones, suggesting outreach might be beneficial to North Kitsap Fire and Rescue. Commissioner Ingalls requested this topic be added to a future bi-north meeting agenda.

2. **Capital Bond:** Chief Gillard shared that the capital bond has been preliminarily approved by the community. Chief Gillard shared that all capital projects over the next six years will be funded by bond proceeds, avoiding reserve or operations fund transfers. Commissioner Ingalls agreed with this approach. Commissioner Uberuaga commented on East Jefferson's purchase of engines at approximately \$1 million each, while Commissioner Milton noted their own engine cost about \$600K five years ago, commenting on the rising cost of apparatus. Options are being considered to keep costs down. Chief Gillard described ongoing discussions about replacing the marine unit; the current boat was temporarily fixed but does not meet safety standards. The Board needs to decide whether to continue providing service or pull the unsafe boat from use. Commissioner Ingalls advised removing the unsafe vessel if not safe to conduct operations. DC Anderson will be reviewing the go/no go standards for this particular vessel to ensure members do not go on calls that would put them in danger. The Board also agreed that service to the Hood Canal will continue as is at this time. Chief Gillard will be putting an action item on the next meeting agenda for direction on purchasing a marine unit. Commissioner Uberuaga suggested collaborating with East Jefferson, though response times remain a concern. Commissioner Milton inquired about leasing instead of buying a boat; Chief Gillard noted that purchasing with the bond has been approved, and would like to put a focus on a more permanent solution. Commissioner Whiteley made a motion to purchase a boat to the maximum allowed by the bond; Commissioner Milton seconded. Discussion ensued about alternative sharing arrangements, and Commissioner Ellingson requested more details by next week. The motion was withdrawn and will return as an agenda item. Commissioner Milton questioned the safety of the current boat; DC Anderson replied that weather is not a concern now but will address service levels and review policies tomorrow. Commissioner Ingalls stated that the commissioners will need to come prepared to give direction on the purchase of a new/used vessel by next meeting. Chief Gillard will reach out to East Jefferson to see if there are any options to reduce the cost and bring back suggested specifications for a replacement marine unit.
3. **2027 Budget:** Chief Gillard stated that the District is planning on not increasing the budget more than five percent, which requires reducing approximately \$1.8 million from the initial request to align with the Board's objectives. The process will commence with the first meeting next week involving program and project managers to review requests. The District aims to achieve the five percent target and does not anticipate a deficit. It is important that this objective is communicated clearly across the organization. Assessed values are stagnant throughout Kitsap County, and other fire districts in the area are facing similar challenges. Commissioner Milton highlighted the need to consider staffing levels, including minimum requirements, when working to contain the budget. Commissioner Uberuaga addressed peak hours and suggested that adjusting service levels, such as reducing staff during specific periods, could help minimize overtime costs.
4. **Policy 8300-Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Prevention-Community Assistance, Referrals and Education Services (CARES):** Chief Gillard stated Program Administrator Rogers has updated the EMS prevention policy to accurately reflect current procedures and staffing regarding the CARES program. The changes ensure the policy aligns with the program's operations.

Commissioner Ellingson moved to adopt Policy 8300-EMS Prevention (CARES). Commissioner Uberuaga seconded. Motion was carried with a unanimous vote to adopt Policy 8300-EMS Prevention (CARES). Passed.

5. **EMS Transport Fees:** Chief Gillard noted that, over the past several years, the District has slowly increased billing rates to catch up to inflation. When compared to the west coast and statewide standards, we have continually fallen behind the averages in transport fees. Central Kitsap Fire & Rescue worked with System Design, which leads the EMS billing system contract, and conducted a review of rates on the west coast and within Washington State, recommending an adjustment to match the state average—a 13 percent increase, depending on ALS/BLS services and mileage. Three options were discussed: maintaining current rates, implementing a modest 4 percent increase based on inflation, or adopting the recommended full adjustment. Bremerton Fire opted for a 4 percent increase, while North Kitsap Fire & Rescue approved the full adjustment. Fees are primarily charged to insurance companies. It was suggested to implement the full amount to match with North Kitsap Fire & Rescue (NKFR). Commissioner Uberuaga inquired about neighboring districts; historically, we have aimed to keep our rates aligned with NKFR.

Proposed adjustments are as follows:

- ALS1: from \$1,225 to \$1,400
- ALS2: from \$1,410 to \$1,600
- BLS: from \$985 to \$1,200
- Mileage: from \$22 to \$25

Chief Gillard will have a resolution prepared at the next meeting.

Informational Items:

1. **Kitsap County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Update:** Chief Gillard reported that St. Michael's Medical Center is set to implement a triage nurse for EMS patients starting September 1st, dedicating an RN for 12 hours each day to reduce wait times, which now exceed 30 minutes for over 10% of units. Chief Gillard noted many of the delays are due to bed and staff shortages and ongoing boarding issues. Utilization at the freestanding facility continues to drop; directors will meet next week to address this. Progress has been made on behavioral health transports, with clearer guidelines emerging about EMS roles during mental health crises. Battalion Chief Gillanders authored a white paper outlining first responders' responsibilities during involuntary treatment act calls, recommending they be allowed to decline transport unless medically necessary. The approved recommendations to give responders more autonomy to focus on medical needs.
2. **Station 71 Second Floor Restroom Remodel Project:** DC Anderson updated the Board on the installation of stair treads, mentioning a minor issue with the color that is currently being addressed. The bathrooms are nearly finished. Commissioner Uberuaga inquired about the budget, and DC Anderson reported that costs are higher than initially planned but remain within expectations due to unforeseen items. Ceiling and paint expenses were within budget. DC Anderson stated that at the next meeting there should be an update on the current budget.
3. **Staffing/Hiring:** AD Sawyers announced that Paul Klahr (Chaplain) and Brenden Kimball (Lateral Firefighter/EMT) have started with the District. Applications for experienced EMTs, paramedics, and lateral hires open September 1, 2026. There is currently one vacancy to replace retiring Captain Warnke, who is planned to depart in April 2027. AD Sawyers thanked Administrative Specialist Robideaux on her social media post regarding the recruitment.
4. **Facilities:** DC Anderson inspected landscaping and irrigation—76 sprinkler heads were functional except one, which is being addressed. For the 2027 capital request, we're compiling a comprehensive list with captains of items approved in 2026 and requested in 2027 to save costs. Thanks were given to leaders and firefighters for their efforts during the remodel and within constraints.

5. **Apparatus:** Chief Gillard noted that Engine 108 has returned from deployment after over a week in Spokane. Fleet Manager Bartholomew and Fleet Technician Smith are working to get it back in service and are documenting all costs for deployment and reconditioning to enable a thorough cost comparison on revenue the District earns versus sending units on deployment. Although we generate revenue, it's important to understand the difference in expenses; the District sent four employees to respond to the fires on the eastern side of the state.
6. **Strategic Advisory Board (SAB) Meeting Date:** AD Sawyers would like to start discussing a SAB date, will send out availability in early October, and would like to have ideas on discussion topics.
7. **Attendance at the Washington Fire Commissioner Association Conference:** AD Sawyers discussed the upcoming conference in Spokane, noting registration opens next week and requesting attendees to confirm plans. AD Sawyers highlighted travel costs, stating the current mileage rate is \$0.76 per mile and flying is a cheaper option. District vehicles are available, and carpooling is encouraged to minimize expenses. Commissioner Ellingson and Commissioner Milton plan on going.

Commissioner and Staff Comments:

Commissioner Ellingson: Noted that he received *The Pulse* and expressed a desire to review it before it was sent out. He requested that commissioners be given an opportunity for preview in the future before public distribution. Chief Gillard responded that alternatives to *The Pulse* are being considered to reduce costs moving forward. Recent WFCB Board discussions addressed a national movement to lower GEMT reimbursement. Healthcare costs are rising, with medical claims up 109.6% and pharmacy expenses driving over 70 claims above \$50K. The industry average increase is 22%, and WFCB is increasing to 18.5%, while vision rose 15.1% and dental 10.3%. Recent labor and industries claims highlight poor Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and inspection issues.

Commissioner Whiteley: Asked if the District knew of upcoming meetings discussing the upcoming proposal from the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency's ban on burning in Kitsap County. Commissioner Ellingson stated there should be a public hearing in the near future.

Chief Gillard: Crews faced a challenging weekend with a serious accident and adolescent tragedy. Our thoughts are with them and the peer support team handling difficult situations.

Public Comment: No public comments.

Good of the order:

Next Regular Meeting **Wednesday, August 26, 2026 at 16:00**

Kitsap County Fire Commissioners Meeting, **Tuesday, August 25, 2026 via Zoom©**

Washington Fire Commissioners Association (WFCB) Conference, **October 21-24, 2026, Spokane, WA.**

Executive Session: At 5:59 p.m., Commissioner Ingalls called a 10-minute executive session pursuant to RCW 42.30.140 relating to collective bargaining issues and negotiations. set to run until 6:09 p.m. At 6:09 p.m., Commissioner Ingalls closed the executive session and reopened the regular meeting. There was no action taken.

Adjourn: The regular meeting was adjourned by common consent at 6:09 p.m.

ATTEST:

Nichole Sawyers, Kitsap County Fire District #18 Board Secretary