Kitsap County Fire District #18
Board of Commissioners Special Meeting Minutes
July 20, 2026
Poulsbo Fire Department
Poulsbo, WA

REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE:

David Ellingson	Commissioner	Jim Ingalls	Commissioner
Jeff Uberuaga	Commissioner	William Whiteley	Commissioner
Darryl Milton	Commissioner (excused)	Jim Gillard	Fire Chief
Nichole Sawyers	Administrative Director (AD)	Shane Anderson	Deputy Fire Chief (DC)

Call to order: Meeting was called to order by Commissioner Ingalls at 2:00 p.m.

Approval of agenda:

Commissioner Whiteley moved to approve the 08/10/2026 special meeting agenda. Commissioner Ellingson seconded. Motion was carried with a unanimous vote to approve the 08/10/2026 special meeting agenda. Passed.

Public Comment: No comment

Discussion: The meeting began with Chief Gillard outlining the District's ongoing capital needs and recent plans to address facility and apparatus requirements. The bond, recently approved, is intended to support projects such as the purchase of a new medic unit, engine, marine unit, facility renovations, and equipment replacements over the next several years.

At this meeting, the Board focused specifically on the purchase of a new marine unit for Hood Canal service. The discussion began with an assessment of the current vessel's condition and safety concerns. Chief Gillard and staff emphasized that the existing boat had reached the end of its useful life, presenting reliability and safety risks for personnel. Commissioners debated whether marine services should continue on Hood Canal, considering community demand and historical response times. Several members questioned whether other agencies in the region, including neighboring fire districts, could provide support in emergencies. The Board weighed the necessity of maintaining its own marine capabilities versus relying on other agencies. Commissioners and staff discussed ideas for collaboration with nearby agencies to improve cost-effectiveness, including sharing resources or coordinating responses. Chief Gillard and D/C Anderson provided background on the limitations of other agencies to provide service to the area. Some members favored purchasing a smaller, more affordable boat, which would reduce costs for acquisition, moorage, and ongoing maintenance. Others raised concerns that the current marine unit or a vessel of similar size is not sufficient for the conditions our personnel are called to respond to. Chief Gillard stated concerns about delaying the decision on level of service and delaying acquiring a replacement marine unit. The Board did not reach a final decision. The Board recognized the need for continued dialogue, balancing operational necessity, community expectations, and fiscal responsibility before finalizing the District's approach to marine service.

Chief Gillard also discussed the expansion of the fleet building, emphasizing the importance of efficiently addressing the District's facility needs. He opened the conversation by suggesting that the work performed last year provided the necessary feasibility study and cost estimates, but that neither of the options was considered cost-effective enough to pursue for the design-bid-build process. Chief Gillard offered that pursuing a progressive design-build approach for the expansion could potentially result in considerable cost-efficiency compared to the current options. This method, he explained, would allow greater flexibility and adaptation throughout the construction process, helping the District maximize its resources. Commissioners engaged in a constructive dialogue regarding alternatives to a new building, including options for expanding the existing structure and the feasibility of managing the project internally. They weighed the benefits and drawbacks of both strategies, considering factors such as project complexity, regulatory requirements, and long-term maintenance.

Commissioner Ingalls expressed a clear preference for hiring an external contractor to oversee the project, citing the numerous legal and procedural challenges associated with public works projects. He noted that engaging a contractor could help the District navigate permitting and compliance issues more efficiently and reduce the risk of unforeseen complications. Other commissioners echoed similar concerns, highlighting the importance of ensuring the expansion met all legal standards while remaining cost-effective.

The discussion was collaborative, with members exploring various paths forward and agreeing on the need for further analysis to determine the best approach. The Board acknowledged the value of consulting with experts and gathering additional information before making a final decision, demonstrating a commitment to both fiscal responsibility and operational excellence.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Adjourn: The special meeting was adjourned by common consent at 4:00 p.m.

ATTEST: Nichole Sawyers, Kitsap County Fire District #18 Board Secretary