

# ***Snohomish County Fire District #4***

## **MEETING MINUTES**

### **SPECIAL MEETING** **BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS**

<b>DATE:</b>	Tuesday June 3rd, 2025
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Fire Station #31. 163 Village Court Monroe, WA

<b>BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	<b>BRIAN MILLS</b> , Chair <b>CRAIG ERICKSON</b> , Fire Commissioner <b>EVAN MERRITT</b> , Fire Commissioner
<b>STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	Don Waller, District Secretary/Fire Chief Jason Hodgkinson, Assistant Chief Shauna Harth, Executive Specialist

#### **I. ROLL CALL**

Snohomish Regional Fire and Rescue (SRFR) Chair Elmore confirmed there was a quorum and opened the SRFR meeting at 17:29 noting that Brian Snure was not present.

Chair Mills called the meeting to order at 17:30 hours. All members of the Board were present with Chair Mills attending virtually.

#### **II. FLAG SALUTE**

#### **III. OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comments.

#### **IV. OPEN UNION COMMENT**

A SRFR Union representative thanked everyone for being present.

#### **V. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

##### **A. Joint discussion regarding the letter SCFD#4 sent to SRFR on May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

##### **Discussion:**

Introductions were made. SRFR Board of Commissioners present were Chairman Troy Elmore, Vice Chairman Randy Fay, Roy Waugh, Jeff Schaub, Rick Edwards, Jim Steinruck, and Davin Alsin. Administrative staff present were Chief O'Brien, AC Mike Messer, Leah Schoof, DC Michael McConnell, Kristi Szilak, and Laana Larson.

A discussion was had regarding the joint boards' expectations. Summarized expectations from SRFR Commissioners include:

- To start formal discussions regarding a merger or formation of a regional fire authority (RFA).

- To have key stakeholders involved in the process due to the increased workload that staff will face when entering into merger discussions.
- To look at hiring a third-party consultant to handle the process or to form a committee.
- To include the timeline to hire a new chief (SRFR) in this discussion.
- To create a realistic timeline after finding a common goal to reduce the lengthy timeline of merger discussions.
- To understand that a merger would include the merging of the two agencies' cultures, and that should be kept in mind.

Summarized expectations from SCFD#4 Commissioners include:

- To keep the public's interest in mind, as they have entrusted us with these duties.
- To keep our employees' interests in mind.
- To look at current opportunities and analyze those options fully.
- To have a visual expectation of the project and goals so that the board, public, and employees are reassured that steps are being taken.

Chair Mills and Commissioner Alsin requested to review the email and have a discussion regarding it. The following discussion involved Chair Mills clarifying that the initial letter had been sent with the intent to open the door for further discussions.

A short discussion was surrounding how the two agencies have started working together. Examples were provided by Chief Waller, Chief O'Brien and members of the audience highlight joint training, employee development and broad finance discussions.

An additional letter from Chair Mills to Chair Elmore was brought forth for discussion and was displayed for the audience to see. Discussion points included:

- How a new chief selection would impact labor negotiations.
- If a new or interim chief would hinder a merger discussion.
- Chief Waller's astute capabilities in the possible interim fire chief role.

Chair Elmore noted that SRFR Commissioners have not changed their stance on selecting a new fire chief and will proceed with their selection process. Commissioner Schaub shared the SRFR fire chief hiring timeline with SCFD#4 commissioners. There is a meet and greet on Sunday June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025, that Chair Mills will be attending.

SRFR Commissioners voiced that they would still like to continue merger discussions as they proceed with selecting a fire chief. Several questions were posed regarding moving forward with merger discussions:

- How to determine whether to consider an RFA or a merger?
- Would legal counsel be able to determine viability?
  - Chair Elmore stated no, the legal counsel represents both agencies and would not be able to provide services for this matter.
- Does a merger affect SRFR's accreditation?
  - AC Messer stated that a merger would not affect accreditation; however, if the formation of an RFA took place, then certain requirements and documentation would have to occur. They also stated that SRFR would need to include the new district in compliance reports, strategic planning, standard of cover (SOC), and other documents.

A joint discussion was made in which parties recommended that the Boards have collaborative discussions and form a vision path over the next 3-6 months, then hire a consultant whose fee would be split 50/50. Chair Mills suggested that small work groups be formed to divide up the work and be respectful of time restrictions. The groups would discuss topics and practices that would need to be addressed during a merger. Chair Elmore and Chair Mills will form the topics for the subgroups. Chair Elmore stated that labor groups should be brought in to be part of the discussion at some point.

Chair Elmore requested a copy of the *Fire Department Assessment and Options Analysis* by Jim Torpin. Chief Waller advised it was publicly available on the SCFD#4 website. Chair Elmore will also gather resources surrounding merger processes to share.

A discussion was had with the intent to share contact information and the limitations of SCFD#4 quorums' communication abilities. Commissioner Erickson asked SRFR and SCFD#4 to form a shared contact list of Commissioners and Division leaders.

Chair Elmore and Chair Mills agreed with a joint meeting schedule: for the next six months there will be a joint meeting on the second Tuesday of each month, alternating locations between SCFD#4 Station 43 and SRFR Station 31. The next meeting will be held at SCFD#4 Station 43. The time was not designated.

## **VI. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

- A. An audience member asked if the above-mentioned events (SRFR fire chief hiring events and future joint meeting) will be public events.
  - a. Chair Elmore advised that yes, they are, excluding the fire chief testing process. Zoom options will be available for future joint board meetings.

## **VII. COMMENTS**

- A. Chair Mills asked for the fire chief meet and greet time. It will be held at 17:30.
- B. Commissioner Steinruck noted that the Commissioners appreciate that staff from both agencies attended the meeting.

## **VIII. ADJOURN**

At 1930 hours, the SRFR Special Board Meeting was adjourned by Chair Elmore.  
At 1930 hours, the SCFD#4 Special Board Meeting was adjourned by Chair Mills.

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL FIRE COMMISSIONERS BOARD MEETING,  
JUNE 3rd, 2025**

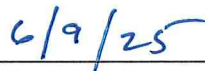
**Minutes prepared and submitted by:**

  
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**Shauna Harth**, *Executive Specialist*

  
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**Don Waller**, *District Secretary*

**MINUTES APPROVED BY FIRE COMMISSIONER:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Brian Mills**, *Board Chair*

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*