

Okanogan County Fire District No. 6

Board of Fire Commissioners Special Meeting Minutes

August 13, 2026

PRESENT

Chief Acord, Commissioners Milliken, Lindsey and Heller, Assistant Chief Stamps and Secretary Gollen.

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Milliken calls the meeting to order at 1:04 pm.

Commissioner Heller states he would like to begin the meeting by allowing 30 minutes on a timer to discuss big picture goals. They are working off the "District Business Plan-working document" provided by Commissioner Heller at the prior meeting. The discussion of big picture goals begins. Questions to consider are read from the document by Commissioner Lindsey.

1. How would you characterize the sense of urgency in terms of costs and risks associated with fire/wildfire suppression within our district?
2. How much worse could the problem of fire/wildfire become?
3. What is the county's strategic approach toward the fire/wildfire suppression, especially within the WUI?
4. How is this approach captured in policy?
5. How do we measure the success of current policy(s)?
6. What funding and resources are available to enact these policies?
7. What planning techniques has the county implemented to reduce fire risk?
8. What would happen if federal support for firefighting costs were to end and your local jurisdiction became responsible for all firefighting costs?

. Twenty-five more minutes is added to the timer. This topic is discussed for the duration of the meeting.

Chief Acord is asked what he feels are the top priority items and what does our community expect. Answer: Training. Community expectation is that the District provides fire suppression and control on an incident (we put the fire out) and provide stability to the people we respond to.

- Topic: Current staffing numbers, staff capabilities and apparatus versus where the District wants to be in 2031 for wildland and structure fires.

Discussion: Does the District have the appropriate apparatus for current and future needs? If not, the work is to define the gaps. How many staff, at what capabilities are needed on the District's volunteer roster for structure and wildland fires, taking into consideration a multiplier that accounts for how many volunteers are available to respond to a call as a percentage of how many are on the volunteer roster.

Commissioner Heller states that according to NFPA statistics, planning should consider a 3:1 ratio. Commissioner Lindsey produces a visual representation of the four stations, their apparatus and what staffing numbers would be needed to ideally man all apparatus across the District simultaneously. The Board agrees that the current roster of 41 volunteers is not going to meet their goals, it could take between 80-120 volunteers.

Chief Acord expresses that structure protection is the District's number one priority. Fifteen is the minimum number of firefighters typically needed on a typical residential structure fire. He would like to see the source of the 3:1 ratio before the board considers using it.

The Board continues discussion on the topic of structure and wildland fire goals. Two potential goals are identified as: The District has the capacity to respond to two separate structure fires simultaneously within 10 minutes. The District has the capacity to provide structure protection for 12 structures during a wildland fire within a 40-minute turnout time. Additionally, a potential goal for automobile accidents is identified as: respond to an automobile accident with backup within a 10-minute turnout time with four firefighters and extraction capability.

Commissioner Heller requests that the Chief provide optimal staffing numbers/capabilities for wildland responses. Chief Acord reiterates that wildland fire is a dynamic moving environment and we cannot put a top number to it. The needs are different for each incident. Assistant Chief Stamps adds that with our 300 square mile district the driving distance is variable and even if we have 200 staff we can only staff so many apparatus. Our mutual aid partners are needed, USFS and DNR

- Topic: Training.

Discussion: Stating what the District's priority is can guide the training. Commissioner Heller expresses that if the District's priority is wildland fire, training protocol should allow firefighters to stop training at any tier, more specifically red card certification. The Board and Chief further discuss the District's current training expectations (FF1, red card and EVIP) and implications of setting a standard to just red card certification to increase volunteer numbers.

- Topic: Board ranking of stated goals for refinement. Chief Acord requests that firefighter and public safety be added to the list.

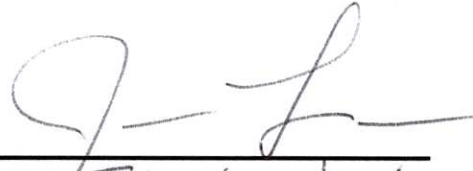
Result of ranking. Commissioner Heller puts an initial ranking of Volunteer system-recruitment and retention #1. Culture and community engagement #2. Volunteer and public safety #3. Career staffing and wages #4. Equipment and Stations #5. How the District sustains it (funding) #6.

- The Board agrees on assignment of individual Commissioners and the Chief to each of these broad stated goal categories for the purpose of improving clarity to the goals and creating 3+ steps for each category for discussion at the next special meeting.
- Commissioner Milliken states that the scheduling of the next special meeting (for the purpose of continuing the conversation and the process) will be added as an agenda item for the Board's next regular meeting.

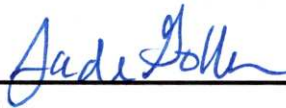
ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Milliken adjourns the meeting at 5:03 pm.

X


Miles Milliken
OCFD6 Board of Fire Commissioners Chair

X


Jade Gollen
OCFD6 Secretary

August 13, 2024 Special Meeting Sign In

JOHN OWEN

Emily Sissm

Ralph Schwartz