

Whatcom County Fire District #4
4142 Britton Loop, Bellingham, WA 98230
12:00 p.m.
February 12, 2026
Regular Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Cooley called the regular Whatcom County Fire District #4 Board of Fire Commissioners meeting for February 12, 2026, to order at 12:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Attendees: Chairman Steve Cooley; Vice-Chairman Tim Johnson; Fire Commissioner Mark Lann; D21 Commissioner Bruce Ansell; Fire Chief Jason Van der Veen; Deputy Fire Chief Tony Melillo.

With the rescission of Proclamation 20-28, the district continues to do its best to provide accommodations to the public. A direct link allowing the public to participate in the meeting during the public comment section was included on the meeting agenda and posted on the District's website.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

1. Meeting Minutes
 - a) January 12, 2026
2. Staff Reports – Chief / Operations / Training / Technical Support
3. Financial Report
 - a) Total Revenues – December \$33,523.52 (2025)
 - b) Total Expenditures – February \$794,613.56
4. Voucher / Payroll / Benefits
 - a) Monthly Expenditure Payroll Voucher: \$966.00
 - b) Monthly Expenditure Voucher: \$793,647.56

MOTION: Commissioner Lann moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Johnson and approved 3-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Communication: Chief Van der Veen noted that during the January Board Meeting, Commissioner Lann expressed concern about the need for better communication between the District 4 and District 21 Boards.

Both Board Chairs will receive board packets and be invited to attend each other's meetings to promote transparency and keep the lines of communication open. The Board Chairs will keep all board members informed and provide highlights of the meeting.

Chairman Cooley shared highlights from the District 21 January meeting he attended. Topics covered included plans to reorganize the administrative office, update the office staff's job descriptions, and search for a finance specialist.

Chairman Cooley plans to attend the District 21 upcoming meeting on Thursday, February 19, 2026. The main topic will be the levy lid lift.

Rise to the Challenge Conference: Commissioner Lann provided information about an upcoming leadership training he was considering attending in March. Board members agreed that this would be a good conference to attend.

Britton Loop Drill Ground Pavement Issues: Chief Melillo reviewed ongoing issues on the training grounds at Britton Loop Station 12. Concerns included pavement cracks and deteriorated drain grates.

Chief Melillo contacted various companies to address the issues and received quotes for work in different areas of the training grounds.

- Krux – lowest bid; provided an estimate for a different scope of work.
- Stremler
 - \$107,725 (immediate work in targeted area)
 - Can begin immediately and can work with the district to establish a timeline to address other issues.
- Western Refinery Services (WRS)
 - \$77,642 (immediate work in targeted area)
 - Can begin immediately and can work with the district to establish a timeline to address other issues.
 - \$383,000 to complete all projects

Chief Melillo showed a grid map outlining the tasks for each section. Work could be done in phases to lessen some of the inconvenience. The summer months would be the least disruptive for completing the main part of the project, as the grounds are used the least.

The group discussed using extra cement in specific areas instead of asphalt to enhance long-term durability. Although this would raise the final cost, the board approved applying cement in those areas rather than asphalt. Chief Melillo will examine the additional cost of cement in certain locations and any warranties, then provide an update at the next meeting.

Chief Van der Veen noted that the project fits within the budget alongside re-siding the administration building and the purchase of a new apparatus. The Bellingham Fire Department regularly uses the training grounds, and their rent for both the training grounds and the administration building (A) will help cover a portion of the cost over time.

The Board endorses the project, including the additional concrete costs in Section B, to preserve the taxpayer-owned facility and ensure its safety.

The project will include fixing any grates, replacing the asphalt in Sections B and C with concrete, and cleaning and resealing the asphalt in Sections A and D.

MOTION: Chairman Cooley moved to authorize the Chief to proceed with updating the training grounds using the services of Western Refinery Services (WRS), including the additional concreting option, not to exceed \$400,000. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lann and approved 3-0.

There was additional discussion about refreshing the landscape and long-term plans, including pouring a concrete pad for a pole barn-style building to hold training equipment and fixing the aging training tower.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **March Board Meeting Attendance Query:** All Commissioners will attend the March 16 Board Meeting. Vice-Chairman Johnson and Commissioner Lann plan to attend via Zoom. Chair Cooley plans on attending in person.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

- District 21 Board Meeting Highlights
- Training Ground Project Update and Timeline

ADJOURNMENT

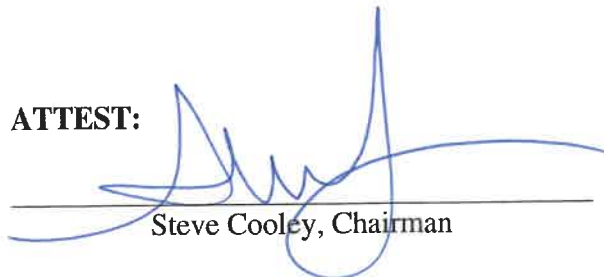
The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:



Jennie Sand, Board Secretary

ATTEST:




Steve Cooley, Chairman



Tim Johnson, Vice-Chairman

Mark Lann, Commissioner



Jason Van der Veen, Fire Chief