

West Klickitat Regional Fire Authority

Special Meeting/Strategic Planning Workshop

119 NE Church Street White Salmon WA 98672.

Saturday December 13, 2025. 0900am.

❖ **09:00.**

❖ **Attendance: WKRFA Governing Board:** Quorum: Thomas Montag, David Lindley, Ben Giant, Robert Connor, Charles Virts. Jason Hartmann

Advisory groups/staff: Chief Long, Bill Hunsaker, Captain Wardwell, Captain Grose, Darren Lanz, Jennifer McLean, Thomas Crumpacker, Eric Bosler, Beth Payne, Jure Poberaj, John Neilson.

The workshop covered the following:

- A. Review of the Culture Plan PowerPoint
- B. Review of spreadsheets showing schedules for age and replacement of
 - a) Fleet (vehicles)
 - b) Equipment (Fire rescue tools and PPE)
 - c) Facilities (buildings)
- C. Basic review of WSRB elements for our Property Protection Classification

Board Workshop Summary

This workshop was held as a *discussion-only* session with no formal actions taken. The intent was to openly explore long-term planning needs, service expectations, and financial strategies to guide future decision-making. All board members and staff were encouraged to participate, with an emphasis on shared understanding and collaborative direction-setting.

1. Strategic Planning Horizon

The board considered appropriate time horizons for strategic planning.

Key points:

- Different operational areas require different planning windows; capital replacement can justify long-range forecasting, whereas other functions may be best addressed within a 3-year outlook.
- Planning must remain flexible, recognizing that community conditions and service demands evolve.
- There was general agreement that the board may identify different horizons for different planning categories (e.g., 3, 5, 7, or 10 years).
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2. Strategic Planning Materials

Staff provided a strategic agenda guide, supporting documents, and a PowerPoint to structure discussion.

A review and update of the district's SWOT analysis is included in the planning process.

3. Financial Framework & Capital Strategy

Discussion centered on levy capacity, capital reserves, apparatus planning, and future funding needs.

Levy Rate & Authority

- Current levy rate is approximately \$0.76 per \$1,000, with a statutory capacity up to \$1.00.
- Any future levy adjustments would require clear public communication and justification.

Capital Reserve Target

- The district currently allocates 10% of revenue to capital.
- Board and staff generally agreed this target is appropriate to maintain apparatus, equipment, and infrastructure.

Apparatus & Equipment Needs

- Replacement delays require early ordering; fire engines now have 700+ day lead times.
- A brush truck replacement is overdue, and an engine replacement follows closely in the lifecycle plan.
- Additional equipment needs (e.g., fans, apparatus tools, SCBA items) continue to accumulate and must be scheduled into the capital program.

Reserves for Emergencies

- Maintaining adequate cash reserves—separate from capital—is critical for unplanned infrastructure failures (e.g., water tanks) not eligible for debt financing.

Potential Use of Debt

- Some board members suggested exploring financing options to acquire major capital items sooner rather than waiting to fully accumulate reserves.
- The district currently carries no debt and appears capable of supporting reasonable debt service if needed.

4. Services & Operational Capability

Search and Rescue

- The district currently does not provide search and rescue services; staffing, training, and sustainability challenges make this difficult.
- The board discussed whether such services may be needed in the future.

Water Rescue

- Water rescue remains a low-frequency but high-impact risk due to river exposure and the Columbia River corridor.
- The district lacks staffing and capability for a full swift-water program and currently relies heavily on commercial rafting companies for expertise.
- The district may need to improve its ability to access waterways for life-safety incidents over time, though with caution regarding safety and resource demands.

5. Relationship with Neighboring Agencies

Significant discussion centered on the district's evolving relationship with Bingen and potential long-term alignment.

- There were differing perceptions of the balance of mutual aid between the agencies, though all agreed the partnership is active and important.
- Some board members anticipate that, over time, improvements in the district's training, staffing, facilities, and equipment may encourage closer integration or shared services.

- The consensus was not to force consolidation, but rather to continue demonstrating strong performance and maintain positive collaboration, allowing future opportunities to develop organically.

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6. Roadmap Development

There was broad agreement that staff should prepare a comprehensive roadmap—covering operations, capital planning, financial strategy, and service development—for board review and approval.

The Board made no decisions but wanted a plan or recommendation to address the apparatus needs along with the other two elements.


Moving forward, the Board needs a generalized plan for 3,5,8,10 years for the following:

- A. Levy rate predictions and budget analysis to determine if the current \$.76/thousand levy rate will keep up with our current operating costs. We know there's very little room to reduce expenses unless we want to see staffing negatively affected.
 - B. Analysis of our effective response data.
 - C. Implement a plan for apparatus purchasing to stay on top of WSRB requirements.
 - Fleet replacement identified:
 - 1 x engine in the next two years
 - 1 x brush truck immediately
 - 1 x staff vehicle due to mileage.
 - Additionally, convert Utility 30 to a Type 5 brush/officer response apparatus.
 - D. Based on our operating revenue, what capital purchases can be made in the above time frames (3,5,8 &10 years)?
- ❖ Meeting adjourned 12:30pm.

APPROVED:


WKRFA Chair - Thomas Montag (date)

Attest:


Secretary Rozalind Plumb