



**Thurston County Fire Protection District 8  
Special Board of Fire Commissioners' Meeting  
November 20, 2025**

MINUTES of the special Board meeting held November 20, 2025, at South Bay Station 8-1 and remotely using Zoom. Commissioners Kilpatrick, Bivens as well as Chief VanCamp, Assistant Chief LeMay, and Secretary Stumpf were in attendance. Commissioners Zvirzdys and Hunter participated remotely. Commissioner Long was unable to attend. The meeting was called to order at 3:30 pm.

The purpose of the special meeting was to review and discuss the 2026 expense budget recommendation due to a dramatic decrease in projected revenues. As a result, Chief VanCamp recommends against hiring five firefighters and one Administrative Assistant, as their salaries may become unsustainable and could lead to future layoffs.

**2026 Expense Budget Recommendations:** Using handouts, Chief VanCamp reviewed the 2026 budget issues and interests mentioned at the November 12<sup>th</sup> regular board meeting. Some highlights from the handout coversheet included:

- The Five-Year Plan assumed 6.5% annual AV growth for property tax revenue, but 2026 projections dropped to 1.5%, reducing future base levy revenues.
- Historically, AV growth averaged 11.4% annually since 2014.
- Current indications suggest a lower growth trend to continue beyond 2026.
- The revenue decline requires corresponding expenditure adjustments for 2026–2030, measured by each year's ending cash balance.
- In 2024, voters approved a four-year excess levy (2025–2028) to fund expanded IR&R staffing. The Plan anticipates seeking voter approval in 2028 to extend the levy through 2032.
- The Plan targets 28 career IR&R staff by 2027; currently, there are 22. For 2026, it proposes adding up to five FF-EMTs and promoting three LTs.
- Career IR&R labor and benefits account for 68% of the 2025 operating budget.

Three scenarios were analyzed for future expenditure adjustments:

- **Original Plan:** Hire 5 new FF-EMTs and 1 Administrative Assistant
- **Hybrid Proposal:** Hire 2 new FF-EMTs and 1 Administrative Assistant
- **Adaptive Proposal:** No new career staff in 2026
- A handout shows the five-year impact on ending cash balances for each scenario and shows excess levy funding requirements for 2029 and beyond.

**Potential Alternative Revenue Sources:** were also discussed, including:

- Capital Repairs & Replacements Fund (balance: \$760k): Diverting funds would cancel long-term plans for facilities and equipment, requiring future bonded debt. Provides about 1.8 FTEs for one year. Not a sustainable revenue source.
- District Reserve Fund (balance: \$2,015k): Key to risk management; using it for staffing would cover 8 FTEs for one year. Not sustainable.
- BLS Transport (Appendix 4): Cost-benefit analysis shows only 41% cost recovery; staffing and revenue concerns remain. Not sustainable.
- Mobilization: Reimbursement rates do not cover actual costs; backfilling staff is problematic. Not sustainable.

In conclusion, Chief VanCamp's recommendations for 2026:

- No new career staff positions in 2026
- No changes to non-career labor programs (facilities and equipment maintenance, training, health and safety, fiscal and office management, volunteer IR&R staffing)
- No reallocation of CR&R or reserve funds for operating purposes

Commissioner Zvirzdys expressed support for hiring new firefighters, even if layoffs might be necessary later. A discussion followed regarding potential funding for these positions. Also discussed were considerations for a Bond and the possibility of merging with another district in the future.

**Executive Staff adjusted COLA request:** Chief VanCamp recommends an additional 2.3% COLA for executive staff (Fire Chief, Assistant Chief, District Secretary), above the 2.7% in District Policy, to address salary compression. Salary compression occurs when there is little difference in pay between employees regardless of differences in experience, tenure, or job responsibilities. He also noted that we currently have a lower administrative overhead than comparable districts.

- Commissioner Zvirzdys: Opposed additional pay if new firefighters cannot be hired; suggested a lower percentage.
- Commissioner Hunter: Recommended reviewing comparable salaries with other districts before approving.
- Commissioner Kilpatrick: Noted that compression is evident.

**Final words:** Commissioner Kilpatrick stated that no action would be taken and that the expense budget did not need to be adopted at this meeting. He recommends all five Commissioners further discuss these recommendations.


**Adjourn:** The Board announced that the next regular meeting is scheduled for December 9, 2025, beginning at 5:30 pm and will be held at South Bay Station 8-1. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:40 pm.


ATTEST:

  
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Douglas Kilpatrick, as Chair for TCFPD 8

  
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Gloria Zvirzdys, as Commissioner for TCFPD 8

  
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Pamela Long, as Commissioner for TCFPD 8

  
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Daniel Bivens as Commissioner for TCFPD 8

  
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Jake Hunter, as Commissioner for TCFPD 8

  
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Heidi Stumpf, District Secretary for TCFPD