



**Chelan Fire and Rescue
Special Meeting with Manson
Monday, December 9, at 3:00 P.M.
232 East Wapato, Chelan, WA 98816**



The CFR Board of Commissioners will conduct the meeting in person at the fire station; you are welcome to join via Zoom. The public is welcome to join by following this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87284665516> Meeting ID: 872 8466 5516 or dial +1 253 215 8782

Proposed Chelan Fire and Rescue agenda pending Board approval.

Flag Salute: Performed

Roll Call: Chairman Russ Jones, Commissioner Mark Donnell, Commissioner Karyl Oules, Chief Brandon Asher, Assistant Chief Shawn Sherman, District Secretary Misty Fifield, Chairman Fred Wise, Commissioner Chris Willoughby, Commissioner Dan Baker, Chief Arnold Baker, and Reggie Trusel.

Special Meeting Called to Order: Chairman Jones called the meeting to order at 3:12 P.M.

New Business: Shared Position Discussion:

- **Asher:** Thanks everyone for attending to discuss the shared volunteer coordinator position. Eric Quinn reviewed our old Volunteer Coordinator job description (see notes). It could potentially remain an exempt position. Asher believes this candidate will offer flexibility and help reduce overtime costs, providing a solid foundation for us to consider.
- **Fred:** Does Wenatchee have a similar position?
- **Asher:** Bob Ghee might be handling this there, but we can reach out to them. Asher acknowledges that our volunteer program isn't improving, and we need to update our flyer.
- **Baker:** Spoke with Michelle, the grant writer, and she is willing to pursue the SAFER grant.
- **Asher:** Reviewed the spreadsheet: Chelan population 9,000, Manson population 4,776, Chelan call volume 1,205, Manson call volume 194, Manson EMS calls 1,704.
- **Donnell:** Does both agencies see the need to move forward with this grant?
 - **All agree.** Donnell believes our main resource issue is the lack of volunteers and questions whether we have the demographics to fill this need.
- **Asher:** We've managed to retain a small number of volunteers. The roster from 2018 shows that those volunteers are no longer with us as most moved away.
- **Fred:** Are there other districts that have attempted something similar with success? Can we reach out to them?



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- **Donnell:** We did. Asher had the position and recruited with Chelan, Entiat, and Orondo, and the SAFER grant was over \$1 million, which covered training, wages, and bunker gear.
- **Asher:** not confident that our demographic has changed much in recent years.
- **Oules:** Are we pursuing the SAFER grant or focusing on the shared position?
- **Baker:** If you think it's too much, we can slow down and focus on the SAFER grant first.
- **Asher:** We might be moving into the grant process and need to backup, so we need to reconsider our approach. I'd like to discuss the Duty Officer role.
- **Oules:** Supports moving forward with the grant but suggests we should have a backup plan in place.
- **Russ:** In his opinion, hiring two firefighters and a shared position is unaffordable, but a joint coordinator position is possible.
- **Donnell:** Believes he has enough budget experience to afford this position. Asks if the position will be open to the public.
- **Baker:** If we're applying for the grant, we should wait to hire a shared position to avoid jeopardizing the grant.
- **Donnell:** Suggests waiting until after the grant process, possibly by 2026 or November 2025.
- **Asher:** When hiring, what qualifications will the candidate need? What title should this person have?
- **Oules:** Asks if the title is important.
- **Asher, Donnell, and Baker:** Agree that the title is important.
- **Asher:** Notes that a contract was drawn up to test the process, and he believes there are qualified local candidates for this role. This position offers the chance to groom a local person for a future leadership role.
- **Baker:** Believes it's important to open the position to ensure fairness and transparency, maintaining respect for the public.
- **Fred:** Asks what the primary responsibility of this person is. Will they recruit volunteers?
- **Baker:** Also mentions that training is part of the role.



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- **Donnell:** Believes recruitment isn't the issue—retention is. He estimates the annual cost for new recruitment (for the first year) is around \$10,000. The challenge is training and retaining volunteers.
- **Fred:** Agrees that retention is the real issue.
- **Sherman:** Responds to Fred's question, explaining that the SAFER grant fell short due to the inability to engage volunteers—split between career and volunteer work. An additional person is essential to assist with volunteers.
- **Fred:** Asked if Brian Brett is struggling.
- **Baker:** Stresses that the training center is vital for building skills and supporting the current program.
- **Sherman:** Points out that if training isn't engaging, volunteers won't stay. WVF is phasing out their resident program due to the high costs of volunteers.
- **Sherman:** Suggests that everyone agrees on the need for a volunteer coordinator to reduce barriers between the two districts and hold joint drills.
- **Baker:** Mentions that they currently have one part-time training person, but more staff is needed—ideally two full-time training positions.
- **Donnell:** Asks when the next academy starts.
 - **Asher:** January 5.
- **Donnell:** We're likely past the point of adding more recruits to the academy. It might be best to wait and see where the grant leads us.
- **Sherman:** Suggests stopping past practices—no more throwing people into wildland training without proper preparation. We need to slow down and ensure proper training is provided.
- **Donnell:** Asks how we keep volunteers engaged while waiting for the academy.
- **Sherman:** Believes people will be more interested if the process is more engaging.
- **Fred:** Asks if exit interviews have ever been conducted.
- **Sherman:** Has tried, but volunteers can't be forced to participate.
- **Asher:** Mentions that volunteers have returned their gear and left without much explanation.



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- **Fred:** Asks if the state requires more from volunteers.
- **Sherman:** Explains that the problem arises when standard-based policies conflict with varying standards across districts.
- **Chris:** Agrees that the training requirements are time-consuming.
- **Baker:** Points out that CFR has a comprehensive list of requirements, but Manson doesn't have the same standards.
- **Sherman:** Notes that compliance standards are mandatory.
- **Donnell:** Acknowledges that smaller agencies are doing the best they can with limited resources.
- **Russ:** Suggests moving forward with the shared position, as relying solely on grants isn't sustainable.
- **Other Manson Commissioners:** Expect changes in the next 18-24 months.
- **Baker:** States they have budgeted for the shared position.
- **Oules:** Suggests presenting some numbers.
- **Fred:** Emphasizes the urgency of moving forward, particularly due to potential wildfire threats.
- **Dan Baker:** Request to review the contract in their own time.
- **Donnell:** Mentions the contract and stresses the challenging nature of filling this position, highlighting the qualifications required for the role.
- **Russ:** Suggests the staff meet to discuss the numbers.
- **Asher:** Proposed salary is equivalent to the Day Captain rate.
- **Chris:** Asks about the raise.
- **Asher:** Estimates the salary to be around \$120,000 per year, plus benefits.
- **Baker:** Believes this role should be aligned with a Chief position, offering a clear career progression for Captains.
- **Russ:** Refers to the contract.
- **Chris:** States that the attorney mentioned the position must meet the 80/20 rule to be considered exempt, regardless of rank—only the job description matters.



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- **Fred:** Asks if both Chiefs are in agreement to proceed.
- **Both Chiefs:** Confirm they are in agreement.
- **Russ:** Suggests finalizing the details by the next meeting to keep the process moving forward.

Long Range Plan Discussion:

Asher: The shared position is part of the long-term plan. Asher wants to evaluate the future of Manson Fire and consider the best direction for the Chelan Valley. He asks if there's potential for a merger. Asher wants to be involved in shaping the future of fire service in the valley, referencing the successful inter-county program at WVF.

- **Fred:** Believes a well-documented plan and interlocal agreement are key for success. We are moving in the right direction and it shows that it can work.
- **Asher:** Feels the relationship between the two districts is strengthening.
- **Fred:** Inquires about call types—are they mostly EMS?
 - **Asher:** Yes, many are EMS calls.
- **Donnell:** Notes that as commissioners, they have a responsibility to provide public service. With limited resources, increasing costs, and a nationwide volunteer shortage, it's important to be efficient and look ahead to anticipate future needs.
- **Sherman:** Points out that most attendees at the National Fire Academy are volunteers. He raises concerns about Manson's future with the new training facility, especially with 12 resident quarters and the challenges that all departments have and currently face over time.
- **Russ:** Asks for clarity on the expected outcome.
- **Asher:** Proposes looking at a 2-3 year plan. What do the Manson Commissioners want? Does the community support the direction? A feasibility study may not be necessary, but community input is important.
- **Oules:** Suggests it's time to finalize this proposal- pound out a dollar amount.
- **Sherman:** Asks what Manson wants and what the dollar amount should be.
- **Baker:** Suggests Manson 5 Commissioners have to sit through another meeting to discuss key details.
- **Donnell:** Asks who the new position will report to.



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- **Asher:** The new role will report to CFR and work under the CFR7 Assistant Chief.
- **Russ:** Requests a copy of Manson 2025 budget

Continuing Discussion on Insurance:

- **Donnell:** Spoke with Ryan about insurance and will discuss further after the holidays, then involve the other commissioners and legislative members.
- **Legislative Day:** Scheduled for February 6. Donnell spoke with Roger and expressed his desire to be involved in the committee.

Motion to Adjourn:

- **Donnell** motioned to adjourn at 4:36 PM

Chelan County Fire Protection District 7
Board of Commissioners:



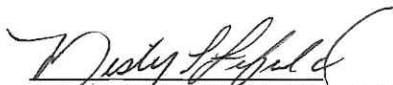
Chairman, Russ Jones



Commissioner Mark Donnell



Commissioner Karyl Oules



Attest: Misty Fifield, District Secretary