BENTON COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT NO. 2

REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

May 5, 2026

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chairperson Orth called the regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners of Benton County Fire District #2 meeting to order at 4:12 PM at 1304 Dale Avenue, Benton City, Washington.

THOSE PRESENT

Chairperson Orth, Commissioner Rouse, Fire Chief Bates, Asst Fire Chief Dormaier, District Admin Wheeler.

Staff Members Present: Captain Reed, Paramedic Harpel.

Guests: City of Benton City Representative Jerod Miller

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA – *Excuse Commissioner Howell*

PUBLIC COMMENT – *None.*

Financial Review – *Review of revenue and expenditures reports/vouchers presented for approval.*

CONSENT AGENDA

All matters listed within the Consent Agenda have been distributed to each member of the Board for reading and study. These matters are considered to be routine and will be considered or enacted by one motion of the Board with no separate discussion. However, if any member of the Board desires separate discussion on a specific item, that item may be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the Regular Agenda by request.

- Agenda: **Approve agenda dated May 5, 2026.**
- Minutes: **Approve minutes of the Regular Board Meeting dated April 14, 2026.**
- Claim Vouchers *(Fund 6821)*
  - **Approve Bill vouchers in the amount of $44,125.55**

Chairperson Orth moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Commissioner Rouse seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

IMPORTANT DATES

- **05-19-2026, B2 Fire COMM Meeting, 4:00 PM, STA 210,Tuesday**
- 05-25-2026, HOLIDAY: Memorial Day, Office Closed
- 05-30-2026, Ki-Be HS Graduation
- **06-02-2026, B2 Fire COMM Meeting, 4:00 PM, STA 210,Tuesday**

CONFERENCES

- October 21-24, 2026, **WFCA State Conference** (Spokane, WA)
  - *Attending: Orth, Howell, Rouse, Bates*

CORRESPONDENCE – *None.*

FINANCIALS *(Financial Officer)*

- Budget Position Report as of 04/28/2026.
- District Financial Report: *as of 03/31/26*

General Fund 6821	$55,312.31

EMS Fund 6828	$1,942,530.21
Reserve Fund 6826	$74,470.33
Total General Fund	**$2,072,312.85**
Bond Fund 6822	$50,803.02
Total ALL Funds 02/28/26	**$2,123,115.87**

RESOLUTIONS/MOTIONS – *None.*

REPORTS

- Fire Chief Bates
  - The Drug Take-Back event was held on April 25 at the station in partnership with the Benton County Sheriff's Office (BCSO) and the Coalition for a Healthy Benton City.
  - The 800MHz radio project continues to progress. Installations are complete, with two remaining vehicles to be finished in-house.
  - The Inland Empire Bike Ride is scheduled for May 9, 2026. BC2 will again host a pit stop at Station 210, as in previous years. Rehab members will staff the station as the district contact. This event provides an opportunity to support the community and promote positive public relations, and participants typically donate supplies to Rehab. Crews are aware of the route and available for response as needed.
  - On May 22, 2026, the district will host a Ki-Be class for community service. This outreach opportunity supports local students and provides exposure to the fire service as a potential career.
  - Coordination with the City continues to progress positively. Joint efforts have included multiple meetings, project collaboration, and walkthroughs of new construction. Work is ongoing on a hydrant project and development of a new system to be used jointly by the City and the District.
  - The Chief attended Fusion Center training and will work to reconnect the district to notification systems. The Fusion Center coordinates information sharing among local, state, and federal agencies, including threat assessments for events and public gatherings. The Chief will explore the potential need for a district liaison and the associated requirements to enhance situational awareness.
- Asst Chief Dormaier/PIO
  - Continued work on grant activity, including new applications and follow-up on awarded grants.
    - A $25,000 grant from DNR is currently in progress.
    - Two grant applications were not awarded; however, the District received a D5H Dozer through DNR and the Forest Protection Program (FPP). Ownership of the apparatus will transfer to the District after one year.
      - The dozer will serve as a reserve unit for the District and as a regional resource, as there are currently no secondary (second-out) dozers available.
    - A Cache Trailer obtained through DNR and the FPP program is now in service and being utilized. Ownership will transfer to the District after one year.
    - Appreciation was expressed to Caren for tracking filing deadlines and maintaining organization of the grant process.
  - District staffing currently totals 68 personnel.
    - Two seasonal positions have been posted.
    - Two Firefighter/Paramedic positions have been posted.

- Recruitment is underway for Volunteer Resident and Volunteer positions:
  - Written testing is expected to occur mid- to late-May.
  - Interviews and physical agility testing will follow.
- The District continues to work with the Chamber of Commerce to support public events and maintain community engagement outside of emergency operations.
- The Officer Cadre was recognized for strong performance in supporting District operations, mission, and vision. Their efforts in providing off-hours training for all shifts, particularly for new members, were noted as highly beneficial.
- One firefighter is currently on light duty due to a non-work-related condition and is anticipated to return to full duty by the end of the month.
- The Maintenance Division remains active with major projects in addition to routine and daily maintenance work.
- The Training Division has been heavily engaged and is beginning to transition as the District moves into the next recruitment phase.
  - Dozer training is planned in the near future.
  - Scheduling will be determined based on weather conditions and fuel moisture levels.
  - Training is expected to be conducted regionally and include participation from state and federal partners.

- Training Cpt. Kale Guerin – *None.*
- Safety Cpt. Mike Meyer, HSO – *None.*
- B2 Association – *None.*

CITY OF BENTON CITY – *Jerod Miller*

NEW BUSINESS

- State Annual Report for 2025: *Due May 30, 2026.*

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – *None.*

BVFF – *None.*

PERSONNEL

- Excuse Commissioner Howell from Commissioners' Meeting dated 05-05-26.

Chairperson Orth moved to excuse Commissioner Howell from Meeting dated May 5, 2026. Commissioner Rouse seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING – *There were no agenda items to add to the next meeting.*

EXECUTIVE SESSION – *None.*

- **Executive Session for Personnel Qualifications and/or Performance Review per RCW 42.30.110(1)(g)** (*Evaluate the qualifications of an applicant for public employment or review the performance of a public employee.)*

An Executive Session was called for 30 minutes to do performance review. The session opened at 4:54 PM in the Chief's Office. At 5:24 PM, the session was extended eleven (10) minutes. The executive session closed at 5:34 PM, and the Regular Meeting reconvened.

- ACTION: *No Action.*

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Rouse moved that the meeting be adjourned. Chairperson Orth seconded. There being no further business, Chairperson Orth adjourned the meeting at 5:35 PM.

Attested on May 19, 2026.

/s/ Caren Wheeler
CAREN WHEELER, DISTRICT ADMIN

/s/ Barry Orth
BARRY G. ORTH, CHAIRPERSON

/s/ Larry Howell
LARRY D. HOWELL, COMMISSIONER

/s/ Steve Rouse
LEWIS S. ROUSE, COMMISSIONER