SOUTH KING FIRE
Special Meeting/Retreat
March 7, 2026
Station 68 and Virtual

Commissioner Baruso called the Regular Meeting to order at 0830 hours with Commissioners Burrus, Fuller, Vadino and Monroe in attendance. Board Secretary Lauri Perry recording.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Vadino.

To listen to the full meeting, please visit our website.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Burrus had no comments.

Commissioner Fuller had no comments.

Commissioner Vadino had no comments.

Commissioner Monroe had no comments.

Commissioner Baruso thanked everyone for being here today on the weekend.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Commissioners and staff were asked to introduce themselves, to include: Their role at South King Fire; how long they have been with the district; what motivates them to do what they do what is their hope for today's discussion.

CONTEXT SETTING – RESULTS OF LISTENNG SESSIONS AND SOUTH KING FIRE FOCUS FOR 2026

Chief Woodey spoke about the Shared Vision Memo – Listening Sessions and Fire Chief Observational Executive Summary letter that he emailed to the Commissioners and all staff on February 18, 2026. Commissioners were able to ask follow-up questions for Chief Woodey regarding the letter.

At 1000 hours the meeting recessed for 15 minutes until 1015 hours.

At 1015 hours the meeting reconvened.

ROLES AND FUNCTIONING OF THE BOARD

Legal Counsel Eric Quinn gave a presentation on Board Members Roles and Simple Procedures and answered Commissioners' questions.

Here are a few of the slides that Eric Quinn presented – Board Member Roles and Simple Procedures;

- Scope of Discussion
  - The Core roles of the Board
  - The Commissioner Ethics Rules

    - Rules of Procedure
- The Core Roles of the Board RCW 52.14.100
    - To "manage the affairs" of the district
    - To adopt "reasonable rules to govern the district"
- The Dilemma
    - The Board is a policymaking body authorized to adopt simplified rules of order and its own rules
    - The RCWs do not require members to be friends
    - But the Board is also the "face" of the District
- The Commissioner Ethics Rules in One Page
    - Follow the Rotary Four-Way Tool
    - Don't accept gifts
    - Keep confidential information confidential
    - Don't secure privileges for yourself by using your status as a Commissioner
    - Avoid conflicts of interest
    - Ast as a "body of the whole"
    - Don't violate the Open Public Meeting Act (OPMA)
    - Know when to lead and when to be led
- The Four-Way Test
    - Is it the truth?
    - Is it fair to all concerned?
    - Will it build goodwill and better friendships?
    - Will it be beneficial to all concerned?
    - Any course of action/rule not meeting all four of these tests should not be enacted
- Acting as a "Body of the Whole"
    - Individual Commissioners have little to no authority when acting alone
    - But when they cast the majority vote they have the greatest authority
    - Acting alone creates perceptions about the "team" appearance matter
    - The essence of a deliberative democracy: Reaching a shared consensus on direction

Discussion and questions specific to the Role and Functioning of the Board to include:

- What are appropriate ways the Board can engage with firefighters? What are the correct rules of engagement that honor the Chain of Command?
    - Response: Board members should be mindful of the chain of command and their perceived positional power. Board members act as a body not as individuals.

- What is the appropriate access to agency counsel?
    - Response: Legal questions should be routed through the Fire Chief or via the Board Chair if the concern relates to the Fire Chief.

- What are the expectations for Commissioners for meetings that conflict with outside commitments?
    - Response: Expectations should be clarified in the Commissioner Guidelines. Generally, efforts are made to schedule meetings at times that work for everyone. However, committee meetings need to be scheduled during the workday when staff or consultants are available. Meeting scheduling requires timely responses for effective scheduling. It's also recognized that not everyone may be available to attend every meeting. We will schedule time sensitive

meetings, such as Special Meetings, when we have a quorum to do so. Special Meetings or Retreats may be scheduled during the workday, dependent on staff and consultant availability.

- What should a Board member do if they see a fire safety concern in the community?
  - Response: Be aware of your perceived positional power as a Commissioner. Respond as a civilian would and use the system (call 911 if it requires an emergency response) not your role in the system.

- Current strengths:
  - Overall communication with staff before Board meetings
  - Respectful interactions during meetings
  - Access to Board Chair and Legal Counsel
  - Trusted Legal Counsel
  - Communications between Chair and Vice Chair
  - 2 on 2 meetings
  - Communication

- Opportunities for Improvement:
  - Commissioners expressed a desire to increase the effectiveness of Commissioner meetings by applying Robert's Rules of Order. Specific protocols that were agreed upon include:
    - Asking the Chair to be recognized before speaking.
    - Not speaking to or referring to Commissioner's by name. Go through the Chair and referring to on "the member's" comment or proposal.
    - Adhering to the agenda and not revisiting past decisions.
    - Using plain language when possible to facilitate understanding of community members and members of the Board.
    - Commissioners agreed to make the use of Robert's Rules an explicit practice, with specific opportunities to revisit what is working and what can be improved.

At 1200 the meeting recessed for 30 minutes until 1230 hours.

At 1230 the meeting reconvened.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS 2026 PRIORITIES

After significant discussion by the Board, they suggested making the following changes to the Board Committee structure:

Current Commissioner Committees

Standing Committees listed in the 2025 Board of Commissioners Guidelines

- Budget, Finance, and Audit
- Insurance
- Policy and Procedures
- Emergency Medical, Basic Life Support, Hospital Transport, and Emergency Management
- Mergers/Consolidations and Legislative Affairs
- Joint Labor/Management
- Strategic Leadership Plan
- Legal
- Public Safety
- Culture and Engagement

Agreed-upon Commissioner Committees (will need to be approved via a Motion and a Second at a Regular Meeting)

- Budget, Finance, and Audit will be retained as a standing committee.

Board members will be appointed and ready to engage on the following topics:

- Insurance (usually once per year at renewal)
- Legislative Affairs
- Policy and Procedures

Board members will be consulted on the following current initiatives and will have ultimate adoption authority:

- Labor/Management negotiations (pending labor's agreement to sunset the Joint Labor/Management Board Committee)
- Standards of Cover/Master Planning

Committee Expectations of Commissioners:

- Committee members will let the Board Secretary know when meetings are necessary and what items should be on the committee meeting agendas.
- Committee members shall report out on committee activities, beyond what is included in the meeting notes provided in Board packets. Commissioners shall be prepared to make Motions when needed.
- Staff will proactively identify upcoming topics that require Board or committee input. Examples include reoccurring or annual items such as insurance coverage renewals or legislative agenda setting.
- Commissioners will respond to emails within 48 hours. The Board Secretary will indicate the deadline with a "reply by" date, striving to give Commissioners 48 non-weekend hours to reply whenever possible.
- Commissioners will limit individual requests, mindful of staff time and resources and shall seek to self-serve when possible.

The first Board of Commissioners priority listed below will include further definition of agreed-upon expectations for Commissioners.

The meeting recessed at 1350 hours for a 5 minute break until 1355 hours.

The meeting reconvened at 1355 hours.

The Board agreed on the following two priorities:

1. Clarifying Expectations, Strengthen the Onboarding Process, and Improve Information Management
    - Build on and improve existing Commissioner 101 information by the end of 2026. Improvements should include:
        - Additional information about the parliamentary process/Roberts Rules of Order
        - Guidance for Commissioners behavior when representing South King fire by engaging members of the public or when to wear South King Fire apparel.
        - Guidance for what to do when observing an issue in our communities.
        - Updating of the Commissioner Guidelines, to include the delineation of the standing committees.
    - Review and revise the commissioner onboarding process – Schedule the oath of office (swearing in ceremony) for the new Commissioners as close to January 1st as possible.
    - Provide coaching for new Commissioners.
    - Seek input from the newest Commissioner on how the onboarding process can continue to be improved.
    - Roles:
        - The Board Chair will be accountable to ensure this priority is met.
        - The following individuals will be consulted: Vice Chair Vadino, Chief Woodey, Executive Director Ganem, Board Secretary Lauri Perry and Legal Counsil Eric Quinn.
        - Additional Commissioners will be asked to contribute content development or coaching of new Commissioners.
2. Enhance Commissioner Presence at Events
    - Create and maintain a crowd-sourced calendar of upcoming events to include;
        - Internal SKF events (staff recognition, retirements, etc.)
        - Fire Service events (such as King County Fire Commissioner Association)
        - Community events throughout South King Fire response area.
    - Coordinate Commissioner participation at events to ensure coverage and avoid duplication of efforts or violation of the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA).
    - Roles:
        - The Board Chair will be accountable to ensure this priority is met.

- The following individuals will be consulted: Vice Chair Vadino, Chief Woodey, Board Secretary Lauri Perry, South King Fire Community Affairs Office and Legal Counsel Eric Quinn.

COMMISSIONER ROUNDTABLE

Final comments by the Commissioners, reflecting on the days process and outcomes included:

- Appreciation for today – I learned a lot.
- We clarified some things and agreed on our high priorities. We haven't had these in writing before.
- We covered everything I was hoping that we would cover.
- The review of what the committees we want to maintain was very successful.
- We succeeded in getting everyone on the same page as we move forward. We have an important opportunity to advance the agency with a New Fire Chief and alignment around our priorities.

The meeting adjourned at 1504 hours.

COMMISSIONER (CHAIR)

COMMISSIONER (VICE CHAIR)

COMMISSIONER

COMMISSIONER

COMMISSIONER

BOARD SECRETARY