



City of Bellingham-Whatcom County Fire District 8 Regional Fire Authority Planning Committee Meeting Minutes for August 3, 2026



Committee Members Present:

Roger Buswell, Whatcom County Fire District 8 Commissioner

Dan Hammill, City of Bellingham Council Member

Michael Lilliquist, City of Bellingham Council Member

Kim Lund, City of Bellingham Mayor

Robert Neher, Whatcom County Fire District 8 Commissioner

Committee Members Absent:

Sheena Williams, Whatcom County Fire District 8 Commissioner

City of Bellingham Staff, Officials, and Others Present:

Rachel Carlson, Assistant Fire Chief

Christopher Hughes, Fire Systems Analyst

Forrest Longman, Deputy City Administrator

Dave Pethick, Assistant Fire Chief

Matt Stamps, Assistant City Attorney

Rod Topel, RFA Project Manager

1. Welcome and introductions

Mayor Lund called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m. Mayor Lund offered brief remarks expressing sympathy for the City of Spokane during their current wildfire emergency.

2. Minutes review

Action:

Council Member Dan Hammill moved to approve the 7.20.26 minutes. Council Member Michael Lilliquist seconded the motion. Commissioner Robert Neher pointed out a typo on the second page. Motion passed 5-0 with Commissioner Sheena Williams absent.

3. Review of RFA Fire Benefit Charge and Calculator

Chris Hughes reported that he did analysis on sprinkler data and found that the impact of the sprinkler discount to the Fire Benefit Charge (FBC) would be about \$200,000 if all eligible properties were to receive the discount.



City of Bellingham-Whatcom County Fire District 8

Regional Fire Authority Planning Committee

Meeting Minutes for August 3, 2026



Chris Hughes displayed the FBC calculator tool that he developed to verify assessor's data and change various factors and categories. Committee members and staff modeled different scenarios using the tool and discussed resulting impacts.

Staff emphasized the value of keeping the formula simple and based on land use code. If approved, the new RFA would have the ability to change the numbers based on experience and feedback from the community after the first year.

Members expressed a desire to protect smaller businesses and tenants living in multifamily residential buildings.

4. Update to Plan Document Draft Appendix E

Rod Topel said that he had received feedback from Council Member Lilliquist on Appendix E. He encouraged any other members who have suggestions to contact him before the next meeting, when he will be bringing back a new draft of the document.

5. Public comment

No public comment was given.

6. Next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for August 17, 2026. Mayor Lund has a conflict and will be absent. Commissioner Neher agreed to chair the meeting.

7. Adjournment

Mayor Lund adjourned the meeting at 3:05 p.m.