

West Klickitat Regional Fire Authority
Public Hearing to receive comments on the 2026 budget.
 119 NE Church Street White Salmon WA 98672.

Thursday November 20, 2025. 6:30pm.

1. **The meeting was called to order at 18:30, by Thomas Montag**
 Regular Business meeting will follow.
2. **Agenda:**
“Move to approve the agenda for the public hearing as presented,” made by Charles Virts, second by Jason Hartmann, (4 in favor, 0 opposed) motion passed.
3. **Roll Call**
WKRFA Governing Board: Quorum: Thomas Montag, Jason Hartmann, David Lindley, Robert Connor, Charles Virts.
 Excused: Ben Giant
Advisory groups/staff: Chief Wes Long, Rozalind Plumb, Jennifer McLean, Eric Bosler, Jure Poberaj

4. **Review of 2026 estimated Levy amount:**

- 2025 The WKRFA levied \$0.76 per \$1,000 of assessed value in the first year of operation. This was based on the limit set in the WKRFA Plan approved by the voters.
- **2025 Levied amount was \$1,344,249.62** (\$1,204,149.20 received through October)
- The **Maximum Lawful Levy amount** calculated by the Klickitat County Assessor’s Office is based on \$1.50 per \$1000 of assessed value.
- The WKRFA Plan restricts the Levy to a maximum of \$1.00 per \$1000 of assessed value.
- The levy amount below is based on the *estimated* assessed values by the County Assessor’s Office on 10/13/2025.
- The Board can authorize an increase in revenue over 1% of the previous year.

		Assessed Value	per 1000	rate	Total tax
1% over 2025	1%only	\$ 1,870,453,161.00	\$ 1,870,453.16	\$ 0.735633663	\$ 1,375,968.31
	\$0.76	\$ 1,870,453,160.00	\$ 1,870,453.16	\$ 0.76	\$ 1,421,544.40
RFAPlan Max	\$1	\$ 1,870,453,160.00	\$ 1,870,453.16	\$ 1.00	\$ 1,870,453.16
State max	\$1.50	\$ 1,870,453,160.00	\$ 1,870,453.16	\$ 1.50	\$ 2,805,679.74

- **Options:**
 1. Increase total levy over 2025 by 1% = \$0.74/1000
 2. Maintain \$0.76 /1000 = 5.75% over 2025
 3. Levy a different amount between \$0.74 and \$1.00.

- Consideration was given on the amount to be levied if there are funds left over from the 2025 budget. 1% increase over the 2025 total does not keep pace with inflation.
- Chief pointed out that 2025 was a transition year and is not a good indicator of predictable operating costs. There are several issues that need to be addressed in 2026 that will stretch the available funds. Chief recommended the board maintain \$0.76 so as not to lose ground on unanticipated costs and still meet the WKRFA Plan directives [to increase volunteer training, coverage, and plan for apparatus replacement]. Long term Strategic Planning is scheduled for December.
- WKRFA is the only fire protection service in the state with the ability to change the levy rate within this range. Consideration was given to maintaining a stable levy rate.
- The intent is not to collect more than needed. The board will monitor closely in the first few years of operation.
- Review of why the rate decreases from 0.76 to 0.74 with a 1% increase in the amount levied. As assessed values climb the effective rate per \$1000 of property value decreases.

5. Review of 2026 Operating Budget:

The staff have predicted expenditure for the 2026 financial year by addressing the anticipated operating and capital costs. Predicted costs are set out as line items within the budget and are subject to change as needs arise. Staff have been updating the amounts based on 2025 costs. Some areas like IT have increased significantly.

The 2025 budget has several areas that went over budget but is still under spent overall. This is mainly due to not hiring new staff until later in the year. Personnel costs are the largest area in the budget. The payroll section is heavily budgeted to ensure we can cover employee wages. Staff are cautious as there are still unknown issues associated with the transition to the RFA and adding shift staffing.

At the October meeting the budget was presented using 1% (\$31,718.69) over the 2025 levied amount of \$1,344,249.62, which calculates to \$0.74.


Staff based the budget presented on an increase of 5.75% (\$77,294.35) over 2025 levy amount of \$1,344,249.62, which calculates to \$0.76. It also includes an additional increase of \$18,276.19 the County Assessor estimates will be available from new construction.

The budget includes funding for Klickitat County Fire District 3 as KCFD3 no longer has an operating budget. 2025 Costs included insurance for the board and annexations of properties into the fire district.

- 6. Public Discussion:** Eric Bosler made comment that he has been involved in the budget process in the past and is confident that staff have been lean. He also noted that \$0.76 is what was on the ballot and sticks in the mind of those who voted on it.
- 7. Approval** of the 2026 Budget is planned to occur after this public hearing, during the regular business meeting following the hearing.
- 8. Motion to Adjourn:**

"Motion to adjourn," made by Jason Hartmann, second by Robert Connor, (4 in favor, 0 opposed) motion passed.
Meeting adjourned at 18:57.

APPROVED:



WKRFA Vice Chair -David Lindley (date) 12/17/25

Attest:



Secretary Rozalind Plumb