WKRFA West Klickitat Regional Fire Authority
Special Meeting
STRATEGIC PLANNING

119 NE Church Street White Salmon WA 98672.

Saturday September 12, 2026. 09:00am.

- **Called to order by Chair Thomas Montag at 09:03.**
- **Flag Salute.**
- **Attendance:**

  WKRFA Governing Board: Quorum: Thomas Montag, David Lindley, Ben Giant, Charles Virts. Morella Mora.

  Absent: Robert Connor,

  Advisory groups/staff: Chief Long, Deputy Chief Hunsaker, Jennifer McLean, Rozalind Plumb, FF Jure Poberaj, Lt. Ben Schneider.

  Public: none.

- **Welcome & Purpose**

  Chief Long gave a brief overview of the formation of the RFA, and highlighted the need for strategic planning to align the agency's promises to serve voters, including fiscal management, staffing levels, training, and infrastructure. The RFA has been in place for 18 months and has hired 2 line staff, increased quality of training, and improved call response. (There are gaps in responses when staff are not on duty. These have been EMS calls where KCEMS1 is responding). Chief noted the need for an additional firefighter staff position to fil the gap. WKRFA board and staff are responsible for maintaining the capital assets of the agency, and vehicle replacement is tied to insurance ratings. The board needs to address apparatus purchasing and fleet adjustments to reflect service requirements. The Board needs to address the impact of large capital purchases on the budget in conjunction with the services and coverage promised to voters.

2. Current Fleet Status Review

- Ben Giant provided a financial worksheet that helps model the financial needs of the agency for the next 24 years (through 2050). It projects the cost of replacement with the expected year of replacement and accounts for the anticipated increase in assessed values and levy. The worksheet looks at different options for purchasing vehicles using cash only (existing and projected capital funds), fully financed, and partially financed options.
- Ben highlighted that there are a lot of assumptions in the model, and it should be viewed only to show the general direction the RFA is heading.

- Knowing that the worksheet requires refining it was still very helpful to the board to think beyond the next 5-10 years.
- Projecting when current vehicles are due to be replaced highlighted a potential "cliff" around 2050 when several vehicles are due to be replaced at the same time.
- The model looks at options to pay all cash, partial finance, fully finance, and /or raise the levy rate for the purchases.
- The RFA Plan approved by the voters allows the levy rate to be raised to no more than $1.00 per 1000 of Assessed Value (AV). Anything over $1.00 per 1000 would require a vote by the constituents. (The State allows Fire Agencies with one or more employee to levy up to $1.50 /1000AV. The RFA is self-capped at $1.00).
- One option discussed is to raise the levy rate from 76 to 92 cents per $1,000 valuation to cover the anticipated apparatus replacement costs through 2050. Starting this increase in revenue in 2028 could build a cushion for future financial needs.
- The importance of clearly communicating the need for any levy increase to the voters was emphasized.

3. Risk & Service Impact Assessment

- Impact of aging vehicles on response times and safety is obvious. The RFA needs to maintain the fleet to ensure the safety of the volunteers and to meet survey ratings and insurance requirements.
- Chief noted the potential impact of aerial truck requirements on survey ratings. (There is a trend of new construction with multiple stories or steep slope access on some sides).

4. Replacement Criteria & Prioritization

- Chief provided an update on the status of the fleet, including the need to replace engines and brush trucks.
- There is additional need for a staff vehicle to support routine trips and training. This could be a car and not a truck.
- Discussion on the need to prioritize vehicle replacement, focusing on Engine 30-01, B32.

5. Funding & Procurement Options

- A new engine is estimated at $750,000. There was much discussion over the high cost and how the industry has seen huge increases recently. The trend is for cost to keep increasing. Delaying a purchase will not save money.
- Grants- State/federal programs. Grants for vehicle replacement are not prioritized at this time.
- Loans – The Washington State local loan option has favorable interest rates around 2.9%
- Group purchasing agreements/Cooperative purchasing agreements have financial advantages.
- Leasing options were not viewed as a cost-effective option.
- Discussion on the impact of interest rates and loan terms on the budget. The need for proper stewardship and planning to ensure financial stability. The importance of

balancing current expenses with future financial needs (possible staff increases to cover service).

6. Drafting the Vehicle Replacement Plan

Staff will work on refining the replacement plan. This will always be a working document as we cannot predict outside influences.

- Short-term (1–2 years) urgent replacements
- Mid-term (3–5 years) planned upgrades
- Long-term (6–10 and 10-25years) fleet modernization goals

7. Action Items & Next Steps

- The board agree on the need for a detailed financial plan and the importance of making informed decisions based on accurate data.
- Staff will meet next Tuesday to refine the data in the model.
- Engage the community in the discussion about the need for new equipment and the potential impact on taxes.
- plan to have a refined model ready for presentation at the regular meeting.

8. Summary

The meeting focused on strategic planning for the RFA, emphasizing the need to address fleet replacement and budgetary concerns. The board discussed the possibility of raising the levy rate from 76 cents to 92 cents per $1,000 valuation by 2028 to ensure financial stability and cover apparatus replacement costs through 2050.
Key fleet replacement priorities include engines, brush trucks, and water tenders, with specific models and timelines outlined.
The board also considered financing options, including local loans and state programs, to manage these expenses effectively.
The meeting discussed the financial and operational implications of replacing and maintaining firefighting equipment. Key points included the need to replace Engine 3001, which is over 30 years old, and the potential cost of $750,000.
The board considered hiring a third full-time staff member to support volunteers, estimating the annual cost at $130,000.
They also discussed the importance of community engagement and the potential impact on taxpayers.
The board agreed to finalize a detailed financial plan and prioritize vehicle replacements, with a focus on ensuring long-term sustainability and public support.

❖ **Next Meeting**:

Regular Board meeting Thursday September 17th 18:30. Location: Station 30, 119 NE Church Street White Salmon.

- ***"Motion to adjourn," made by David Lindley, seconded by Ben Giant*** *(4 in favor 0 opposed). Motion passed.*
  Meeting adjourned 11:30.

Minutes provided by R Plumb with some input from AI generated text.

APPROVED:

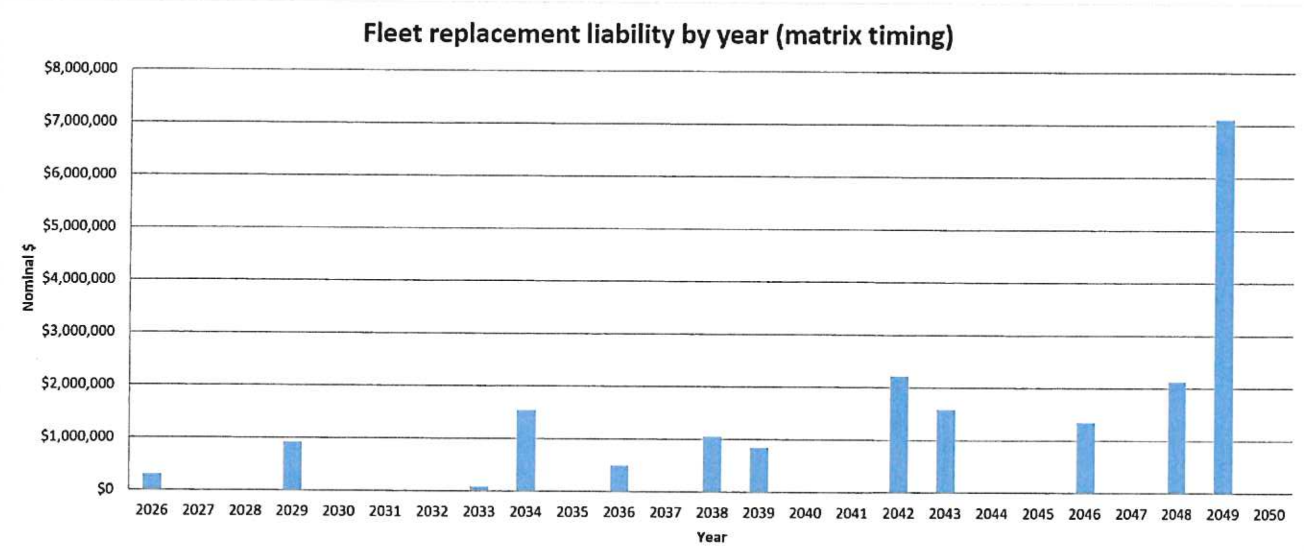
Thomas C Montag 9/17/20

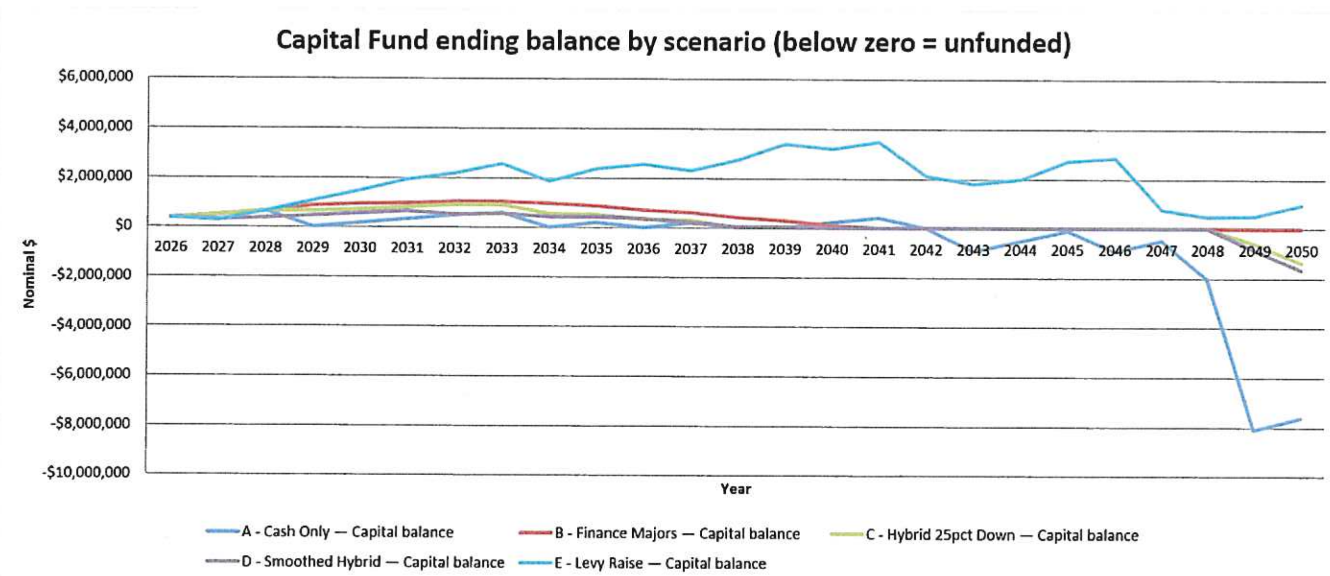
WKRFA Chair -Thomas Montag (date)

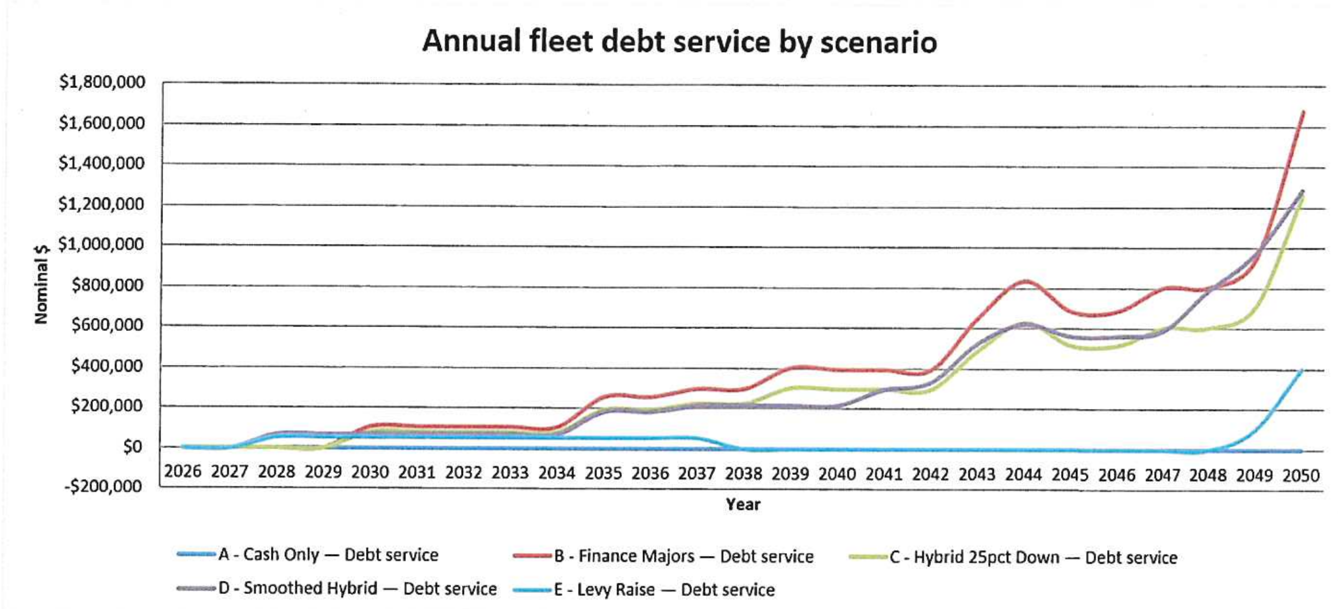
Attest:

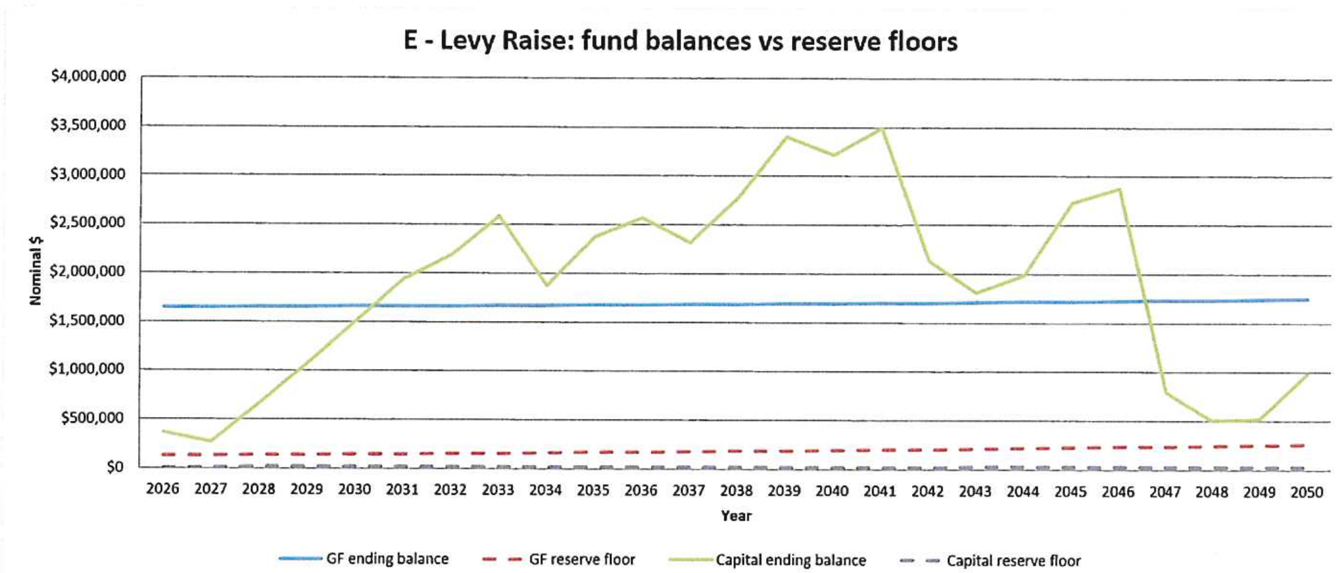
Administrative Manager - Rozalind Plumb

Charts selected from the WKRFA Fleet replacement Financial Analysis (version 9/12/2026)






Annual fleet debt service by scenario
$1,800,000
$1,600,000
$1,400,000
$1,200,000
$1,000,000
$800,000
$600,000
$400,000
$200,000
$0
-$200,000
Nominal $
2026 2027 2028 2029 2030 2031 2032 2033 2034 2035 2036 2037 2038 2039 2040 2041 2042 2043 2044 2045 2046 2047 2048 2049 2050
Year
A - Cash Only — Debt service
B - Finance Majors — Debt service
C - Hybrid 25pct Down — Debt service
D - Smoothed Hybrid — Debt service
E - Levy Raise — Debt service


E - Levy Raise: fund balances vs reserve floors
$4,000,000
$3,500,000
$3,000,000
$2,500,000
$2,000,000
$1,500,000
$1,000,000
$500,000
$0
Nominal $
2026 2027 2028 2029 2030 2031 2032 2033 2034 2035 2036 2037 2038 2039 2040 2041 2042 2043 2044 2045 2046 2047 2048 2049 2050
Year
GF ending balance
GF reserve floor
Capital ending balance
Capital reserve floor