



**Snohomish County Chiefs' Association**  
**Board Meeting**  
**1:00 p.m.**  
**September 28, 2022**

**PRESENT:**

Thad Hovis  
Dave Kraski  
Jim Haverfield  
Keith Strotz  
Eric Andrews  
Travis Hots  
Kevin O'Brien  
Don Waller  
Drew Bono  
Brad Reading  
Roger Vares  
Susan Bjorling

**President** South County Fire  
**Vice-President** North County Fire  
**Secretary/Treasurer** Snohomish County FPD 17  
**Medium Zone Representative** Snohomish County FPD 19  
Sky Valley Fire  
SCFD 22  
SRFR  
SCFD 4  
Darrington Fire District 24  
  
Everett Fire  
South County Fire

**A. Call to Order** Meeting called to order at 1306 hours.

**B. Adopt/Adjust Agenda** No adjustments to the agenda

**C. Minutes**

Action: A motion was made by Chief Kraski to approve the minutes. Chief Hovis seconded the motion. Minutes were unanimously approved.

**D. Old Business**

After a discussion it was determined that the general membership meetings will continue to be offered in a hybrid format via Zoom or in-person at Shawn O'Donnell's. Other locations will be scouted to see if they may be more well suited to the group.

**E. New Business**

**1. MPDS**

Chief Hovis has spoken with the county SCEMS Director who has not resigned but has indicated that he may be planning to depart. It may be wise to be prepared for him to vacate the position in quarter 4 of this year.

He's quite busy and may not be able to fully commit to continuing in the position.

**2. SCEMS 2023 Budget**

Roger Vares was asked by Chief DeMarco to hold off on hiring any additional positions for the time being.

Roger will be producing a carryover budget from 2022 into 2023. Rather than hiring an ESO/Data Manager, they will build that position into a larger system.

2022's budget was \$255k.

There are two agencies who will be withholding their funds from SCEMS until there is an MPD change.

Essentially, there will be two budgets submitted. One budget will be \$255k and one will be \$92k less than that. The total, should all agencies eventually contribute, will be \$255k.

Both of the above agencies stated they will submit the full amounts due once the MPD has been changed.

Should they opt to not contribute, SCEMS will operate on a smaller budget and not divide the shortfall between current members. Remaining agencies would not be asked to make up the difference.

Chief Andrews would prefer to operate at the full budget and not just accept a shortfall, even if his agency would have to pay more.

Roger Vares will take his proposal to the SCEMS Board the first week of October.

With the understanding that the SCEMS Board has not yet accepted the above-mentioned plan provided by Roger, the expectation of the Executive Board of the County Chiefs is that they will look at a budget plan approved and presented by the SCEMS Board.

Chief Kraski expressed that timelines are tight, and Chiefs will need to submit their budgets to the Boards soon.

Chief Waller, of one of the two agencies that has withheld funds, stated that his agency sent a letter in 2020 stating that they would contribute again when there was a "significant change" to SCEMS.

### **3. MPDS**

Chief Hovis has spoken with the county SCEMS Director who has not resigned but has indicated that he may be planning to depart. It may be wise to be prepared for him to vacate the position in quarter 4 of this year.

He's quite busy and may not be able to fully commit to continuing in the position.

### **4. NWIMT Letter of Support**

Chief Reading, Chief Andrews, Chief Bono

Chief Bono mentioned that equipment for the Northwest Incident Management Team needs maintenance, and the organization could benefit from the support of the County Chiefs.

Discussions have been had surrounding dissolving the team.

Recently, the County has had some need to use the equipment. Past conversations included discussions about selling the equipment and returning any funds to the member agencies, but that hasn't happened.

NWIMT would like to keep the equipment available and be able to provide incident management support to the area. Sky Valley Fire and FD24 would like to maintain the equipment and ensure that it's available. They will build a system that will allow the items to be utilized. There may be other entities that are interested in keeping the equipment as an option, but they have not been heard from, as of yet.

Chief Reading mentioned that the volunteers from Darrington donated many hours to the NWIMT and it would be a good idea to keep it in the area.

Chief Andrews would like to be sure the equipment is available to agencies when they need it.

Chief Bono reiterated that they are not attempting to take this equipment and gatekeep it, but they hope to keep it available to be used by area agencies at no cost.

Sky Valley and FD24 are willing to take on the costs associated. They're putting together a consortium based on interlocal agreements.

Chief Kraski inquired as to who holds the titles to the various pieces of equipment. Chief Bono stated that the equipment is registered to Northwest Incident Management and there is a Board affiliated with that organization.

Chief Bono mentioned that this will not be a money maker, but they would accept reimbursement, if available. Any such monies received would be used to reinvest in the equipment and its maintenance.

The money brought in through the original formation of the NWIMT will be divided and disbursed to the participating agencies.

Chief Hots stated that he fully supports Sky Valley and District 24 taking this equipment over and being the stewards.

Chief Bono clarified that the account affiliated with NWIMT contains approximately 150k. Chief Kraski asked if some of those funds could go toward maintenance. Chief Bono stated that he didn't believe all parties would be interested in using those funds for upkeep.

Chief Andrews mentioned that the DNR may assist with some of the maintenance costs.

Chief Hots made a motion to support the County Chiefs' Association on the proper, legal dissolution of the organization at the advice of legal counsel. Chief Kraski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chief Hovis reminded the group that there were five counties involved in the initial formation of the NWIMT. It may be prudent to investigate any potential legal

ramifications associated with the per capita funds having been contributed since 2007. Agencies, taxpayers and residents are stakeholders in all of this. Chief Hovis's main concern is that the assets and the funds in the account are addressed legally, in order to avoid any potential findings in a future audit. The interlocal agreement may address these issues through "successors and assignees," but it may be a good idea to investigate. A conversation with the general membership and a consultation with an attorney could be wise.

Chief Reading did confirm that Bill Franz, Chair of the NWIMT, has been working with Attorney Rich Davis on the dissolution.

Chief Bono will explore having a letter of support drafted. He and Chief Andrews will follow up with Chiefs Hovis and Kraski.

#### **5. SCFCA E-mail Distribution Groups**

With the departure of the administrative personnel at SCEMS over the summer of 2022, there was some confusion regarding the email distribution groups and who is accessing/managing them.

These lists will now be managed via the SCFCA website by webmaster Leonard Boche of Northwest Business Services.

#### **6. SCEMS Update**

Jennifer Russell, who has been contracted to work as the administrator of SCEMS, has been experiencing some frustration surrounding the SCFCA affiliation with SCEMS and the MPD. As a contracted employee with SCEMS it was deemed appropriate that Chief Kraski present her statement on her behalf.

Chief Hots sought clarification to be sure that none of the issues raised by Ms. Russell are ethical or could potentially be a liability for the group in the future. Chief Kraski stated that the concerns are based on workflow and processes.

#### **F. Committee Updates**

Chief Hots stated that the Board needs to accept nominations for VP and Treasurer/Secretary at the next meeting.

Large agency reps can be nominated by any large agency personnel and any large agency personnel will be able to vote.

Chief Haverfield reminded the group that they will be heading to Sound Credit to sign signature cards to complete the process of establishing the SCFCA bank accounts. The appropriate parties will head to the Credit Union after the General membership meeting to be held on Monday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**G. Announcements/Good of the Order**

**H. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 0201 hours. The motion was made by Chief Hovis and was seconded by Chief Kraski.

**Minutes prepared and submitted by: Susan Bjorling**  
Executive Assistant, Office of the Fire Chief  
South County Fire

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 26, 2022**  
**1:00 pm**

**Attachments:**  
**Email request – letter of support for NWIMT**



Date: September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022

To: NWIMT Board of Directors  
From: Fire Chief Eric Andrews and Interim Fire Chief Drew Bono  
Re: IMT Equipment Succession

NWIMT Board of Directors,

As you are aware, the Northwest Region is currently facing multiple wildfires that are actively impacting our communities. The Bolt Creek Fire (9,440 acres) is currently impacting communities served by Sky Valley Fire. The Suiattle River, Lake Toketie, and Boulder Lake Fires (1,184 combined acres) is impacting the Darrington community.

All these fires have resulted in increased risk to responding firefighters, both internal to our agencies as well as to the firefighters who have responded to provide aid to our communities. Incident managers assigned to these fires have experienced significant challenges in fulfilling logistical support needs.

During the critical initial attack stages of the Bolt Creek Fire, firefighters experienced considerable challenge in radio communications. Snohomish and King County firefighters were working on 800mhz radios where Skykomish and Chelan County firefighters operated on VHF. Command staff was forced to use two or three radios at the same time to maintain continuity in communication. This posed a substantial safety risk our firefighters. Even after the initial attack phase, the first-arriving IMT was unable to receive many of the ordered logistical needs.

What is concerning to us is that much, if not all, of what we needed would have been provided should the NWIMT bus and trailers be allowed to respond. This would have provided for safer and more effective incident communications and management. However, this equipment was not available for response due to the board action placing the NWIMT equipment unavailable due to the pending dissolution.

We believe that our communities have been done a disservice by not allowing this equipment to be used as intended. Further, both of our agencies have provided proposals to NWIMT to allow for the equipment to continue to be available response assets. We have not been provided a response from NWIMT to either of our proposals.

Our agencies recognize the vital need of supporting quality and capable incident management in our region and we have a track record of doing so. As such, we are developing a partnership based on inter-local agreement between our entities to fill the void that the dissolution of NWIMT has left.

We are formally proposing to that the NWIMT recognize the importance of ensuring this equipment is made available again by allowing our consortium to become the succeeding entity to take care of the



trailers, bus, and associated equipment. We are committed to ensuring that this equipment is put back into service immediately and is maintained and improved well into the future.

In return of taking on the added responsibility of the equipment, we will ensure that it will be made available throughout the Northwest region and beyond at no cost to local agencies for all non-reimbursable incidents requiring an IMT.

This will ensure that our constituency, region-wide, continues to be able to enjoy the capabilities of having a strong logistical capability at no cost in the same spirit that NWIMT was founded upon in 2007.

Most of the work completed to prepare the NWIMT equipment was provided by volunteers of our agencies. Storage of the equipment over the years has been provided at no cost to the NWIMT.

We believe that this is a fair option for NWIMT that most importantly ensures that what happened over the last week will not happen again to any other communities in critical need.

Please contact any of us if you have any questions.

Submitted respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Eric Andrews'.

**Eric Andrews, Fire Chief**  
Sky Valley Fire  
Phone: 425-356-7373  
Email: eandrews@skyvalleyfire.org

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Drew Bono'.

**Drew Bono, Interim Fire Chief**  
Darrington Fire District 24  
Phone: 360-913-5003  
Email: dbono@darringtonfire.org