

Whatcom County Fire District #5

Point Roberts Fire Department

2030 Benson Road, Suite A
Point Roberts, Washington, 98281

Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners
July 24th, 2026

MINUTES

In Attendance: Commissioner Virginia Lester
Commissioner Pat Harper
Commissioner Ray Smith
Chief Christopher Carleton
District Secretary Linda Hughes

Guests: Richard & Gina Fiorelli
Assistant Chief John Shields
Islena Faircrest

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm by Commissioner Lester.

B. RESIGNATION OF DISTRICT LEGAL COUNSEL and EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

Chief Carleton reported that this Special Meeting has been called to discuss the replacement of legal counsel, and the matters of emergency communications.

He continued that the EMS communications in Whatcom County typically includes Point Roberts. He offered some background on the 2015 implementation, in partnership with Whidbey Telecom, of our own EMS radio dispatch system to help alleviate the often unreliable, and spotty communication problems plaguing the district, and noted that this is the system that has been working well for us for about a decade.

Chief continued that the County is looking to integrate all tower communications, but he did not want to sign on to that integration agreement because he was not willing to give up the system that has proven to be effective for this community.

FARS intends to take over all communications and offered to build Point Roberts infrastructure for free, but with regular usage fees.

Commissioner Smith asked Chief Carleton if FARS could guarantee serviceability of the new system 24/7 365 would you have signed onto it? Chief answered that he would not want to give up control of our infrastructure that we know works well for this community.

FARS then refused to enter into an interlocal agreement with WCFD5 due to our position that we do not want to give up control of our infrastructure. Chief added that we therefore have essentially been kicked out of the system. He added that Whatcom County Sheriff's office is implementing their own system and allowing WCFD5 to piggyback on it.

The resignation of the legal counsel is related because that firm is working on this, so there is a conflict of interest in continuing to represent WCFD5. However, they did recommend a few other firms as replacement and Chief Carleton is in the process of interviewing them. He will report again when a new firm agrees to represent WCFD5. He hopes to have a new firm engaged by the August regular meeting.

Chief is seeking permission from the Board to vet and engage a new firm for legal representation.

Commissioners Lester and Smith both commented that it seems prudent to act on this matter as quickly as possible to rectify being without legal counsel.

MOTION: Commissioner Smith moved that the Board approve Chief Carleton's request to seek and retain new legal counsel, at his sole discretion, based on his knowledge and experience, at the very earliest convenience. Commissioner Harper **SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION PASSED 3 - 0**

Chief Carleton added that future technology may affect our communications, but for now he feels we should retain control of our infrastructure because that is what is working.

He noted that FARS will be discussing the issue of Point Roberts at a Special Meeting in mid or late August.

C. ADJOURNMENT

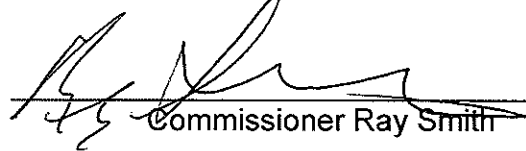
As there was no further business, Commissioner Smith moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:42 pm. Commissioner Harper seconded the motion. **Motion passed 3 – 0.**

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners will be August 12th, 2026, at 4:00 pm.



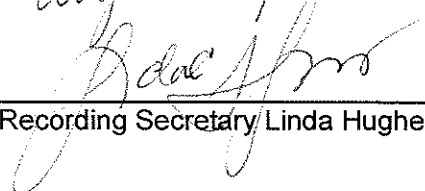
Commissioner Virginia Lester

Commissioner Pat Harper



Commissioner Ray Smith

Dated August 12 / 26

Attest: 
Recording Secretary Linda Hughes