



Safeguarding lives, property, and the environment through prevention, education, and emergency response.

BASIC FIRE COMMISSIONER INFORMATION

The Bainbridge Island Fire Department (BIFD) serves approximately 25,000 residents of Bainbridge Island as well as the more than 8,000 commuters using the Washington State Ferry system daily.

The BIFD utilizes a combination of volunteer and career Firefighter/EMT's to provide:

- Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- Fire Fighting
- Marine Response
- Technical Rescue
- Emergency Preparedness
- Public Safety Education
- Fire Prevention

The BIFD is governed by an elected five member Board of Fire Commissioners. Regular public meetings are held the second and fourth Thursday of every month at 4:30 PM.

Attached are excerpts from the Washington Fire Commissioners Association Handbook dated January, 2024 outlining roles and responsibilities of the Commissioners.

PLEASE NOTE: All Commissioners are required to provide a financial disclosure statement to the Public Disclosure Commission. Use this link for additional information: <https://www.pdc.wa.gov/learn/new-candidates>. Additional information about the Bainbridge Island Fire Department can be found on our website, www.bifd.org.



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Excerpts from the Washington Fire Commissioners Association Handbook

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ROLE.

The board of commissioners, consisting of five elected individuals, is responsible for governing the operations of the District. The board will generally be responsible for the following areas:

1. Determining levels of service and establishing goals.
2. Determining type and level of funding, approve budgets, tax levies.
3. Establishing policies and approve operational procedures.
4. Employing key personnel, supervising chief.
5. Guiding strategic planning.
6. Representing District to public.

A COMMISSIONER'S ROLE.

As an individual commissioner you have no individual authority to operate a fire protection district. Instead, individual commissioners have the following responsibilities:

1. Attend meetings of the board of commissioners.
2. Educate yourself to understand the history of your District, the laws governing the operation of the District and your role in governing the District.
3. Actively participate in the governance of the District by working with the board of commissioners in open public meetings.
4. Understand and comply with all ethics laws.
5. Act as a representative of your District with a professional demeanor.
6. Avoid any attempts to unilaterally direct staff members or micromanage the staff. The board of commissioners runs the District through the Chief, individual commissioners do not, and should not, attempt to run the District.
7. Represent all constituents and avoid special interests.
8. Maintain confidentiality of privileged or private District records and information.

REQUIREMENTS FOR OFFICE.

To serve as a commissioner of a fire protection district you must be a registered voter residing within boundaries of the District.

OATH OF OFFICE.

You must take an official oath as a condition of taking office. The oath must be taken before a notary, signed and filed with County Auditor.



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I, _____ do solemnly swear that I will faithfully and impartially discharge the duties of this office as prescribed by law and to the best of my ability, and that I will support and maintain the Constitution of the State of Washington and of the United States of America.

You are also required to register with the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission.

TERM OF OFFICE.

Commissioners are elected to six-year terms. Elections are held in odd numbered years. (Note, the current vacancy will be filled in the November 2025 election.)

VACANCIES - CREATION.

A vacancy may be created in a number of situations including resignation, conviction of a felony, death, a commissioner moving out of the District, or a commissioner's residence being annexed into an adjacent city. A vacancy may also be created when a commissioner misses, without permission from the board, three consecutive regular meetings when a formal notice procedure is followed. (RCW 52.14.050)

VACANCIES - FILLING.

If two or more board members remain, the board members have 90 days to fill the vacancy. If not filled within 90 days or only a single board member remains, the County legislative authority fills the vacancy. Individuals appointed to fill a vacancy serve until a new commissioner is elected at the next commissioner election (odd years). The person elected then serves the remainder of the term of that commissioner position.

MANDATORY COMMISSIONER TRAINING REQUIREMENTS.

Every commissioner or member of an RFA governing board is required by statute to engage in Public Records Act, Open Public Meetings Act and record retention training. The training must occur no later than ninety days after the commissioner has taken the oath of office and the training must be completed at least once every four years thereafter. The Washington State Fire Commissioners Association regularly offers the training and can also assist in locating appropriate training from other sources.



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CHAIRPERSONS ROLE.

The Chairperson continues to vote, make motions and participate in discussions in the same manner as the other commissioners. In addition, the chair has the specific statutory authority to:

1. Preside over and conduct meetings.
2. Announce executive sessions.
3. Call special meetings.

QUORUM.

A meeting of the board of commissioners only occurs when a quorum of the members is present. A quorum of commissioners is required for the board of commissioners to take action. If a quorum of commissioners is present, any discussion of District business must comply with the open public meetings act. A quorum in a five-member board is three commissioners.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT.

All meetings of a quorum of commissioners must be held in Conformity with the Open Public Meetings Act. The Act broadly defines meeting to include the transaction of the official business of the board including but not limited to "receipt of public testimony, deliberations, discussions, considerations, reviews, evaluations and final actions."

PER DIEM.

RCW 52.14.010. Commissioners are entitled to \$161.00 (as adjusted by inflation every five years with the next adjustment occurring January 1, 2029) per day for attending board meetings "or in performance of other services or duties on behalf of the district." The determination of what constitutes district business and "other services or duties" should be determined by policy of the board of commissioners. The statute places an annual cap of \$15,456.00 (96 days) on the amount of per diem that a commissioner may receive. A commissioner may waive all or a part of his or her right to receive the per diem if the waiver is made in writing, in advance of earning the per diem.