

**OLYMPIA TUMWATER REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING**  
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**CONVENE:** 5:31 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Chair/City of Tumwater Councilmember Leatta Dahlhoff, Vice Chair/Olympia Councilmember Y  n Hu  nh, Tumwater Councilmember Michael Althaus, Olympia Councilmembers Jim Cooper, Tumwater Councilmember Eileen Swarthout, Olympia Councilmember Lisa Parshley. Tumwater Fire Chief Brian Hurley, Tumwater Fire Union Representative/ Paramedic Lieutenant James Osberg, Olympia Interim Fire Chief Todd Carson, and Olympia Fire Union Representative/Firefighter Steven Busz.

Staff: Tumwater City Administrator John Doan, Olympia City Manager Jay Burney, Olympia City Attorney Mark Barber, and Tumwater Fire Department Administrative Assistant Erika Stone.

Others: Karen Meyer, The Athena Group; Karen Reed, RFA Consultant; Bill Cushman, Fiscal Analyst; and Neil Blindheim, FBC Consultant.

**WELCOME,** Chair Dahlhoff welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**AGENDA:** There were no changes to the agenda.

**SCHEDULE** Ms. Meyer shared a current copy of the schedule.

**REVIEW:** Ms. Reed reported the committee is tentatively scheduled to approve the Regional Fire Authority (RFA) Plan later in the meeting. The unions are scheduled to review the Plan on October 12, 2022.

City Manager Burney reported the councils are scheduled to meet jointly on October 25, 2022 at the City of Olympia Council Chambers. The councils will review plan elements and the recommendation by the committee to afford an opportunity for both councils to discuss and ask questions. The meeting is tentatively scheduled to begin at 5:00 p.m.

Ms. Reed advised of the need to schedule a public meeting hearing prior to the councils rendering final action on the RFA Plan. The proposal is to schedule a public hearing on November 14, 2022 hosted by the RFA Planning Committee.

Fire Lieutenant Osberg inquired on the status of the October 20, 2022 town hall meeting. City Manager Burney responded that he plans to discuss whether another town hall meeting would be scheduled. Fire Lieutenant Osberg noted that the meeting is posted online with an invitation for the public to attend. Ms. Meyer and Ms. Reed offered to follow-up on the status of the meeting.

**FIRE BENEFIT** Ms. Reed referred members to another Fire Benefit Charge (FBC) option  
**CHARGE (FBC)** incorporating all the elements from Option A with lower weights for smaller  
**FOLLOW UP:** residential homes and small commercial properties. The formula reflects a revised cost per gallon reflective of the \$10.5 million collection target. She asked members to focus on the comparison of the example costs when the FBC

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was first introduced to the current iteration.

Ms. Reed reviewed formula options considered by the committee to date. The committee started the process with a target of collecting \$13.5 million and learned property valuations had increased substantially dropping the target to \$10.5 million. Sprinkler data was subsequently added to the database. In Option 1, the FBC is distributed proportionately to the square footage of each building class, e.g., 66% of total square footage is single-family residential so single-family residential pays approximately the same percentage of the FBC. Option 1-A includes residential sprinkler data. Revenue lost to sprinkler discounts shifted to residential properties resulting in a slight increase in the Residential Building Class Weight, increasing to .582 from the original .58. Option 2 reflects an increase in the number of collections from the commercial sector by 6% and reduced collections from the residential sector by 6%. Option 3 divides residential into three classes with weights increasing with square footage. Breakpoints are at 2,000 and 3,000 square feet. Residential and Commercial shares are the same as Option 2 (+/- 6% over Option 1-A). Option 3-A is the same as Option 3 with a lower FBC collection amount and elimination of the fee for mobile homes. Option 3-B is the same as Option 3-A except for slightly lower weights for residential tier 1 and commercial tier 1. Option 4 reflects a major reduction for small residential (1,500 square feet maximum) and small commercial (1,000 square feet maximum). The total residential share is lowered by 8% and commercial share increased by 8% as compared to Option 1-A.

Ms. Reed reviewed tables reflecting the cost for each use category under each option. The FBC has reduced significantly for residential uses since the first calculations considered by the committee; however, the option currently under consideration reflects higher numbers in commercial use categories, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Ms. Reed requested feedback on proposed Option 3-B and whether the option should be included in the RFA Plan.

Char Dahlhoff noted that at the last meeting, the majority of voting members supported Option 3-A; however at the request of the committee, the consultant team reviewed, recalculated, and modified Option 3-B. She asked for input on the option to move forward. Ms. Reed noted the figures in Option 3-A as reflected are not accurate and do not account for adjustments in commercial classes and the cost per gallon to reflect the new FBC collection amount.

*Councilmembers Cooper and Parshley joined the meeting.*

Members provided feedback and unanimously supported Option 3-B.

**REVIEW DRAFT** Ms. Reed referred to an updated draft of the RFA Plan reflecting all recent

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**RFA PLAN:** changes. She asked members to review four policy points for any possible revisions:

- FBC formula (as approved earlier by committee)
- Personnel – Interim Selections: Interim Fire Chief Brian Hurley; Interim Deputy Chief, Operations Todd Carson; and Interim Chief, Support Services Mike Buchanan
- Administration Systems & Leadership: Systems and leadership positions in place by early spring 2023 if RFA is approved by voters with costs shared by the two cities based on size of city (2/3-Olympia & 1/3-Tumwater). *Mr. Barber later clarified that the Plan does not designate the positions of Human Resources Director and Finance Director as interim positions.*
- Titles of fire stations were changed to reflect right of first refusal when no longer used for fire purposes and that the parties could negotiate on the terms.

Discussion ensued on the assignments of interim chiefs. Fire Chief Hurley described the discussions between him and interim Fire Chief Carson about the roles to fill and each individual's interests. Subsequent discussions occurred with deputy and assistant chiefs of both agencies with the selections unanimously supported reflective of each individual's interests and strengths. City Manager Burney added that all chief positions are interim at this time and nothing precludes the future RFA Board from rendering different selections. When the RFA is approved, the organization will have interim personnel in the top chief positions to move the organization forward and provide direction to fire personnel.

Each member individually affirmed support of the proposed draft RFP Plan.

Discussion followed on next steps and the meeting schedule. Fire representatives Osberg and Busz affirmed sufficient information was available to present the RFA Plan to union membership on October 12, 2022. Members agreed to cancel the October 17, 2022 meeting.

Ms. Reed said she would follow up on the schedule for the October 20, 2022 Town Hall meeting.

Members thanked and acknowledged the leadership and the efforts of Chair Dahlhoff, staff, and the consultant team.

**ADJOURNMENT:** **With there being no further business, Chair Dahlhoff adjourned the meeting at 6:37 p.m.**