

OLYMPIA TUMWATER REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING

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CONVENE: 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair/City of Tumwater Councilmember Leatta Dahlhoff, Vice Chair/Olympia Councilmember Yén Huỳnh, Tumwater Councilmember Michael Althaus, Olympia Councilmember Jim Cooper, Olympia Councilmember Lisa Parshley, Fire Union Representative/Firefighter Erin Johnson (for Steven Busz), Tumwater Fire Union Representative/Paramedic Lieutenant James Osberg), Tumwater Fire Chief Brian Hurley, and Olympia Deputy Fire Chief Todd Carson (for Fire Chief Mark John).

Excused: Tumwater Councilmember Eileen Swarthout.

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

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

WELCOME: Chair Dahlhoff welcomed everyone to the meeting.

FEEDBACK FROM CITY COUNCIL PRESENTATIONS: Members provided feedback on the outcome of each presentation of the committee's progress to the Olympia and Tumwater City Councils:

Olympia City Council:

- Some inquires about maintaining levels of service, keeping pace with growth, and ensuring fire investments match growth rates
- Questions on the process for tracking values and principles
- The Council continues to be excited about the efforts
- The level of detail provided to the Council was just right and received media coverage

Tumwater City Council:

- Similar perceptions by the Council as Olympia in terms of the logical format of the presentation highlighting the problem statement, goals to achieve, and vehicles for achieving the desired outcome
- Some questions pertained to the funding mechanism and how it affects existing property tax for fire
- Questions as to implementation of the RFA from a human resources perspective
- Ensure ongoing communication with firefighters who have questions.

NEXT STEPS – INITIAL City Administrator Doan updated members on the status of the Thursday,

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**PUBLIC OUTREACH
SESSIONS:**

May 19, 2022 town hall virtual meeting at 6 p.m. A copy of the virtual meeting script was shared with members. Committee members are invited to attend but are not scheduled to present information. Olympia Councilmember YẾN Huỳnh offered to provide welcoming comments. City Administrator Doan encouraged the attendance of fire union representatives. The committee is scheduled to review the final script at its next meeting.

**PRESENTATION/
DISCUSSION:
GOVERNANCE
OPTIONS:**

Ms. Reed led a discussion on the first of a series of discussions to develop a set of proposals to present to the councils. The first proposal is on governance of the RFA. She referred to previous data and information on governance. Based on the timing of August 23, 2002 as the effective date of the RFA, the primary election in 2025 would be the date of the election for fire commissioners if the governance structure is elected versus appointed members.

Ms. Reed recapped some of the basic rules of governance the committee previously reviewed on elected versus appointed board (cannot be mixed), number of members (no legal limit but consider practical limit), term limits (staggered), and responsibilities and authorities of the board.

Member feedback and recommendations included:

- Add timing for the start-up process (negotiations and contracting between the two cities)
- Consider the board's responsibility to negotiate the RFA labor contract and consider the timing of that action
- The board should manage the finances of the RFA
- The RFA Plan includes recommendations on staffing and financing
- Important for boardmembers/commissioners to understand the fire service and industry standards
- Consider future visionary efforts for increasing services and securing funds to fill gaps in service
- Ensure RFA Board collaborates and works well with other regional RFAs and fire districts
- Ensure board's transparency to the community
- Ensure continuation of outreach to the community

Members offered feedback on potential conflicts between the future RFA and the cities:

- Consider potential conflict in interactions with police and public works. Important to continue seamless process in existence today.
- Consider role of RFA with respect to crisis response and mental health service delivery in the community
- Continuance of oversight on plan review for new building permits, street design, and density

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- Fire inspections
- Consider RFA's role in ongoing council conversations on public safety
- Ensure RFA is part of the community, participates in events, and creates activities engaging the community
- Ensure RFA is represented in other governmental entities within the region
- Consider timing of ballot measures to avoid conflicts with other local ballot measures
- Ensure smooth transition for transferring facilities, capital, and satisfying existing loans

Member input on the composition of the initial start-up board (2.5 years) included:

- Consider even number of members to ensure equal representation by each city
- Consider continuing current RFA Planning Committee structure as board structure of new RFA
- Consider number of members from each council with respect to what constitutes a quorum for each council
- Prefer two elected officials from each council
- Support for inclusion of labor representation

ACTION:
JURISDICTIONAL
BOUNDARIES OF RFA:

Ms. Reed reviewed proposed language for inclusion in the RFA Plan on jurisdictional boundaries on date of formation and any changes in jurisdictional boundaries after formation of the RFA.

The committee supported the following language:

A. JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES ON DATE OF FORMATION

1. On the Effective Date of the RFA, the jurisdictional boundaries of the RFA shall be the legal boundaries of the Participating Jurisdictions --- the City of Olympia and the City of Tumwater.

B. CHANGES IN JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES AFTER FORMATION OF THE RFA

1. Boundary changes that do not require an RFA Plan amendment:

1.1. City annexations of areas not included within current city boundaries. On the effective date of such annexation, the territory annexed shall automatically be included within the boundaries of the RFA pursuant to RCW 52.26.290. The territory added to the RFA by such annexation shall be subject to the taxation, charges, and bonded indebtedness (if approved as part of the annexation process) of the RFA.

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Any transfer of assets or employees that occurs because of annexation shall be between the transferring entity and the RFA.

1.2. RFA Annexations. Pursuant to RCW 52.26.090(g), the RFA shall have the authority to conduct annexations of unincorporated territory adjacent to the RFA pursuant to the statutory authority and procedures set forth in RCW 52.04.001 through RCW 52.04.051.

1.3. RFA Partial Mergers. Pursuant to RCW 52.26.090(g), the RFA shall have the authority to participate in the partial merger process under the authority and pursuant to the procedures set forth in RCW 52.06.090 and RCW 52.06.100.

2. Boundary Changes that require an RFA Plan Amendment.

2.1. Annexations of Adjacent Fire Protection Jurisdictions [including cities or fire districts in proximity to the RFA's boundaries]. Other fire protection jurisdictions that are adjacent to the boundaries of the RFA are eligible for annexation by the RFA. Upon Plan amendment and voter approval as provided in the annexation procedures of RCW 52.26.300, the boundary of the RFA will be expanded to include adjacent fire protection jurisdictions.

**PRESENTATION/
DISCUSSION: SERVICE
LEVEL
RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR RFA PLAN**

**TARGET: MAINTAIN
AND ENHANCE
CURRENT LEVEL OF
SERVICE
&
ISSUES/OPTIONS:**

Tumwater Fire Chief Hurley and Olympia Deputy Fire Chief Carson presented information on current service levels, staffing, and call volume statistics for each department.

Questions to consider for future needs to maintain service levels with projected population growth are based on existing conditions:

- Both agencies experience response times exceeding stated goals and trends are indicative of an increasing volume of calls and population. Tumwater anticipates more planning and updating standards of cover policies and procedures to establish distribution and concentration of fixed and mobile resources.
- The City of Olympia continuously reviews data points for each station to assess the utilization of existing resources.
- An ambulance transport proposal was presented to the Olympia Finance Committee to address response time issues. The proposal expands the existing Fire Department CARES .25 FTE position. The position's success rate reflects a 77% decrease in the 911 system when the CARES specialist contacts individuals with non-emergent needs but are higher users of the 911 system. The Finance Committee recommended approval of both proposals to the Olympia City Council.
- Tumwater's Strategic Goals include interest in exploring the CARES programs and BLS transport for the City.

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- Tumwater's goal is to staff its battalion unit full-time to address issues of on-scene incident command.

Next steps include developing recommendations on resources required to maintain service levels and a proposal for service enhancements.

Member comments included:

- A request for more trend data on call volume per population for cardiac save rates, response times, and the availability of BLS transport for the last 10 years in one graph.
- Consider incorporating data in the graph of southeast Olympia under the assumption that the City annexes that area.

**WORK PLAN
OUTLINE:**

Ms. Reed referred to an updated version of the work plan and information on RFA commissioner salaries.

**ACTION AND
QUESTION LOG:**

Ms. Meyer referred to updated talking points for members.

The meeting packet includes the action/decision log reflecting a change in the format.

ADJOURNMENT:

With there being no further business, Chair Dahlhoff adjourned the meeting at 6:42 p.m.

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President
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