

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 Councilmembers Jim Cooper, Tumwater Councilmember Eileen Swarthout, Olympia Councilmember Lisa Parshley, and Olympia Interim Fire Chief Todd Carson.

Excused: Tumwater Fire Chief Brian Hurley, Tumwater Fire Union Representative/Paramedic Lieutenant James Osberg, 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; and Neil Blindheim, FBC Consultant.

WELCOME AND AGENDA REVIEW: Chair Dahlhoff welcomed everyone to the meeting.

There were no changes to the agenda.

DECEMBER 6, 2022 COUNCILS ACTION, BALLOT TITLE AND LANGUAGE REVIEW: Ms. Meyer reviewed the meeting agenda. City Administrator Doan reported on each Council's approval of the joint resolution to place the Regional Fire Authority proposal on the April 2023 ballot. The City of Tumwater filed the RFP Plan with the Thurston County Treasurer's Office.

City Attorney Barber reported the joint resolution has not been filed with the Thurston County Auditor's Office at this time; however, he anticipates filing the resolution by the end of the week when the Auditor's Office has released the 2023 elections schedule.

City Manager Burney reported the joint resolution authorizes the RFA Planning Committee to remain in place and continue its work.

Chair Dahlhoff referred to public testimony offered by former Tumwater Mayor Pete Kmet and his recommended edits to the ballot measure. She asked about the process for considering Mr. Kmet's suggestions.

City Administrator Doan advised that Mr. Kmet suggested including a cap on the amount of the fire benefit charge (FBC). Staff discussed the suggestion and agreed a cap on the FBC runs the risk of creating the same problems encountered today with the 1% property tax limitation and it would limit the RFA's ability to adapt to changing conditions in the future.

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City Attorney Barber reviewed election dates. The resolution must be filed with the Thurston County Auditor's Office by February 24, 2023. Other election dates in 2023 have not been published by the Auditor's Office. The Auditor's Office is currently working on the election schedule and indicated the schedule would be published soon. Additional dates are included on the schedule to meet specific submittal requirements. One example is a date the committee is required to submit appointments to the pro and con committees. The Planning Committee must make the appointments by resolution. By law, the Planning Committee is not required to appoint existing members of the committee to oppose the ballot measure as the appointment can be made by the County Auditor by advertising the position. Another task by the committee is to ensure all steps are followed in a timely manner. An update on the timeline of activities will be provided after the Elections Division for the County Auditor has published the schedule.

City Administrator Doan advised that he believes some individuals are in the process of establishing a pro committee.

Councilmember Parshley recommended correcting the date for registering to vote within the committee's materials.

Ms. Reed reviewed a list of required actions to complete in January 2023. The committee is recommended to conduct a second public hearing on the FBC on January 9, 2023. The meeting notice indicates the meeting will be at Olympia City Hall beginning at 5:30 p.m.

City Manager Burney updated members on the status of completing the FBC calculator. The FBC calculator is scheduled for release in time for the January 9, 2023 public hearing.

Mr. Blindheim noted that he discovered miscoding of 150 parcels as apartments that should be corrected to reflect residential units.

Discussion ensued on the updated release of parcel data by Thurston County to include new construction. Staff agreed to pursue discussions offline on the possibility of incorporating updated parcel data from the county within the FBC calculator.

In response to questions about the scheduling of the public hearing, City Attorney Barber outlined the required timing of the hearing on the FBC to meet RCW requirements. The public hearing topic is limited to the FBC. Additionally, as the county has not published the schedule for other required deadlines, the date to submit a resolution of appointments to pro and con committees is uncertain at this time and will be shared after publication of the county's calendar. Members of the committee who are aware of individuals interested in serving on either committee can submit nominations for those individuals at that time.

City Attorney Barber described the functions of the pro and con committees, appointment process, opportunity to issue a rebuttal statement

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by each committee, and how information on the committee's process and requirements are provided to each member at the time of appointment.

**OVERVIEW OF
PUBLIC EDUCATION
PLAN:**

City Manager Burney reviewed the proposed public education plan:

- Update Website
- Inclusion of FBC Calculator
- Informational flyer mailed
- Councils' consideration of resolution in support of measure in mid-January (proposed date: January 17, 2023 for both Councils)
- Offer educational presentations by the Fire Chiefs to community and civic groups (some Public Disclosure Commission restrictions will be reviewed with Fire Chiefs)

Members were encouraged to offer information on community groups to contact for an informational presentation.

FBC CALCULATOR:

Previously addressed.

**RFA 2023
COMMITTEE TASKS:**

Ms. Reed outlined upcoming committee tasks:

- January 9, 2023 Public Hearing on Fire Benefit Charge
- Appointment of Pro and Con Committee Members
- City Clerks to publicize applications for both committees
- Track public outreach efforts
- Track start-up activities if RFA is approved by voters

**ESTABLISH 2023 RFA
PLANNING
COMMITTEE
MEETING DATES:**

Ms. Reed reviewed proposed meeting dates:

- January 9, 2023 (Public Hearing)
- February pro and con committee appointments
- Once per month thereafter

Staff was asked to change the January 9, 2023 public hearing start time from 5:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Ms. Reed confirmed the January 9, 2023 agenda would include scheduling committee meetings in 2023.

ADJOURNMENT:

With there being no further business, Chair Dahlhoff adjourned the meeting at 6:11 p.m.