

**TUMWATER PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
MARCH 12, 2024 Page 1**

CONVENE: 8:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Chair Peter Agabi and Councilmembers Leatta Dahlhoff and Kelly Von Holtz.

Staff: City Administrator Lisa Parks, City Attorney Karen Kirkpatrick, Finance Director Troy Niemeyer, Fire Chief Brian Hurley, Police Chief Jon Weiks, Police Commander Jay Mason, Assistant Fire Chief Shawn Crimmins, Communications Manager Ann Cook, and Police Administrative Supervisor Laura Wohl.

**APPROVAL OF
MINUTES:**

**DECEMBER 12, 2023 &
JANUARY 9, 2024:**

MOTION: **Councilmember Dahlhoff moved, seconded by Councilmember Von Holtz, to approve the minutes of December 12, 2023 and January 9, 2024 as published. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

**FIRE MOBILIZATION
INTERAGENCY
AGREEMENT WITH
THE WASHINGTON
STATE PATROL:**

Fire Chief Hurley briefed members on the proposed Fire Mobilization Interagency Agreement with the Washington State Patrol.

Fire services in Washington maintain a fire mobilization plan to provide a mechanism for resources to respond to fires, disasters, and other large-scale events that cannot be handled by a single agency. The agreement is primarily used for wildfires. Previously, the agreement was expanded for other types of disasters, such as the landslide in Oso. The first plan was adopted in 1993 following fires in Spokane. The agreement has been updated periodically based on lessons learned.

The agreement provides for reimbursement to the City. The agreement is with the Washington State Patrol as the State Fire Marshal's Office operates under the Washington State Patrol. When assets are mobilized during a state-approved mobilization, it is possible for participating agencies to receive reimbursement. Each year, the State Fire Marshal's Office works with the Washington Fire Chiefs Association to develop a reimbursement schedule.

The proposed action is a renewal of an existing agreement effective through 2029.

Tumwater has not historically participated in statewide mobilizations. A number of fire agencies in Thurston County have participated. The limitation for the City is because of staffing making it difficult to send personnel and apparatus out of the area for response. In some cases,

**TUMWATER PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
MARCH 12, 2024 Page 2**

the response could be up to two weeks. The Fire Department has actively enhanced wildland fire fighting training. As training occurs and staffing and equipment permit, the Fire Department may participate in mobilizations in the future. The Fire Department also has participated in Rescue Emergency Support Module (REMS) deployments. A Paramedic Firefighter participates and supports firefighters. The Paramedic received training in specialized rescue techniques.

The agreement applies to large incidents in Thurston County, such as the previous fires in Thurston County. Any mobilization and resources provided by the City would be under the agreement. Any declared mobilization would enable the City to receive reimbursement for costs incurred.

Staff requests the committee place the Fire Mobilization Interagency Agreement with the Washington State Patrol on the March 19, 2024, City Council consent calendar with a recommendation to approve and authorize the Mayor to sign the agreement.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked whether the Amtrak train derailment near the City of DuPont included mobilization by the Tumwater Fire Department. Fire Chief Hurley said the response by Tumwater was under a mutual aid agreement despite the incident occurring in Pierce County. That incident did not trigger a statewide mobilization response. He cited some large fires occurring in the state. The most recent fire invoking response was the Goat Rocks Fire in Lewis County that resulted in a large mobilization in September 2022. Fire Chief Hurley added that the department's Training Officer participates as a member of the Thurston County Special Operations Rescue Team (SORT). He participated in the Oso landslide event.

MOTION:

Councilmember Dahlhoff moved, seconded by Councilmember Von Holtz, to place the Fire Mobilization Interagency Agreement with the Washington State Patrol on the March 19, 2024, City Council consent calendar with a recommendation to approve and authorize the Mayor to sign. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

**WASHINGTON SURVEY
AND RATING BUREAU
UPDATE:**

Fire Chief Hurley reported Washington Survey and Rating Bureau (WSRB) is a non-profit independent organization that produces data insurance companies utilize to identify risks for pricing insurance products. Accurate data are required from communities to inform the process. The criteria is evaluated and approved by the Washington State Office of the Insurance Commissioner. Most, but not all companies use WSRB data as one data point in determining insurance premiums. However, other factors can be considered. The WSRB

TUMWATER PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
MARCH 12, 2024 Page 3

assigns a Protection Class (PC) to each property in the state based on the community's PC rating, distance to a fire station, distance to a standard fire hydrant, and lacking hydrants, the amount of water that could be supplied through water tender operations (large water trucks). Some areas in the City lack adequate fire hydrants. In those areas, the City has mutual aid agreements with response partners to send water tenders during a fire to those areas.

The process of evaluation includes only the fire protection capabilities and not response to medical calls and other types of other emergency incidents. Four factors of consideration include fire department operations (40% of score), community water supply (35% of score), emergency communications (T-Comm), and fire safety control (fire prevention community risk reduction) (16% of score). The Fire Department provides the WSRB with data spanning three to five years of responses, training, equipment, maintenance, and other information, such as certifications of mechanics working on Fire Department vehicles. The process requires a site visit, which occurred in July 2023.

The City recently received its new PC rating based on a scale of 1 to 10 with the lower amount reflective of a higher score. Effective July 1, 2024, the City's PC rating will reduce from Class 4 to Class 3. The City has maintained a Class 4 rating over the last two evaluation cycles. The prior rating was Class 5. The new rating applies to commercial and residential properties located within five miles of a responding fire station with a standard fire hydrant distribution. Properties not meeting those requirements typically have a higher PC rating. However, the majority are rated at PC 3.

Fire Chief Hurley shared information on the distribution of 662 rated departments in the state. The City's new rating places the City in the top 14% in the state. The only Class 1 department in the state is the City of Seattle. The City of Olympia is rated as Class 2 and the City of Lacey is rated as a Class 3.

Fire Chief Hurley reviewed data causing the change in the City's PC rating. The main reason was the City's water supply.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked whether the addition of a new three-million gallon water tank would affect the City's score. Fire Chief Hurley advised that the addition of a water tank could certainly assist in affecting the score as the WSRB sends the City a list of properties in the City located near specific fire hydrants with a request for water flow rates for each hydrant. In any situation where the water supply is bolstered, the flow rate would improve which helps improve the City's rating. The score, however, did decrease for water supply primarily because of the lack of each fire hydrant inspected each year and flow

TUMWATER PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
MARCH 12, 2024 Page 4

testing every five years. At this time, the City lacks the resources to maintain that schedule. The Fire Department score improved from 56% to 66%. The communications score remained consistent with fire safety control improving as well from 40% to 56%. For 2023, the City's score is 2.76, which is rounded to 3.

The WSRB measures fire department operations against an ideal for Tumwater. The type of commercial structures located in the community should call for flows of 4,000 gallons of water per minute equal to four staffed fire engines plus a staffed ladder truck. The City received credit for Olympia's ladder truck as part of the mutual aid response, but not full credit. The score improved because the City invested in staff and equipment with the average number of personnel per day increasing and with investments in fire hoses, nozzles, and apparatus that helped to improve the score in operations.

Within the fire safety control area, the number of inspections completed by the Fire Prevention Officer helped improve the score considerably. Improvements are possible as the recommendation is for every business to be inspected annually. Existing resources lack the capacity to inspect each business annually. The department's matrix focuses on higher risk properties each year and other smaller business with fewer hazards that are inspected each year.

Fire Chief Hurley reiterated the City's robust water system; however, the score would be higher if hydrants were inspected annually. Capacity is lacking for both hydrant and business inspections. The department hired its first full-time Fire Prevention Officer in 2013, which prompted an increase in the inspection program to help improve the score. Eventually, the incumbent retired and for a brief period, the department lacked a fire inspector. The current Fire Inspector, Mark Armstrong, has been in the position for approximately two years.

Chair Agabi inquired about the number of FTEs in the Tumwater Fire Department. Fire Chief Hurley said FTEs in the fire department total 53 with 46 assigned to operations (daily staffing). Each day, 11 employees are on duty of which nine are stationed in the City and two serving on the medic unit in Rochester.

Fire Chief Hurley referred to maps developed by the WSRB depicting the 1-1/2 mile driving distance from each fire station. The map identifies areas to the west of the City towards Black Lake and to the south where the City experiences some driving distance coverage issues. The department's planning process will produce much better maps. An agency evaluation is currently underway in support of the department's strategic planning process.

**TUMWATER PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
MARCH 12, 2024 Page 5**

Areas for improvement identified by the department include improved documentation of training, increasing the number of fire inspections annually, and improving fire hydrant inspections.

In response to questions regarding fees assessed for fire inspections, Fire Chief Hurley explained that the City's fee schedule includes fire inspections. Current revenue generated by the inspection program does not fully support the position. Chair Agabi questioned the allocation of staff focused on inspections when staffing to meet fire and other emergency needs is lacking. Fire Chief Hurley said the goals and priorities would be included in the strategic plan to prompt discussions on ways to increase staffing to inspect all businesses each year, which may entail a discussion on the current fee schedule because the City's fee is less than other jurisdictions. Annual inspections are important for staff especially for businesses working with or storing hazardous materials to ensure the materials are properly stored and the company's fire alarm/sprinkler system is operational.

Fire Chief Hurley shared that based on conversations with the analyst from WSRB, he envisions a path to receive a Class 2 rating for the Fire Department during the next evaluation cycle in 2028.

Councilmember Dahlhoff encouraged Fire Chief Hurley to include the long-term goal of achieving a Class 2 rating within the department's biennium budget request by documenting the elements required to achieve the rating.

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL
EMS CONTRACT WITH
THURSTON COUNTY
FOR BASIC LIFE
SUPPORT FUNDING 2024
EXTENSION:**

Fire Chief Hurley reported the first career Tumwater Fire Department employees were comprised of paramedics, partially funded by Thurston County Medic One. That partnership has continued with Advanced Life Support (ALS) funding for paramedic services and personnel, as well as Basic Life Support (BLS) funding with Medic One. The department's fire engines and staff for emergency medical respond to non-life threatening incidents, such as falls, trauma, and illnesses. The agreement with Medic One includes funding for the department's BLS program. The funds support the purchase of equipment, tools, and training and evaluation programs. Funding is from the Thurston County Emergency Medical Services levy. Funding for BLS across the county is allocated to jurisdictions based on the number of calls each year. Funds received in 2023 for direct support was approximately \$55,000. The department is also able to purchase supplies, equipment, and participate in specialized training directly through Medic One rather than from a third-party vendor.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked whether the funding levy includes an expiration date. Fire Chief Hurley said the levy is permanent with a lid lift approved three years ago. The levy lid lift is placed on the ballot on a six-year cycle to adjust for inflation.

**TUMWATER PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
MARCH 12, 2024 Page 6**

The 2024 funding allocation has not been determined; however, staff believes the amount will reflect an increase from the 2023 amount. The current agreement is effective until 2025; however, Medic One requires an annual acknowledgement. The request is to recommend placement of the 2024 Basic Life Support Funding Extension Letter of Acknowledgement with Medic One on the March 19, 2024, City Council consent calendar with a recommendation to approve and authorize the Mayor to sign.

MOTION:

Chair Agabi moved, seconded by Councilmember Von Holtz, to recommend placement of the 2024 Basic Life Support Funding Extension Letter of Acknowledgement with Medic One on the March 19, 2024, City Council consent calendar with a recommendation to approve and authorize the Mayor to sign. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS:

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked about the timeline for the strategic plans for the Fire and Police Departments. Fire Chief Hurley said the department has completed a draft of the strategic plan with the agency evaluation pending completion. The timeline for completion of the plan is at the end of April.

City Administrator Parks advised that the intent is to provide a briefing to the committee on both plans.

Police Chief Weiks reported the Police Department plan should be completed by mid-May. Briefing on the plan has been scheduled for both the committee and the Council during a worksession.

ADJOURNMENT:

With there being no further business, Chair Agabi adjourned the meeting at 8:41 a.m.