



REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY PLANNING COMMITTEE August 13, 2015

Present: Jay Covington, Chief Admin Officer
Ed Prince (Chair), Renton City Council
Armondo Pavone, Renton City Council
Marcie Palmer, Renton City Council
Ray Barilleaux, KCFD #25
Myron Meikle, KCFD #25
Kerry Abercrombie, KCFD #25
Mark Peterson, Fire Chief

Chad Michael, Deputy Fire Chief
Erik Wallgren, Deputy Fire Chief
Iwen Wang, FIT Administrator
Tracy Schuld, Accounting Supervisor
Linda Sartnurak, KCFD #40
Jon Parkinson, FCFD #20
Will Aho, Local 864
Rhonda Heyden, Admin Secretary

1. **Call to Order:** Councilmember Prince called the committee meeting to order at 2:11 p.m.
2. **Approval of Previous Minutes:** Motion made by Councilmember Prince to approve the minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting on July 9, 2015. Seconded by Commissioner Barilleaux. Motion carried.

3. **Station 15 Costs:**

Deputy Chief Michael shared information regarding the costs of Station 15. Councilmember Pavone asked for a breakdown of the soft costs, which Deputy Chief Michael indicated that he would get from Brian Harris, Architect.

4. **RFA Plan Finance Section (Section 6):**

Section C, Transfer of Assets; Subsection 1.1 Reserve Fund: Commissioner Abercrombie stated that District 25's reserve fund would be transferred to the RFA to build the RFA's reserve fund. He wondered what would happen to the reserve fund if the RFA dissolved. He asked if there should be a provision that states in the event that the RFA is dissolved, the money would be returned to District 25. Chief Peterson stated that it would take a vote of the people to dissolve the RFA and he doesn't foresee a dissolution. Jay Covington added that the RFA would be considered a municipality, thus to dissolve would require a vote of the people.

Commissioner Meikle inquired about the language in the subsection which states that District 25's reserve fund would be transferred for the purposes of establishing a capital expenditure fund. Chief Peterson added that the Commissioner's motion during a District 25 Special Meeting was to transfer District 25's reserve fund into the RFA's reserve fund. Administrator Wang agreed to change the language to reflect transferring to the capital project reserve fund.

Section D, Debt; Subsection 1: Administrator Wang indicated that the names of the three employees referenced have been removed.

Motion made by Commissioner Meikle to accept section 6, with the amended language regarding the reserve fund. Seconded by Councilmember Pavone. Motion carried.

5. **Community Concerns:**

Deputy Chief Michael wanted to give an opportunity for the Councilmembers and Commissioners to

share any feedback that they might have heard from their constituents regarding the RFA.

Councilmember Prince indicated that he has only talked with a handful of people regarding the RFA, but most people would like more information. A few people would rather have a Board of 7, instead of a Board of 6, which would include one citizen to allow for citizen oversight. For the most part, however, Councilmember Prince stated that people are interested in more information on what an RFA is, how it will impact them, how it will impact the City of Renton finances, and how it will impact their finances.

Councilmember Pavone stated that he has noticed that people are asking for details, since the material is difficult to explain and understand.

Councilmember Palmer indicated that she has heard from some upset Kenndale homeowners regarding paying for Fire Station 15 for 20 years, and the Fire Station has not been built yet. The Kenndale response seems to be "you owe us" and they will not be voting for more taxes. Jay Covington added that Kenndale residents have been paying for the property for 20 years and it was a great investment. The cost now will only be the cost of the fire station, and not the property.

Commissioner Meikle added that the commissioners feel as though they have to "sell it" to the citizens and educate them as well, as it appears that there is some animosity toward the City of Renton. Education will make a big difference: where we're at as a fire department and where we're going to be 5-10 years down the road.

Jay Covington indicated that all of the concerns could help to create Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's).

6. *Communications Consultant Briefing:*

Deputy Chief Michael explained that Liz Loomis/Public Affairs does a lot of work with fire districts and Regional Fire Authorities on lid lifts and maintenance & operation levies. She is also a former city Mayor and councilmember. Deputy Chief Michael has worked with Liz Loomis on an unrelated project and was pleased with the work she did.

The challenge is to educate people on 1) what is an RFA and 2) what is a fire benefit charge and how it works. A large educational campaign will be necessary and Liz Loomis will assist with putting it together.

Councilmember Pavone asked to see samples of her work, to which Deputy Chief Michael indicated that he would be happy to provide the samples.

Commissioner Meikle asked if Liz Loomis is the only option. Deputy Chief Michael stated that she is not the only option, but due to her expertise and background, she seems to be the best option. Jay Covington added there are other in-house options, but it would be a tremendous learning curve.

Linda Sartnurak stated that she attended a seminar presented by Liz Loomis and she was very impressed with her presentation and knowledge.

Councilmember Prince took exception to the language that indicated an information flyer would be given at the time of an emergency call. The committee agreed to have this language deleted and agreed to keep the second sentence that states that a one-page, two-sided flyer explaining the RFA and fire benefit charge could be used to answer questions.

Lieutenant Aho stated that he liked the social media component of Liz Loomis' proposal, since she can reply to blogs, posts, and tweets in a factual manner.

Councilmember Palmer inquired about the language included in the proposal "Owned and Social

Media; Web site" that discusses adding a Fire Benefit Charge calculator to both websites, and engaging a developer to create the software. Chief Peterson explained that the calculator would give the homeowner the ability to add their square footage and assessed value to determine what his/her costs would be. Jay Covington indicated that the City would develop the calculator and Liz Loomis would incorporate it into the website.

Councilmember Pavone wanted to clarify Liz Loomis' hourly rate of \$195/hour, listed under "Budget". Jay clarified that this charge is only for travel time expenses, to be billed at half of the hourly rate of \$195/hour.

Jay Covington indicated that a Committee of the Whole is scheduled for September 14, 2015, where an update of the RFA would be presented to Council. At that time, or shortly after, Jay would like Council to give the authorization to hire Liz Loomis.

Commissioner Meikle inquired as to which Planning contract sections remain. Deputy Chief Michael indicated that Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 have been approved. Section 6 was approved today. Chief Peterson stated that Section 7 is the Organizational Structure and proposes bringing Sections 7 & 8 to the next RFA meeting.

7. RFA Name:

Chief Peterson indicated that the Citizen's Advisory Committee had recommended keeping the name simple and concise and proposed the name "Renton Regional Fire Authority". He added that there could be a caveat that the Governance Board can change the name in the future if the RFA expands to Fire District 20 and/or Fire District 40, to be more inclusive of those areas. The committee agreed with the name.

Chief Peterson referenced Section 3; Formation Authority; RFA Plan Approval, bullet point #4, which reads "Should the RFA plan be approved by 60% of the voters of the participating jurisdiction, the _____ Regional Fire Authority shall be formed on.." and requested a motion be made to add the new RFA name. Councilmember Pavone made a motion to adopt the name "Renton Regional Fire Authority". Seconded by Councilmember Palmer. Motion carried.

8. RFA Timeline:

Chief Peterson indicated that there will be specific dates to follow if the decision is made to continue with the RFA and is looking for a commitment from the Governance Board. Commissioner Meikle requested re-evaluating the timeline to look at what is remaining and what could be accomplished between now and April, 2016. Chief Peterson stated that he would update the timeline for the next RFA Planning meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 3:12 p.m. The next RFA Planning meeting will be September 17, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. in the 7th Floor Conferencing Center.

Recorded by:
Rhonda Heyden, Administrative Secretary I