

Klickitat County Fire District 3 Commissioners Meeting  
119 NE Church Street  
April 26, 2023, at 16:30 (4:30 pm)

## **SPECIAL BOARD MEETING**

### **West Klickitat County Regional Fire Authority Planning Committee**

**Call to order.17:00**

The City of WS and KCFD3 called their meetings to order.

#### **Attendance**

Commissioner Montag (Chair), Commissioner Connor (Vice Chair), Commissioner Virts – (Quorum),  
City Council Members: Jason Hartman, Ben Giant, Jim Ransier- (Quorum).

Staff/volunteers: Wes Long (Fire Chief), Rozalind Plumb (Dist. Secretary), Jennifer McLean (Admin.  
Assistant), Bob Merritt (mHc Associates) Chief Hunsaker (WSFD), Stephanie Porter (COWS Clerk Treasurer),  
David Shultz (COWS Legal council)

**Public Comment.** Held to end.

#### **Committee formation:**

Consensus to not have a chair and for the consultant Bob Merritt to manage the meetings.

#### **Presentation – Bob Merritt**

Bob introduced himself and his history with RFAs and their formation.

He noted that the KCFD3 and WSFD Chiefs have worked together for years, and this is not always the case when combining forces.

If the RFA passes there would be no significant changes for the first year and a half, simply due to the governing board needing to establish and deploy the master plan. The creation of the 'master and deployment plan' would require input from the elected Governing board, volunteers, and staff.

The West Regional Fire Authority (WKRFA) Planning Committee will be drafting a plan. Once completed the draft will be presented to the full city Council for adoption. Once adopted by both boards it will go to the electorate for a vote.

The Committee had been given a draft plan for review before the meeting. The plan has 9 sections. It was noted that the usual process is to have at least 10 meetings and go over each section before finalizing it. To get this on the August ballot requires the submission to the county before May 12<sup>th</sup> (16 days from this meeting date). So this is will be a fast and condensed process. The committee chose to review each section in turn and address any questions that occurred.

The WKRFA Plan will be general in nature to form the RFA and set the guidelines. Once formed the governing board will create a detailed 'master and deployment plan' which will address the operational structure.

Discussion occurred regarding sections:

1. Background and Needs statement – review of events up to now. Some revisions made and all in approval (6 approved)
2. Definitions (6 approved)
3. Formation Authority- Chapter 52.26 RCW
4. Jurisdictional Boundaries – RCW 52.26.020(2) Boundary changes, adjacent Fire departments who wish to join would need a revision of the plan and the revision would have to go to vote in all the affected jurisdictions. – some discussion on new members joining. The plan would have to be revised to include the new entity and then go to the vote in all the districts involved.
5. Governance and Organizational Structure-
  - a. Who represents on the governing board? There are 2 choices:
    - i. Sitting members of each jurisdiction
    - ii. Elect RFA Commissioners.
  - b. Five- or six-member board – 3 Sitting Fire Commissioners, 2 City Council members
  - c. Compensation of board members – follows established Special Purpose District stipends by RCW. 52. (currently set by legislature at \$128/day. The stipend can be waived.
6. Funding and Finances:
  - Annual funding would be through an ad valorem tax. Determining what that would be is currently in progress. Looking at a combined 2024 budget to include
    - i. Operational costs
    - ii. Apparatus replacement fund
    - iii. Equipment replacement fund (\$5,000 or more)
    - iv. Facility component replacement fund.

The replacement funds are not required to be in the plan. Discussion on having them referenced but not be too restrictive.
  - Transfer of Funds-Discussion on how to fund in the transition period before funds are available from tax levies that become available in May. (\$3080,000 from WSFD reserve).
  - Debt – KCFD3 has a Bond with the debt service that will expire in 2038. The district will not transfer the debt to the RFA.
  - Facilities- KCFD3 will transfer ALL assets to the RFA. WSFD building is mixed use with City Council Chambers and Public Works. Discussion on how to proceed and address the future needs of the fire department. Most likely the building will have to be leased to the RFA. Discussion on sunset clause and having the new governing board decide the details of the lease. Tabled for further research.
7. Operations, emergency management and support – mutual aid agreements – Master and deployment plan is required to be made in the 1<sup>st</sup> year by the governing board.
8. Administrative management and personnel. Discussion on staffing and regulations.
9. Hazard prevention and public education.

**Next steps:**

Consensus to address rewrites before making the Draft plan available to the public.

May 1<sup>st</sup> – Next committee meeting. Having the budget available for the May 1<sup>st</sup> meeting is a high priority to be able to determine the tax levy rate.

May 8<sup>th</sup> -Public Hearing for the committee to receive input from the public on the plan.

May 10<sup>th</sup> -Joint meeting with City Council and KCFD3 to review and approve the plan.

**Public Comment:**

Dave Swan WS Volunteer FF – Facilities – The downstairs was paid for by water and sewer. Suggested dividing the building and separating the utilities. Regarding section 8b2 -He stated that “there has been considerable discussion among the firefighters that it would be a deal breaker if the volunteer firemen do not have a veto over who the board hires to be the chief or training officer.” Stated it has been a problem.

Carl Swanson WS VFD – Task Force Report- suggested that insufficient data was input to the report. He referenced the data being from 2 years of covid when non EMT responders were told not to respond to covid risk incidents. Comparisons made to national averages, and minimum numbers of responders on scene being unattainable. He also noted that there was no quantifiable data regarding the community expectations. Were citizens asked specific questions to establish percentages of answers? In closing he stated he supports the RFA and understands the budgetary constraints. He recognized the changing needs of the fire landscape and the need for more resources. He stated that what we need most are personnel.

Closed Public Comment.

Request to address the outreach aspect for the plan and to get more feed back for firefighters. Chief Hunsaker said the firefighters have been invited and his door is open.

**ADJOURN.**

**Adjournment – made by City Council**

***“Motion to adjourn,” made by Commissioner Virts, seconded by Commissioner Connor (3 yay, 0 nay) motion passed.***


Meeting adjourned at 19:06 hrs.

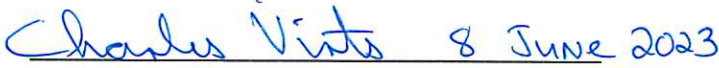
**APPROVED BY:**

  
Chairman – Commissioner Thomas Montag (date)

**Attest:**

  
District Secretary Rozalind Plumb

  
Commissioner Robert Connor (date)

  
Commissioner Charles Virts (date)