



INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Community Services & Safety (CSS)

FROM: Chief Jay Wittwer

BY: Deputy Chief Norm Golden

CC: Mayor Ekberg

DATE: June 7, 2021

SUBJECT: Fire Advisory Task Force / CPSM Report Update

ISSUE

Update on activities of the Fire Advisory Task Force and the Center for Public Safety Management (CPSM) Report review. The group is asking for the City Council to support hiring consulting services to provide a neutral party to help move the process forward and to provide a timeline for completion.

BACKGROUND

The CPSM report was presented to the Committee of the Whole on March 8, 2021. The report provided recommendations for improving fire services in the city. An internal work group was formed to evaluate the report recommendations and determine strategies to provide high-level, financially sustainable fire services. The city will form a Fire Advisory Task Force (Task Force) to work in a co-creative space with the community to present options to the Council.

The internal work group is providing an update on their work since March 8, 2021. The group meets weekly and is working from a Chartering Document, previously shared with the Council on April 26, 2021, to define the scope of this project. The group agrees that our purpose is not to “get rid” of the fire department, but to determine how best to provide a high-level, financial sustainable fire services. Maintaining our current response staff, equipment, and capabilities is the starting point of our project.

The group has solicited potential regional partners to gauge interest in partnering to provide services as alternatives to retaining fire services in-house. The next step is to form a Task Force to evaluate the options and present them to the Council. This community task force will be comprised of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), residents, business representatives, local leaders, etc.

The group has identified the main options for providing fire services to the City of Tukwila. The threshold decision is whether to continue to provide services as a city department, standing up our own regional fire authority, or to partner with another organization. Then there are options to explore within each of these options.

City of Tukwila

- Provide a municipal fire department (current practice).
- Establish a Regional Fire Authority within our own city.
- Establish new revenue sources such as a Fire Benefit Charge and/or a Levy Lid Lift.

Partnerships

Enter a contract for services.

Annex into an existing Regional Fire Authority (RFA).

Regional Fire Authority (RFA) – These are special purpose districts created under RCW 52.26. An RFA establishes a municipal corporation with independent taxing authority through a property tax levy as well as a Fire Benefit Charge (FBC). An RFA requires a vote of the people (simple majority), and the FBC requires a 60% supermajority that is renewable every 6 years, 10 years, or can be voted in as a permanent funding source. RFAs are fairly new in Washington State as they were authorized in 2004. The first RFA is the Valley Regional Fire Authority (Auburn, Algona, and Pacific) established in 2007. Currently there are three RFAs in King County, three in Snohomish County, and about eight more throughout the state.

DISCUSSION

Consulting Needs

The group explored the options for consultants with experience in working with emergency services and particularly working with cities on fire services and exploring options such as contracting for services, annexing to a current agency or formation of Regional Fire Authorities. The group believes engaging consulting services for this process would be beneficial to the city.

Financial Consultant Bill Cushman and Facilitator Karen Reed are two consultants who do have extensive local experience in this arena and we are recommending contracting with them to assist the City. The group did explore other consultant firms such as [Berk Consulting](#) and [Emergency Services Consulting International \(ESCI\)](#), but these firms are more focused on strategic plans for emergency services.

Bill Cushman is a financial consultant with extensive experience in municipal finance. Mr. Cushman has over 50 years of budget analysis, developing financial planning models, and strategic financial planning. Mr. Cushman has worked specifically with many fire service providers on mergers and formation of Regional Fire Authorities. A Financial Analyst is needed to provide “apples-to-apples” comparison projections for the Task Force to evaluate.

Karen Reed (principal of Karen Reed Consulting, LLC) provides facilitation services for organizations looking for sustainable delivery models. Ms. Reed has extensive experience facilitating and negotiating multi-stakeholder public policy matters. Ms. Reed is very experienced in working with fire service providers associated with Fire Services contracts and RFAs, and has worked with Bill Cushman on many of the projects in our area.

Mr. Cushman and Ms. Reed have teamed up to successfully guide cities such as Lynnwood, Renton, and currently Mill Creek on exploring and implementing fire services through contracts and forming Regional Fire Authorities. They have also worked with Fire Districts and Fire Authorities on Sustainability Assessments, and Strategic Fire Service options in Snohomish, King, and Pierce County.

Timeline

The internal work group would like to bring the consulting team onboard and gather information over the next three months to provide to the Task Force. We will simultaneously implement the recruitment and appointment process to ensure an effective Task Force with a membership that is representative of the community and that meetings are ready to commence without further delay.

Fire Marshal Services

Improvements to the Fire Marshal's Office (FMO) was part of the CPSM recommendations. Due to current staffing issues within the FMO and the continued demand for fire permit services, The group is interested in exploring various options for providing these services. These options could include additional staff or redirection of existing staff, increased fees for cost recovery of services, and possible partnerships with another FMO as a more sustainable service model.

The Fire Marshal and Finance Director are working on these ideas and will be presenting options to the Community Services & Safety Committee at a future date for a recommendation to the Council.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The financial request for the two individual consultant contracts (Facilitation Services and Financial Analysis) are each within the Mayor's budget authority. A budget amendment up to \$80,000 (\$40,000 each) will be needed to fund this request.

RECOMMENDATION

The Council is being asked to approve the proposal for consultation services, and consider this item at the June 14, 2021 Committee of the Whole meeting.

The Council is also being asked to approve the timeline for information gathering and continued work on establishing the community Fire Advisory Task Force.

ATTACHMENTS

Chartering Document
April 26, 2021 Informational Memo
Bill Cushman Biography
Karen Reed Resume



INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Committee of the Whole
FROM: David Cline, City Administrator
BY: Jake Berry, Public Safety Budget Analyst
CC: Allan Ekberg, Mayor
DATE: 04/26/2021
SUBJECT: Fire Advisory Task Force Internal Working Group

ISSUE

Now that the City has received CPSM's Operations & Data Report, an internal working group has been established to distill the knowledge contained within the report, augment it with our own, and then apply it with the goal of providing a high-quality Fire Service to the Community at a sustainable cost. The purpose of this memorandum is to inform the CSS of the formation of this working group and the process it intends to use to carry-out its mission.

BACKGROUND

Mandated by Council via Ordinance 2621, the Fire Department commissioned CPSM to provide an independent review of Fire's budgetary and management practices. CPSM presented their findings to Council on March 8th and subsequent discussions were held during the March 15th CSS meeting.

DISCUSSION

At the direction of the Mayor, an internal working group consisting of Mayor Allan Ekberg, City Administrator David Cline, Finance Director Vicky Carlsen, Fire Chief Jay Wittwer, Deputy Fire Chief Norm Golden, HR Director Juan Padilla, Local 2088 President James Booth, and Public Safety Budget Analyst Jake Berry has been established. This group will work closely with City Council and Community Services and Safety Committee members as well as Tukwila Staff from other departments to gain their input and to leverage their knowledge.

With the ultimate goal of providing a high-quality Fire Service at a sustainable cost, the group will evaluate the recommendations (both specified and implied) contained within the CPSM report and determine which are reasonable priorities from a contractual, data, and time-based standpoint.

The group will research and evaluate other teams that have created value-driven processes so that we can learn from their achievements and challenges. We understand that change is desired immediately but we believe this issue is too important to rush.

Community Engagement

The working group plans to seek the assistance and input of the Community. Because the group values the advice and knowledge of the Community, we would like to formally invite Community members to actively participate in some of our discussions. These Community members will be selected via a Boards and Commissions type process. To include a diverse set of knowledge we will seek representatives from our business and residential Communities by reaching out to civic groups, multi-family groups, business developers, and other groups as the Committee directs. Applications to join our discussions will be sent to these groups and then, once received, will be presented to the Committee for vetting and acceptance. The group would also like to invite a

representative from another Fire Department within Zone 3 to provide an expert third-party perspective.

The purpose of including such a large and diverse set of experts and stakeholders is to foster a co-creative space that will allow for the collaborative development necessary to achieve our primary goal.

Financial Sustainability

The term “Financial Sustainability” has become a hot topic since the release of the CPSM report and the Group would like Committee’s input on how we define this term. What does Financial Sustainability mean to the Committee? What are the associated service-level implications?

High-Level Process

Once we have defined Financial Sustainability and Community Engagement, the group will evaluate the 37 stated recommendations (as well as some unstated recommendations found within the report) to determine which meet the following criteria:

- Reasonable: as CPSM’s Mr. Iacona stated, not all of the recommendations will make sense for Tukwila
- Not Bargaining Related: because the Local 2088 contract runs through 2022, we will focus on those recommendations that can be accomplished in the meantime
- Impactful: based on cost (or savings) and the return to the Community
- Label as either Policy or Procedure-Related: to determine involvement and timeline

From the recommendations that remain, we will identify those that are easiest to accomplish, the “low hanging fruit”. Tackling these tasks first will allow us to test and refine our process and prepare us for the larger tasks.

Attachment #1 is a table containing questions the group has received from Council as well as the group’s response to each of the questions. We will include an updated version of this table with each update to CSS and the Council.

The Mayor stated to the working group that providing a high-quality Fire Service at a sustainable cost is one of the City’s highest priorities and has drafted a team charter to guide the group and to frame its actions and responsibilities. That charter is included as Attachment #2.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

None at this time.

RECOMMENDATION

We ask that Committee approves the formation of this Task Force and the updated Charter. With Committee approval, the Group will present to C.O.W on April 26th to seek their input and approval. This will allow the group to begin recruiting Task Force members in May.

ATTACHMENTS

1. CPSM Operational & Administrative Analysis: Council Question Follow-Up & Parking Lot
2. Fire Department Financial Sustainability Project Chartering Doc

Chartering Document

A Chartering Document allows for a mutually agreed upon understanding of what a team effort and purpose is.

TEAM name: Fire Advisory Task Force

Background:

The Tukwila Fire Department and Administration share the common goal of ensuring robust community engagement regarding the necessary financial support to sustain Tukwila Fire service. Our focus is to advise City policy officials (the City Council) on options and opportunities to enable and sustain fire services to the City of Tukwila. We will rely on a data-driven focus to ensure optimum response to questions, inform members and help drive informative outcomes. It is the intent of the team to consider and present multiple options to help identify operational fire service funding models while considering best practices to ensure an effective and efficient service to the community.

Team Objective:

To advise the City Council and the public on financial recommendations and fire operational models to facilitate a common understanding of service options. With the ultimate objective to seek a sustained financial model that achieves public support through:

- Shared Value-Driven Process
- Co-Created Work Plan
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Cooperation
- Data Informed Analysis
- Defined operational models
- Engagement with public
- Financial modeling
- Support of the public
- Vote of the public

Overview

The team will meet regularly to review and provide oversight on data acquired, operational models to be considered, along with financial aspects and matching revenue needs and solutions. Appropriate community outreach shall be conducted to inform the public and seek public acceptance while incorporating community criteria into decisions.

Team Configuration

The team shall have several members comprising of those roles deemed necessary, members may consist of union representation, fire administration, city administration, City Council representatives, project manager, finance, fire personnel, business community representation, and public/community participants.

The Mayor can help to identify and appoint the business community member(s) and the Council, through the council president, can be asked to do the same for community member(s). Recommendations will be accepted by all team members.

Participation by City Council representatives is recommended based on specific roles of Council members. For example, these representatives might include Council President, Finance Committee Chair, and Community Services and Safety Chair. The Council may also choose representatives based on past experience working on fire studies.

The team seeks to include a large and diverse set of experts and stakeholders to foster a co-creative space that will allow for the collaborative development necessary to achieve our goal of providing a Community-supported and financially sustainable Fire Department model.

The expected duration of the team’s activity

The team shall continue in existence until a preferred outcome is achieved and the 2023/2024 biennium budget is approved or if a resolution is achieved sooner.

Team Organization

The team will choose a chair and/or co-chairs to help facilitate meetings, this position may rotate, based on volunteers. Each team member is an equal in the process and all due decorum and respect is expected. Team creation generally goes through a process of Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing, thus each individual member is expected to help each other through this process. Sub-teams can be formed for specific tasks; while it is the duty of the sub-team to report back to the overall team often to keep all team members informed.

Time Expectations

Team should meet no less than every-other-week, and likely more during formation and critical times.

In Scope: The expectations & deliverables of the team

Major areas to understand / deliver information on include:

- Co-Create a Timeline and Workplan
- Value identification and agreement
- Seek all necessary data to drive a data-informed decision
- Provide a definition to required funding
- Define where required funding can be achieved from
- Receive and review public comment
- Visit with community members to share work effort and outcomes
- Produce justification of selected outcome
- Advise the full City Council on progress and outcomes
- Seek council support on decision points
- Inform the community of progress and outcomes
- Promote the desired outcome with the public/community

Out of Scope: Items the team is not to consider

- Collective Bargaining Issues

Team members (fill in as members are identified)

The following team members have committed to participate on this team:

	Organization/Group	Team Member Name
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Reporting Hierarchy

The team is self-actuating equals, if an issue comes up that the team cannot resolve, the mayor can make a final decision. The team seeks to build a collaborative environment that fosters creative and innovative thinking and that honors the perspectives and ideas of all members.

Team Principles

This team’s members are bound by and subject to the City’s code of ethics policy, TMC 2.95, Code of Ethics for Employees and Appointed Officials.

Bill Cushman - Biography

Bill Cushman began his association with municipal finance fifty years ago armed with a degree in English Literature from the University of Washington, followed by several years at various endeavors, including a year as a disk jockey at KISW, FM, 99.9 on your radio dial, the field of technical writing seemed like a natural fit.

He was first introduced to municipal finance as a novice technical writer and budget “analyst” for the City of Everett in 1971. After a two-year stint in the same role with the data processing department at PACCAR, he returned to Everett where he was named Computer Services Manager in 1976 and then Finance and Budget Director in 1978 remaining in that role for the next 25 years.

Retiring after 30 years’ service with Everett, Bill was recruited by the largest fire district in Washington, Snohomish County Fire District 1 where he oversaw financial matters for 15 more years. The highlight of the SnoCo FD1 gig was the development of strategic financial planning models that allowed the Fire Commissioners and the Fire Administrative to work in concert to develop long-range financial and organizational programs with a high level of confidence that their common goals would be met with success.

In 1993 while still with Everett, and continuing for the next 20 years, Bill was invited by organizations such as the Washington Association of Cities, Washington Finance Officers Associations, Washington Fire Chiefs’ Association, and Washington Fire Commissioners’ Association to lecture and present seminars about strategic financial planning. During this time, he handed out more than 3,600 copies of a simplified planning model to introduce the audience to some of the basic concepts involved with setting long-range goals and targets that incorporate the financial resources required to bring the envisioned plans to a satisfactory conclusion.

The final application with SnoCo FD1 was to prepare financial plans and documents that resulted in the creation of the South Snohomish County Regional Fire Authority, a consolidation of SnoCo FD1 and the City of Lynnwood, an effort that was artfully managed by Karen Reed who oversaw all the planning and logistical requirements to bring the program to a successful voter-approved completion in 2019.

Bill also provided the financial documentation that brought the City of Monroe and Fire District 3 and Fire District 7 into a merger that was followed by the additional merger with Fire District 8 and the City of Lake Stevens, creating a new agency, Snohomish Regional Fire and Rescue.

Other agencies that have benefitted from the financial models provided by Bill Cushman include North County Regional Fire Authority, City of Arlington, City of Mill Creek, City of Kenmore, City of Bothell, Woodinville Fire, Northshore Fire, City of Marysville, Marysville Fire, City of Brier, and about 35 more municipal corporations which would be tedious to enumerate.

He is currently engaged by Whatcom County Fire District 21 with goal setting and financial planning and the setting of fire tax levies. Also under contract is the City of Mill Creek in assisting them in seeking alternative service provisions with a neighboring fire authority. Lewis County Fire 6 is in the process of establishing a strategic budgeting process that incorporates most of the planning models available and which would serve as the basis for a critical analysis of Tukwila Fire over a period 2021 through 2027.



Karen Reed

Karen Reed Consulting, LLC

4951 S.W. Forney Street Seattle, WA 98116

(206) 932-5063 | cell: (206) 948-3556 | kreedconsult@comcast.net

- Public Process Facilitation
- Multi-Agency Negotiations
- Interlocal Agreements
- Strategic Planning

EXPERIENCE:

KAREN REED CONSULTING, LLC, Seattle, WA

Principal/Owner August 2003 – Present. Karen’s consulting practice focuses on facilitation and negotiation of multi-stakeholder public policy matters. Her clients include counties and cities in Western Washington, state and regional government agencies, and nonprofit organizations.

Recent projects include:

- ***Snohomish County Fire Districts 4 and City of Everett Regional Fire Authority Facilitation*** (2021-ongoing). Facilitate discussions between three agencies seeking voter approval to form a regional fire authority.
- ***City of Mill Creek Fire Service Options*** (2021-ongoing) Providing strategic advice to City on fire service delivery options.
- ***City of Mill Creek Park Properties Development Visioning*** (2021-ongoing). Facilitate efforts to develop multi-acre public property for park and recreation purposes.
- ***Arlington-North County Regional Fire Authority Annexation*** (2020-2021). Facilitate discussions between two jurisdictions to secure voter approval for annexation.
- ***North Whatcom Regional Fire Authority*** (2020) Facilitate discussions between two fire districts for potential ballot measure to create a regional fire authority.
- ***Seattle Public Utilities Customer Review Panel*** (2013-ongoing) Facilitate 9-member citizen panel advising utility in development and ongoing updates of its 6-year strategic business plan, which links capital and operating budgets to utility rates.
- ***Seattle City Light Review Panel*** (2010-ongoing) Facilitate citizen panel charged with providing advice in the development and ongoing updates of the utility’s 6-year strategic business plan linking capital investment and operations to rates.
- ***Everett Fiscal Sustainability Advisory Committee*** (2020). Facilitate citizen task force charged with assessing options to strengthen City’s financial sustainability.
- ***Graham Fire Department Public Education*** (2020). Assist fire department in developing public education plan related to benefit charge ballot measure.
- ***Medina Council Retreat*** (2016, 2018, 2020, 2021). Develop and facilitate Council retreat.
- ***Monroe Court Options Study*** (2020). Analyze court service delivery options for cities of Monroe, Lake Stevens and Sultan.
- ***Snohomish County Housing Affordability Taskforce*** (2018-2020). Facilitated taskforce charged with developing recommendations to increase regional housing affordability.
- ***South Sound 911 Governance*** (2018-2019) Facilitated regional governance discussion between Pierce County and group of cities regarding oversight of regional 911 call center.
- ***City of Bothell Municipal Court Options Study*** (2019). Analyzed local courts service options.
- ***City of Bothell Council Teambuilding*** (2018 – 2019). Teambuilding facilitation.

- ***SNO911-SERS Merger Steering Committee Facilitation*** (2018) Facilitated successful merger discussions between the two regional 911 call centers in Snohomish County.
- ***Kitsap Regional Council Retreat*** (2018) Facilitated retreat for regional council.
- ***Renton Parks Citizen Advisory Committee*** (2017-2018) Facilitated 16 member citizen group tasked with developing recommendations to City for a potential parks ballot measure.
- ***SNOCOM-SNOPAC Consolidation*** (2016-2018) Facilitated discussions leading to the January 2018 consolidation of the two 911-call centers in Snohomish County.
- ***Lynnwood-Fire District 1 Regional Fire Authority Planning Committee*** (2016-2017) Facilitated work of elected official committee and staff group to develop finance and operations plan for proposed regional fire authority; approved by voters in August 2017.
- ***King County Land Conservation Task Force*** (2016) Facilitated 25-member task force providing recommendations on county executive proposal to expand green spaces preservation.
- ***Snohomish County Dept. of Emergency Management Strategic Plan*** (2015-2016) Facilitated staff leadership project to develop department strategic plan; drafted plan.
- ***Auburn Mayors' Homelessness Task Force*** (2015-present) Facilitated community task force to develop recommendations to respond to homelessness in the city.
- ***Tacoma Property Crimes Reduction Task Force*** (2015) Facilitated blue ribbon panel tasked with recommending strategies for reducing property crime in the city.
- ***Renton Regional Fire Authority Public Education*** (2015) Assisted city with developing public communications plan that led to voter approval of the fire authority.
- ***Mercer Island Town Center Visioning and Development Code Project*** (2015-2016) Provided strategic advice, analysis and communications materials for land use code revision effort.
- ***Redmond Community Homelessness Task Force*** (2015) Facilitated community task force charged with making recommendations to address homelessness.

KING COUNTY, Seattle, WA

Special Project Manager, Office of Management and Budget, January 2003-July 2003; Director's Office, Dept. of Natural Resources and Parks, February 2002-December 2002.

- Facilitated blue ribbon task force on County general fund budget crisis.
- Developed business plan for transformation of King County parks system. Facilitated citizen task forces charged to recommend parks system funding options; led staff team negotiating transfer of dozens of county parks and recreation facilities to local agencies.

CITY OF BELLEVUE, Bellevue WA

Assistant City Manager for Intergovernmental Relations 1998-June 2001

Intergovernmental Relations Manager October 1993 through 1997

- Directed government relations for the City at regional, state and federal levels, and negotiated service contracts on behalf of Bellevue and suburban cities.

PRESTON THORGRIMSON SHIDLER GATES & ELLIS, Seattle WA

Attorney, January 1986 to July 1992.

- Practice in municipal law and finance.

EDUCATION:

STANFORD LAW SCHOOL, Stanford, CA

Juris Doctorate, 1985

POMONA COLLEGE, Claremont, CA B.A., magna cum laude, Economics and Public Policy, 1982