

# Tukwila Future Fire/EMS Service Community Advisory Committee

## Meeting 6

**Tuesday, March 8, 2022 | 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM**

The meeting will be conducted on Zoom. Join Zoom Meeting:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7558840726?pwd=d3NDRjhIQ0hYckpUUGNzRndpK2hqUT09> Phone in  
information: (253) 215-8782 | Meeting ID: 755 884 0726 | Passcode: 482717

### Agenda

1. Welcome Chair (2 min.) *Verna Seal*
2. Review of Agenda (1 min.) *Karen Reed, facilitator*
3. Review and approval of February 1 and February 15 meeting summaries (3 min.) *Karen*
4. Response to questions asked at previous meeting (10 min.) *Staff Team*
5. Updated Meeting Schedule (1 min.) *Karen/Laurel*
6. Options List review (1 min.) *Karen*
7. Presentation: **Option 5: Tukwila partners with another fire district to create a Regional Fire Authority** (15 min.)
8. Follow up on criteria discussion from Meeting 5: additional info., discussion. (25 min.)
  - Review of input from Meeting 5
  - Approach to developing additional information suggested by Committee
  - The Committee has identified several criteria for making a recommendation to Council on the future of fire/EMS services. Are some criteria more important than others? If so, which ones?
- break**-- (5 min.)
9. Committee Discussion (40 min.)
  - Short presentation recapping Options 1-5
  - What do you see as the pros and cons of the Options 1-5?
  - "Open mike": What else would you like to discuss with your peers on the Committee?

10. Review: Committee Update Presentation to City Council: Draft Presentation Materials (10 min.)
  - The Council presentation is scheduled for Monday March 21 7:00 P.M.
11. IAFF Union Comment (3 min.) *IAFF President James Booth*
12. Next Agenda (1 min.) *Karen*
13. Adjourn (2 min.) *Verna*

**Future of Fire/EMS Services Community Advisory Committee**

**February 1, 2022**

Virtual Meeting due to COVID-19 Emergency

4:00 p.m.

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**DRAFT MINUTES (REVISED)**

**Present**

*Committee members:* Jim Davis, Katrina Dohn, Peggy McCarthy, Andy Reiswig, Dennis Robertson, Verna Seal, Sally Blake, Hien Kieu. Ramona Grove, Abdullahi Shakul, Ben Oliver

*City staff & consultants:* Allan Ekberg, Nora Gierloff, David Cline, Laurel Humphrey, Norm Golden, Jay Wittwer, Vicky Carlsen, Niesha Fort-Brooks, James Booth, Karen Reed, Bill Cushman

1. Welcome, Introductions

Chair Seal called the meeting to order.

2. Review of Agenda

Ms. Reed reviewed the agenda.

3. Review and approval of January 4, 2022 Committee meeting minutes

Ms. McCarthy requested an amendment to the fifth bulleted point on page 3 as follows:

- ~~3.2% increase per year in revenue is reasonable for the City.~~ 3% increase in fire department expenditures is reasonable.

Ms. McCarthy moved approval of the minutes as amended and Mr. Robertson seconded. The motion carried and the minutes were approved as amended.

4. Election of Vice-Chair

Ms. Reed requested nominations for the position of Vice-Chair. Ms. Blake nominated Ms. McConnell, and Mr. Shakul nominated Ms. Kieu. Ms. McConnell was not present to accept the nomination and Ms. Kieu wanted time to consider whether she was willing to be nominated. Ms. Reed will follow up with both Ms. McConnell and Ms. Kieu before the next meeting and place this item on the next Committee agenda.

5. Responses to questions asked at previous meetings

Ms. Reed reviewed a list of responses. Mr. Robertson asked for a more detailed response regarding what the City has implemented from the CPSM study in terms of efficiency and cost reduction recommendations.

6. Recap of Meeting 3 Presentation/Continued Discussion

Ms. Reed reviewed the presentations and discussion. New comments and questions from the committee included:

- Its important to consider changing times, avoiding debt, thinking creatively, improving service.
- I'm comfortable with prioritizing recommendations on enhanced services, but not comfortable talking about cuts to other city programs.
- Cuts from other departments should only be implemented as a last resort. I would be in favor of cutting from parks as it is hard for the City to maintain existing parks and to enforce laws and regulations in these existing parks. I would support no new development of parks to save money.
- ~~Cuts from other departments should only be necessary; as a last resort, I would be in favor of cutting from parks as these are hard to maintain and enforce use. The City should not be developing new parks right now.~~
- **Q:** Is it not feasible to contract for inspection services? **A:** Its possible but must be bargained.
- **Q:** Is it possible to look into the cost of contracting for inspection services? I assume that contracting out would reduce costs quite a bit, is it possible to estimate one year? **A:** We will look into this.

Committee members discussed Question 1: Assume no new funding is available and adding these services will mean cuts in other city programs. Would you support adding any of these, and if so, which options? Responses and questions included:

- **Q:** Inspection revenue seems low, and there is an opportunity to bring in more. Would that revenue help address this question? **A:** Inspection fees would never be high enough to offset the cost of FTEs.

Several committee members noted the difficulty of voting on this questions – not comfortable advising the council here, need more information. Accepting these many caveats, the last round of discussion led to the following input:

- I would support inspectors if offset by fees. The public education piece could be with existing emergency management staff. I don't understand cost/equipment needs associated with Cares unit.
- Yes to fire inspectors, even if it takes cuts; CARES, no. Public educators ok but not with new staff.
- I support Option 4 (Cares unit + 1-2 Fire Inspectors)
- No to funding through cuts (6)

Committee members discussed Question 2: If new taxes would be required to fund these programs, which, if any, of these options would you support.

- I support enhanced services with new taxes. (5 responses)
- **Q:** What is the annual cost for a \$500K home? **A:** Approximately \$65
- A new tax should be a last resort. We have to have inspections. (2 responses)
- I support enhanced services with new taxes, but also reducing costs wherever possible.
- Abstain (2)

Committee members discussed a potential definition of financial sustainability. There were no objections to the proposed definition. Comments included:

- The definition should also consider debt.

The next discussion focused on criteria the Committee members think are important in order to make a recommendation to the Mayor and City Council on which option for future Fire/EMS service they prefer. Suggested criteria included:

- Ensure diverse needs of community are met; leveraging other resources for this purpose.
- Total costs, considering costs to residents and businesses.
- Labor considerations
- Operational and financial control over decisions.
- Weigh the cost and overall quality of service, not just response times. What does quality mean for our community?
- Accountability and performance measurement.
- Public education means programs available to schools.
- Ability to keep up with changing demands
- Educating diverse community with language access.

7. Fire Labor Relations 101

Deputy Chief Golden provided an overview of Fire Labor Relations

- **Q:** Does a change to shift staffing require a new contract: **A:** The goal is to all be on same page with any decision to change.

8. Comparing the Options: Blank Template

Ms. Reed presented a draft template for comparing options. Additional suggestions included:

- Add qualitative assessment regarding sustainability/scalability. Could the solution accommodate future growth?
- Show costs to residents and businesses.
- Cross reference options with criteria.

9. Options 1 (Status Quo) and Option 2 (Status Quo plus Service Adds)

Ms. Reed presented an overview of potential options for future service delivery.

10. Union Comment

Captain Booth shared that this work is difficult and is common in the fire service industry due to the recession and housing market. Tukwila is not alone.

11. Next Agenda/Adjourn

Ms. Reed reviewed the February 15, 2022, preliminary meeting agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:01 P.M. by unanimous consent.

*Minutes by LH*



**Future of Fire/EMS Services Community Advisory Committee**

**February 15, 2022**

Virtual Meeting due to COVID-19 Emergency

4:00 p.m.

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**MINUTES**

**Present**

*Committee members:* Katrina Dohn, Peggy McCarthy, Andy Reiswig, Dennis Robertson, Verna Seal, Sally Blake, Hien Kieu, Ramona Grove, Ben Oliver (Absent: Jim Davis, Abdullahi Shakul)

*City staff & consultants:* David Cline, Laurel Humphrey, Norm Golden, Jay Wittwer, Vicky Carlsen, James Booth, Jake Berry, Karen Reed, Bill Cushman

1. Welcome  
Chair Seal called the meeting to order.
2. Review of Agenda  
Ms. Reed reviewed the agenda.
3. Review and approval of February 1, 2022 Committee meeting minutes  
Ms. Blake requested an amendment to the third bulleted point under Item 6 on page 4. She will email her proposed amendment to Ms. Reed and the February 1, 2022 minutes will be presented for Committee approval at the next meeting.
4. Election of Vice-Chair  
Ms. Kieu was appointed Committee Vice-Chair by consensus.
5. Schedule Update  
The Committee Report to the Full Council is tentatively scheduled for March 21. Committee members agreed to an additional meeting to be held on Tuesday, May 3, 2022 at 4:00 p.m
6. Responses to questions asked at previous meetings  
Ms. Reed reviewed a list of responses. Mr. Robertson asked for a table showing numbers of firefighters per capita and square mileage per station for Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority, Renton Regional Fire Authority, and Tukwila.
7. Recap of Meeting 4 Presentation/Continued Discussion  
Ms. Reed reviewed the previous discussions on enhanced services, fiscal sustainability, decision criteria, and options 1 and 2.

*Definition of Fiscal Sustainability* - One member prefers the definition of fiscal sustainability to be “A fire agency is considered fiscally sustainable if it can maintain service levels within available revenues.” The rest of the committee is comfortable with the full definition: “A fire agency is considered fiscally sustainable if it can maintain service levels within available revenues – in the City’s case (as a government providing many services), this means maintaining fire/EMS service levels without negatively impacting services in other City departments competing for the same funding.”

Committee members discussed recommendation criteria and potential measures for the proposed criteria as follows.

- Some of the criteria are a go/no-go.
- Do other agencies capture data that Tukwila doesn’t capture?

*Ability to meet needs of diverse Community*

- Demographics of labor force
- Expand criteria to be “ability to meet needs of diverse community of residents and businesses.”
- Availability of translators/multilingual staffing/language access

*Ability to meet needs of large business community*

- Fire benefit charge formula creates an awareness of hazards
- Response times
- Robust Fire Marshal Office staffing; numbers of inspections

*Impact on labor force, retention, recruitment*

- Benefits compared to other agencies

*Overall service quality, response times PLUS*

- Capacity of Fire Marshal Office
- Response times
- Turnaround time on building reviews (considering the role of Community Development Department)
- Provision of public education, Cares, Fire Marshal services
- Consider services offered as part of comparison matrix

*Accountability for outcomes/ability to measure outcomes*

- Staying within or near budget
- Response times
- Look to CPSM report for measures
- Look at measures used by other agencies, particularly Renton and Puget Sound

*Is public education offered?*

- Why is only one of three enhanced services listed?

*Ability to keep pace with needs of growing community*

- Committee members agreed to strike this from list of criteria

*Sustainability of funding*

- Flexibility of funding



8. Options 3 (Tukwila Fire District w/property taxes) and Option 4 (Tukwila Fire District w/property taxes and fire benefit charge)

Ms. Reed presented an overview of two more options.

- **Q:** Has the City considered a fire district in previous studies? **A:** Yes, but it was never pursued very far.
- This sounds similar to a Metropolitan Park District, like Tukwila Pool
- **Q:** In this scenario how soon is the property tax revenue available after the levy?
- **Q:** What is the “Excess Levy for Debt=\$1,870,128” on page 31 under all four options? **A:** Debt services on the fire stations.
- **Q:** Is it typical to have an appeal process for the fire benefit charge? **A:** Yes

9. Union Comment

Captain Booth shared that the union supports finding efficiencies and reducing redundancies; fire districts have challenges with funding models; he appreciates the Committee’s work.

10. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 P.M. by unanimous consent.

*Minutes by LH*

## Future of Fire/EMS Services Community Advisory Committee (v. 3.3.21)

	Question Received	Question	Response / Status
1	Meeting 1	<i>Provide number of calls by type (EMS vs Fire) per day, per station Note that 2 stations were recently relocated which impacts relevance of per-station call data from before the present locations were active.</i>	Calls by station district provided on 12/14.
2	"	<i>Provide data/outcomes from other cities that joined a regional effort</i>	Pending (will be presented later)
3	Meeting 2	<i>Provide information on how much of their general fund budget/property tax the cities of Renton and SeaTac were expending on Fire before they formed an RFA (Renton) or contracted with an RFA (SeaTac)</i>	<del>Provided in Meeting 3 packet</del> See response below.
4		<i>Would additional <b>fire investigation</b> and <b>permitting/fire inspector</b> staff pay for themselves through fees? Generally, what can we expect in terms of Fire Marshal office generated revenue?</i>	Provided in Meeting 3 packet
5		<i>How many inspections does one inspector complete in a year on average?</i>	Provided in Meeting 3 packet
6		<i>Does the Fire Department and/or City have a preference/priority in terms of these enhanced services?</i>	Provided in Meeting 3 packet
7		<i>Where would the money come from to fund enhanced services?</i>	This will be discussed in Meeting 4 (Feb 4)
8		<i>What is the staffing model for a CARES unit?</i>	Provided in Meeting 3 packet
9	After meeting 2	<i>A summary of projected future City revenue streams (particularly sales tax) for the next ten years or so.</i>	We can provide a 6-year forecast. (Vicky Carlsen)
10	"	<i>Definition of fiscal sustainability?</i>	This is a discussion item for the Committee
11	"	<i>Can you provide comparables for total salary, total compensation cost (TCC), retirement benefits and medial plan benefits in other fire service providers in South King County</i>	We will provide this data for Renton RFA and Puget Sound RFA when we explore those service alternatives.
12	Meeting 3	<i>Can you provide information on what the City has done with respect to the efficiency and cost reduction recommendations in the CPSM report?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Additional info on this requested at Mtg. 4</i></li> </ul>	Provided in Meeting 5 Packet

13	“	<i>Can we charge other fire agencies for responding to calls in their territory? Could this offset our costs?</i>	Provided in Meeting 4 Packet
14	Meeting 4	<i>Could we contract out inspection services and would that cost less than doing it ourselves?</i>	Provided in Meeting 5 packet
15	Meeting 5	<i>Please provide comparative data on numbers of firefighters per capita and square mileage per station for Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority, Renton Regional Fire Authority, and Tukwila</i>	See below.
16		<i>In creating a Tukwila Fire District, how soon is the property tax revenue available after the levy?</i>	A new taxing district needs to notify the assessor of intent to impose taxes by August 1 for the taxes to start the following calendar year.
17	After meeting 5	<p>Inspectors:</p> <p>a. Which personnel typically conduct the <b>routine inspections</b>, the FMO inspectors or the on-duty firefighters?  Would routine inspections be conducted for apartment complexes as well as commercial buildings?</p> <p>Page 18 of 12.14.2021 agenda packet, "With additional staff, from 1.0 to 3.0 FTE's, Tukwila could provide regular inspections, every one to three years, for the estimated 2,500 businesses within Tukwila. Annual inspections could be provided for the estimated 400-600 commercial occupancies that have higher hazards. Additional staff, from 1.0 to the full 3.0 FTE would increase the number of inspections that could be completed each year."</p> <p>b. How was the <b>number of additional inspectors</b> determined? The Enhanced Services scenario has been reduced to 2 FTE's from 3. The overtime budget, according to the published 2021-2022 budget, is \$60,000 per year. If the cost of one inspector, 1 FTE is \$150,000, then the overtime cost of \$60,000, would suggest only 1/2 of an FTE is needed not 2 FTE's... so how was the need determined? Also, contracting for these services could match demand with capacity and keep costs lower.</p> <p>c. How much <b>additional revenue</b> could be earned if the inspection and planning fees were increased?</p>	See below

		It appears the average cost for both is \$100... \$100 per inspection and \$100 per plan review. This was calculated as follows. Financial Planning Model, page 15, shows inspection fee revenue at \$80,000 and plan review revenue at \$100,000. On page 5 of the 1.4.22 agenda packet, the number of annual inspections and plan reviews is listed as 800 and 1000 respectively.	
18	“	<u>Cares Unit.</u> The \$250,000 of overhead seems very high compared to the \$58,000 projected cost for .33 FTE. What kind of costs make up this \$250,000?	See below
19	“	<u>Public Educator.</u> Could public education be accomplished by existing City resources? Some possibilities - messaging could be placed on the City's website or in the Hazelnut, in-person training could be conducted by the Emergency Manager or Fire Chief/Deputy Chief, middle school and high school students could visit FS 54 on a field trip as it's within walking distance of Showalter and Foster, the City's communication division and the Community Connectors (if still being used) could meet with their residential groups to share information.	See below
20	“	Is it feasible and does the Administration plan to pursue enacting a <b>utility tax</b> on all water and sewer utilities in Tukwila City instead of just those operated by the City? How much additional revenue could be generated by this?	Pending
21	“	Provide and update on what the Council is considering in regards to Fire Marshal Office services?	See below

**Question 3:**

***Provide information on how much of their general fund budget/property tax the cities of Renton and SeaTac were expending on Fire before they formed an RFA (Renton) or contracted with an RFA (SeaTac)***

Based on data posted online:

**SeaTac** began receiving service from Puget Sound RFA by contract in 2014.

In 2013, **25.5%** of SeaTac's General Fund expenditures went to Fire, the equivalent of **60.7%** of their property tax revenue went to Fire for that same year.

**Renton's** RFA was started providing service in 2017.

Online data shows that in 2016, the City of Renton spent **23.9%** of General Fund and the equivalent of **76.9%** of their general property tax on Fire.

*For comparison purposes:*

**Tukwila in 2021:**

The Fire Department was allocated **22.1%** of General Fund revenues, the equivalent of **79%** of the general property tax levy.

**Question 9:**

***A summary of projected future City revenue streams (particularly sales tax) for the next ten years or so.***

The City does not have a 10-year revenue projection; the most recent 6-year projection, by revenue source, is included below. It does not include \$5.7M of federal ARPA funds.

The information below was provided as part of the 2021-2022 biennial budget process. The document will be updated during the 2023-2024 biennial budget process.

The next official update will be during the upcoming budget cycle with an estimated completion date of late September 2022. All assumptions will be updated to reflect the current state of the economy. The assumptions were pre-pandemic and are expected to change significantly with the next update.

Ongoing economic effects of the pandemic require updating revenue forecasts for sales tax, other business taxes, and charges for services. At this time, it is unknown how long the pandemic will continue to impact revenue growth in these areas.

Projected annual growth rate of City General Fund Revenues:

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Sales Tax	5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
Use Tax	2%	2%	2%	2%
Property Tax	3%	3%	3%	3%
Business Tax	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
Charges for Services	1.5%	2%	2%	2%
Other Income	2%	2%	2%	2%
Licenses and Permits	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
Transfers In-ICA*	2%	2%	2%	2%
Intergovernmental Revenue	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
Fines & Penalties	1%	1%	1%	1%

\*ICA= Indirect Cost Allocation

**Total Projected Revenue Change per biennium:**

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
-10.6%	+3.6%	+3.3%	+2.6%	+2.6%	+2.6%

For additional detail, see <https://www.tukwilawa.gov/wp-content/uploads/FIN-Current-Budget.pdf>. This is the current City budget. The detail on this issue starts at p. 61.

**Question 15:**

***Provide comparative data on numbers of firefighters per capita and square mileage per station for Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority, Renton Regional Fire Authority, and Tukwila***

	<b>Tukwila Fire</b>	<b>Puget Sound RFA</b>	<b>Renton RFA</b>
Daytime Population per FF	2778	990	1018
Population per FF	366	990	1018
Fire Fighter per Sq Mile	0.18	0.48	0.26
Fire Fighter per Call	0.008	0.008	0.006
Number of Fire Stations	4	13	7
Stations Per square Mile	2.4	8.4	4.8

## Questions 17- 19

### **17. Inspectors**

***Which personnel typically conduct the routine inspections, the FMO inspectors or the on-duty firefighters? Would routine inspections be conducted for apartment complexes as well as commercial buildings?***

There are several types of “inspections” conducted in the fire service. TFD does not conduct many of the inspections for various reasons.

**Development Inspections** – These are done by certified fire inspectors. Tukwila does conduct inspections required for building/development. These inspections are part of the fees paid to have a project approved. Inspection of the fire protection systems (alarms, sprinklers, etc.), fire access, and storage facilities are common inspections.

Tukwila **does not** do the following inspections (mostly due to lack of staffing):

**Company-level Safety Inspection** – These are done by the fire fighters on the rigs with minimum training. They are a very general overview of the property and look for common fire code violations like blocked exits, improper electrical hazards, and fire extinguishers. Any violation that is found is sent to the FMO to follow-up for correction. They are valuable to the crews for site familiarization and making a connection with the business owner. These are allowed in commercial businesses under the fire code but can be requested by private occupancies by the property owner.

**Permit Use Inspection** – These inspections are done by certified fire inspectors. Certain activity like welding, high-pile storage, or use/storage of hazardous materials require a permit under the fire code. Each permit has a fee paid that covers the cost of providing the inspection of the defined activity. These are typically done annually.

Only “public – common” areas of an apartment building (Laundry Room, Pool Area) are subject to inspection under the fire code. A property owner may request an inspection of their private occupancy. All commercial buildings can be subject to inspections under the fire code. These inspections can be done by on-duty staff with no formal training, or by certified fire inspectors. TFD does not conduct these inspections due to lack of staffing. If an inspection was requested, the FMO would work to meet that customer’s needs.

***Page 18 of 12.14.2021 agenda packet, "With additional staff, from 1.0 to 3.0 FTE's, Tukwila could provide regular inspections, every one to three years, for the estimated 2,500 businesses within Tukwila. Annual inspections could be provided for the estimated 400-600 commercial occupancies that have higher hazards. Additional staff, from 1.0 to the full 3.0 FTE would increase the number of inspections that could be completed each year."***

***b. How was the number of additional inspectors determined? The Enhanced Services scenario has been reduced to 2 FTE's from 3. The overtime budget, according to the published 2021-2022 budget, is \$60,000 per year. If the cost of one inspector, 1 FTE is \$150,000, then the overtime cost of \$60,000, would suggest only 1/2 of an FTE is needed not 2 FTE's... so how was the need determined? Also, contracting for these services could match demand with capacity and keep costs lower.***



Our FMO would need 1-3 FTEs to meet the projected demands of the city. The added FTEs would allow the FMO to standup all the services needed to quickly conduct plan reviews, meet inspection timelines, and conduct all types of inspections (outlined above).

At a minimum, the FMO would need one additional FTE to start the inspections required by “permitted use” activity (welding, high-pile storage, etc.). These inspections are the next most important to conduct when staffing is available. This is an immediate need and standard practice in the area.

Current overtime costs in the FMO are due to doing the minimum needed to meet the city’s needs for development. No permit inspections are being done, or safety inspections. The turnaround time for plan review is too long, and added FTEs are needed to get back on track.

Currently, we utilize two consultants for plan review, and manage inspections with two certified fire inspectors that are also responsible for fire investigation.

Most FMOs in Zone 3 conduct all three of the categorized inspections outlined above. Some safety inspections are done by the on-duty crews, while others use certified FMO staff to inspect all buildings. Most have a schedule to inspect the high hazard properties annually (or more often) and less hazardous propertied every 2 or 3 years. Also, all permitted use inspections are conducted by certified fire inspectors at least annually.

***c. How much additional revenue could be earned if the inspection and planning fees were increased?***

***It appears the average cost for both is \$100... \$100 per inspection and \$100 per plan review. This was calculated as follows. Financial Planning Model, page 15, shows inspection fee revenue at \$80,000 and plan review revenue at \$100,000. On page 5 of the 1.4.22 agenda packet, the number of annual inspections and plan reviews is listed as 800 and 1000 respectively.***

We **estimate** about \$500K in revenue can come from a full service FMO in Tukwila. This is based on the existing fee schedule and workload. We anticipate the workload to increase as development in Tukwila South is beginning. The revenue would not be immediate, as the need to have the program set up prior to applying fees would create this lag time. There would be an immediate cost of FTEs, and then the offsetting revenue would come in once the program is running.

***18. Cares Unit. The \$250,000 of overhead seems very high compared to the \$58,000 projected cost for .33 FTE. What kind of costs make up this \$250,000?***

The CARES unit program can take many forms. We currently received about \$100K in funding from King County for Mobile Integrated Health (MIH). Most organizations in our area use the county MIH money to fund a CARES program. Puget Sound RFA and Renton RFA share a CARES program that covers both organizations. It is estimated that Tukwila would need 1/3 of a CARES unit. Renton RFA can provide CARES service for Tukwila in exchange for the Tukwila MIH funds.

We estimate the costs based on what is needed for starting up our own program with another partner (not an RFA with an existing shared unit). There are capital costs as well as staffing costs to launch a program. This is not the most efficient method but gives the full costs of standing up a program. The viable option would be to partner with neighbors to launch a new program or expand a current program that is in place.

**19. Public Educator. Could public education be accomplished by existing City resources? Some possibilities - messaging could be placed on the City's website or in the Hazelnut, in-person training could be conducted by the Emergency Manager or Fire Chief/Deputy Chief, middle school and high school students could visit FS 54 on a field trip as it's within walking distance of Showalter and Foster, the City's communication division and the Community Connectors (if still being used) could meet with their residential groups to share information.**

A Public Education program can be very flexible. Public Education can be as little as social media messaging, to as much as full school programs. These programs are typically a stand-alone program under the fire department, or under the Fire Marshal's Office. Some of the functions of a robust Public Education program do cross-over to Emergency Management. Currently, there is no capacity available in the fire department for Public Education.

When there is a specific need for Public Education, we can assign this work as needed. This happens after major events when we hold a meeting to engage the public to answer questions and offer safety tips. This is a reactive measure and does little for prevention. Any Public Education work will push back other duties of the assigned personnel. A robust Public Education program is a critical piece required for accredited fire services, and a best practice in the area. Community Risk Reduction programs all incorporate Public Education.

## **Question 21**

***Provide an update on what the Council is considering in regards to Fire Marshal Office staffing?***

The Council is considering entering into a one-year interlocal agreement with Puget Sound RFA to transfer from the City one position in Tukwila Fire Dept. to the PSRFA to help establish a Fire Investigation Unit (FIU) that would serve the City and PSRFA. Renton RFA and other Zone 3 (south County) agencies are also considering joining the FIU. This will remove the need to address fire investigations from the current Tukwila FMO. It does not impact the other enhanced services adds—the Fire Department would still be looking for 1-3 additional inspectors in that office. Council plans to take action on this proposal on March 7<sup>th</sup>.

More specifically, the agreement provides for Tukwila to provide one FTE (Captain Johnson) to PSRFA. Then PSRFA will provide investigation services for Tukwila. This will provide an on-duty investigator Monday – Friday (10-hour shifts), and then a standby investigator (responding from home) on the off hours. The estimated amount of fire investigations in Tukwila is equal to 1.25 FTEs, so we benefit from the efficiency of joining the FIU. The eventual goal is to look at a 24/7 model similar to what existed between PSRFA and VRFA a few years ago.

City of Tukwila  
Future of Fire/EMS Services  
Community Advisory Committee

All dates are **TUESDAYS**, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. All meetings will be conducted on Zoom unless we are able to meet in person.

If you are unable to attend any of the meetings, please let Karen know ([kreedconsult@comcast.net](mailto:kreedconsult@comcast.net) / 206 932 5063)

Meeting 6 March 8, 2022

**Update to City Council at a Council meeting on March 21**

Meeting 7 March 22, 2022

Meeting 8 April 5, 2022

Meeting 9 April 19, 2022

Meeting 10 May 3, 2022

Additional meeting may be scheduled if there is a request from Council and/or additional time is needed for the committee to complete its work.

## List of Potential Future Fire/EMS Service Delivery Options

<p><b>Option 1: Status Quo</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Service Provider:</b> <i>City of Tukwila Fire Department</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Option 2: Status Quo “Plus” – Funding for enhanced services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Service Provider:</b> <i>City of Tukwila Fire Department</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Option 3: Create a Tukwila Fire District, funded solely by property taxes (no Fire Benefit Charge)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Service Provider:</b> <i>A new governmental entity and taxing district, authorized by the voters, with boundaries co-extensive with the City: Tukwila Fire District.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Option 4: Create a Tukwila Fire District, funded by both property taxes and a Fire Benefit Charge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Service Provider:</b> <i>A new governmental entity and taxing district, authorized by the voters, with boundaries co-extensive with the City: Tukwila Fire District.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Option 5: Partner with another fire service provider to create a Tukwila Regional Fire Authority–with a fire benefit charge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Service Provider:</b> <i>Tukwila Regional Fire Authority, a new governmental entity and taxing district, created by voter approval to provide fire suppression and emergency medical response.</i></li> </ul> <p>Potential partners: adjacent fire districts or cities</p>
<p><b>Option 6: Contract for Service with Renton Regional Fire Authority (RRFA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Service Provider:</b> <i>Renton Regional Fire Authority (RRFA), a separate municipal government and taxing district created by voters to provide fire suppression and emergency medical response.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Option 7: Contract for Service with Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority (PSRFA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Service Provider:</b> <i>Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority (PSFA), a separate municipal government and taxing district created by voters to provide fire suppression and emergency medical response.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Option 8: Annexation into Renton RFA</b>          (Note: the RRFA has indicated it is not willing to have the City annex directly into the RFA without <b>first partnering in a service contract</b> capacity for some number of years. However, because it would be very difficult to reconstitute the Tukwila Fire Department after entering into a service contract (or annexing), it makes sense to analyze what annexation might look like as a longer-term option)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Service Provider:</b> Renton RFA (See <b>Option 6</b>)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Option 9: Annex into Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority</b>          (Note: the PSRFA has indicated it <i>may</i> be willing to entertain direct annexation of the City without first entering into a service contract; further discussion would be required. Because it would be very difficult to reconstitute the Tukwila Fire Department after entering into a service contract, it is important to consider how annexation might look as a longer-term option)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Service Provider:</b> Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority (See <b>Option 7</b>)</li> </ul>

Each of these Options primarily describe a service provider and funding mechanism. We will compare and contrast each, including the implementation path.

## **Option 5: Partner with another fire service provider to create a Tukwila Regional Fire Authority—with a fire benefit charge**

**Service Provider:** Tukwila Regional Fire Authority, a new governmental entity and taxing district, created by voter approval.

**Brief description of option:** The City and another adjacent or proximate fire service provider(s) would negotiate a plan for creation of a regional fire authority and submit it to the voters of the member jurisdictions for approval. A regional fire authority has essentially the same service and revenue generating authority as a fire district, however, it has broad discretion to shape its governance/oversight board to meet the needs of the participating partners. The City cannot create an RFA on its own, it must partner with another agency (or agencies) which also must have authority to provide fire service.

Potential partner agencies—adjacent or proximate non-RFA fire service providers—include:

- FD 24 (a small “paper district” served by Tukwila)
- FD 2 (serving Burien/Normandy Park)
- FD 11 (serving the North Highline area)
- FD 20 (Serving West Hill/Skyway)
- Seattle FD

The Tukwila FD has reached out to all these potential partners except the first (FD 24)) and reports that they are not interested in pursuing this option at this time. Similarly, these partners are not interested in merging with TFD (creation of an RFA provides more flexibility on governance so would likely be preferred by Tukwila). That said, uninterested partners could change their mind over time.

This option assumes the City can work to firm up FD24 management/governance and that they are the agency Tukwila would partner with to create a Tukwila RFA. FD 24 does not currently have a board of commissioners in place, or any employees with whom the City could negotiate, but this presumably can be remedied with some work. FD 24 is very small; just a few blocks of area.

Like Option 3 and 4, an RFA would require that an administrative structure be stood up to support the new agency. Costs would be in the same range as for Options 3-4. Also like Options 3 and 4, all employees and the current collective bargaining agreement would be transferred to the new agency; employees would retain their seniority, benefits, accrued vacation, etc.

Current operational costs suggest a fire benefit charge (FBC) and a \$1.00/\$1,000 AV Fire Levy is the most stable approach to fund the current Tukwila operation. Therefore, financially and operationally, there is essentially no difference between this option and **Option 4**, since the service area and AV are basically identical. The difference here is in the process and governance and the type of separate government formed (an RFA versus a fire district).

### **Overview of service provider (services, governance, finances (tax rates, % of budget received from FBC, other fees, taxes))**

An RFA can provide all the same services that a city fire department or a fire district can provide. It also has essentially the same financial authorities.

As with a fire district, an RFA imposing a fire benefit charge, is limited to \$1.00 / \$1,000 A.V. in property taxes. Like a fire district, an RFA would be eligible to receive a share of regional EMS revenues, apply for grants, and charge fees for service.

**Timeframe: Earliest date on which this option could be implemented**

The negotiation of an RFA plan is a somewhat lengthy process and can take a year or more. After formal approval of the plan, it can be placed on the ballot at any election. Voters in all member jurisdictions are entitled to vote. Generally, the goal is to vote in February or April to ensure the RFA taxes can be imposed the following January rather than be delayed a year. With a fire benefit charge involved, a 60% approval vote must be secured to create the RFA.

**Major implementation steps (negotiation, council action, service provider actions, voter approval, etc.)**

Creating an RFA starts with the partner agencies creating a formal planning committee to develop an “RFA plan” outlining funding, services, operations, and governance for the proposed agency. The committee must have 3 elected officials from each participating agency. The plan must be approved by the legislative body of all participating agencies, and then submitted to the voters for approval.

As with creation of a Tukwila Fire District, all fire department employees of both agencies would be transferred to the new RFA, with their seniority, accrued vacation leave and other benefits retained.

The major issues determined by the RFA Planning Committee are:

- Governance -- will the governing body be directly elected, or appointed by the member agencies; if directly elected, members can be at-large or districted)
- Finance – establishing the FBC formula, reserves
- Operations—establishing the organizational chart.

Securing needed voter approval for any option (Option 3, 4 or this option) will require a public education campaign. A “pro” campaign would typically be very helpful and would typically be led by the IAFF. This highlights the importance of union support for any option requiring a vote.

**Current service metrics for service provider (response time)**

Assuming the RFA raised funds at the level required to support the current Tukwila Fire Dept., there would be no change in service levels.

**Enhanced Services Options: staffing/cost**

The RFA could choose to fund these services. The cost would be the same as for the other Tukwila Options 2-4.

**Operational Model Options: Considering a model with fewer than 4 stations in Tukwila? Cost and service implications.**

Same as for Options 3-4. Would require union support.

**Summary of estimated cost components / estimated annual cost to City and/or taxpayers**

See **Attachment A**.

The cost is essentially the same as Option 4, however, there would be additional transaction costs to accommodate the negotiation of the RFA plan with FD 24 (or another partner).

**Staffing implications**

Like Options 3 and 4, by law all employees and the current collective bargaining agreement would be transferred to the new agency; employees would retain their seniority, benefits, accrued vacation, etc.

**Facilities & Equipment –disposition, future costs, debt, any new/different facilities to be deployers?**

Same as Options 3 and 4 –assets would be transferred over to the RFA, excepting that the City may need to retain title to stations with bonded debt. Typically, the RFA would not pay for these assets.

**Oversight/Control – how will Tukwila Council/Mayor be involved in service and cost decisions affecting Tukwila going forward?**

This would depend on the governance model. Tukwila could retain majority control on the governance board if FD24 agreed, and the parties chose a board of directly elected members.

**Summary of implications of this option**

**Cost:** Costs would be essentially the same as Option 4 (Fire District with FBC), except that transaction costs would be higher due to the need to negotiated with FD 24.

**Service Levels:** Current service levels could be maintained under this financing model (\$1.00 Fire Levy and Fire Benefit Charge)

**Oversight/Management Control:** If partnering with FD 24, Tukwila could maintain majority control over the RFA Board through claiming a majority of seats. But engagement of a representative(s) of FD 24 on an ongoing basis would be part of the discourse at the RFA board.

**Other:** Additional transaction time/cost to stand up FD 24 and negotiate an RFA plan with them.

**Risks/Major Unknowns:** Can FD 24 be brought to a position that it can negotiate with the City? How long will that take? Would they agree to negotiate the creation of an RFA with the City? The precise nature of the FBC formula that would be negotiated is also unknown so cost impacts on various sectors of the Tukwila community cannot be estimated.

As with any FBC, the amount collected and formula for collection can be changed each year by the governing board; the check here is that the governing board members are accountable to voters.



# Criteria Discussion Re-cap

Goal: agree on criteria,  
metrics, any ranking

CITY OF TUKWILA FUTURE OF FIRE/EMS COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING 6 - MARCH 14, 2022



# Re-cap of Criteria Discussion at Mtg 5

	Proposed Criteria	Possible Measures for this Criteria
A	Ability of provider to meet needs of diverse community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labor force demographics</li> <li>• Is public education offered in multiple languages?</li> <li>• Access to translators when responding to incidents?</li> </ul>
B	Ability of provider to meet needs of large business community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ladder trucks</li> <li>• Robust FMO</li> <li>• FBC creates awareness of hazards/risks</li> </ul>
C	Total costs, considering both costs to residents and businesses	This data is available.
D	Impact on labor force, recruitment and retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comparable employee benefits packages</li> </ul>
E	Control over operational and financial decisions	Council oversight on costs/services can be demonstrated (or not)
F	Overall quality of services (response times <i>and more</i> )-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire permit review turnaround time</li> <li>• Ideas from CPSM report</li> <li>• What programs are offered (basic, specialized)?</li> </ul>
G	Accountability for outcomes/ ability to measure outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How often is the annual budget exceeded and by how much?</li> </ul>
H	Is public education offered	*merge with F – programs offered.
I	Ability to keep pace with changing/growing community (scalability)	Delete
J	Sustainability of funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FBC more sustainable than property tax</li> </ul>

# Are some criteria more important?

## Pros and Cons of having tiers/rankings for criteria...?

- ▶ A. Ability of provider to meet needs of diverse community
- ▶ B. Ability of provider to meet needs of large business community
- ▶ C. Total costs, considering both costs to residents and businesses
- ▶ D. Impact on labor force, recruitment and retention
- ▶ E. Control over operational and financial decisions
- ▶ F. Overall quality of services (response times *and more*)-
- ▶ G. Accountability for outcomes/ ability to measure outcomes
- ▶ J. Sustainability of funding

Write down  
your top 3  
criteria.  
We will share  
them to see if  
there is easy  
consensus

# Next Steps

- ▶ Supplemental Data template will be developed where criteria metrics not already presented in Option write-ups.



# Options 1-5 Summary & Discussion

MEETING 6 | MARCH 14, 2022

CITY OF TUKWILA FUTURE OF FIRE/EMS COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

# For discussion purposes....

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option	Option 5
	Status Quo	Status Quo + Enhanced Services	Tukwila Fire District—prop. taxes only, <i>Council as governing board</i>	Tukwila Fire District—prop. Taxes & FBC <i>Council as governing board</i>	Tukwila RFA – prop. taxes & FBC; <i>Shared board, City majority</i>
2022 Est. Costs (including retained costs)	\$16.09M	\$16.99M	\$17.84M*	\$17.84M*	\$17.84M*
			*Costs shown do not include funding for enhanced services, but it could be added		
Financial Sustainability	Impacts to other depts. unless new revenue added	Impacts to other depts. unless new revenue added	Relies on strong ongoing voter support for prop. tax “lid lifts,” excess levies	More stable than current, ongoing voter support needed for lid lifts and FBC renewal	More stable than current, ongoing voter support needed for lid lifts, FBC renewal

# For discussion purposes....

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
	Status Quo	Status Quo + Enhanced Services	Tukwila Fire District—prop. taxes only, <i>Council as governing board</i>	Tukwila Fire District—prop. Taxes & FBC <i>Council as governing board</i>	Tukwila RFA – prop. taxes & FBC; <i>Shared board, City majority</i>
Oversight Control, accountability	City controls	City Controls	City controls	City controls	Shared control
Service Levels	Current	Current + Enhanced Services (ES)	Higher risk of service cuts due to property tax reliance	Current levels funded, more stable.	Current levels funded, more stable with FBC included.
			Enhanced Services Funding Could be added to Options 3-5		
Impact on Labor	Essentially same in all options; labor supports providing the enhanced services;				

# For discussion purposes....

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
	Status Quo	Status Quo + Enhanced Services	Tukwila Fire District—prop. taxes only, <i>Council as governing board</i>	Tukwila Fire District—prop. Taxes & FBC <i>Council as governing board</i>	Tukwila RFA – prop. taxes & FBC; <i>Shared board, City majority</i>
Ability of provider to meet needs of diverse community Ability of provider to meet needs of large business community	Option 1 doesn't include enhanced services.	Same for all options, if enhanced services are funded.			
Total costs, considering both costs to residents and businesses	Mix of city revenues used to fund the Fire Department		Costs allocated based solely on property values	Costs will be funded primarily through property tax but some costs will be shifted to larger, riskier structures through the FBC	

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
	Status Quo	Status Quo + Enhanced Services	Tukwila Fire District—prop. taxes only, <i>Council as governing board</i>	Tukwila Fire District—prop. Taxes & FBC <i>Council as governing board</i>	Tukwila RFA – prop. taxes & FBC; <i>Shared board, City majority</i>

- What do you see as the “pros” and “cons” of these options?



DRAFT document for Committee Review

# Status Briefing Future of Fire/EMS Community Advisory Committee

**Presentation to Tukwila City Council**

March 21, 2022

Presenters:

Verna Seal, Committee Chairperson

Hien Kieu, Committee Vice-Chair

Karen Reed, Facilitator

# Committee Mission

Provide findings and recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on the following items:

1. *Sustainability* of the Fire Department service levels within existing City revenues.
2. Any additional Fire Department programs and staffing services that should be priorities to fund in the near-term (0-6 years). *“Enhanced Services”*
3. *Criteria* for evaluating the City’s options for future fire/EMS service delivery.
4. Recommendation as to the preferred option or options for ensuring future provision of high-quality fire/EMS service in the City at a sustainable cost.
5. Public engagement strategies for the City to consider as part of deliberations following delivery of the Advisory Committee’s report

# Committee Members, Timeline

## MEMBERS

Verna Seal, Chair

Hien Kieu, Vice-Chair

Sally Blake

Jim Davis

Katrina Dohn

Ramona Grove

Peggy McCarthy

Jovita McConnell

Ben Oliver

Andy Reiswig

Dennis Robertson

Abdullahi Shakul

- **Committee has met 6 times so far**
- **10 meetings planned (1 added)**
- **First meeting November 9, 2011; last scheduled meeting: May 3**
- **Target to report back to Council in May**

# Committee Work to date

- Committee Charter approved
- Reviewed strategic financial plan projecting Fire Department Cost for 2022-2028
- Reviewed differences between city fire departments, fire districts and regional fire authorities
- 5 out of 9 options developed by Staff Team presented – Options 1-5 focus on Tukwila as a service provider.
- Several discussions of *Enhanced Services*
  - CARES unit contract
  - Public Education program
  - Additional Fire Marshal's Office staffing
- Several discussions of *criteria* for evaluating options, and what constitutes *Fiscal sustainability*

# Fire Dept. Strategic Financial Plan 2022-2028

- Current Fire Department Operation, plus:
  - Additional reserve funds to fund predictable expenses
  - Additional bond issue for Stations 51 and 52
- Some key findings:
  - City General Fund expenses growing faster than City general fund revenues
  - Fire Department in 2022 expends equivalent of \$1.80/\$1,000 AV in property taxes.
  - Total city levy rate in 2022 is \$2.18/\$1,000 AV

# Financial Sustainability

- Based on discussion to date, the Committee would define “**financial sustainability**” for fire/EMS services as follows:

*A fire agency is considered fiscally sustainable if it can maintain service levels within available revenues – in the City’s case (as a government providing many services), this means maintaining fire/EMS service levels without negatively impacting services in other City departments competing for the same funding.*

- Based on information provided, a strong majority of the committee agree that the city’s current fire department operations are not financially sustainable.

# Enhanced Services

- Based on discussion to date, most committee members support the addition of at least some of the proposed enhanced services and would prefer that new funding be secured for these services, rather than continue cutting into other departments.

# Criteria important to the Committee for making a recommendation on future fire/EMS service include:

- Ability of provider to meet needs of diverse community
- Ability of provider to meet needs of large business community
- Total costs, considering both costs to residents and businesses
- Impact on labor force, recruitment and retention
- Control over operational and financial decisions
- Overall quality of services (response times *and more*)-
- Accountability for outcomes/ ability to measure outcomes
- Sustainability of funding



# Options 1-9

- Staff Team has identified these as potentially workable options.
- To date, the committee has discussed Options 1-5, all of which have Tukwila as the service provider.

Blue cells are “Tukwila Only” options

Green Cells are options where Tukwila partners with other agencies

**Option 1: Status Quo**

**Option 2: Status Quo “Plus” – Funding for enhanced services**

**Option 3: Create a Tukwila Fire District, funded solely by property taxes (no Fire Benefit Charge)**

**Option 4: Create a Tukwila Fire District, funded by both property taxes and a Fire Benefit Charge**

**Option 5: Partner with another fire service provider to create a Tukwila Regional Fire Authority—with a Fire Benefit Charge**

**Option 6: Contract for Service with Renton Regional Fire Authority (RRFA)**

**Option 7: Contract for Service with Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority (PRSRFA)**

**Option 8: Annexation into Renton RFA**

**Option 9: Annex into Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority**

# Next steps for committee

- Complete briefings on Options 6-9 (RFAs)
- Identify strategies and tactics to communicate these issues to the Tukwila community after the committee's work is finished.
- Develop recommendations and report to the city council

Questions? Comments?

*Thank you!*