

**City of Bellingham – Fire District 8 Regional Fire
Authority Planning Committee
Meeting 6**

Date: Monday, October 16, 2017

Time: 3:00P.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Location: Bellingham City Hall - Mayor's Board Room

Proposed Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes October 2, 2017
2. Process Check – Chief Newbold and Chief Hewett (25-minutes)
3. Issue Paper #4 Internal Services -Brian Heinrich (40minutes)
4. Follow up discussion on the Life Safety Division and OEM (30-minutes)
5. Future Direction (20-minutes)
6. Next Agenda/Date (5-Minutes)
7. Closing Comments/Adjourn

The Regional Fire Authority Planning Committee meeting was called to order by Bellingham City Councilmember Terry Bornemann at 3:00 P.M. The meeting was held in the Mayor's Boardroom at Bellingham City Hall, 210 Lottie Street, Bellingham.

Present: Kelli Linville, COB Mayor
Bill Hewett, Assistant Fire Chief
Rob Neher, Fire District 8 Commissioner
Rick Sepler, COB Planning and Community Development Director
Terry Bornemann, Bellingham City Council
Michael Lilliquist, Bellingham City Council
Brian Heinrich, COB Deputy Administrator
Roger Buswell, Fire District 8 Commissioner
Dave Pethick, Fire Captain, IAFF L106 VP
Kristi Clift, Fire Admin Services Manager
Todd Lagestee, Citizen
Brian Henshaw, COB Finance Director
Bill Newbold, COB Fire Chief
David Lehman, Fire District 8 Commissioner
Andy Asbjornsen, COB Finance Manager

Butch Markhart, Fire District 8 Commissioner

1. Approval of Minutes October 2, 2017 meeting.
2. Process Check – Chief Newbold and Chief Hewett (25-minutes)

Chief Newbold summarized the ongoing process and timeline. He wants to try to give some background on what has been brought forward so far. The sequence of items that have been presented so far has been based on knowledge of what we will need to spend time on. The Fire Department has been bringing up these items in the form of issue papers, which are commonly used by other jurisdictions. Chief Newbold showed an example of Lynwood and Sno. Co 1 issues list. He pointed out that the colors are not significant to our discussion. Chief Newbold wanted to show this as an example of items he knows we will need to talk about as we go forward. He guesses BFD will need to address approximately 80% of these same items. The planning committee won't need to address labor issues in detail because this has already been resolved over the past few years between the existing labor group. Chief Newbold showed the template that has been used to bring issues forward, stating it seems to have worked for other agencies and the format is similar to a COB agenda bill. At the first planning committee meeting we reviewed a planning schedule used by Sno 1 and we thought we could/should model our planning committee process using the same template. Chief Newbold further explained the legislation for timing for establishing an RFA. Chief Newbold also showed an example of Renton's planning document. His purpose for showing these other agencies' issue lists is to illustrate the length of time for getting through all the issues timely and remind us of our end goal. Chief Newbold's purpose in looking at the elements of the plans is to help us all understand what we are actually trying to develop during this planning process. The plans shown from Renton/King County FD25 and Lynnwood/Snohomish Co 1 were the actual plans developed by their respective planning committees, and which were brought to their voters. Chief Newbold provided examples of the statements that are included in the planning documents.

Mayor Kelli pointed out that there are opportunities to make recommendations within the planning committee process. Some include estimated transition times.

Chief Newbold walked through many examples of items in the Renton RFA Plan. He explained his purpose in doing this is to recognize what our end goal is in this process. Within the planning document it references an Interlocal Agreement – that document is where we get into the “weeds” of how certain items function. Chief Newbold asked for comments and thoughts on where we are going and what the plan should look like.

Councilmember Bornemann said he has realized we don't necessarily need to get all the details worked out and cross every "T" and dot every "I". We need to get a general framework only. The more complex parts will be worked out later.

Councilmember Lilliquist said he agrees, but does think we need some details, for example the Finance parts.

Mayor Linville said she understands. She agrees that certain things should go with the RFA, but not get into a lot of details at this point. She feels like the conversations may have slipped into the details instead of just the plan to move forward.

Councilmember Bornemann and Chief Newbold explained they had postponed some decisions from last meeting because Mayor Linville wasn't there.

Councilmember Lilliquist said he's not ready to make any decisions without more information.

Assistant Chief Hewett said when we talk about making decisions, we may be over analyzing what decision we are making. Simply it is only a decision about whether it is a service we continue providing? We will hammer out the details later.

Mayor Linville would like discussions about services Fire is currently doing. She doesn't feel like we can just assume Fire will continue providing all the same services. She wants discussions on this. Some are automatic, but some need discussion.

Captain Pethick explained that the Fire Chiefs only want to illustrate the complexity and clarify that we are not trying to cut off any conversation.

Chief Newbold stated that we can keep with current meeting schedule and tackle issue by issue as we have been doing, or he proposed another option, which is to consider using an existing RFA Plan (Renton's?) and highlight where we feel more discussion is needed before key decisions are to be made. Regarding simpler issues, we may agree that we are not sure of all the details, but the referenced RFA plan as written seems palatable for such issues. Chief Newbold suggested that some specific issues may require discussion outside of RFA planning committee, as a staff team among the City, and then be brought back to planning committee.

Mayor Linville likes this approach. She asks about Brian Heinrich's information regarding internal services.

Chief Newbold responds that Brian is likely prepared to speak about internal services.

Deputy Administrator Heinrich confirms that he is prepared.

Mayor Linville asks Commissioner Buswell if the District commissioners feel like the example of the plan shown looks reasonable. (Renton RFA Plan)

District Commissioners all agree this is reasonable for most part. They recognize that some details may be changed.

Councilmember Bornemann states that discussions occurring outside of the Planning Committee meetings which is similar to how they operate on City council.

Councilmember Lilliquist said he agrees the internal services are going to be where we slow down.

Chief Newbold confirms that as we start working on Finance we will rely heavily on the Finance depart and other departments for their expertise and details. Chief Newbold will take the Renton RFA Plan provided and revise it to reflect our process and needs.

Mayor Linville wants to look at the substance of the example plan first.

Chief Newbold asks for clarification as to when we will look through this plan – now or at the next meeting?

Councilmember Bornemann asks what everyone wants to review?

Assistant Chief Hewett suggests we go ahead and review Life Safety and OEM. He also wants to reference the example of the Renton plan. Renton plan references the RFA will provide Fire Protection and Emergency Services. We never finished the Level of Service discussion previously – Renton plan adopts the current levels of service provided in the existing areas as they are today – the decision is whether to adopt current levels of service, or do we develop new levels of service?

Councilmember Lilliquist disagrees that our current 2 levels of service are not adequate – he believes there are transition areas that need to be addressed.

Commissioner Markhart said that just because response time level is 8 minutes in the District (example) they don't sit in the station for 3 minutes and then respond.

Assistant Chief Hewett suggested we obviously still have questions about level of service and that we should highlight this issue to address later.

Assistant Chief Hewett said Fire Prevention service (Life Safety) is an existing service being provided by BFD in City limits, and in the District being provided by Whatcom County or Lummi Nation.

Mayor Linville asks for further discussion on this item.

Assistant Chief Hewett said Emergency Management Services are also currently being provided by BFD in City limits, in the District this is being provided by County or Lummi.

Mayor Linville asks for further discussion on this item. She said she has further questions regarding our current OEM BFD employee.

Assistant Chief Hewett asks if Public Education should go with the RFA – all agreed this should transfer to RFA.

Deputy Administrator Heinrich responds that the Planning committee previously requested details regarding costs for further analysis of internal services. He worked with Finance Director Henshaw and other staff members to provide a break out of these services. These are only estimates, not actuals – recognize that changes could occur for actuals. He summarized documents details. He said that Public Works services are significant. In looking at the Renton plan example and reaching out to other organizations he developed some recommendations for transition period – short, medium, long terms. There are various options with all of these items. He suggested we consider ease of transition, impacts on existing staff, etc.

Mayor Linville asked whether the Fleet costs shown are the maintenance of current fleet or replacement of fleet?

Deputy Administrator Heinrich confirmed this is the maintenance, not the replacement.

Mayor Linville asked if Fleet replacement funds would go with the RFA?

Assistant Chief Hewett confirmed Fleet replacement funds would go with the RFA.

Councilmember Lilliquist asked about the LEOFF Pension board?

Deputy Administrator Heinrich agreed this would be something we need further discussion on.

Chief Newbold confirmed that the LEOFF debt and liability had stayed with the City of Renton and they continued to use the Renton City pension board.

Deputy Administrator Heinrich confirmed that the RFA planning document could have language with details that are subject to change/revision.

Planning Director Sepler asked if there is compensation that comes back to the city for these internal services?

Assistant Chief Hewett confirmed that as we talk about all of these different services there will be services provided to the City from the RFA, as well as services provided to the RFA from the City and there will be fees associated with all of these services.

Chief Newbold said Renton's plan for LEOFF states where these obligations reside.

Finance Director Henshaw said he would need to do much more research on the LEOFF details, and that other cities have done different ways. There is a very short time period to work through all the details.

Councilmember Lilliquist said that the Finance section may be an area that we should have further discussion about LEOFF separate from the rest of Finance.

Assistant Chief Hewett agrees we need to speak more about many of these issues to discover the details.

Councilmember Lilliquist asked if the definition of the long term should be 3+ years or never, just so there is not an assumption that it will go with the RFA?

Assistant Chief Hewett hears consensus from the Planning Committee on transitioning most of the items. He says they will continue to work on details with Finance Director Henshaw.

Chief Newbold said he knows that working with Finance and all other departments is a lot of work ahead of us. He asks how do we get departments prepared to look at different details and when will this be decided? He wants to chart a path to meet the expectations.

Councilmember Bornemann asks if there are items that Finance can begin working on?

Mayor Linville said she wants more details regarding Life Safety and Emergency Management; she can't decide today, not based on cost, but based on Function.

Councilmember Bornemann asks if there is time for City staff to have a meeting before the next planning meeting to allow staff to discuss?

All the District commissioners agreed to this process.

Councilmember Lilliquist says he has been anxious to get into the finance details. He wonders if contracting or in-house internal service are roughly the same costs?

Mayor Linville said the current conversations to rejoin the emergency council have been complicated.

Assistant Chief Hewett responds that even in a different emergency management model, an RFA would provide those services to the City through a contract.

Mayor Linville said her interest is that if the fire department is part of the city their obligations are beyond the Fire Department and are City wide. If this is provided with the RFA, their interest may not represent the City interests and she is concerned about losing this.

Assistant Chief Hewett confirmed this is a genuine concern for both OEM and Life Safety and they would be services provided to the City.

Mayor Linville said she would at least want a City employee managing those contracts to maintain the City point of view and interests.

Chief Newbold agrees their obligations for Life Safety and Emergency Management would be spelled out in the contracts. When he envisions an RFA he sees the RFA Chief would still attend commissioner meetings and council meetings and City Department Head meetings to keep up on City issues for the body they are serving.

Mayor Linville said she would no longer be the Fire Chief's boss.

Captain Pethick said he appreciates these conversations and wants to reassure Mayor Linville the he has heard concerns from her and others about the different interests.

Mayor Linville invited Captain Pethick to come talk to her about these issues.

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Next meetings are currently scheduled for October 30th, Nov, 20, Nov. 27, and Dec 18

Chief Newbold said with the shared interests of City staff getting together, can these discussions be accomplished before the next meeting on Oct 30th?

Mayor Linville and Councilmember Bornemann confirm they can do this.

Chief Newbold said he will work with Mayor Linville's staff to coordinate schedules to meet.

Mayor Linville confirmed this is a priority for all.

Mayor Linville asks about defining the need for forming an RFA as part of the planning document.

Chief Newbold provided an example of another agency's statement. He said that BFD does need additional resources to serve the community needs that we are not currently meeting.

Mayor Linville said she wants to be very thoughtful about this process and wants a well thought out plan.

Captain Pethick asks the group for clarification on what they believe the planning document should be based on. He assumes the document should be based on current needs, but not specifics. This will be further discussed.

Councilmember Bornemann adjourns the meeting at 4:37pm.

Recorded by Kristi Clift.