

**City of Bellingham – Fire District 8
Regional Fire Authority Planning Committee
Meeting 11**

Date: **Monday, January 29, 2018**

Time: 3:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Location: Bellingham City Hall - Mayor's Boardroom

Proposed Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes January 19th, 2018 (5 minutes)
2. Section 5, Governance, edits from legal (10 minutes)
3. Follow up on Section 8, Operations and Services (30 minutes)
4. Section 4, Jurisdictional Boundaries, follow up (15 minutes)
5. Section 6, Funding and Finance, information only (30 minutes)
6. Planning Committee Items? (20 Minutes)
7. Next Agenda (5 minutes)
8. Closing Comments/Adjourn

The Regional Fire Authority Planning Committee meeting was called to order by Bellingham City Councilmember Terry Bornemann at 3:02 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
Terry Bornemann, Bellingham City Council
Michael Lilliquist, Bellingham City Council
Roger Buswell, Fire District 8 Commissioner
Dave Pethick, Fire Captain, IAFF L106 VP
Kristi Clift, FD Admin Services Manager
Todd Lagestee, Citizen
Brian Henshaw, COB Finance Director
Bill Newbold, COB Fire Chief
Brian Heinrich, COB Deputy Administrator
Ted Carlson, COB Public Works Director
Rob Glorioso, Local 106 President
Monea Kerr, COB Mayor's Office

Rick Sepler, COB Planning and Community Development Director
Peter Ruffato, COB Attorney
Andy Asbjornsen, COB Accounting Manager

1. Approval of Minutes January 19th, 2018

The January 19th, 2018 minutes were unanimously approved.

The planning committee unanimously decided to switch agenda items 2 and 3.

2. Follow up on Section 8, Operations and Services (30 minutes)

Bellingham Assistant Fire Chief Bill Hewett presented follow up on Section 8, Operations and Services. The City of Bellingham, through the Bellingham Fire Department currently provides Fire Investigation Services within the boundaries of the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County currently provides Fire Investigation Services within the District. On the Effective Date, Fire Investigation Services within the boundaries of the RFA shall be provided as follows:

Within the City Bellingham: The RFA will provide origin and cause investigation to the City of Bellingham and the City of Bellingham shall designate the RFA Chief as its Fire Chief and the RFA Fire Marshal as its Fire Marshal. The RFA shall cooperate with the City of Bellingham in any criminal investigations as appropriate. Within unincorporated Whatcom County, Whatcom County shall provide Fire Investigation Services. The RFA would cooperate with the City of Bellingham in criminal investigations. As a city department, fire investigators investigate the origin of the fire and if it is criminal, they pass the case to the Bellingham Police Department and they conduct criminal investigations. If the crime is related to fire, we would continue to help them with their investigation. Whatcom County would continue to be used as investigative services out there. The RFA will provide both in the city and the district for public education services as it exists currently. In public education services, there are no statutory requirements.

On the Effective Date, Emergency Management Services within the boundaries of the RFA shall be provided as follows: Within the City of Bellingham: The City of Bellingham shall develop policy direction for Emergency Management Services within the city boundaries. The RFA will implement and coordinate Emergency Management Services within the City boundaries, as identified in the Inter-local Agreement (ILA). At a future date beyond the effective date, the City may choose to rejoin the Whatcom County Emergency Management Council for Emergency Management Services and subsequently negotiate another ILA with the RFA. Within unincorporated Whatcom County: Whatcom County shall remain the provider of Emergency Management Services. The new part in the Emergency Management section is recognizing that at a future date beyond the effective date, the City may choose to rejoin the Whatcom County Emergency Management Council, which would their change the relationship with the RFA. On the effective date, the City provides policy direction, while the RFA provides implementation and coordination.

On the Effective Date, the RFA will assume the fire and EMS dispatching functions previously provided by the City of Bellingham Fire Department with the approval of the What-Comm/Prospect Administrative Board. At a future date, the What-Comm/Prospect Administrative Board may choose to co-locate or consolidate dispatch services countywide which would require a new agreement between the affected agencies.

Councilmember Lilliquist said I would consider renaming F. Prospect Communications. We should name it something like “Dispatching,” so the public doesn’t get confused, then refer specifically to Prospect Communications Center.

Councilmember Bornemann said does that work for everyone?

COB Fire Captain Dave Pethick said knowing that this section has gotten awhile to get here, and that we have other work like the budget to do, these words could use some clarification. If I’m building a budget, should I be anticipating a new employee for emergency management?

COB Mayor Kelli Linville said maybe I misunderstood. It’s my understanding we are only talking about Prospect for the purpose of this planning document, so Whatcomm would stay.

Captain Pethick said Prospect Communications is not Whatcomm.

Finance Director Brian Henshaw said we have to know who is going to reside where. This was a change from Thursday in our last conversation. I agree with Captain Pethick, we are going back and forth. It has changed from Thursday and Friday to now.

Mayor Kelli said I did agree to it. We were talking about it before we were talking to the chiefs about it. We would have fire and emergency management go with the RFA and the rest of the stuff would stay with city. We nuanced life safety. We are in the middle of deciding what the future of Whatcomm will be through a study that is being conducted. If we have to change it, we can. We are doing the biennial budget as well.

Councilmember Lilliquist said for those of us who weren’t in that meeting last week, what was the other way?

Mayor Kelli said if you want to make it as clean as possible, you would say fire services, emergency medical services without dispatch, life safety or emergency management. Just those fire activities would go with the RFA.

Councilmember Lilliquist said by default, dispatch doesn’t go with the RFA?

Mayor Kelli said until there is a decision by the Whatcomm board, this is how it is. I am happy to have that discussion. In some ways it’s easier to just do the fire stuff.

Councilmember Bornemann said the Whatcomm debate has been going on for years. It could change at some point but very well could not. We have been looking at this for a very long time.

Mayor Kelli said it is important that we are doing the study and will gain information to move forward with. 2.2 was a compromise.

Assistant Chief Hewett said this reflects the intent of the city. There is a study ongoing and we want to be able to point to the fact that that's out there.

Captain Pethick said in emergency management, is that a position that the RFA should be budgeting for?

Mayor Kelli said we might want to discuss if we will be joining the county emergency management council before we hire for that position. We don't know who would be designated to that position. One of the two Bills would be the one who does it, but who is our point person in the City to work with the RFA? We need to have somebody. It's hard to figure out the finances if we don't know the answer to that question. We need to look at the cost of doing it this way vs. keeping it all with us. We need to make sure we are not shutting the door on a colocation.

Councilmember Lilliquist said to answer Captain Pethick's question, I read this as emergency management services, and yes you should put that in your budget. 2.1C says Whatcom County will provide. 2.1A says implement and coordinate. I like that the city will coordinate policy, but if they will have to implement, coordinate/provide emergency management, then yes you have to budget.

Chief Newbold said Paul Gazdik is an implementer and coordinator within the city and in conjunction with the City's policy and multiple City departments. His role today is that he works with many different departments. He is in the Fire Department's budget and provides implementation amongst many different departments, and works at direction of the mayor in regards to emergency managements. As the code states, the fire chief by charter is the emergency manager.

Chief Hewett said it says the city would provide policy and the RFA would provide services at the beginning. The committee originally thought provide was too strong of a word.

Councilmember Bornemann said if we have to change the language, given your definition of the position and how it operates, does it work with you to be in the budget of the RFA, but still function with those issues with the different departments and under you chief?

Chief Newbold said that would be at the direction of the planning committee.

Finance Director Henshaw said ultimately, it has to be paid for.

Councilmember Bornemann said if it's in fire budget now, it would remain in the RFA budget.

Finance Director Henshaw said are they going to pay for it by the Fire Benefit Charge or a transfer to the city by the RFA? All of these services need to be taken one step further – how will they be paid for?

Mayor Kelli said if we decide where the positions are going to be, we can decide who pays for it. It's important to know where they are before deciding who will be paying for them.

COB Attorney Peter Ruffato said what if we changed section 2.1A to "The RFA will provide implementation and coordination of emergency management services."

Mayor Kelli said that's not a significant change.

Councilmember Lilliquist said the idea of coordination makes me glad it's there.

Assistant Chief Hewett said I'd like to point out the planning document vs. the ILA. The ILA would have more details. The planning document is nebulous. We don't want to get into the exact things the City wants because in the future, the City's desire may change and it's easier to address that in the ILA. If later on the City wants to make changes, the only way they can is through the ILA. This document, once live can only be changed by the RFA board.

Mayor Kelli said that is why a few of these things gives a little more broad direction rather than completely leaving it open and nobody knows what we agreed to. I appreciate some clarifying comments.

Councilmember Lilliquist said this is a very high level document. I am worried about it not indicating enough. Coordinate is an important term. I think that this is my chance and the planning committee's last chance to provide guidance. Once it's out the door, it's the RFA board's documents. I want more specificity.

Councilmember Lilliquist said I like the idea to change it to "The RFA will provide implementation and coordination of emergency management services"

Councilmember Bornemann said does everyone agree here?

Fire District 8 Commissioner Roger Buswell said I don't know how many people remember the original Whatcomm, but I do – I've seen it in action, and it isn't pretty. I'd rather have them separated. I wouldn't want to see them back together. The law enforcement side basically ran the thing, and fire didn't have any say. They'd grab fire dispatchers and use them for law enforcement. That's why it got separated in the beginning.

Mayor Kelli said we are looking at the different ways that people do different jobs. We have to build a new building. Is it efficient to build a building with colocation rather than just for one of the organizations? Collocation is what we are talking about because of the new building that will be needed. Received

Commissioner Buswell said collocating would work.

Mayor Kelli said if Bellingham is rejoining Whatcom Emergency Management Council, we would have to have a big voice and say because we serve so many.

Councilmember Bornemann said going back to item 2, what was our edit?

City Attorney Ruffato said item 2 section 2.1A will be changed to The RFA **will provide implementation and coordination** Emergency Management Services within the City boundaries, as identified in the Inter-local Agreement (ILA).

Councilmember Lilliquist said we also changed F from "Prospect Communications" to "Fire & EMS Dispatch."

Councilmember Lilliquist said 2.1 under F says the RFA would assume fire and EMS dispatch. The RFA leaves emergency management where Commissioner Buswell would want it. But it leaves the door open for future foolishness.

Captain Pethick said the title of Prospect Communications is changed to Fire and EMS Dispatch.

The planning committee unanimously approved this change.

Councilmember Lilliquist said we should state the obvious in item A section 3 – There are two levels of service there. I'd like to add a final sentence along the lines of "The RFA governing body shall have the authority to review and revise levels of service as appropriate." I would like to hint at what is already true – its non-substantive, but I would like to add that sentence to clarify.

Assistant Chief Hewett said past G, at the very bottom of the section, it says "The **OPERATIONS AND SERVICES** section of the **RFA Plan** is subject to amendment by a majority vote of the RFA Governance Board," which essentially says the same thing.

Councilmember Lilliquist said we are adopting two levels of service, but they can be changed in the future. It indicates that there will be future flexibility. The implication there is important and I would ask that we add that sentence. I'm leaving a bread crumb

Mayor Kelli said, so the last line after G would stay?

Councilmember Lilliquist said yes, it's kind of a boiler plate.

Chief Newbold said it's duplicated at the very beginning and the end.

The planning committee unanimously approved this change.

Councilmember Bornemann said we have approved individual sections, should we approve them as a whole too?

Assistant Chief Hewett said the last one we have to approve is section G. Sections A-F say "this is what we want to do" Section G specifically speaks to 'in order to making the transition happen...' The City of Bellingham Fire Department staff assigned to the Life Safety Division shall be transferred over to the RFA. The RFA Life Safety Division shall be organized as provided in Appendix D. The City of Bellingham agrees to designate the Chief and Fire Marshal of the RFA as the Chief and Fire Marshal of the City of Bellingham. Unless otherwise noted in the RFA Plan or the Inter-local Agreement, the transfer of authority and the Life Safety Division of the RFA shall be seamless and shall initially model the current Life Safety Division of the City of Bellingham Fire Department. The RFA shall enforce Fire Code within City of Bellingham and, except as provided in the Inter-local Agreement, the City shall provide the necessary prosecution and police support for enforcement of code enforcement issues. The RFA shall conduct origin and cause investigation within City of Bellingham and, except as provided in the Inter-local Agreement. The RFA shall cooperate with the City of Bellingham in any criminal investigations as appropriate. The City of Bellingham Fire Department staff assigned to the Life Safety Division shall be transferred over to the RFA. The City of Bellingham Fire

Department staff assigned to the Prospect Communication Center shall be transferred over to the RFA.

Captain Pethick said Appendix D is saved for our organization chart. Specifics wouldn't be in Appendix D.

Mayor Kelli said I want to be sure that it's based on the model in the current ILA.

Chief Hewett said there is going to be a short window of time when the RFA will become live and we will be able to get an ILA through a governing board that will adopt it. In the little window between October 1st and the first board meeting and City Council meeting where the board can adopt the ILA, we will have a seamless transition.

Mayor Kelli said the initial model of the current life safety sounds too specific.

Assistant Chief Hewett said the changes in permit review we were talking about, we are implementing that beforehand with or without the RFA. In that transition, life safety will continue to do what they were doing on the day we are live.

Mayor Kelli asked: Could there just be a period after seamless? It basically says the ILA will describe the division of duties.

Assistant Chief Hewett said 1.5 states "The RFA shall enforce Fire Code within City of Bellingham and, except as provided in the Inter-local Agreement, the City shall provide the necessary prosecution and police support for enforcement of code enforcement issues."

Mayor Kelli said I think the "and" after "except" should be deleted, so it would read "The RFA shall enforce Fire Code within City of Bellingham, except as provided in the Inter-local Agreement, the City shall provide the necessary prosecution and police support for enforcement of code enforcement issues."

Chief Hewett said 1.7 is a duplicate.

City Attorney Ruffato said 1.6 should include county because if it's a felony, it would be their jurisdiction.

Councilmember Lilliquist said we should add "and other jurisdictions" to 1.6.

The planning committee unanimously approved the above changes.

Chief Hewett said 1.7 should say staff assigned to the "Office of Emergency Management" 1.8 includes dispatchers, which finished up section G.

Commissioner Neher said I have a quick question – basically, in G section 1.4 right after the seamless part, we're already doing that with the ILA now right? The model is based on BFD's response and policies, such as apparatus, crews and responses? "It shall initially model the current Life Safety Division of the City..." which is what we are doing now with the ILA right?

Mayor Kelli said yes with Fire District 8 in Whatcom County.

Chief Hewett said the Life Safety division is specific to the fire marshal in the City's case.

Captain Pethick said what if we adopted Section 8, Operations and Services with the amendments, and we will do best with Monea's notes to reflect these changes

Section 8, Operations and Services was unanimously adopted as amended.

3. Section 5, Governance, edits from legal (10 minutes)

Assistant Chief Hewett said City Attorney Ruffato provided us with some edits to Section 5 on Governance and we have been getting those edits melded into where we were. Item 2 states:

Transition Board. Upon the Effective Date, the Transition Board shall include five (5) voting members consisting of two (2) seated, elected Commissioners from Fire District 8 to be appointed by the F.D. 8 board, and three (3) seated, elected officials from the City to be appointed by the City Council to serve as the "Transition Board."

- a. **Position 1.** This position will be filled by a District Commissioner.
- b. **Position 2.** This position will be filled by a District Commissioner.
- c. **Position 3.** This position will be filled by one elected official from the City.
- d. **Position 4.** This position will be filled by one elected official from the City.
- e. **Position 5.** This position will be filled by one elected official from the City.

The change in this section is that we originally had Position 1 being filled by a District Commissioner, Position 2 being filled by a City elected official, Position 3 being filled by a District Commissioner and Positions 4 and 5 being filled by a City elected official. The change is that Positions 1 and 2 are now to be filled by a District Commissioner. Wards 1 and 2 were the ones that touched the Fire District, so this makes sense with our new ward map. Item 3 states:

3. Permanent Governing Board and Commissioner Districts. The Transition Board shall transition to a Permanent Governing Board consisting of five (5) elected commissioner positions as follows:

- a. **Position 1** shall be filled by a registered voter residing within **commissioner district number 1** and shall serve an Initial Term of six (6) years. The initial election for this position shall be at the 2019 general election.
- b. **Position 2** shall be filled by a registered voter residing within **commissioner district number 2** and shall serve an Initial Term of six (6) years. The initial election for this position shall be at the 2021 general election.

c. Position 3 shall be filled by a registered voter residing within **commissioner district number 3** and shall serve an Initial Term of six (6) years. The initial election for this position shall be at the 2019 general election.

d. Position 4 shall be filled by a registered voter residing within **commissioner district number 4** and shall serve an Initial Term of six (6) years. The initial election for this position shall be at the 2021 general election.

e. Position 5 shall be filled by a registered voter residing within **commissioner district number 5** and shall serve an Initial Term of two (2) years. The initial election for this position shall be at the 2021 general election.

Positions 1 and 3 will transition in the first election cycle, and positions 2, 4, and 5 will transition in the second election cycle. Two positions will be phased out in each election cycle except for the third cycle. The appointed commissioner position wards would line up with people in those wards that would be able to run in those districts. In item 3.2, peter provided changes about eligibility.

City Attorney Ruffato said I don't know if this is the latest version, but I am noticing some changes we settled on that aren't in here. I'm noticing, for example, for all commissioner positions we had eligibility and voting. I'm not seeing some of the last changes in these documents.

Captain Pethick said this is what we had on Thursday afternoon. The two that are struck out are the two changes we had last week.

City Attorney Ruffato said if that's the case, we need to do more work on this.

Assistant Chief Hewett said the second hand email I got didn't have any changes to 3.2.

City Attorney Ruffato said mine was rough on the formatting. In B, it stated "only registered voters **of** a commissioner district may vote..."

Councilmember Lilliquist said I would rather wait and see the language.

City Attorney Ruffato went to get the document.

City Attorney Ruffato returned with the draft changes and said in section 3.2 there are three main differences (in bold):

3.2. For all Commissioner Positions 1-5, the following **voting and eligibility** conditions apply:

a. To be eligible to hold a commissioner position the person must be a registered voter who resides **within** the applicable commissioner district and a resident of such commissioner district for one year proceeding the general election for the position; and

b. Only registered voters **of** a commissioner district may **vote at a primary election to nominate candidates for the commissioner position of such district; and**

- c. All registered voters of the RFA shall be eligible to vote at a general election to elect a commissioner of the commissioner district; and
- d. No elected commissioner shall hold any other public office that would be incompatible with the office of fire commissioner, while serving as a fire commissioner; and
- e. No elected commissioner shall hold any other employment with the Regional Fire Authority.

Assistant Chief Hewett said this gets to what the planning committee was looking for – a registered voter that resides in the specific district, who can't hold another public office that wouldn't be incompatible.

City Attorney Ruffatto said sometimes we appoint people to one board and they are servicing on another board. When you get to the point of electing, what D says is already part of state law but it calls it out in this document. There are various analyses that have been done that prove that it is unfavorable to be on two different boards at once. For example, you can't be on the School District Board and the Planning Commission, and this calls those out on a case by case basis.

Hewett – primary elections are held in commissioner districts only.

Unanimously approved to replace draft divisions to 3.2

The planning committee unanimously approved Section 5, Governance as amended.

4. Section 6, Funding and Finance, information only (30 minutes)

Captain Dave Pethick said this is an opportunity for us to talk about funding and finance and there is still a lot of work to be done here. We have some talking points to get us thinking about it. This is an opportunity for us to start talking about this. The talking points for Section 6 were built over the weekend to continue our conversation on funding and finance. When we talk about people, financing, the interim, revenues collected, etc., how do we address these? In terms of asset transfers, what does the planning committee feel about the City reserve fund, City fleet fund, CIRF fund (the computer and internet replacement fund), debt transfers – city ambulance and fire district loans, leave liabilities? We need to talk about potential RFA revenues, service contracts, permits and inspection fees, fire impact and mitigation fees, property taxes, levy taxes, etc. The Fire Benefit Charge must be reasonably proportioned and must have a public hearing process.

Mayor Kelli said I see this as an initial conversation for finance and funding.

Captain Pethick said this is a starting point and not an all-inclusive list.

Captain Pethick said: How do we arrive at a fire benefit charge? These are rough numbers for example. If you have a total budget of \$30,000, a property tax value of \$11,000, BLS transport

fees of \$500,000, and contract fees of \$8,000,000, the total supplemental funds needed (FBC) would be \$10,500,000, which represents about 35 percent of the 60 percent statute max or the most we can charge. The Fire Benefit Charge must be reasonably proportionate and fair. The thing to remember about the Fire Benefit Charge is that we decide what we need and the formula helps us charge proportionately throughout the community. One thing you don't see here is a construction category.

The Fire Benefit Charge formula is $\text{SQRT}(\text{SqFt}) \times 18 \times \text{Cost per Gallon} \times \text{Balancing Factor} \times \text{Cat Factor} \times \text{discount} = \text{FBC}$

- Square root of $\text{SQFT} \times 18$ = simplified formula for needed fire flow in gallons
- CPG = The Cost per Gallon Factor (CPG) is determined by dividing the total Supplemental Operating funds needed (Total FBC) by the Total Fire Flow ($\text{SQRT}(\text{totsqft}) \times 18$) of the District. $\text{TotFBC}/\text{TotFF} = \text{CPG}$
- Balancing factor = Used to compute the exact revenue target, 0.01096449527
- Category Factor = User defined. MF (Multi-family), MH (Mobile home), Res (Residential), COMM (Commercial)
 - Res = 0.43
 - MH = 0.4
 - MF = 1.9
 - COMM = 10 factors based on SQFT from 0.5-6
 - Discount = Income, seniors, **Sprinklers (0.9)**

FBC Example for a residential unit

- SQRT of $2336 \times 18 = 869$ gallons
- $869 \times 60.9 \text{ cents} = \529.82
- $\$529.82 \times .43 \times 1.09 = \248.32 paid annually in a Fire Benefit Charge

Councilmember Lilliquist this formula says you can fight a fire in a building four times the size with only twice as much water. That doesn't seem to add up correctly.

Captain Pethick said this formula assumes you will have a fire flow need that will get bigger as the building gets bigger.

Councilmember Lilliquist asked: you can put out a fire four times as large with only twice as much water?

Chief Hewett said in the international fire code, there are fire flow tables. It's not a complete 1 for 1 and you don't need double the water for double the square footage.

Commissioner Neher said if you were to go from 10,000 to 40,000 square feet, there will be other factors involved like sprinklers, which doesn't get addressed in this formula right?

Captain Pethick said there are other factors that can be used in the Fire Benefit Charge, such as distance from fire stations or fire hydrants, if gas is used, etc. This is a simplified formula.

Councilmember Lilliquist said I like the sprinkler discount and the senior discount. Could there be a hazard premium for enumerated uses such as petroleum storage depots or fireworks factories, which we may not have now but could have in the future?

Captain Pethick said we could incorporate hazard premiums for places like that, yes.

Councilmember Bornemann asked: If they see hazards that need to be corrected for later, they could?

Captain Pethick said the RFA board has the opportunity to vote on that and change it if they want to.

Assistant Chief Hewett said with the Fire Benefit Charge, we are saying “we need this much money” and then we use this formula to calculate how we are going to charge it out to the community. It’s basically saying “we want this much and here’s how it’s going to be distributed.” A lot of this is based on our FBC consultant who looks through what percentage to charge different categories. If we are 50 percent residential, then residences are going to have to pay 50 percent of that Fire Benefit Charge. It clutters the concept of that balancing factor if we add something that we have 0 percent of those type of occupancies in our area.

Councilmember Lilliquist asked: How common is it for RFAs to have hazard premiums or higher categories of risk? Is it commonly adopted or used?

Assistant Chief Hewett said Kent is the only one that gets into the hazard premium category.

Chief Newbold said I wouldn’t say only. This is the most common simplified formula that they have throughout the valley. Kent’s is extremely complicated and has a fire alarm discount, sprinkler discount, factors in distance to hydrants, pump systems, and various other complexities.

Councilmember Lilliquist asked: Do we have any high risk facilities here? We might in the future but are we sure we don’t have any now?

Assistant Chief Hewett said there are fireworks facilities in District 8 that are exempt from the Fire Benefit Charge. When you see the bill they get based on their square footage, you wouldn’t want to charge them more anyway.

Finance Director Henshaw said there are a lot of ways this can be tweaked for positives and negatives. We should see if the split is close before changing the formula. Is it really 40 percent residential and 40 percent mobile? By adding or subtracting, you can tweak those. You need to look at the differences in residential, areas and types of houses. It would give you better examples instead of just extremes. It is a very small number out of the biggest ones.

Mayor Kelli asked: What’s the total budget for fire right now?

Finance Director Henshaw said \$24 million.

Captain Pethick said this Fire Benefit Charge example was developed with 2017’s total square footage. We have gone a year now, there are probably square footage and assessed value changes in the city.

Assistant Chief Hewett said this was done before we formed the committee and adopted our charter. We would like to contact the consultant who data mined for 2017's data because it was done with 2016's data. We would like to engage him again in pulling the newest data and putting it into the formula. He does some other consulting services as well. There is a \$3000 charge that goes along with that. In our charter, we talked about cost related to that being split between the City and Fire District 8. The Fire Department and District 8 both have room in their budget to split \$3000 pretty easily so that we have more up to date information in there. The planning committee needs to agree.

Councilmember Lilliquist said the data is a year old. It's not that old is it?

Finance Director Henshaw said there was \$188 million of new construction this year. The database for the county won't be updated until February 14th or 15th and we need to wait until then to hire somebody. We are almost to the point where new data will be out. Planning can pull some of that data too.

Assistant Chief Hewett said it's also getting that data into the format and database that converts it into the Fire Benefit Charge. I spent an hour on the phone with Dave and a consultant walking through some of the formulations and how it all works. He had data from almost every agency in the state of WA. Consulting on that is well worth the \$3000. If you want to enact that part of our charter that splits those costs, the planning committee can do so.

The planning committee unanimously approved the above decision with one abstention.

Councilmember Lilliquist said so we figure out how much we need and go backwards. We are saying that because commercial is 47 percent of our square footage, we charge them 47 percent. Is that 47 percent reflective of the calls, response, effort and amount of service they actually get?

Assistant Chief Hewett said the Fire Benefit Charge is based on the fire flow formula. If your building is on fire, we know the larger the building, the more service it would take. Commercial buildings require more service than residential. Rate of incident is not part of the factor here.

Chief Newbold said that's where the discount comes in for sprinkler systems or alarm systems. If you do arrive and there is a fire, how do you mitigate that?

Councilmember Bornemann said the model you are proposing, is that based on what is used?

Assistant Chief Hewett said it's based on the RCW.

Chief Newbold said and the NFPA standards for fire flow. There are different models in regards to that.

Councilmember Bornemann said I would hate for us to set down a road to reinvent the wheel.

Councilmember Lilliquist said I would hate to beget the square wheel. We should bill people on the actual service and not the potential service theoretically speaking.

Assistant Chief Hewett said a lot of the Fire Department is built on potential. The RCW goes into talking about it being reasonably proportioned based on the benefit to the property. It doesn't

compare the actual fire benefit, it looks at the potential benefit based on the size of your property. It is proportioned out based on the fact that 40 percent of our property is residential.

Councilmember Bornemann said Michael, is there a motion you have regarding this?

Councilmember Lilliquist said no.

Chief Newbold said if I may respond to Mayor Kelli's previous question, our 2018 budget is 27.4 million.

4. Section 4, Jurisdictional Boundaries, follow up (15 minutes)

Chief Hewett said last time we talked about Section 4 and laid out how we would annex in the future. There are a couple different sections – if another fire district wanted to merge into the RFA, if there was an area that is not currently in fire district/fire service that wanted to be annexed into RFA, what would happen if the City initiated an annexation of some other fire district and how it would affect the RFA.

City Attorney Ruffato said we had this 1997 agreement entered into by Fire Districts 2,4,8 & the City of Bellingham. It was a concern for the fire districts because annexations were eroding their tax base. This RFA brings that to even more of a head. A lot of things agreed on in the '97 agreement, this RFA brings it to head in consolidation and raises a question of whose responsibility is it between the City and the RFA. Who will step in to the City's shoes for these districts? This is an agreement that includes City municipal government, fire districts and fire departments as parties. We met with the fire districts to talk this out. We will work on this and hope that it informs the ILA. It's pretty bare bones in the plan right now that when the city annexes anything, the RFA would take over that service area. The RFA would then be in the position of the fire districts were they to raise an objection in the boundary review board. This is something we should think about.

Assistant Chief Hewett asked: How will the City and the RFA interact in the future? If Fire is no longer a City department but is a separate agency, we need to discuss with them what those impacts look like and look at the boundary review board. We will identify how that relationship would work out with the RFA.

7. Planning Committee Items? (20 Minutes)

Chief Newbold said this is an opportunity for planning committee members to bring forth any questions or concerns they have. None seen.

8. Next Agenda (5 minutes)

Assistant Chief Hewett said he is not sure what staff will get together for the next meeting. We will have more finance information and if we get a chance to get language going on jurisdictional boundaries, we can talk about that.

The next meeting will be held on February 5th at 3:00 P.M. in the Mayor's Board Room at Bellingham City Hall.

9. Closing Comments/Adjourn

The RFA Planning Committee adjourned at 5:01 P.M.

Recorded by Monea Kerr.