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MINUTES OF THE MARYSVILLE / ARLINGTON / FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT #12
REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY PLANNING COMMITTEE

Arlington City Council Chambers
110 East Third Street
March 23, 2017

Marysville Councilmembers Present: Steve Muller, Jeff Vaughan, Jeff Seibert, Donna Wright

Arlington Councilmembers Present: Chris Raezer, Jesica Stickles, and Marilyn Oertle.

FPD #12 Commissioners Present: Pat Cook, Tonya Christofferson

FPD #12 Commissioners Absent: Gary Bontrager

Also known to be present were City of Marysville staff members Mayor Jon Nehring, Gloria Hirashima, Sandy Langdon, and Jan Berg; City of Arlington staff members Mayor Barbara Tolbert, Paul Ellis, Kristin Garcia, Bruce Stedman, Kristin Banfield, Tom Cooper, Greg Koontz, Craig Monson, Jason Nyblod, Chris Peterson, Sam Johnston, and Dave Kraski; Fire Protection District #12 staff members Martin McFalls, Cody Brooke, Matt Campbell, Ryan Chopp, Ricky Williamson, Tyler Dormaier, Craig Milless, Jason Huizenga, Solomon Wilson, Jack Reeves, Luis Cruz, Jacob Kuehn, Jeff Cole, Darryl Neuhoff, Ryan Canbury, and Tim Gunn; Tom King and Greg Oakes

Arlington Mayor Barbara Tolbert called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. and called for self-introductions.

Minutes of the February 23, 2017 meeting

Councilmember Marilyn Oertle moved for the approval of the minutes of the February 23, 2017 meeting. Councilmember Steve Muller seconded the motion, and requested two corrections to the minutes. On page 3, sixth paragraph, fourth sentence should read "Councilmember Muller commented that EMS call volumes are only going to grow." On page 4, tenth paragraph, first sentence should read "Councilmember Muller said he would like to see operational staffing changes for each station for the different levels. The motion was amended to include the two corrections and passed unanimously.

Review Fire District financial models including menu of options

Arlington City Administrator Paul Ellis and Chief Administrative Officer Gloria Hirashima reviewed the financial models and menu of options run by the Finance subcommittee. Ms. Hirashima noted that every 10 cents of levy generates approximately \$1.1 million in revenue

and revenue to support fire and EMS services largely comes from property tax. A brief overview of the three funding scenarios presented at the last meeting was shared, with discussion of the acceptable cash flow minimums. Ms. Hirashima then asked the group what additional models the group would like to see run.

Councilmember Raezer inquired as to what Arlington brings to the table that makes this work.

Councilmember Oertle expressed that Arlington is attached to its Fire Department. She is not seeing what justifies an RFA and she doesn't have anything to convince the Arlington taxpayers that this is a good idea. She suggested that the staff work on an interlocal agreement that works out partnering opportunities in the greater Smokey Point area.

Board Member Christofferson stated she was very bothered by Option A and it should be eliminated. She felt that merging of services cannot result in the reduction of services. She inquired if it made sense to broaden the boundaries of the RFA to encompass a greater area. She also encouraged those in attendance to look at the greater good an RFA would bring about. She noted that she was not sure if spending more staff time on scenarios was worth the effort.

Board Member Cook expressed that cost savings will not be immediate, but will appear in the longer term. He felt that the formation of an RFA was not an action of losing a department, but forming a larger family with a blended identity. He stated that we cannot continue to have individual chiefdoms and we need to be looking at broader services across the county. He also felt that his constituency would support a \$2 per \$1,000 levy for fire and EMS services.

Councilmember Vaughan noted that he continues to have an open mind about forming an RFA but does not believe that the case has been made adequately.

Councilmember Muller stated that there are inefficiencies that can be corrected with a joined department. He believes that the cuts presented were in duplication of services. He does not believe we have completed the analysis of what other efficiencies can be achieved with alternative staffing models.

Councilmember Stickles expressed that her focus for the RFA discussions was to find cost savings and opportunities to increase service. She felt the models we have seen so far do not reach either of those. She doesn't have information or data that she could use to explain why an RFA is a good deal for the Arlington taxpayer.

Councilmember Seibert agreed with the prior statements made so far. He felt that the levy support by any constituent is up for conjecture at this time. He inquired how we can make the operations more efficient.

Councilmember Oertle stated that the RFA would be hard for her to sell to the Arlington taxpayers. Arlington loses control of its fire department and adds a fire levy on top of that to fund services we currently pay for out of our general fund.

Board member Cook noted that these services cost money and we will have to ask the voters for that money.

Councilmember Raezer stated that he has yet to see how the scenarios make the fire and EMS service sustainable long term.

Mayor Tolbert stated that we have only looked at reductions through attrition and not at restructuring. She asked the committee how they would feel about looking at other staffing models.

Councilmember Raezer expressed that the committee needs to look at restructuring.

Mayor Nehring inquired if there was a menu of options that the committee would like to look at.

Councilmember Muller remarked that EMS is where the calls are increasing. He inquired if there are ways to provide that service more efficiently. Different rigs? Different staffing models? He noted that we should look at this from a different perspective – if I was going to start this business now, what would it look like?

Mayor Tolbert noted that perhaps we should be looking at availability costs versus demand costs and at peak staffing.

Board member Cook reminded the committee that we still need engines. If we have needs, we should hire more people and staff smaller BLS rigs. Lake Stevens is getting away from cross staffing and adding more staff.

Board member Christofferson asked how Arlington would benefit from the RFA.

Chief Stedman remarked that to start with we would get 24 hour command and control (BCs), Fire Prevention unit with a Fire Marshal, Training Division and Mechanical shop.

Mayor Nehring stated that he is hearing reluctance from Arlington to moving forward on an RFA.

Additional discussion followed.

Discussion of April meeting

Mayor Nehring and Mayor Tolbert announced that the April RFA Planning Committee meeting has been canceled. The Mayors encouraged the members of the committee to caucus with their respective boards and send feedback so that the May meeting is fruitful.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:28 p.m.

Barbara Tolbert, Mayor

Jon Nehring, Mayor