



REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY PLANNING COMMITTEE October 29, 2015

Present: Ed Prince (Chair), Renton City Council
Armondo Pavone, Renton City Council
Marcie Palmer, Renton City Council
Ray Barilleaux, KCFD #25
Kerry Abercrombie, KCFD #25
Jay Covington, Chief Admin Officer
Chad Michael, Deputy Fire Chief

Erik Wallgren, Deputy Fire Chief
Linda Sartnurak, KCFD #40
Iwen Wang, FIT Administrator
Tracy Schuld, Acctg. Supervisor
Steve Winter, Local 864
Will Aho, Local 864
Rhonda Heyden, Admin Secretary

1. **Call to Order:** Councilmember Prince called the committee meeting to order at 2:06 p.m.
2. **Approval of Previous Minutes:** Motion made by Councilmember Pavone to approve the minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting on September 17, 2015. Seconded by Commissioner Abercrombie. Motion carried.

3. **RFA Plan:**

Deputy Chief Michael indicated that the RFA plan has been sent to attorneys Larry Warren and Brian Snure, with a request that they review the plan and have their suggestions back by Friday, November 6th. Jay Covington indicated that he had spoken with Larry Warren and that he only has minor grammatical corrections to the plan. Fire District #25 Commissioners will be asked to approve the plan at the Commissioner's meeting on Tuesday, November 17th. This would give time for the Planning Committee to come back together on Thursday, November 12 to discuss any items that might need to be resolved.

Deputy Chief Michael indicated that an updated RFA plan was included in the packet of materials. The following has been updated within the plan:

- Appendix D, Interlocal Agreement, was removed. An Interlocal Agreement will still exist, but it will not be part of the RFA Plan document. It will be a separate document.
- Appendices A-E were retitled: "Exhibit 1: Real Property" became "Appendix D, Real Property"; "Exhibit 2: Vehicle and Rolling Stock" became "Appendix E, Vehicles and Apparatus".
- Exhibit 3: IT and Office Equipment was removed.
- Section 4, Jurisdictional Boundaries; Subsection A2: The language that discusses District 40, "Assignability of the Contract", remains highlighted since there are still some questions. Jay Covington added that there would need to be a discussion with the attorney from District 40 to come up with some language that could then be presented back to the District.
- Section 6, Funding and Finance; Subsections 2.1 and 2.2: Appendices and Exhibits were retitled.

- Section 7, Organizational Structure; Subsection C2: Removed “as identified in more detail in the Interlocal Agreement shown in Appendix D”.
- Appendix A: Boundary map was added.

Commissioner Abercrombie had a few modifications:

1. Section 5, Governance; Subsection A2: “Board of Directors from District” should be “Board of Commissioners from the District”
2. Section 6, Funding and Finance; Transfer of Assets, Subsection 1.1 Reserve Fund: “Capital Projects Fund” should be “Capital Projects Reserve Fund”.
3. Section 6, Funding and Finance; Debt, Subsection 1: Commissioner Abercrombie asked if an Appendix should exist that lists the three Leoff 1 retirees. Administrator Wang stated that an Appendix would not be needed for the three retirees.

4. **Staffing:**

Administrator Wang explained that the current proposal is to increase staffing by 15 Firefighter positions to staff Fire Station #15. After a recent discussion with the Steering Committee, there was a request to look at the potential of adding one in-service aid unit, which would add nine additional Full Time Employees (FTE's). What would the cost be if this service component was added?

Administrator Wang referred to her handout “RFA Cost Estimate based on 2016 Department Budget”. The first page is the current financial plan, with 15 additional firefighters. The second page shows the costs of increasing the number of firefighters to 24, which provides one additional full time aid unit. The tax rate difference is only \$0.10. The question is, if there is an increase of \$1.94 to \$2.04 will it be tolerable?

Councilmember Pavone asked how the metrics were figured for the need and if there was a tangible need? Jay Covington indicated that calls for service are increasing as population in both the City and District increase. Additionally, increased congestion causes a bigger challenge with the ability to get to the calls on time. Deputy Chief Wallgren explained that, since 2010, Safer Grants have been obtained to be able to staff Aid 13. Currently, Aid 13 is in service, but there have been times during the past couple of years that Aid 13 has not been in service, due to sick leave, disabilities, and other factors. Aid 11 is rarely in service. Administrator Wang indicated that Aid 13 is being staffed primarily with the overtime budget. Regular staffing will not be able to sustain that service.

Deputy Chief Michael stated that he has been working with GIS and the Planning Division to forecast the population and call volume. The population is estimated to increase by 40,000 in the next 20 years. The call volume shows a 3% increase in demand right now without the additional population. The increase of population by 40,000 will cause the system to be significantly busier. Today, the demand is being met, but there have been times when the system has been taxed.

Deputy Chief Wallgren added that in 2010 when the City applied for the Safer Grant, it was with the intent to staff Aid 13. Engine 13 would be out of service on a call and there'd be subsequent calls with no other apparatus close to respond to that incident. Thus, units had to come from Station #17, Station #14, and Station #11, which increases the response time and the ability to mitigate the incidents in a timely fashion. Right now, the City has a standard of 7 ½ minutes. There are areas within the City's geographical area where this standard can't be met. The number of calls compounds this, as well as the number of resources that are on the street in a given day.

Jay Covington indicated that, in bringing up this discussion, he wanted to make sure that the City was in "the right spot". If the City does nothing, every year, it is losing a little bit of "the battle of attrition". The B&O tax that the City passed was to stabilize where it is right now. In the future, when there are increased demands placed on the Fire Department (increased calls for service and response time pressures) there are not any additional resources available. The RFA was a way to address the City's needs and District 25's needs to be able to have a more stable funding source for the District and to address the fact that the City is impacted in the North area because there is not a Station #15 as of yet. Once Station #15 resources are in this area, then Station #16 and Station #12 would stay in their area, which would help with response times. Jay Covington asked the committee if the RFA would be an easier "sell" if people understood what they were going to get: not only would the service be maintained, but there would be an improved service that will continue. Would that be worth an additional \$0.10?

Steve Winter added that the Citizen's Advisory Committee recommended that the City ask for what they thought they'd need in the beginning, rather than coming back later to ask for it. He referenced the new adult care facilities that would add a couple hundred calls each and stated that an increased call volume is a guarantee. He indicated that the Fire Department is getting taxed with its ability to respond to the calls and the response times are increasing. The question the City needs to answer is "can we continue down this road or do we just need more ability to respond".

Councilmember Prince stated that he would rather the City go out for what it needs, rather than have to go back to the voters in a couple of years.

Councilmember Pavone would like to ensure that the need is present.

Deputy Chief Wallgren indicated that statistical information is being gathered to show some of the numbers on paper. He further indicated that the Fire Department has been struggling with service demand levels over the past decade and it is a trend that continues to climb. There are more calls every year, the request for services are increasing, and there aren't sufficient resources to meet some of these goals.

Councilmember Prince asked when the research from GIS and the Planning Division would be available, to which Deputy Chief Michael responded "by next week".

5. **Next Steps:**

Deputy Chief Michael asked the committee if there is anything that would be critical to consider as the City gears up to placing the RFA on the ballot. No suggestions were made.

6. **Communications:**

Administrator Wang indicated that a few conversations occurred with Liz Loomis. After the second conversation, it was mutually agreed that partnership wouldn't work, and the Communication's Consultant resigned and terminated their contract. The City contacted other consultant firms and has since met with Karen Reed, LLC. A proposal has been put together, and it is similar to what Liz Loomis was offering. Councilmember Prince asked if this proposal needs to be brought to Council, to which Jay Covington responded that, since it is under \$50,000, it does not.

Administrator Wang stated that Karen Reed, LLC will help with messaging, provide strategic advice regarding the key message to be delivered, help to build an internal speaker's bureau, provide Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's), brochure design, PowerPoint, etc. The City of Renton will manage the production (graphics and printing) and Karen Reed, LLC will submit the content to the City of Renton. Administrator Wang further stated that the Communication's

Consultant suggested putting together a focus group that will hone into the community sentiment, questions, concerns, and interest, which will help to refine the message. Councilmember Prince recommended some fresh faces for the focus group to receive an authentic idea of what people are thinking. Additionally, the Communication's Consultant has done some research in speaking with Auburn and Kent. The domain names of RentonRFA.com and RentonRFA.org have been purchased.

Jay Covington explained that neither Cocker Fennessy nor Karen Reed, LLC have worked on an RFA, but that they do have extensive experience working on government issues. They also have extensive experience in understanding financial issues and have worked on many campaigns.

Commissioner Abercrombie asked if the Communication's Consultant would provide the FAQ's, to which Jay Covington responded that this would be one of the first tasks, so that all answers are consistent.

7. Next Meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 12, 2015 from 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. in the Council Conference Room (Room #720).

Meeting adjourned at 2:46 p.m.

Recorded by:
Rhonda Heyden, Administrative Secretary I