

# King County Fire Protection District No. 27

## Minutes

A special meeting of the Board of Commissioners of King County Fire Protection District No. 27 was held on May 24, 2018 at Station No. 271 located at 4301-334th PL SE in Fall City, Washington.

Chairperson Hansen called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m.

### Present:

Chairperson Hansen  
Commissioner Hollis  
Commissioner Meredith  
Chief Connor  
Secretary Wall

### In Attendance:

Committee Rep. Robert Angrisano	FF Springer
Committee Rep. Brandon Bothwell	FF Noble
Committee Rep. Nora Hightower	FF Jessen
Captain Larson	FF Fleming
Lt. LeDoux	FF Baker

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

#### **Study Session with Consolidation Evaluation Committee**

After introductions of the Committee members and Commissioners, Nora Hightower facilitated the discussions from the following outline that was established by the Committee:

#### **Introduction**

- Committee has met 14 times with the goal of collecting and analyzing available options to provide the board with information to support their decision-making.
- We've looked at 4 options.
  1. Stand-Alone: Continue as FD 27, essentially as we operate today
  2. Join Eastside Fire & Rescue as interlocal agreement partner
  3. Merge with FD 10
  4. Cooperative arrangement with City of Snoqualmie (4 sub-options)
    - Sharing resources or administration → merged organization
- Our focus has been to look at how the options impact:
  - Governance/Local Control, Taxes & Budget, Service, and Operations
- We understand there had been consideration of November ballot measure with an August filing deadline.
  - Today is an update on what we know at this time and an opportunity for you to ask questions
  - We're not done with our analysis yet because discussions with Snoqualmie are still in-progress
  - After discussing the options, we'll talk about the potential ballot measure.

#### **Option 1: Continue as Stand-Alone District**

##### Governance/Local Control

- Strong community support demonstrated by passage of ballot measures.
- Continuing as an independent fire district ensures local control and that services are adapted to our community, *working with our local schools, businesses, etc.*

##### Taxes & Budget

- Taxes that are collected stay with FD27 service area.
- However, there are concerns about financial sustainability due to reliance on levies.

##### Service

- Over time, the District has been a very lean organization which is fiscally prudent, however also has the following downsides:
- From a level of service and emergency response perspective-
  - Don't consistently have 3-person minimum career staffing on duty for response.
    - 3 career staff on duty \_\_\_% of time.
    - Revenue for additional staffing could be included in future levy.
  - Dependent on Volunteer Program for supplemental staffing.

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- 3-person staffing achieved 98.1% of the time with combination of career staff and volunteers.
- If only 2 firefighters are available for structure fires, limited to defensive tactics only.

### Operations

- From a management and administration perspective.
  - Limited resources for HR, fire prevention, training, maintenance, etc., These functions are performed by Chief, Administrative Assistant, and Firefighters.
  - Lack dedicated Training Officer and there are limited career advancement opportunities.

Discussion ensued; what levy amount would be needed for sustainability, excess levy in place through 2020. Levy/budget analysis for D27 is needed for the next two years. Public Hearings needed to inform the community to allow them to address these issues/options.

### **Option 2: Join Eastside Fire & Rescue as Interlocal Agreement Partner**

In this option FD27 continues as an entity from a financial and political perspective; however, EFR would provide our fire service, including management of all operations.

#### Governance/Local Control

- Requires unanimous vote of current ILA partners and new ILA.
- FD27 retains independence and ability to adapt services to community.
- Decision to join EFR is reversible.

#### Taxes & Budget

- FD27 expenses would increase an estimated \$514k/year + annual contribution to equipment and capital funds.
- FD27 would have option to use either levy or fire benefit charge.

Service levels and operations would be comparable to Option 3.

Discussion ensued; the District could go out for a fire benefit charge as a partner or as a stand-alone agency. The Board conveyed that exploring option 2 further would be less likely due to the costs.

### **Option 3: Merge with Fire District 10**

In this option FD27 ceases to exist. All aspects of the fire service would be administered by FD10.

#### Governance/Local Control

- Requires voter approval 50% >1
- Irreversible decision
- FD27 Commissioners on FD10 Board during transition, then elected at large, *D27 Commissioners would finish their current terms.*
- Decisions made to benefit larger (entire D10) area.

#### Taxes & Budget

- Overall cost to FD27 taxpayers would decrease an estimated \$250k/year.
  - Fire Benefit Charge decreases cost for most taxpayers (77%); increases for most businesses and a few homeowners. *2-6 business would see substantial increases.*
- Rely on FBC voted measure every 6 years, instead of excess levy
  - Higher ceiling relative to operating budget
  - Commissioners can adjust FBC rate for unexpected need after public hearing.
- Charge transport fees.

#### Service

- 3-person career staffing at all times.
- Expanded community outreach programs.
  - Citizen Corps.
  - Fire Explorer program for youth.
  - Community Emergency Response Teams
- Special operations enhancement
  - Haz-Mat
  - Trench Rescue



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- Confined Space Rescue
- Fire Prevention Division
  - More resources to identify and inspect higher hazard/target areas.
  - Expanded inspection program and Fire Marshall oversight.

### Operations

- Robust organization with levels of management and full scope of support services.
  - HR, IT, Facilities, Vehicle Maintenance, etc.
  - Battalion Chief services.
- Greater administrative expertise, capacity, and efficiencies.
- Expanded fire-fighting training
  - Dedicated training division.
  - Access to regional training.
  - More exposure to special operations training.
- Reserve volunteer fire-fighting program focused on people interest in pursuing fire fighter career while also supplementing career staffing (farm team concept).
  - Program is evolving.
  - Long-term uncertainty on structure of program.
- All employees transfer with no loss of jobs, including admin and volunteers.
- Increased career pathway for staff.

Discussion ensued; on the fire benefit charge vs excess levy, issues of less local control, various opinions were shared regarding EFR's budget and future operational costs. Lt. LeDoux stated that D10's FBC has remained flat in '17-'18 and their budgets had increased 4.2% and 4.3% respectively, though Robert Angrisano debated if that was correct, he provided a different set of data numbers that were higher. Lt. LeDoux stated that you have stability with a larger agency. Current volunteer program; Chief Connor stated that there would be less reliance on the volunteers- the focus would shift to support level. Opinions were voiced about the current volunteer programs at EFR and at D27. Questions about EFR's ILA partnership and its long-term stability were brought up. The current EFR ILA is a ten-year agreement.

### **Option 4: City of Snoqualmie**

Snoqualmie Fire Department has many similarities with FD27 (size, administrative structure, volunteer programs, etc.) and have history of working cooperatively and sharing resources.

There are a range of options being discussed with Snoqualmie that would primarily be accomplished via an interlocal agreement. In options 1-3, FD27 would continue to exist. In Option 4 a new organization would be created, such as a regional fire authority.

- Do not have much detail yet, so the focus is more on potential outcomes and considerations.
- Snoqualmie City Council expected to vote on May 29 on resolution to continue discussions.

(Sub-Options 1-3)

- 1) Functional Consolidation of Major Divisions (Operations, Training, etc.) e.g *Sharing Training Officer*
- 2) Shared Administration (One management team leading/overseeing 2 departments).
- 3) Merged Organization (Interlocal Agreement; function as 1 agency).

### Governance/Local Control

- Continue elected FD 27 Commissioners.
- Negotiated interlocal agreement establishes levels of service, administrative structure, financial structure, etc.
  - May have less control depending on ILA provisions
- No public vote required

### Taxes & Budget

- Continued reliance on voted levies
- Unknown impact to expenses/taxes
- No plan yet on how to split costs

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### Service

- Could achieve 3-person career staffing at station w/Sub-Option 3
- Similar community programs and emphasis
- Similar Special Operations
  - 1 HazMat technician
- No Battalion Chief

### Operations

- Could achieve administrative efficiencies with improved administrative/management structure (Sub-Options 2 & 3)
- Improved overall training

### **(Sub-Option 4: Voter-Approved Merged Organization)**

- *Has most potential benefits*
- *New structure could be politically challenging to implement*

### Governance/Local Control

- Requires voter approval >50%; if Fire Benefit Charge, then >60%
- Irreversible decision
- FD 27 replaced with new organization and new elected officials
- Governance structure to be negotiated

### Taxes & Budget

- Taxes would likely decrease for FD 27 taxpayers; may increase for Snoqualmie taxpayers

### Service

- Would be established with 3-person career staffing
- Could be established with locally-focused community programs

### Operations

- New organization established with merged operations (all benefits of Sub-Options 1-3 plus independent organization with fully merged administration and changed taxing structure)

Discussion ensued; the City of Snoqualmie Council has on their agenda for 5/29 a resolution approving continued discussions with Fall City on these options outlined. Sub options 1,2,3, would build on each other. Chief Connor stated that the RFA would be ideal but realistically harder to achieve. Chairperson Hansen stated that she didn't think that the Snoqualmie options 1 and 2 were a long-term solution, she had some concerns with the political uncertainty and costs.

Chief Connor stated that D10 will need an answer on the direction of the Board; August 7<sup>th</sup> is the deadline to submit a ballot measure for the November election and is also the last day to withdraw a measure. Citizens input is critical to this process and he recommended holding some public hearings. Commissioner Hollis conveyed that if we remain a stand-alone we have our excess levy in place through 2020; this date is our real deadline; there is a sense of pressure to get this done. FF Springer stated that a merger with D10 solves a lot of problems for D27 and he further elaborated on his opinions.

Commissioner Meredith conveyed that an election this fall should be considered; we should take the information that we have available and provide it to the community. If it makes sense financially and operationally we should not let the D10 merger option dissolve; and put it out to the community to vote.

After further Board discussion it was decided that an Open House would be scheduled on June 18<sup>th</sup> from 6-8 pm to publicize the information that the committee has put together. A special meeting to take formal public testimony on July 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm was scheduled and a special meeting on July 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm to render a decision was also scheduled.

The Board thanked the Committee members for all their efforts and hard work.




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**Adjournment:**

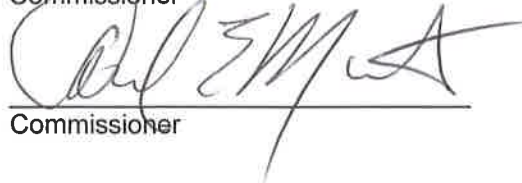
With no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Hansen at 12:29 p.m.

Attest:  
Melinda Wall  
Board Secretary

Melinda Wall

  
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Commissioner

  
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Commissioner

  
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Commissioner