



**JOINT LAKE STEVENS FIRE / FIRE DISTRICT 7
COMMISSIONER WORKSHOP MINUTES
6:00 PM
January 8, 2019
Lake Stevens Fire Conference Center**

1. Open the Workshop of January 8, 2019

Lake Stevens Fire Chairman Elmore opened the meeting at 1800 hours.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call

Lake Stevens Fire: Chairman Elmore, Vice Chair Steinruck, Commissioner Gagnon, Chief O'Brien, Deputy Chief Huff, Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal Messer, Director of Finance & Administration Leah Schoof, Various Members of the District, and Communications Director/District Secretary Laana Larson.

Fire District 7: Chairman Waugh, Vice Chair Snyder, Commissioner Wells, Commissioner Woolery, Commissioner Fay, Chief Meek, Assistant Chief Silva, Assistant Chief Andrews, Various Members of the District, and District Administrative Coordinator Denise Mattern. Commissioner Schaub is an excused absence.

4. Chief's Update

Chief O'Brien welcomed everyone. Tonight we are talking about a potential merger and how to improve service to our citizens, and talking through a draft plan. Chief O'Brien introduced attorney Brian Snure who is joining us this evening. Our Districts meet as an executive staff on a monthly basis. We have grown a lot and learned a lot already.

Chief O'Brien reviewed power point presentation.

Seeking Improved Regional Service

- Partners in common
- Lake Stevens Fire / Fire District 7 Partnership - CRP June, 2015
- Initial Merger Presentation to Boards – February 2018
- "Umbrella Interlocal" Approved August, 2018

Partnering Today

- Community Resource Paramedic
- Combined Training Division
- Two Regional Fire Academics,
- CRRD – Working Together
- Shop
- Job Shadowing
- Upcoming Leadership Retreat

Potential Benefits of Merging

- Efficiencies in emergency response operational services
- Improved staff utilization
- Efficiencies in administrative services, CRRD
- Fiscal responsibility
- Professional development opportunities
- Enhanced fleet and facility maintenance
- General quality improvement
- Preparing for the future

5. Attorney Brian Snure

- The Merger Process
- Board of Fire Commissioner Responsibilities

Attorney Brian Snure reviewed Commissioner Board roles and responsibilities. In a merger you'll be bringing two different cultures together, operationally you naturally work together, though not so much as boards. Legally a merger is a simple process, two fire districts become one district. It's not so simple for the fire districts themselves. It used to be the districts had to be adjacent to one another, and two years ago it was changed so that the districts need to be within reasonable proximity of each other. Near enough so service can be delivered effectively.

Fire District 7 Chairman Waugh asked if we are the first two districts to test these waters. Are there unknowns we will have to address?

Brian Snure commented yes, there is a possibility for issues to arise; and it will have to be articulated to the boundary review board. The voters will also have a say on whether the merger will happen. If the boundary review board denies it, you'll have to wait another year before trying again. If the merger is approved by the voters, then you would pass a resolution and the merge would be effective by January 1 of the next year.

Brian Snure commented financially you are in a good position to move forward with a merger. Assets and liabilities are complicated issues. Once the merger is official, Fire District 7 will own everything and Fire District 8 will no longer exist to own anything.

Lake Stevens Fire Chairman Elmore commented Fire District 7 currently has a WSRB rating of 3, would Lake Stevens Fire take on their rating?

Brian Snure commented you would most likely be reassessed.

Brian Snure commented in regards to the number of Commissioners on the Board, you would work towards reducing the number to 5. When a Commissioner resigns you don't replace them and as terms come up you reduce the number of elections. Potentially you could end up with 5 Commissioners who all reside within Fire District 7 boundaries, it all depends on the voters. You also have the option to ask the voters to increase the size of the Board to 7 after the merger.

Fire District Anatomy:

- Heart - Title 52 RCW
- Brain - Board of Commissioners
- Senses – Individual Commissioners
- Body / Muscles, Arms, Legs, etc. - Staff

Reviewed RCW 52 and additional RCWs 42, 84, and 39 regarding public records, open public meetings, property taxes, public works, charge cards for travel, and expense travel fund.

RCW 52

"Fire protection districts are authorized for the provision of fire prevention services, fire suppression services, emergency medical services, and for the protection of life and property..."

Beyond Title 52

- Chapter 42.56 RCW – Public Records
- Chapter 42.30 RCW – Open Public Meetings
- Chapters 84.52 & .55 – Property Taxes
- Title 39 RCW – Public Works, Interlocal Agreements
- RCW 42.24.115 – Charge Cards for Travel
- RCW 42.14.120 – Expense Travel Fund

Board of Commissioners Size and Organization

- Three member board – statutory
- Five member board – statutory when all personnel full-time full paid
- Seven member board allowed when annual budget exceeds 10 million dollars

RCW 52.14.010

The affairs of the district shall be managed by a Board of Fire Commissioners.

Limitations on power – the Board cannot:

- Change qualifications for office
- Change compensation of Commissioners
- Change purpose of District
- Bar other commissioner from meeting
- Change manner of acting
 - Public Meetings
 - Majority Voting

Statutory Powers – Board of Commissioners

- RCW 52.14.010
 - Manage the affairs of the District
 - Fix compensation of District personnel
 - Empowers Board of Commissioners to permit Commissioners to serve as volunteer firefighters
- RCW 52.14.050
 - Authorizes the filling of vacancies on Board of Commissioners
 - Authorizes Board of Commissioners to declare vacancy in office
- RCW 52.14.080
 - Establishes position of chair
 - Establishes position of secretary
- RCW 52.14.090
 - Authorizes Board to establish principal place of business of District
 - Establishes regular monthly meetings of Board
 - Authorizes special meetings of Board
 - Authorizes Board to establish date and place of meetings
- RCW 52.14.100
 - Establishes general powers and duties of Board of Commissioners
 - Manage and conduct business
 - Negotiate and enter into contracts
 - Adopt policies and procedures
 - Perform all acts necessary to carry out business

Duties and Responsibilities – Board of Commissioners

- Financial – Adopt Budgets, Levy Taxes
- Level of Services – Fire Protection, EMS, Fire Prevention, Performance Measures
- Personnel Management – Hire, Fire, Employment Contracts
- Safety Compliance – L&I Standards
- Policies and Procedures – Adopt and Review
- Conduct Meetings, Take Actions (Resolutions / Motions)
- Represent All Residents
- Avoid Special Interests

RCW 52.14.010

The key to an effective board is what you do with it; remember you are managing the fire district and not running it, and delegating authority.

Delegation

- Identify what you are delegating
- Identify the authority to be delegated
- Identify positions to whom the authority is delegated
- Identify purposes to be accomplished
- Identify conditions under which authority is exercised
- Establish the limits of the authority
- Establish a mechanism to review the actions of the individual to whom the authority has been delegated

Fire Chief

- No specific statutory duties – All powers delegated from the Board
- Operations, Budgets, Personnel Management
- Executive – enforce policies and procedures
- Golden Rule – Hire a good Chief and let the Chief do the job

Role of the Individual Commissioner

- No statutory powers; they only have authority as a Board
- Chair presides over meetings, calls special meetings, and calls for executive session
- RCW 52.14.010
 - Establishes qualifications to serve as a Commissioner – resident elector of District
 - Establishes compensation for serving as a Commissioner
 - Establishes expense reimbursement for serving as a Commissioner
- Responsibilities include residency requirements, oath, attend meetings / participate / take action, and comply with ethics rules

Commissioner Effectiveness

- Learn all you can about your District
- Don't act as a committee of one
- Don't be afraid of change
- Don't be afraid to ask questions
- Retain competent, key employees
- Maintain your sense of humor

Chief O'Brien reviewed draft merger management plan. The goal of consolidating is to be more efficient, improve staffing and training opportunities, and to provide improved service to the communities we serve today and into the future.

The objective is to consolidate the services of Fire District 7 and Lake Stevens Fire through a voter approved merger. Lake Stevens Fire merges into Fire District 7.

Philosophy

- A new organization
- Improve on the qualities of Fire District 7 and Lake Stevens Fire
- No take over

Strategic Planning

- A combined process – February 2019

Culture

- Cultural assessments from Dr. Pat Sikora
- Cultural Integration Team – March 2019
- Recommend complete organizational integration upon legal merger

Financial Planning

- Positive plan in February 2018
- Financial plan to be updated and presented February 2019

New District Name

- Leadership recommends renaming the new organization with a new title that reflects the communities we serve.

Board of Commissioners

- The structure of the new Board of Fire Commissioners will be decided by the Boards of Lake Stevens Fire and Fire District 7.
 - Increase Board to 7
 - Positions may “term out”

Fire Chief

- To be determined by the Lake Stevens Fire and Fire District 7 Commissioners
- Senior Leadership recommends Chief O'Brien
- Chief Meek to serve as Advisor

Leadership / Succession Planning

- The Fire Chief of the New District will select Executive Leadership positions based on the needs of the District through structured interviews

Draft Organization Structure

Merger Process Timeline

- July 1, 2018 – Functional “Umbrella” Interlocal Agreement Approved
- September 1, 2018 – Internal Organizational Culture Initiative with Dr. Pat Sikora
- January, 2019 – Joint Board Meetings
- January, 2019 – Operational “Job Shadowing”, Orientation and Training
- February, 2019 – Financial Model Finalized
- February, 2019 – Initiate Community Meetings
- February, 2019 – Lake Stevens Fire Petitions Fire District 7 to Merge, Formal Process Begins
- March, 2019 – Cultural Integration Team Established
- March 11, 2019 – Fire District 7 Approves Petition
- April, 2019 – Notice of Intention to Boundary Review Board
- May 10, 2019 – Filing Deadline for August 6 Election
- August 6, 2019 – Lake Stevens Community Votes to Approve Merger
- January 1, 2020 – Legal Merger of Fire District 7 and Lake Stevens Fire

Chief O'Brien commented where we've come and where we are today has been an excellent process. We are excited about the possibility of a merger and keep moving our interlocal agreement forward. We have an exciting future.

Chief Meek thanked the Commissioner Boards for allowing us to do this. We want the organization to understand we have diligently kept our strategic plans as the driving tools. He thanked our senior leadership for their candid interviews. We are already improving services by working together. Chief Meek commented it has been an honor to work with this group and he encouraged the Boards to consider this merger.

At 1920 hours Lake Stevens Fire Chairman Elmore called for a ten minute break.


6. Executive Session:

At 1930 hours Chairman Elmore called for an executive session pursuant to RCW 42.30.110 (1) (g) to evaluate the qualifications of current employees who are considered as applicants for the fire chief position of a merged fire district including the review of the performance of current employees of Lake Stevens Fire and Fire District 7 as such performance relates to identifying the appropriate person to serve as Chief of the merged districts; for 30 minutes with no decision to follow. Executive session included Chairman Elmore, Vice Chair Steinruck, Commissioner Gagnon, Chief O'Brien, Chairman Waugh, Vice Chair Snyder, Commissioner Wells, Commissioner Woolery, Commissioner Fay, Chief Meek, and Attorney Brian Snure. At 2000 hours Chairman Elmore announced to the public that the executive session would be continued for an additional 25 minutes.

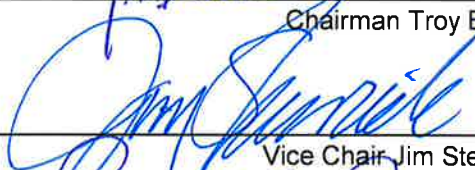
Chairman Elmore reconvened the open public meeting at 2025 hours and the meeting moved forward with Adjournment.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 2025 hours.
Motion by Chairman Elmore and 2nd by Vice Chair Steinruck.
Vote Unanimous.


Minutes respectfully submitted by Laana Larson, Communications Director/District Secretary.



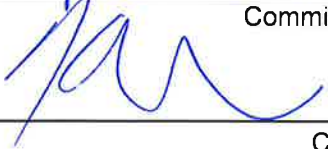
Chairman Troy Elmore



Vice Chair Jim Steinruck



Commissioner Paul Gagnon



Chief Kevin K. O'Brien