



CITY OF WHITE SALMON
Special Council and West Klickitat Regional Fire Authority Planning
Committee Meeting – Monday, May 1, 2023
In Person and Via Zoom Teleconference

Council and Administrative Personnel Present

Council Members:

Ben Giant
Jason Hartmann
Jim Ransier

Fire District 3 Commissioners:

Thomas Montag
Robert Connor
Charles Virtis

Staff Present:

Bill Hunsaker, Fire Chief/Code Enforcement
Stephanie Porter, Clerk Treasurer
Troy Rayburn, City Administrator

David Schultz, City Attorney

Fire District 3 Staff Present:

Rosalind Plumb, FD3 Secretary
We Long, Fire Chief

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

- Call to order at 5:00 PM
 - City of White Salmon Council Roll Call
 - KCFD3 Commissioners Roll Call
 - Agenda Approved
- **Approval of Agenda**
 - Council Member – Jim Ransier - Requested to move the Public Comment before the business items.
 - Motion to approve the agenda as amended.***
 - Moved by – Jason Hartmann, Seconded by - Ben Giant**
 - Motion carried 3-0, City of White Salmon Council***

II. Public Comment

Carl Swanson – White Salmon Volunteer Firefighter

Commented on the consolidation of the Fire Departments. Carl mentioned that it seems like this is being rushed to get this to a vote by August 2023. Carl talked about the Bingen Fire Department and if or when they wish to join the district.

Adam Brake – White Salmon Volunteer Firefighter

Adam Brake addressed the information that was provided to the public and White Salmon Volunteers was only a draft version. He is concerned that not enough outreach to the community was done and gave examples of responses to fire department call outs.

III. Business Item

A. Formation of West Klickitat Regional Fire Plan

- WKRFA Planning Committee members discussed changes to the West Klickitat Regional Fire Authority governance policies and rules, including funding and ownership of the White Salmon Fire Station 30 facility. They also discussed the lease of the upper floor of the White Salmon Fire Station to the West Klickitat RFA and the retention of the city

council chambers until a transition plan is developed. They talked about the ownership and leasing of a dual-purpose facility with the West Klickitat Regional Fire Authority. They clarified that the city would retain ownership of the building and lease the upper floor to the fire authority at no additional cost and discussed potential maintenance and insurance considerations.

- WKRFA Planning Committee members discussed changes to a proposed plan for a Regional Fire Authority, including language addressing the separation of a building and the autonomy of volunteer associations. They agreed to publish the document for public review before finalizing it. The need to make changes to the draft RFA Plan before publishing it was discussed. The committee talked about the beginning levy rate and the funding needed for apparatus replacement, equipment replacement, and facility replacement. They reviewed matrices and discussed how much funding should be allocated for the 2024 West Klickitat Regional Fire Authority Budget.
- WKRFA Planning Committee members reviewed in detail the initial budget presented by Fire District 3 staff. This presentation included proposed matrices addressing the facility replacement, apparatus replacement and equipment replacement components. Staff clarified the executive staff and governing board positions included in the budget and identified an initial \$0.91 per 1000 assessed value levy rate to fund the WKRFA proposed operating budget. The replacement matrices identified a total additional need of \$0.76 per thousand assessed value levy rate. The committee discussed the tax levy rate limit of \$1.50 per thousand assessed value and clarified the missing information on the facility component matrices.
- WKRFA Planning Committee members discussed the replacement of equipment and apparatus between the two organizations and the possibility of pooling resources for economy of scale. They also compared the proposed 2024 budget to the existing budgets of the two entities and noted that the RFA would significantly increase the budget for City of White Salmon fire department.
- WKRFA Planning Committee members talked about increasing the operating budget to add two paid salaries and invest in training, recruitment, and prevention. They considered a levy rate between \$0.91 cents and \$1.50 to contribute towards the liability but needed more information before deciding. The possibility of proposing a tax increase to address the fire district's liabilities. They considered various numbers, including a dollar per thousand, but were cautious about proposing a number that would not be marketable to voters. This included the proposed levy rate for the new RFA management system. They debated the appropriate amount, considering the impact on taxpayers and the need to be frugal.
- The WKRFA Planning Committee agreed on a draft levy rate of \$1.05 per thousand assessed valuations. The committee discussed timing and funding of a proposed RFA including in order to see an initial tax revenue in 2024, the proposition would need to be included and approved by voters during the August 2023 election.

B. Appointment of Required Pro/Con Committees

- Staff notified the WKRFA Planning Committee that they would need to appoint a pro committee and a con committee to provide statements to be included in the ballot pamphlet. The committee discussed.

Moved by Jason Hartmann. Seconded by Jim Ransier.

Motion to appoint a WKRFA pro committee roster in alignment with the Fire District 3 approved committee roster to include Allison Hensey, Eric Wilson, and Chris Wiggins.

CARRIED White Salmon 3-0

- Staff notified the county that the WKRFA committee has been unsuccessful in recruiting a con committee and are actively recruiting volunteers for that role.

Additional Discussion:

- WKRFA Planning Committee discussed the Amended RFA Plan. Consensus by all 6 planning committee members to move the plan forward to the Public Hearing.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30p.m.

Marla Keethler, Mayor

Stephanie Porter, Clerk Treasurer