



CITY OF WHITE SALMON
Special Council and West Klickitat Regional Fire Authority Planning
Committee Meeting – Monday, May 8, 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
Troy Rosenburg, Deputy Clerk | Utility Clerk
David Schultz, City Attorney

Fire District 3 Staff Present:

Rosalind Plumb, FD3 Secretary
Wes Long, FD3 Fire Chief

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

- Call to order at 7:00 PM
City of White Salmon Council – No changes to the Agenda
KCFD3 Commissioners- Agenda Approved

II. Public Comment

No Public Comment

III. Business Item

A. Public Hearing – West Klickitat Regional Fire Authority Final Draft Plan

Jason Hartmann, White Salmon City Council, opened the public hearing at 7:05pm.

No public comment was made.

Jason Hartmann, White Salmon City Council, closed the public hearing at 7:06pm.

- Bob Merritt, consultant, gave a general summary of the WKRFA Plan.
- WKRFA Planning Committee reviewed a revised budget proposal plan for the WKRFA, including assumptions made in the budget. City Council members requested an explanation from Chief Wes Long to notate how the Operating and Maintenance budget numbers were reduced so drastically from \$0.91/1000 AV to \$0.69/100 AV levy rate. They discussed the updated operating and maintenance budget for the proposed RFA using an updated levy rate recommendation of \$0.69 per 1000 of assessed valuation. The committee considered the timing of approving the plan and the potential impact on households. The committee decided to pursue using the primary election with an effective date of September 30th to allow time

- for the reconstruction of tax rolls, and waiting until November would delay the collection of taxes until 2025.
- WKRFA Planning Committee members discussed the urgency of saving money for equipment and facilities, as well as the need for education and outreach to residents about a new tax. The committee acknowledged the momentum and support from the community task force but recognized the limitations of the pro committee's role in promoting the tax. In addition, the legal limitations on campaigning for a proposed RFA. They agreed that while agents of the city and fire district can provide information, they cannot engage in biased campaigning. The volunteer associations were noted as being able to campaign for or against the proposal as their own entity.
 - WKRFA Planning Committee members addressed the proposed rate of \$0.69 per thousand dollars for the RFA, which was suggested for operational expenses but did not account for capital expenditures. They considered designating some of the revenue specifically for unfunded liability and ensuring that the proposed rate would cover both operational and capital expenses. Also, the appropriate amount of funding needed for the RFA, with some members advocating for a higher amount to ensure success and others suggesting a lower amount with fewer restrictions on how the money is spent. They also discussed the possibility of designating a certain amount of funding specifically for unfunded liabilities. Addressing the budget for the RFA and the possibility of needing more funding in the future. City Council members recommended that 10% of the proposed unfunded liabilities be included in the initial proposed levy rate. The committee agreed on a \$0.07 levy rate that would be designated specifically to unfunded liability. They learned that the RFA can increase their annual levy rate up to their authorized ceiling of \$1.50/ 1000 AV without needing a lid lift or going back to the voters.
 - WKRFA Planning Committee members discussed the draft plan for the West Klickitat Regional Fire Authority's funding. They debated the proposed ad valorem property tax rate and how to allocate the funds for operational costs and unfunded liabilities. They talked about the wording for the RFA plan, including the allocation of funds for operations and unfunded liabilities. The committee agreed they would like to see draft language that would include the \$1.50 ceiling for the sake of transparency because this rate would be preauthorized to levy any year after approval by voters. The committee was concerned about confusing voters and ultimately decided to create two options for the wording.
 - Per consultant Bob Merritt, the planning committee is allowed to approve the WKRFA Plan at the next meeting. It will be done before the full City Council and Commission make their decision on the RFA Plan.

- WKRFA Planning Committee members talked about the authorization of the commission or regional fire authority, the need for transparency and communication with residents.

B. Appointment of Con Committees

- The appointment of a con committee was discussed. Per Fire District 3 and City staff, no volunteers were received for the con committee.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03p.m.

Marla Keethler, Mayor

Stephanie Porter, Clerk Treasurer