

Klickitat County Fire District 3 Commissioners Meeting
119 NE Church Street
April 19, 2023, at 16:30 (4:30 pm)

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING Joint Meeting with City of White Salmon

This meeting was available using remote online video and telephone technology. The district posted notice of how to access the meeting (Website and posters in the area).

Call to order.16:31

Both the City of WS KCFD 3 called their meetings to order.

Attendance

Commissioner Montag (Chair), Commissioner Connor (Vice Chair), Commissioner Virts – (Quorum),
Staff/volunteers: Wes Long (Fire Chief), Rozalind Plumb (Dist. Secretary), Jennifer McLean (Admin.
Assistant), Bob Merritt (mHc Associates) Chief Hunsaker (WSFD)
City Council Members: Jason Hartman, Ben Giant, Patty Fink, David Lindley, Jim Ransier- (Quorum).
Mayor Marla Keethler, Stephanie Porter, Troy Rayburn
Via Zoom : Barbara Baily, David Shultz, Melinda Heindel.

Public Comment. Held to end.

Presentation - Task Force Report introduction by Consultant Bob Merritt and presented by the Task Force representatives.

Individuals from the West Klickitat Community Task Force addressed sections of the task force executive summary. Issues presented included:

Finances: Inconsistent and inadequate funding for fire in the city. KCFD3 legal levy rate increases of 1% are not enough to keep up with inflation.

Levels of Service: Looking at the regional landscape, fire is a high threat, the population is increasing with residential growth into wildland/urban interface. Medical calls are increasing with an aging population and a high percentage of outdoor sports. Regional infrastructure of railways, highways, agriculture, and industry can create hazardous situations.

Emphasis should be for a service that prioritizes the safety and well being of responders and provides the tools, training, and depth of forces to respond safely.

Time is critical in responding to emergencies. The rural landscape and volunteer system has inherent delays from dispatch to responders arriving on scene.

The nature of the event, which vehicles responds, the number volunteers responding, and the level of training the volunteers have all affect outcomes.

Training: There was sincere admiration for the volunteers. The emphasis is to improve the system to better support the volunteers. To create a training program that is robust enough to grow and maintain volunteers. The plan recommends employing professional staff to support training and recruitment.

Public Education: An increase in public education can reduce the risks in the community.

Task Force member abstained from vote: It was noted that one task force member abstained from voting to approve the final report. He stated he did not feel he had enough information or data to vote for or against it. He had assumed he would be able to see economies of scale and financial cost savings associated with an RFA. However, "financial cost savings" were not part of the conversation. He acknowledged the current cost of the fire department was a huge bargain at \$100,000/year. Will the level of service increase with the increased cost to White Salmon. In a major event we would receive help from surrounding agencies. Should the current Fire Chief retire the city is not situated to employ a full time Fire Chief

Discussion: There was discussion on the surrounding agencies and available resources, the response times and road structure/geography that affect response times. White Salmon is central to response for the city and surrounding area.

Next steps:

Form a committee to take all or some of the recommendations and create a plan to take to the voters. The committee will require 3 members of City Council and 3 Fire Commissioners to draft a plan. The plan will address governance and the cost of an RFA.

If the plan is approved by both agencies, then it will be presented to the public for vote.

Consensus from the board and council was to continue researching the formation of an RFA.

Motion to approve Joint Resolution: City of White Salmon Resolution 2023-04-558 [KCFD3 Resolution 2023-09] made by Councilman Ben Giant, Seconded by David Lindley. (5 yay, 0 nay)
Motion passed.

Motion to sign on to Joint Resolution: City of White Salmon Resolution 2023-04-558 KCFD3 Resolution 2023-09. Made by Commissioner Virts, seconded by Commissioner Connor (3 yay, 0 nay) motion passed.

ADJOURN.

Adjournment – made by City Council

"Motion to adjourn," made by Commissioner Virts, seconded by Commissioner Connor (3 yay, 0 nay) motion passed.


Meeting adjourned at 16:16 hrs.

APPROVED BY:

 6/8/23
Chairman – Commissioner Thomas Montag (date)

Attest:


District Secretary Rozalind Plumb

 6/8/23
Commissioner Robert Connor (date)

 8 June 2023
• Commissioner Charles Virts (date)