

West Klickitat Regional Fire Authority

Planning Committee Meeting

119 NE Church street White Salmon WA 98672.

Thursday March 21, 2024. 6:30pm. **Draft- without committee approval**

- **Meeting called to order at 18:30.**
- **Attendance:**

WKRFA Planning Committee: Quorum. Ben Giant, David Lindley, Thomas Montag, Robert Connor, Charles Virts.
Absent: Jason Hartmann

Advisory groups/staff: Captain Jess Wardwell, Eric Bosler, Captain Jerremy Grose (KCFD3), Chief Hunsaker (WSFD), Chief Long (KCFD3), Rozalind Plumb (KCFD3 Secretary), Jennifer McLean (KCFD3 Admin).
- **Agenda:**

Approval of the agenda made by Ben Giant, seconded by Charles Virts. (5 yay, 0 nay) motion passed.
- **Minutes of February 22 Meeting.**

Motion to approve minutes as presented made by David Lindley, seconded by Robert Connor. (5 yay , 0 nay) motion passed.
- **RFA Transition Projects:**
 - Subcommittee reports
 - **Governance and Administrative.** See report attached.
Eric Bosler reported that the group met twice. Focus of the group is on Section **5. B.4** – “...shall develop and adopt governance policies and rules for the WKRFA Governing Board to conduct business beginning September 30th...”
The Governance subcommittee’s priority is on those policies, procedures and tools needed by the RFA Board of Commissioners to enable formal adoption of the Regional Fire Authority on October 1st.
 - **Finance & HR**
Focus is on Sections 6 Funding and Finance, and section 8 Administrative/Management/Personnel. The 1st meeting was held on March 14th. The County Treasurer Greg Gallager and County Auditor Heather Jobe were in attendance. Their involvement at this early stage is vital and they are very supportive. The most significant issue raised was the timing of the movement of funds to the new RFA accounts. While the ‘Effective Date’ of the RFA is September 30th there was discussion about the effect of moving funds on that date and the significance of year end closures for both the County and KCFD3. Both KCFD3 and WSFD are funded through to the end of 2024. Further investigation is needed to clarify if funds can be held until the end of 2024. The RFA board would have to authorize a resolution to take

effect between September 30 to December 31 to operate under the existing funding structure.

Discussion on the transfer of funds on the effective date and potential change for an operational date of January 1, 2025. The WKRFA plan is specific, but also allows the governing board to adapt. Legal counsel should be consulted. Funding for the cost of legal counsel needs to come from KCFD3 and City of White Salmon.

Additional discussion on the funding of the RFA from Sept 30 to January 1 if funds are not transferred on the effective date. Would the contribution from each agency be equal? Ultimately it would still result in less funds being transferred on January 1. This would need further discussion.

- **Operations subcommittee**

Captain Wardwell noted the subcommittee has sent out a survey to volunteers. The focus has been on discussing levels of service and duty shifts of the volunteers. Page 6 of the transition guide. Other items include the name of the RFA -Doing Business As (DBA), and a logo. The WKRFA is the legal name, but it is hoped we can have a more easily marketable name.

“Return with Honor” – Jeremy Grose introduced the concept as a proposed WKRFA mantra for the volunteers to maintain in all their actions.

The draft budget will rely on volunteers and eventually allow for recruitment of paid personnel to support the volunteers.

- **Ben Giant asked- How are the subcommittees feeling about the scope of work and the ability to accomplish the tasks?**

Eric Bosler felt confident that it can be done by the subcommittees. He stated that we have access to examples, and tools (such as policy software -Lexipol) and can call in subject matter experts and legal counsel when needed.

Rosalind admitted that the tasks are intimidating. There is a lot to do. The priority is to ensure continued service to the community through the transition period, and clearly identify what the governing board needs to be effective on September 30. Identify what is needed now and what can wait until later.

Chief Long noted that he is monitoring the workload the admin staff are taking on with the RFA and suggested we reassess the workload in June. He is optimistic that the tasks can be achieved through the subcommittees.

- **Financial Need of the planning Committee**

KCFD3 Board has authorized spending for RFA needs, but all costs will need to go to the KCFD3 board for approval.

- **Legal Counsel-** Who should the Planning Committee engage for legal counsel?

The city has legal counsel that they engage for matters relating to the city. KCFD3 has legal counsel with specialized knowledge of Fire Districts and RFAs. Recommendation from Chief Hunsaker and Charles Virts was to use Brian Snure for his expertise. David Lindley also agreed that having someone already well versed would be more cost effective. All correspondence to legal counsel to be addressed through KCFD3 District Secretary Rosalind Plumb.

Motion to retain Brian Snure as legal counsel on time and materials basis for the Planning Committee made by Charles Virts seconded by David Lindley, (5 yay, 0 nay) motion passed.

- **IT planning and implementation-** Rozalind noted that planning for the RFA will require IT costs. While all the existing equipment will be transferred there will be advantages to creating new platforms specifically for the RFA. Discussion with IT specialists will help define the best practice. Jenifer McLean has already begun discussion with the State Archivist to transition out of KCFD3. There will likely be a longer list of needs for IT before the RFA is effective (e.g. Emails and Web site). No decision required at this time.
- **Consultant / Project Management**
 - Last meeting the Planning Committee discussed the need for a consultant to help lead the process. The decision then was to create sub-committees to achieve the goals, and to call in specialist help when needed.
 - Ben Giant put himself forward to be Project Manager for the Planning Committee to ensure the subcommittees meet the deadline. He proposed he sit in on the subcommittee meetings and use a project planning platform (Asana) to coordinate the critical items. Ben is a Project Manager by trade and offered his service to the Planning committee as a volunteer. The Committee members expressed their gratitude to Ben for offering to take on the task. Some concern was expressed by Charles Virts about not using a subject matter consultant. His concern is about the potential to get in a bind by missing details that a consultant would be aware of. A consensus was established to re-evaluate the situation with staff and volunteers on 1st June 2024.

Motion to approve Ben Giant to take on Project Management made by David Lindley, seconded by Charles Virts. (4 yay, 1 abstained, 0 opposed).

- Next step will be to get each sub committee set up on Asana.
- **Levels of Service**

RFA Plan Section 7. Operationally we will phase in increased levels of service. Creating duty shifts will increase the opportunities for volunteers to be in the station and available for immediate response. Increased training and increased credentialling of volunteers. The focus needs to be on staffing to support the volunteers. The goal is to have 50 to 70 volunteers in the future. Fire, EMS, are the standard service. Rope rescue and white-water rescue are also services that would be beneficial in the region. Prevention, first aid and CPR in the community will be a strong focus. Discussion on training, and fire academy and the issue of training facilities.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn made by Thomas Montag seconded by Ben Giant. Meeting adjourned 19:50.

Next Meeting – Thursday 18 April White Salmon.

APPROVED BY:

Attest:

Committee Chairman -Thomas Montag (date)

District Secretary Rozalind Plumb

Vice Chair- Jason Hartmann (date)

DRAFT

WKRFA Finance/Admin/HR Subcommittee Meeting Summary
04/11/2024 5pm KCFD3

Present:

David Lindly (WKRFA PC)

Stephanie Porter (WS City Clerk/Treasurer)

David Swann (WSFD)

Rosalind Plumb (KCFD3 Secretary)

Jennifer Mclean (KCFD3 Admin)

1. ADMIN

- a. New EIN is in place (99-2381850)
UBI process has been started and approval from the Planning Committee to pay \$50 fee is needed. Once the business license is in place headway can be made with setting up new accounts with L&I, ESD, Volunteer AD/D Additional Insurance, etc....
- b. Payroll – Herman Associates vs. in house software. Sub-committee agrees that keeping Herman and Associates is beneficial.

WKRFA and Volunteer Firefighter stipends. The sub-committee agreed that KCFD3, and WS Volunteer Firefighter stipends will be paid in December 2024. This will make a clean transition to the WKRA.

2. WKRFA Plan sections:

- a. Funding & Finance - sections 6
 - i. Review Brian Snure recommendations – After discussing Brian’s response the sub-committee feels confident in moving forward with the plan to have all assets and finances moved January 1, 2025. According to Mr. Snure the WKRFA Plan is written to support this path.

Recommendation: Have City of White Salmon draft an interlocal agreement to have the City of White Salmon transfer funds to KCFD3 to help fund WKRFA startup costs. The sub-committee sees this as a cost savings in the long run by reducing administrative costs.

- b. Human Resources – section 8
 - i. Personnel contracts – Update name of entity, change title of District Secretary to Administrative Manager – A copy of the contracts will be provided to the sub-committee for review. It is understood that all current KCFD3 Fire District employee contracts will transfer to the WKRFA

as per the plan but will need to be revised to reflect the new entity and date of January 1, 2025.

- ii. Prepare a packet with new forms for both KCFD3 and WS volunteers to complete – Volunteers will be asked to provide new W-4's.
3. Budget preparation – review/compare internal processes – KCFD3 administrative staff will prepare the 2025 WKRFA budget for the Planning Committee to review.
4. Assets
- a. Insurance – Enduris – Roz will research and report back.
 - b. Licensing – Facilities and Vehicle Titles (transfer of ownership) – Stephanie will begin gathering the WS Fire vehicle titles. The exact date of transfer is dependent on paperwork and insurance coverage.
 - c. W.S. Fire Department lease agreement – request Brian Snure to provide a lease agreement to be reviewed by the WS City legal counsel.

WKRFA – OPERATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

Update as of: 4/15/2024

As of the last WKRFA meeting, the Operations Sub-Committee (OSC) has continued dialogue surrounding volunteer engagement in the planning process to finalize elements such as:

- Naming (DBA) of the WKRFA for marketing purposes.
- Logo ideas to encompass our values while remaining inclusive of current and future members of the WKRFA.
- Numbering methodology for stations, equipment and personnel.
- Mission/Value Statement recommendations.

Further, the OSC agreed to make preparations to engage both bodies of volunteer firefighters (WS and KCFD3) in discussions of the WKRFA planning process today, in order to keep members current and eliminate any disinformation. An email summary has been sent to the group and an in-person meeting with the volunteers is anticipated to occur in May.

A second survey is going out to the volunteers soon that is in an easier format. While we greatly appreciate the answers provided in the first survey, the OSC agreed that so many open-ended questions may not have been as conducive as a multiple-choice survey. A new

Additionally, the OSC reviewed the “to-do” task list and held discussions of items that are currently in process as well as prioritizing projects yet to be started. The list was revised and sent to Ben Giant for incorporation into his program management software.

The OSC continues discussions to fine tune recommendations for the “level of service” including “services rendered” by the WKRFA. The OSC needs to hold ongoing discussions to identify actual services the RFA can provide, and goals for possible expansion in the future.

The OSC has also discussed measurable levels of success to address several questions posed by the Taskforce. Through the singularity of reporting systems and the addition of the “Duty Crew” and “Officer Response” programs discussed in last month’s meeting, the data will ultimately show improved response times, by stations, zones/areas, and training for volunteers. The OSC concluded that those service and competency improvements will show over time as the programs are developed.