



A place where families and businesses thrive.

**City Council Work Session Minutes
Fire Governance**

**Monday, April 26, 2021
5:30 p.m., Zoom Community Auditorium**

***Minutes are unofficial until approved by Council.
Council approved minutes as presented May 10, 2021.***

1. ROLL CALL:

Mayor Peter Truax called the work session to order at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom Webinar Video Conference.

COVID-19: Due to the emergency declaration resulting from COVID-19 (Coronavirus disease) and protocols, the Work Session was conducted in a “hybrid” format allowing the public to attend virtually via **Zoom Webinar** and in-person in the Community Auditorium. Members of the public could observe the work session **LIVE** on **Zoom Webinar** or on television on Tualatin Valley Community Television (TVCTV) Government Access Programming Channel 30.

ROLL CALL: COUNCIL PRESENT ATTENDED BY ZOOM WEBINAR: Donna Gustafson; Kristy Kottkey; Timothy Rippe; Mariana Valenzuela; Malynda Wenzl, Council President; and Mayor Peter Truax. **COUNCIL ABSENT:** Elena Uhing.

STAFF PRESENT ATTENDED BY ZOOM WEBINAR: Jesse VanderZanden, City Manager; Paul Downey, Administrative Services Director; Patrick Fale, Interim Fire Chief; and Beverly Maughan, Executive Assistant to City Manager (in the Community Auditorium). **STAFF EXCUSED:** Anna Ruggles, City Recorder.

2. WORK SESSION: FIRE GOVERNANCE

Interim Fire Chief Fale and VanderZanden facilitated the above-noted Council work session, noting the purpose of the work session was to address Council Objective 4.1, Explore Fire District Governance, and to provide an update on the Western Washington County Fire Task Force, discuss fire governance options and seek feedback on next steps. Fale and VanderZanden presented a PowerPoint presentation overview pertaining to the Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) the City of Forest Grove currently has with Forest Grove Rural Fire Protection District, City of Cornelius and Cornelius Rural Fire Protection District, and Gaston Rural Fire Protection District, noting in 2018 the Fire Task Force was formed, comprised of representatives from the five governing entities. The scope of the Task Force was to study three potential governance models and provide a consensus proposal. VanderZanden recapped the foundational principles used by the Fire Task Force to evaluate governance models, noting the Fire Task Force compared fiscal, operational, personnel, and governance attributes of the following options:

- Option 1: Status Quo - continue with current system of individual IGAs

- Option 2: Fire Authority – establish a comprehensive IGA that essentially forms a Fire Authority Board of Directors
- Option 3: Local Fire District – establish a Western Washington County Fire District with Board elected by voters from within the district.

The Fire Task Force also discussed attributes of Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue (TVF&R); however, TVF&R was consolidating Newberg and could not consider additional agencies at that time (nearly two years ago). In addition, VanderZanden referenced slides of the five governing entities current statuses; assumptions; assessed values; current rates; and service scenarios and current status of the work of the Fire Task Force, noting the Fire Task Force looked at several local Fire District service level options, including number of employees, total staff, total daily staff and estimated costs:

- Status Quo – estimated cost \$2.08/\$1,000
- Enhanced – estimated cost \$2.71/\$1,000
- Moderate – estimated cost \$2.91/\$1,000
- High – estimated cost \$3.60/\$1,000

VanderZanden referenced a slide showing Fiscal Year 2021-21 assessed value for each entity, noting the assessed value is a measurement of what each entity would contribute to the Fire District if the rate was the same for all entities. Forest Grove would contribute 50% of all revenues to a potential local Fire District. In conclusion of the above-noted staff report, VanderZanden referenced a slide showing the results of the City's Livability Survey to the question of what two factors mattered most when providing fire services (Quality of Services 62%, Cost of Service 30%, and Who Provides Service mattered the least at 22%).

Council Discussion:

Mayor Truax opened the floor and roundtable discussion ensued as the Council had an opportunity to review and discuss the fire governance models outlined above. In response to inquiries pertaining to the Fire Task Force surveying firefighters, VanderZanden advised the firefighters expressed concern about retirement and existing service levels. Interim Fire Chief Fale addressed inquiries pertaining to current operations and fire service delivery models, noting other entities do not have 24/7 staffing levels and cannot afford full-time employees. The goal is have full-time professional firefighters instead of volunteers.

VanderZanden advised all five governing entities are in favor of pursuing a local Fire District, noting emphasis was placed on the local Fire District starting with a permanent rate that would not require a future local option levy. VanderZanden noted should a local Fire District move forward, the Fire Task Force will need to conduct further work to assure retirement and address timing, compression, governance, and legal implications.

Discussion ensued pertaining to the upcoming local option levy renewal and the potential timing impacts of the work being conducted by the Fire Task Force. Mayor Truax noted a local Fire District is two years out. Discussion ensued pertaining to the importance of having a clear and transparent levy educational campaign, to which VanderZanden concurred.

Council took no formal action nor made any formal decisions during the work session.

3. ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Truax adjourned the work session at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Anna D. Ruggles, CMC, City Recorder