

timeframe. Many cities who have gone through similar processes took many years to arrive at a final decision (and some chose not to proceed) and even more time to complete the transition (some included “bridge” years of partial changes).

3. Discussion of contracting may occur at the same time the City is attempting to negotiate a successor agreement with the union.
4. The impacts of contracting and of transferring personnel into the employment of another entity will have to be bargained with the union. The Washington State Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) has made it clear that respect for the bargaining process includes giving the union an opportunity to suggest alternatives. In addition, any union that represents the personnel of the agency Mercer Island would join would also have the right to bargain any impacts of the new partnership.
5. Currently, all cost implications are largely unknown. Initial hard and soft costs, even prior to City Council potentially executing an agreement, are likely to be significant. Expenses may include contractual services’ fees for legal or special counsel, project management, collective bargaining, and consulting. Without knowing all necessary variables currently, it is difficult to estimate this expense. Some of the scope of work may be able to be performed by the City Attorney’s Office, but given the workload in that office and the specialized expertise that may be helpful in this matter, it is likely that external resources will be needed. An early cost estimate for the professional services needed for this scope of work is \$50,000 to \$80,000. Final costs incurred as a result of executing a potential contract are also largely unknown. As the highly conditional and conjectured estimates that the City received from three potential partners demonstrate, the transition and one-time/first-year costs each would charge the City of Mercer Island were wildly varied (ranging from \$200,000 to \$2.9 million). In addition, the City’s costs to close the bargaining unit’s incumbent contract, the costs to mitigate the union’s impacts of the new partnership and the costs the partner agency will incur due to its need to bargain impacts (which the City will likely absorb a portion of, over time) are all unknown now. Soft costs would likely include prioritizing and reserving time in the workplans of the Fire Department, City Manager, Finance, IT and Human Resources.

Attachments:

1. Overtime policy
2. Decision variables and considerations
3. Fire Service Comparisons: Population, Assessed Value, Employees, Budget
4. Fire Department Staffing Comparisons
5. Contracting preliminary process/timetable and budget
6. Maps