



# *City of Stevenson*

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To: City Council and Fire District 2 Commissioners  
From: Leana Kinley, City Administrator  
RE: Organizational Structure  
Meeting Date: October 5, 2023

## **Executive Summary:**

The City of Stevenson and Fire District 2 have been working together cooperatively for many years. Task 4B1 of the Fire Department Strategic Plan suggests developing a new organizational structure to improve leadership and management of the fire department. The information below will bring up agency structure options, staff structure options, and more options may arise from the discussion.

A copy of the Plan can be found online at  
<https://www.ci.stevenson.wa.us/emergency/page/documents-reports-resources> .

## **Overview of Items:**

### *Two Fire Chiefs-One for each region:*

In the current Interlocal Agreement, the document outlines two Fire Chiefs, one for the City and one for the District. The City Fire Chief is responsible for the supervision and direction of the Volunteers, records and reporting to the District. If this is to continue, it would be beneficial to have very clear expectations of what the job description is for each Chief to avoid overlap and confusion.

### *Hire Administrative Staff or Fire Chief:*

There is an overall recommendation in the plan to hire staff to catch up with the policies, procedures, and practices outlined. There has also been discussion around hiring a Fire Chief. A full-time Fire Chief with salary and benefits would cost about \$130k in the first year if we could find a qualified person to fill the position. The City Council has discussed and decided it is not in the budget for this year. There may be additional options to combine a position or reduce the hours to make it more attainable.

### *City Performs Administrative Duties for Fire District 2:*

The current agreement only has the city keeping records of calls and related information. Fire District 2 is responsible for all other record keeping, management, and documentation as required for a special district in Washington State.

### *City Annexes into Fire District 2:*

In this scenario the City gets out of the fire department service through agreement of both the City and the District and by ballot measure presented to registered voters in both the City and District. The property taxes for Fire District 2 would then apply to City residents. In 2023 the rate is .63073660 per \$1,000 of assessed value. This would bring in an additional \$222k to the District and reduce City

expenses by about \$70k. While the City taxes will not need to be reduced (which is required if the city were to create a fire district equal to the city boundaries), the total levy limit of 3.60 per \$1,000 includes any fire districts. This is not an issue for the City as the 2023 combined levy rate would be 2.18206200, well below the 3.60 limit.

*Establish a Regional Fire Authority (RFA) to include at a minimum City and Fire District 2:*

From MRSC: "A regional fire protection service authority (RFPSA) is a special purpose district created by the vote of the people residing in the proposed district ([chapter 52.26 RCW](#)). Its boundaries are coextensive with two or more fire protection jurisdictions (fire district, city, town, port district, municipal airport, regional fire protection service authority, or Indian tribe) located within "reasonable proximity." It is a municipal corporation, an independent taxing authority within the meaning of [Article 7](#), Section 1 of the state constitution, and a taxing district within the meaning of [Article 7](#), Section 2 of the state constitution.

Regional fire protection service authorities were authorized in 2004. The legislature noted that the ability to respond to emergency situations by many of Washington state's fire protection jurisdictions had not kept up with the state's needs, particularly in urban regions and that efficiencies could be gained by regional fire protection service delivery."

This process starts with creating a Regional Fire Protection Service Authority planning committee to draft a plan. The RFA in this case would have all the powers of a fire protection district (RCW 52), including the ability to annex other agencies and levy taxes. The final decision on the creation of the RFA is put to the voters (approving the plan created by the committee). If the plan includes the authority of the RFA to levy taxes, then over 60% of registered voters need to approve the RFA. The financing of the RFA would be outlined in the approved RFA plan and include these details. There is the ability for a Fire District within an RFA to dissolve, although there is a question as to how that area would be represented.

More information can be found on the MRSC website at <https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/governance/forms-of-government-and-organization/special-purpose-districts-in-washington/regional-fire-protection-service-authorities>

**Action Needed:**

Consensus on additional information or a proposed path forward to be brought before both agencies for additional review and discussion.