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December 3, 2021

RFA Planning Committee
c/o City of Tumwater
555 Israel Road SW
Tumwater, WA 98501
(360) 754-4120

Dear Committee Members:

It has recently come to our attention that the Cities of Olympia and Tumwater have released a request for qualifications for consultants to facilitate and support the work of the Regional Fire Authority Planning Committee.

We are pleased to introduce our team of consultants who are highly qualified to do this work. Our facilitator, Karen Meyer, has worked with local government public policy makers and health equity assessments for over 18 years and is a seasoned facilitator and project manager. Karen Reed and Bill Cushman are leading experts in Washington state for their knowledge and skill sets in planning, facilitating, and implementing regional fire authorities.

Following you will find our qualifications, high level scope of work, and estimated cost for the project, based on our current understanding and assumptions. If you are interested in working with us, we would of course want to refine the scope and budget to meet your needs before contracting. Please let us know if there is more detailed information you need to make your decision.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide you with our qualifications. Please feel free to contact me directly with any questions at (360) 754-1954 x115 or faitht@athenaplace.com, or you can contact our main point of contact Karen Meyer at (360) 808-8875 or karenm@athenaplace.com.

Sincerely,

Faith Trimble, Founder and Partner
The Athena Group

1. The Athena Group

The Athena Group, LLC is a Washington-based consulting firm that **cultivates the capacity for transformational change** in individuals, systems and society so that everyone has what they need to thrive. Our main lines of business are individual/leadership development, organization development, and community engagement. We integrate equity in all that we do whether its coaching, training, strategic planning, assessments, program evaluations, process improvements or community-based planning.

We are a high-impact consultancy working on some of the most pressing issues of our time, like affordable housing and homelessness, racial equity, early learning, economic justice, and mobility. We have eighteen partners and access to over fifty consultants with 20+ years of experience and a proven track record of results, such that our clients tend to be repeat customers and or referrals. Since inception, The Athena Group has served over 250 organizations in over 600 contracts, primarily state and local governments, along with business and community-based clients.

We are a licensed limited liability company headquartered on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish people, specifically the Nisqually and Squaxin Island people – otherwise known as Olympia, WA. We are a woman-owned small business licensed to do business in Washington, Oregon, Colorado, and Hawaii with certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE), Small Business Enterprise (SBE), and Woman-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE) status.

2. Proposed Team and Experience

We are proposing a team consisting of three individuals with 25+ years of experience with facilitation, project management, local government and/or regional fire authorities. Copies of relevant work samples and references can be provided upon request.

Karen Meyer, Project Manager, Facilitation Lead

Karen Meyer (she/her) brings over 25 years of experience in community planning, public health, and project management. She has experience and expertise in designing and conducting community health needs assessments, with recent experience focused on equity assessments.

Karen has specific expertise in mixed methods research, including internal organizational self-assessment and a wide range of participatory processes to maintain a community-centered focus. As a part of both her professional and personal experience, Karen has worked to integrate diversity, equity and inclusion into systems and processes in both the public, public policy and non-profit sectors. She has worked with marginalized groups including black, indigenous, people of color, people with disabilities, seniors, LGTBQA, various faith communities, unhoused, and youth. She has also worked with elected officials at both the town, city and county level on issues of public health and planning.

Karen is trained in and holds a certificate in Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) from University of Michigan and has implemented CBPR approaches in multiple settings and with multiple populations. This work includes training and experience in facilitation, including meeting design. She also holds a Bachelor's degree in Urban Studies and Master's degree in Urban Planning, both from California State Polytechnic University.

Bill Cushman, Financial Analysis

Bill Cushman (he/him) began his association with municipal finance fifty years ago armed with a degree in English Literature from the University of Washington. Retiring after 30 distinguished years' of service with the City of Everett, Bill was recruited by the largest fire district in Washington, Snohomish County

Fire District 1, where he oversaw financial matters for 15 more years. In this role, Bill developed strategic financial planning models that allowed the Fire Commissioners and the Fire Administrative to work in concert to develop long-range financial and organizational programs with a high level of confidence that their common goals would be met with success. In addition, he prepared financial plans and documents that resulted in the creation of the South Snohomish County Regional Fire Authority, a consolidation of SnoCo FD1, the City of Lynnwood, and the City of Edmonds to bring the program to a successful voter-approved completion in 2019.

Since then, Bill has provided the financial documentation that brought the City of Monroe and Fire District 3 and Fire District 7 into a merger that was followed by the additional merger with Fire District 8 and the City of Lake Stevens, creating a new agency, Snohomish Regional Fire and Rescue. Other agencies that have benefitted from Bill's financial models include North County Regional Fire Authority, City of Arlington, City of Mill Creek, City of Kenmore, City of Bothell, Woodinville Fire, Northshore Fire, City of Marysville, Marysville Fire, City of Brier, and about 30 more municipal corporations.

Most recently, he has worked with:

- Whatcom County Fire District 21 with goal setting and financial planning and the setting of fire tax levies
- The City of Mill Creek with seeking alternative service provisions with a neighboring fire authority
- Lewis County Fire 6 with establishing a strategic budgeting process
- The City of Tukwila to provide financial modelling and fiscal planning as the City negotiates either a contract or annexation with either Renton RFA or Puget Sound RFA.

Karen Reed, Subject Matter Expert

Karen Reed (she/her) has worked with cities, counties and other local governments in Washington for over 35 years. Her consulting practice focuses on public process facilitation, strategic planning, and facilitating the development of interlocal agreements among multiple government agencies. Karen began her career practicing municipal law in Seattle. She then joined the City of Bellevue where she worked as Assistant City Manager handling the city's intergovernmental work for several years. She later worked in King County leading a major restructuring of the parks division and budget policy work. She launched her consulting practice in 2003.

Karen's recent projects include:

- Facilitating the creation of a regional fire authority combining the Lynnwood Fire Department and Snohomish County Fire District 1.
- Facilitating the annexation of the City of Arlington into North County Regional Fire Authority.
- Facilitating a community task force for the City of Tukwila charged with recommending options for the future of fire/EMS service.
- Facilitating initial discussions between the City of Everett and Fire District 4 (Snohomish) exploring the possibility of creating a regional fire authority.
- Facilitating the merger of the two communications dispatch agencies in Snohomish County.
- Facilitating ongoing annexation discussions between South Snohomish County RFA and the City of Mill Creek.

Karen has a law degree from Stanford University and a B.A. in economics and public policy from Pomona College.

3. Scope of Services

Task 1: Facilitation

Karen Meyer, guided by subject matter expert Karen Reed, will design, and facilitate meetings and the work of the City of Olympia and City of Tumwater RFA Planning Committee.

Consultant's tasks shall include developing a work plan for the Committee, developing Committee meeting agendas, providing strategic advice, reviewing, and editing materials prepared by staff, developing, and presenting materials related to governance issues, facilitating Committee meetings, facilitation staff team meetings in preparation for Committee meetings, finalizing draft meeting summaries prepared by staff designated by the Client. Consultant will participate in regular staff team meetings developing agendas and facilitating those meetings as needed.

We are estimating a total of 358 hours for facilitation and subject matter expert guidance. Hour estimates by task include:

- **Start-up work** (kick-off meeting, 13 interviews, drafting workplan, charter, etc.) - 38 hours
- **10 Monthly Planning Committee meetings** (Design, prep and facilitation) 26 hours per month for 10 months - 260 hours
- **3 sub-committee meetings** - 1 meeting each with sub-group of Planning Committee, Committee Chairs and city staff (Design, prep and facilitation) - 30 hours
- **2 council/commission briefings** (Prep and facilitation) - 8 hours
- **Other staff support as needed** - 22 hours

Task 2: Fiscal Analysis

Bill Cushman will lead the financial analysis, which includes a comprehensive strategic financial planning and organizational outlook plan. This estimated hours to complete this work is 86 hours, and includes the following modules:

Strategic Financial Planning Model: This comprehensive model captures the current financial condition of the agency, its total streams of revenue, its complete array of labor and operating costs, and its contributions to various reserve accounts. The planning horizon of the forecast model is seven years, while its focus serves to align the resources of the agency with a concurrent vision of the future for the mutual benefit of the public organization and its constituents.

Executive Summary: This model captures from the various sub-models all the key points and high-level data that are of particular importance to Commissioners, City Council members, Mayors and City Managers, and other executives and stakeholders of the municipal corporation.

Assessed Value Outlook: This module looks back over the history of assessed values and the trends that lend themselves to a view of future property values upon which property tax revenues are totally dependent.

Property Tax: This module offers a comprehensive outlook that will calculate future property taxes for that agency based on the insertion of the agency's current and foreseen assessed values. Additionally, the model will incorporate features to calculate and display the effects of levy lid lift elections or the recapture of dormant banked capacity revenues. The model will extend six years into the future and will be updated annually to extend its purview by one additional year.

Apparatus Replacement: This module will identify the apparatus inventory of the agency and calculate the cost of replacing existing, or newly acquiring additional, apparatus over a twenty-year cycle. The

model will recognize annual or periodic cash contributions into the apparatus reserve, or recognize the infusion of bond proceeds used to acquire apparatus. The election of councilmanic bonds will also generate a debt service schedule to be incorporated into the annual cashflow.

Equipment Replacement: This module will identify the equipment inventory of the agency and calculate the cost of replacing existing, or newly acquiring additional, equipment over a twenty-year cycle. The model will recognize annual or periodic cash contributions into the equipment reserve, or recognize the infusion of bond proceeds used to acquire equipment. The election of councilmanic bonds will also generate a debt service schedule to be incorporated into the annual cashflow.

Facilities and Project Report: This module will identify the facilities inventory of the agency and calculate the cost of replacing existing, or newly acquiring additional, facilities over a twenty-year cycle. The model will recognize annual or periodic cash contributions into the facilities and projects reserve, or recognize the infusion of bond proceeds used to acquire facilities or undertake small capital projects. The election of councilmanic bonds will also generate a debt service schedule to be incorporated into the annual cashflow.

Retirement Payout Planning Report: This module will allow the agency to build a cost projection of the financial reserves that will accumulate to offset the retirement payout liabilities that accrue as employees accumulate unpaid sick leave and vacation hours near the end of their active service.

Debt Service Planning Report: This module identifies the cashflow associated with the issuance and repayment of bonds issued for the replacement or acquisition of apparatus, equipment, and facilities in support of fire and EMS services.

Other Custom Models and Reports: The TORFA PC will have the opportunity to propose the development of custom models and reports that may be of interest.

CIP Index Report: The TORFA PC will receive a report on the latest CIP-W showing the rate of inflation. The data goes back to 1984 and continues to be updated every 60 days with the release of the CPI-W index for the Seattle-Tacoma area from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

3. Schedule

We are assuming the project will begin in December 2021 and end in April 2023. Most of our work will occur December 2021-October 2022, working through the issues list outlined below. After the RFA plan is complete in the fall of 2022, our work will decrease but will still be available to facilitate the monthly RFA meetings.

RFA Issues List

Over-arching issues	Key Operational Issues	Key Financing Issues
Governance	Labor Issues	

	Timeline	Over-arching Issues
A	Dec. '21 - Jan. '22	Problem/Need Statement
B	Feb. - Dec. '22	Operational Efficiencies and other benefits that can be secured through the RFA
C		Overall Schedule and Work Plan
D		Public Outreach Plan during development of RFA Plan
E		Communications Plan
F		Overall Project and Election costs, allocation
G		Public Education Plan (Post RFA Plan Adoption through Election)
H		Transition Plan (Post Election through effective date)
		Structure, Services, Staffing, Financing Issues
1	Jan. - Apr. '23	Proposed RFA Boundaries
2		RFA Name

3		Service Start Date, Levy Start Date
4		<p>What Services will the RFA Provide?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ambulance services ○ ALS Transport ○ Fire Marshal and inspection services ○ Contracts to serve other agencies
5		<p>Governance: Board structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Values / Principles ○ Legal Options / What have others done? ○ Anticipated Role/Status of District 21 & 4 after RFA created
6		RFA Standards of Cover/Service Levels
7		<p>Interlocal Service Agreements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Services provided by other agencies (regional dispatch, emergency management) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assignment to RFA ● Assets/liabilities transferred to RFA or retained? ● Valuation at transfer for purposes of audit
8		Services provided to other agencies—continue/assign?
9		Service from third parties -- ability to assign
10		Facilities – transferred to RFA, leased, or retained? Valuation
11		Apparatus / Equipment – transferred to RFA, leased, or retained? Valuation
12		<p>RFA Staffing Levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Existing staff transferred to RFA ○ Employee Salary assumptions ○ Employee Benefits Assumptions
13		<p>Labor Management Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bargaining Units status/implications for salary/benefits/schedules
14		<p>Employee Transfer Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assigning/funding the Current Liability for Sick Leave/Vacation Hours Accrued in “Time Banks”

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Employees on Long-Term disability ○ Benefits programs—retain current or start new?
15			LEOFF 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assignment/funding of any existing and ongoing liabilities
16			Funding the RFA – Options / Implications / Setting proposed starting fire levy rate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Property Tax (fire levy) ○ EMS levy ○ Benefit Charge ○ Other ○ Interim transfers from Districts to fund operations after effective date and before levy revenues received
17			Existing Debt Obligations: transfer or retain?
18			RFA Reserves – Initial and Target Balances, how funded
19			Existing District/City Reserves -- transfer/disposition
20			7-year financial plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Target Cash Level Policies/ Initial Capitalization / Minimum Cash balances ○ How frequently will levy lid lifts be required to sustain service levels? ○ Inflation Assumptions on all costs ○ Capital (facilities, apparatus) cost assumptions ○ Starting funding rates/structures (fire levy, EMS, benefit charge)

Issues List Prepared by Karen Reed Consulting, LLC

4. Hourly Rate and Proposed Cost

Rates

Consultant will bill at a blended rate of \$225 per hour plus actual out of pocket expenses at cost (none presently anticipated).

Proposed Cost and Assumptions

The estimated cost of the above scope of work is up to and not to exceed \$100,000 (estimated 444 hours x \$225/hour).

Tasks		Hours	Total Cost
Task 1	Facilitation and Project Management	358	\$80,550
Task 2	Fiscal Analysis	86	\$19,350
Total Hours and Project Value		444	\$99,900

Our scope and budget assume the Client will cover the costs of the following activities outside of this contract:

- Legal counsel in support of the project
- A communications consultant or staff to guide public outreach during the RFA Plan development, as well as for the public education campaign and messaging should the Client determine to place an RFA measure on the ballot.
- Administrative support and community organizing including meeting scheduling, publication of public notices, compiling minutes, and organizing public involvement.
- Access to staff who can provide necessary financial data as requested.

Consultant will not provide legal services or legal advice to the Client.