

Cities of Olympia and Tumwater Regional Fire Authority Planning Committee

Draft Proposed Charter / Operating Rules

Version dated 3.8.22 marked to show changes from Version dated 2.28.22

- A. **Mission of the Regional Fire Authority (RFA) Planning Committee:** The mission of the Planning Committee is to create and propose to the City of Tumwater and the City of Olympia a plan (“Plan”) for a regional fire authority encompassing the entire territory within the jurisdictional boundaries of the two cities, including the proposed governance, design, financing and development of fire protection and emergency service facilities and operations, including maintenance and preservation of facilities or systems, all as authorized by Ch. 52.26 RCW. The Planning Committee is advisory to the City Council [and Mayor if there’s a strong mayor]. The Planning Committee shall seek to develop a Plan which, if approved by the voters of the cities, will achieve the following goals and outcomes:
1. To provide stable, secure, affordable and sustainable funding and service levels over time to meet the needs of the growing population in the proposed RFA boundaries.
 2. To improve efficiency and effectiveness of fire service delivery in the proposed RFA boundaries.
 3. To provide service at levels equal to or better than those currently provided within the participating jurisdictions.
 4. To ensure the Plan addresses the concerns and needs of both the cities and is ultimately supported by both City Councils.
 5. To provide transparent, understandable information to the public about the potential impacts of the proposed RFA to the residents of the proposed RFA.
 6. To ensure meaningful public input opportunities during the planning process, and to consider public input received in the drafting of the Plan.
 7. To ensure the governance plan for the RFA provides equitable representation of the member cities, and to provide sufficient flexibility in the Plan to allow additional cities and fire districts to join the RFA in the future without needing to re-submit a new RFA plan to the voters of the proposed RFA.
- B. **Membership:** The Planning Committee membership shall include 3 councilmembers from each city, who shall be the sole voting members of the Planning Committee. The councilmember positions will not have alternates. The Fire Chief from each city shall serve as *ex officio non-voting* member of the Committee. The IAFF Local President from each city shall also serve as *ex-officio non-voting* members of the Committee, and may send a

designated alternate to attend meetings in his/her absence. The voting and *ex officio* members are collectively referred to as the “Members” of the Planning Committee in this Charter. The voting members are referred to as “Voting Members.”

C. Process:

1. Schedule. The Planning Committee will meet on a regular basis approximately twice a month from February 2022 through December 2022, and once a month thereafter if the Plan is adopted by both Cities. The Chair of the Planning Committee may also schedule special meetings as may be necessary or appropriate.
 2. Developing Preliminary Recommendations, Public Outreach Process. The Planning Committee will accomplish its mission by reviewing staff-developed reports, information, options and recommendations and considering public input. The Planning Committee will identify preliminary recommendations with respect to all items that must be included in the Plan. The Planning Committee shall also provide advice on the public outreach effort accompanying the development of the Plan and public education effort after the Plan is approved.
 3. Periodic Updates to Councils. The Planning Committee will provide periodic updates to the Councils of both cities in the form of preliminary recommendations, in order that the Councils may provide timely input on the development of the Plan.
 4. Council Deliberations. Either or both Councils may determine they need additional time to deliberate on a preliminary recommendation from the Planning Committee, and if so, the Planning Committee will shift its work plan so as to not delay the schedule any further than necessary. A Council choosing to deliberate on a preliminary recommendation will make every effort to conclude its deliberations by the end of its next regularly scheduled meeting.
 5. Reconciling Direction from Councils. If either Council is opposed to any preliminary recommendation of the Planning Committee, it will promptly so advise the Planning Committee. The Planning Committee will then work to amend the preliminary recommendations to reconcile it with input from the Council and bring revised preliminary recommendations back for review by the Council. In the event of any apparently irreconcilable conflicts between the Councils, the Planning Committee will so notify the Councils and propose a resolution. Work on the project will cease if either Council adopts a resolution to halt work on the project.
- D. Prompt Notice of Impasse or Desire to Terminate Process. The Planning Committee members agree to negotiate in good faith. If either City determines that there is an

impasse between itself and the other City, it shall promptly so notify the other City in writing (which may be transmitted by email). In the event of an impasse on any item, the Planning Committee shall confer on potential resolution to the matter and offer its recommendation to the legislative bodies. Either City may withdraw from the Planning Committee on thirty (30) days advance written notice to the other City (which may be transmitted by email).

- E. **Public Input.** All meetings of the Planning Committee shall be open to the public and shall be duly noticed as public meetings as required by law. Agendas for meetings (and to the extent practicable all meeting materials) shall be posted online not less than 24 hours before each Committee meeting. The Planning Committee is required by statute to ensure there are opportunities for public input in the development of the Plan. The Planning Committee shall adopt a plan for public input, which will at a minimum include conducting two public information and input sessions before the Plan is approved by the Cities. The City of Tumwater will also host a website (the “RFA Website”) where the public and other stakeholders can gather information and review the agendas, proceedings and materials considered by the Planning Committee. The Planning Committee may determine whether to take public comment at its meetings and shall provide the public a means to submit written comments to the Committee. If the Planning Committee determines to take public comment at its meetings, it shall approve the rules relating to such comment.
- F. **Public Communications.** Members of the Planning Committee may be called on from time to time to comment about the activities of the Planning Committee or the subject matter under deliberation. In such communications, Members will take care to distinguish any official Planning Committee positions from individual Member positions. Members agree to refer inquiries from the press to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee for response on behalf of the Planning Committee.
- G. **Chair and Vice-Chair of Planning Committee:** The Planning Committee elected a Chair and a Vice-Chair from among its voting members, w. The Chair and Vice-Chair will review and approve agendas in advance of meetings. The Chair will preside over the meetings; the Vice-Chair will preside over the meeting in the absence of the Chair. The Chair and Vice-Chair shall serve as spokespersons for the Planning Committee and shall sign transmittals and reports of the Planning Committee and assume such other duties as may be delegated to them from time to time by the Planning Committee. Any vacancy in the post of Chair or Vice-Chair may be filled by the Planning Committee upon a vote of a majority of the Planning Committee. In all events, one of these officers must be a Voting Member from the city of Tumwater, and one must be a Voting Member from the City of Olympia.

- H. **Resignation and Appointment of Replacement Voting Members.** Any Voting Member of the Planning Committee may resign, and such resignation shall be effective upon submitting written notice to the Chair and the resigning member's Council. The Council of the resigning Voting Member shall take prompt action to appoint a replacement member.
- I. **Planning Committee Meetings.** Notice of all meetings of the Planning Committee shall be given by the Chair or his/her designee in writing by electronic mail or personal delivery to all Members at least seven (7) days prior to the date on which the meeting is to be held; provided, however, the Chair may call for special meetings upon not less than twenty-four (24) hours' notice. Any notice shall specify the date, time and place of the meeting; provided, however, notice may be waived in writing signed by the person or persons entitled to such notice, whether before or after the time at which the notice is required to be given, which shall be equivalent to the giving of such notice. Notice for a special meeting shall also specify the business to be transacted as required by RCW 42.30.080(3).
1. Agendas. Prior to each regularly scheduled meeting, the Planning Committee, the Chair and Vice-Chair shall work with staff to confirm an agenda for the meeting. At the beginning of the meeting any Member may request that the Chair add an item to the agenda. The decision whether to add an item shall be made by the Chair. Agendas will be made available to the Members electronically (by email) at least 3 days prior to the meeting. Staff supporting the Planning Committee shall make best efforts to provide all meeting materials to the Planning Committee at least 2 days prior to the meeting date.
 2. Quorum. A quorum at any meeting shall consist of Planning Committee Members who represent a simple majority of Voting Members (five Voting Members).
 3. Rules of Order. All meetings of the Planning Committee shall be conducted informally but as needed shall be in accordance with the latest edition or revision of Robert's Rules of Order, except as otherwise provided in this Charter.
 4. Minutes. The Planning Committee has appointed a staff person to prepare and maintain summary minutes of Planning Committee meetings, recording attendance, general discussion items, decisions, follow up items and votes (where taken). Minutes approved by the Planning Committee shall be available to the public and posted on the RFA Website.
 5. Meeting Notices and Agendas. All meeting notices and agendas will be posted on the RFA Website in compliance with RCW 42.30.077, .080.

J. Decision Making:

1. Votes. The Planning Committee shall attempt to make decisions by consensus, defined as approval from not less than four Voting Members, including two from each agency. Where such consensus cannot be achieved, items may be approved by majority vote of Voting Members, however, the lack of consensus shall be noted. The minutes shall reflect the votes of each member. Each Voting Member of the Planning Committee has one vote. No proxy voting is allowed.
2. Routine Items. Routine actions of the Planning Committee will be confirmed by a simple majority vote of the Voting Members
3. Approval of Final RFA Plan. Notwithstanding the terms of Section I.1-2, the final proposed Plan must be approved by not less than two of the Voting Members from each City.

K. **Staff support for Planning Committee:** Staff support will be provided by the employees of the cities, and an independent facilitator and consultant team. Both agencies acknowledge that additional consultant support may be necessary to develop all the information sought over the course of this effort. The Planning Committee will utilize Mark Barber, Olympia's City Attorney for legal advice. In the event that the Planning Committee determines that the assistance of outside legal counsel is needed, the Cities anticipate sharing the cost of such services.

L. **Funding:** Early in its process, the Planning Committee will make a recommendation as to how costs of the project should be allocated between the cities and shall forward that for action by the appropriate city processes.

M. **Approval and Amendment of this Charter:** This Charter shall be approved by vote of not less than four Voting Members of the Planning Committee, including two Voting Members representing each City, and any amendments must be similarly approved.