

**TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
OCTOBER 8, 2024 Page 1**

CONVENE: 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Debbie Sullivan and Councilmembers Peter Agabi, Michael Althaus, Leatta Dahlhoff, Angela Jefferson Eileen Swarthout, and Kelly Von Holtz.

Excused: Councilmember Joan Cathey.

Staff: City Administrator Lisa Parks, Assistant City Attorney Davis Abbott, Finance Director Troy Niemeyer, Police Chief Jon Weiks, Fire Chief Brian Hurley, Water Resources and Sustainability Director Dan Smith, Transportation and Engineering Department Director Brandon Hicks, Community Development Department Director Michael Matlock, Recreation Manager Todd Anderson, and Deputy City Clerk Tracie Core.

**MEDIC ONE
ADVANCED LIFE
SUPPORT
CONTRACT
AMENDMENTS:**

Fire Chief Hurley briefed the Council on the proposed amendments to an existing Medic One Advanced Life Support Contract.

The Council was briefed several months ago on Thurston County Medic One's plans to add an additional medic unit. The City partners with Thurston County Medic One to provide advanced life support services (ALS). Thurston County Medic One completed a study of response times for ALS calls within Thurston County. The study revealed that within urban areas, increasing response time is projected to exceed the threshold that was established to add more medic units. Medic units are located across the county with two units in Olympia, two units in Tumwater with one unit assigned to the Rochester area, and three units staffed by Lacey Fire District 3. Study analysis was based on all calls in 2023. The study identified preferred locations of the new unit. The top three included Tumwater Fire Station T-2, Fire Station 33 (Lacey), and Fire Station 0-1 (Olympia). Tumwater Fire Station T-2 was identified as a good candidate because of access to downtown Olympia, Capitol Boulevard and Old Highway 99, I-5/US 101, and support to medic units 5, 10, and 4.

The new medic unit not only responds within the urban area, but also to response zones in the county. Currently, Fire Station T-2 is staffed with an engine company of three personnel. The proposal is to staff an additional medic unit at Fire Station T-2 increasing fire personnel from 9 to 11 employees. The proposal aligns with Public Safety Strategic Priorities and Goals to ensure timely, efficient, and effective public safety response in the community and exploring and implementing partnerships to improve efficiency and service delivery.

A medic unit located in the north area of the City improves ALS paramedic response time in that area of the City while improving paramedic coverage overall, as well as firefighting response in the City. Effective response is defined as the ability to assemble 15 firefighters within eight minutes at the scene of an incident. Tumwater Fire Department is only able to

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achieve that response within a small area of the City and is deficit in other areas of the City. Two additional firefighters on duty enhance the department's effective response force and the ability to assemble crews on scene quicker for structure fires. National and state standards call for the "two in/two out" rule, a provision that requires at least two firefighters to enter a structure fire with a two-person crew located outside if a rescue response is required. Daily minimum staffing is also evaluated by the Washington Survey & Rating Bureau every five years. The rating assists in determining property insurance rates.

Tumwater Fire Department staff and Thurston County Medic One staff have met along with representatives from the Thurston County Emergency Medical Services Council to negotiate required agreements. The current ALS contract is valid through December 2025. The contract was previously amended twice. The proposed amendments are No. 3, No. 4, and No. 5.

Amendment No. 3 addresses a new ALS Academy. The amendment was in progress prior to discussions for adding an additional medic unit. The amendment applies to all three contracting agencies (Olympia, Lacey Fire District 3), and Tumwater). The new ALS Academy is comprised of a six-week period paramedic structured training program during a day shift covering all the skills necessary for a paramedic. All new paramedics from the three jurisdictions would attend. Current paramedics would serve as instructors. The agreement enables Medic One to cover those costs with jurisdictions covering overtime incurred by instructors. Medic One would reimburse jurisdictions up to \$40,000 to cover the expense for the salaries of instructor time.

Amendment No. 4 addresses hiring of paramedics. Typically, Medic One funds up to 9.5 paramedic positions. To staff the new medic unit, the department proposes to hire paramedics in December 2024 to enable participation in the ALS Academy, and if needed, participation in the fire academy in early 2025. To accommodate the request, the department requested an increase in FTEs from 53 to 56 FTEs, which was approved. The proposal would increase FTES to 57 in 2024. Currently, the fire department has 52 FTE positions filled with an open Fire Prevention Officer position.

Amendment No. 5 addresses initial start-up costs for the new medic unit. The amendment would authorize an additional 9.5 FTEs effective January 1, 2025 with four positions hired in December 2024 and another five positions hired in January 2025. Only positions filled would be paid until the unit is operational 24/7. Medic One reimburses the City 80% of salaries, benefits, and necessary equipment. The amendment also includes an additional 6% to cover overtime costs. The agreement authorizes \$20,000 in 2025 for administration related to the new medic unit. The City

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currently receives \$20,000 each for Medic 5 and Medic 14 increasing the total from \$40,000 to \$60,000 for medic unit administration. The amendment defines the location of the new medic unit as Tumwater Fire Station T-2. Staff is working with Medic One staff to define the new medic response zone. The agreement also provides reimbursement for start-up costs up to \$475,000. Some or all the amount could be used to cover the costs of FTEs enrolled in the fire academy or for temporary housing and facility costs associated with Fire Station T-2 upgrades.

The proposed amendments were reviewed by City Attorney Kirkpatrick with a final review scheduled. The Thurston County Board of County Commissioners must also approve the amendments. The City has been actively recruiting applicants. Five paramedic candidates were recently interviewed. Several conditional offers were offered to candidates. Following background and medical reviews, successful candidates would receive a job offer. The fire department continues to evaluate options for Station T-2 improvements. The proposed amendments will be presented are scheduled for the Council's consideration at the October 15, 2024 Council meeting.

Councilmember Jefferson requested additional information on the amounts pertaining to 80% reimbursement and 20% City financial responsibility. Director Niemeyer responded that based on the hiring of four paramedics in December 2024, the gross cost to the City for salaries and benefits would be approximately \$45,000 for December with \$36,000 of that amount reimbursed by Medic One for a net cost to the City of \$8,993. Assuming all paramedics are hired by January 1, 2025, first year salaries and benefits for 9 FTEs total \$1,255,060 with the second year of the biennium assuming a cost of living increase for a second year cost of \$1,308,819 with more than \$2 million reimbursed by Medic One resulting a net cost to the City of \$512,776 during the 2025/2025 biennium.

Councilmember Dahlhoff recommended scheduling the request as a Council Consideration to ensure transparency to share current conditions and the need to strengthen the foundation of the proposed action.

Councilmember Swarthout asked about the status of the five candidates. Fire Chief Hurley reported the department completed 10 interviews with several of the applicants as lateral candidates currently employed as paramedics at other jurisdictions, several candidates recently graduated from school, and several applicants reside in other states.

**MAYOR/CITY
ADMINISTRATOR'S
REPORT:**

City Administrator Parks reviewed the timeline for the biennial budget review process. Workshop 2 was rescheduled to the October 22, 2024 Council work session. State law requires two public hearings on the budget. The first public hearing will include the tax levy and the first budget public hearing on Monday, November 4, 2024. The November 5,

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2024 Council meeting was moved to November 4, 2024 because of the General Election. Workshop 3 is scheduled at the November 12, 2024 Council work session. The second public hearing on the budget is scheduled on November 19, 2024 along with any proposed 2023/2024 budget amendments. The bylaws for the Tumwater Metropolitan Park District (TMPD) require a meeting of the TMPD Board which is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. on November 19, 2024 prior to the regular meeting at 7 p.m. The November 19, 2024 Council meeting includes another public hearing and adoption on the TMPD tax levy and the TMPD proposed budget. The Council is scheduled to adopt the 2025/2026 budget on December 3, 2024.

City Administrator Parks shared that the preliminary estimate of attendance at Falls Fest was 6,000 people. Additionally, four Councilmembers and the Mayor participated in the event as well as 12 volunteers. The event featured seven food vendors, 15 art vendors, and three entertainers in addition to a new partnership with the Craft District following the event featuring music with 80 people in attendance.

The Clean-Up Drop-Off event attracted 350 vehicles that participated in the event featuring shredding services (4.2 tons), food items donations for Thurston County Food Bank, battery recycling (Water Resources & Sustainability Department), medication drop-off (Police Department), and lock box medication giveaways (Tumwater HOPES). Two Councilmember and the Mayor participated in the event. The event also was supported by several community sponsorships and volunteers from local businesses.

An upcoming event is scheduled on Thursday, October 10, 2024 at Tumwater Historical Park from 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. with Old Town Center seniors participating in the Chili Cook-off. Councilmember Jefferson has indicated she plans to compete and earn first prize.

The property owner of the South Pacific Restaurant received clearance by the insurance company to proceed with demolition of the burn site. The owner has contracted with a demolition company and City staff has been in contact with the property owner and the contractor. Completion of a hazardous material report was required. Asbestos was identified requiring the application of the demolition permit to document the mitigation work for asbestos removal. The owner is securing a bond for the demolition with the site fenced for security and access prevention. The contractor is working with stormwater staff to address stormwater needs.

Mayor Sullivan reported on her attendance to the Association of Washington Cities Mayors Conference in Ellensburg. She was able to meet with Ellensburg City Manager Heidi Behrends Cerniwey who previously served as the City's Assistant City Administrator.

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ADJOURNMENT: **With there being no further business, Mayor Sullivan adjourned the meeting at 6:37 p.m.**

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President
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