

Olympia Tumwater
RFA Planning Committee
Governance Update for City Councils

June 13 , 2022

Tonight's Discussion

- Review the requirements and legal options for RFA governance.
- Recap the RFA Planning Committee plan to develop governance recommendation.
- Review governance in other RFAs.
- Review set of potential governance options & seek Council input.
- No final action this evening.

Governance

- The RFA must have a governing Board of Commissioners.
- The RFA Plan must propose the Board structure, composition.
- The role of the Board is like the role of the City Council.
 - Adopts budget, authorizes # of FTEs, adopts policies, hires CEO.
- The RFA statute provides great flexibility in structuring the Board.

RFA Governance Options

An RFA Governance Board can be comprised of:

1. Elected officials from member agencies
1. 2. Persons directly elected **At-Large** by the voters of the RFA
3. Persons directly elected by **District** by the voters of the RFA
4. A **mix** of any or all of the above

*The **initial board** must be comprised of elected officials from member agencies, but it can transition to a different approach over time.*

*Terms of office for directly elected Board members **cannot exceed 6 years.***

Committee Process on Governance (as presented in April)

Step 1: Agree on guiding values and principles

Secured support from City Councils at April 19 presentation.

Step 2: Develop a small number (3-5) of options.

Tonight: Review these options with Councils. Solicit input.

Step 3: Select a preferred option.

Review this with City Councils for concurrence.

Proposed Statement of Shared Values and Principles

To guide development of RFA Plan

*Not presented in
order of priority*

Our Values Include:

1. Ensuring operations meet or exceed current service levels in terms of their ability to support a safe and healthy community.
2. Providing a safe, supportive and professional environment for our first responders.
3. **Participatory Governance.** Jurisdictions which are part of the RFA should have a meaningful voice in the operating decisions of the RFA. The RFA Board should seek to make decisions by consensus whenever possible.
4. **Pro-Active Oversight, Planning and Continuous Improvement.** We are committed to planning for the future and proactively identifying and addressing the needs of our communities, identifying and implementing ways to better meet those needs.
5. **Promoting interagency collaboration, communication and strong working relationships.** The RFA will act in the collective best interests of all its public safety partners, not just those served by the RFA.
6. **Making data-driven decisions.** The RFA should take strategic action based on the facts after a thorough and objective analysis of the issues.
7. **Being an effective and efficient steward of public funds.**
8. **Affordable and sustainable financial model.** The RFA should implement an affordable and sustainable financial model that can facilitate consistent service levels over time as the community served continues to grow.
9. **Strong engagement with our local communities.** The RFA should be a positive and engaged member of the communities it serves with pro-active outreach to the public.
10. **Honoring the history and identify of the Olympia and Tumwater Fire Departments while we build the culture for the new fire agency.**

Proposed Statement of Values and Principles

*Not presented in
order of priority*

Our Operating Principles Include:

- A. The RFA Board will be committed to the success of the RFA and will be engaged in actively learning and understanding the work of the agency.
- B. We will strive to operate nimbly, with the ability to make decisions and respond quickly when necessary.
- C. We seek to understand and address the unique needs of the communities we serve. We strive to address these needs equitably in all operating and financial decisions.
- D. We work to attract, develop and retain high quality staff.
- E. We will ensure all City Fire Department staff in good standing at the time of annexation are offered at least equivalent positions within the RFA.
- F. We strive to employ rigorous quality assurance and reporting practices.
- G. We manage agency budgets to control or reduce costs.
- H. We seek to limit spikes in budgets from year to year, by use of planning capital investments over time, developing reserves and other means.
- I. We commit to being transparent, accessible and responsive to our customer agencies and the public.
- J. In contracting to provide services to other agencies, we are mindful of our own costs of service: communities within the RFA boundaries should not incur additional costs from these external service contracts.

What have other RFA's done in terms of governance?

Most have revised their governance structures over time.

Some examples of governance structures (6 of 13 RFAs in the state):

Puget Sound RFA & Renton RFA	Southeast Thurston RFA	West Thurston RFA	South Snohomish County RFA	Marysville RFA
3 elected officials from each member agency (2), plus 1 nonvoting member for each contract agency	3 districts, 2 members elected directly from each district (total of 6 board members)	3 elected officials from each member agency (2, for total of 6 board members)	5 districted positions + 2 at-large positions	4 City Council members + 2 of 3 commissioners from member Fire Agency, one nonvoting.

The RFA Committee considered many governance options

- **Initial RFA board must be comprised entirely of City elected officials.** It must remain in place at least until there is opportunity for an election.
 - August 1, 2023: RFA created
 - August/November 2025: First possible election cycle (*same odd-year schedule as City Councils, other local government officials*)
 - **The initial “all-City elected” board must be in place through at least December 31, 2025. 2 years, 5 months.**
- **Transition approach recommended:** RFA Plan should include both
 - Initial Board of all City elected officials as necessary, **and**
 - A different structure for the ongoing Governance Board after 2025.

Additional statutory requirements to note

- **Districted positions:**

- Districts must be relatively equal in population, consider community and geographic boundaries.
- If there are any districts, the *entire RFA* must be districted, not just one city.
- In the primary, only those voters living in the district vote; in the primary, all RFA voters will chose from among the top-two vote-getters in the primary.

	Olympia	Tumwater
Population (2022 OFM Est.)	55,960 (2021 OFM Est.)	25,360 (2021 OFM Est.)
Olympia is approx. 2.2 times larger in population		

- **The RFA Board can change the governance board structure on its own** in the future, at any time.

- (Unless this authority is otherwise restricted in the RFA Plan).
- Agency should remain independent of the Cities for liability protection.

Recommended Initial Board Structure 2023-2025

- Only city elected officials can serve (legal requirement).
- Options Considered:
 - 4 members, 2 from each City
 - 5 members, 3 from Olympia, 2 from Tumwater
 - 6 members, 3 from each City
- **Recommendation: 6 City Councilmembers, 3 appointed from each City.**
- **Rationale:**
 - Mirrors current RFA Planning Committee structure
 - Maximizes equity in start-up of the new RFA agency as a true partnership
 - Maximizes input from each City without involving a quorum of each City Council

Ongoing Board Structure Options

Several options considered by Committee. Other iterations possible.

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6
# of seats	5	6	7	7	7	7
Appointed by Olympia	1	3	2	1	1	2
Appointed by Tumwater	1	3	2	1	1	2
Directly elected -- at large			3	5		
Directly elected -- by district	3				5	3
Voting	Each Board member has 1 vote					
Other	Staggering of terms/initial term for each Board seat TBD – goal is to minimize turnover required at each election.					

Committee is recommending a 7-member board. Several approaches possible.

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6
# Of seats	5	6	7	7	7	7
Appointed by Olympia	1	3	2	1	1	2
Appointed by Tumwater	1	3	2	1	1	2
Directly elected – at large			3	5		
Directly elected – by district	3				5	3
Voting	Each Board member has 1 vote					
Other	Staggering of terms/initial term for each Board member under discussion – want to minimize turnover required at each election.					

Rationale for **7-members**: Functional size, large enough to support subcommittees, odd number.

Additional RFA Planning Committee considerations on governance

Districts

- ***Benefits:*** geographic distribution of representatives
- ***Challenges:*** Districts may be too small to ensure strong candidate pool; potential focus on district area at expense of overall agency
- *3 Districts* would likely mean 2 districts include most/all of Olympia and 1 district includes most/all of Tumwater
- Union leaders strongly want to ensure board members with sufficient time and expertise to dedicate to the oversight of the new agency.
- The start-up board will be a major time commitment, ongoing board less so, but still significant.

Questions for Council - RFA start-up board

Thoughts on initial start-up board recommendation?

Start-Up Board Recommendation	
3 Olympia Councilmembers	3 Tumwater Councilmembers

Questions for Councils: Ongoing RFA board structure.

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6
# Of seats	5	6	7	7	7	7
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Appointed by Tumwater	1	3	2	1	1	2
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Voting	Each Board member has 1 vote					
Other	Staggering of terms/initial term for each Board member under discussion – want to minimize turnover required at each election.					

Your thoughts on:

- Proposed 7-member size?
- District versus at-large seats?
- Ongoing Council representation?
- Other?

Next Steps

- RFA Planning Committee will return with a final recommendation on governance, based on Councils' input.
- Committee will also return with recommendations re: the transition details between the initial and ongoing board, initial terms of each seat to achieve staggered terms.