

# City of SeaTac

## Council Workshop Minutes Synopsis

November 29, 2010  
5:00 PM

City Hall  
Council Chambers

**CALL TO ORDER:** The SeaTac City Council Workshop was called to order by Mayor Terry Anderson at 5:04 p.m.

**COUNCIL PRESENT:** Mayor Terry Anderson, Deputy Mayor (DM) Gene Fisher, Councilmembers (CMs) Rick Forschler, Anthony (Tony) Anderson (*arrived at 6:15 p.m.*), Ralph Shape, Pam Fernald and Mia Gregerson.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Interim City Manager (ICM) Todd Cutts, City Attorney Mary Mirante Bartolo, City Clerk Kristina Gregg, Interim Assistant City Manager (IACM) Jeff Robinson, and Acting Fire Chief Brian Wiwel.

### PRESENTATION:

● **Review the proposed Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with the Kent Regional Fire Authority (RFA) for joint operation and administration of specific fire services (see Agenda Bill #3277)**

Acting Fire Chief Wiwel introduced Kent Fire Department / RFA Chief Jim Snider.

Acting Chief Wiwel briefed the Council on the background of this issue. At the June 5 Council Retreat, the option of joining a RFA and items needed in the Fire Department were discussed. Since 1992 staff has been reduced from twelve to seven in the Training, Administration and Fire & Life Divisions. At the same time there have been added demands, including Emergency Medical Services with more complex procedures, Weapons of Mass Destruction, technical rescue, water rescue as well as Federal and State mandated regulations. Staff can't maintain status quo so staff is proposing a possible solution.

In 2008 when the master plan was completed, some recommendations were made, including hiring an Assistant Fire Chief / Fire Marshal, hiring a Battalion Chief in the Training Division, hiring an Administrative Assistant, and hiring a Public Educator. Updates on this were made at Public Safety & Justice (PS&J) and Administration & Finance (A&F) Committee meetings.

Acting Chief Wiwel summarized the services proposed to be contracted for: administrative services – Fire Chief; emergency management; fire prevention – Fire Marshal, Fire Inspector, and Public Educator; Fire Investigation; and Training consolidation.

The 2011 proposed budget includes \$293,432 for some of these services. The cost for the proposed ILA for most of these services is \$179,911. That is a \$113,521 savings. Training would be through a contribution of personnel; no new cost to the City. SeaTac would receive the additional benefit of highly skilled and qualified staff in these areas.

The ILA has a one-year term that may be cancelled with 60 days notice, or renewed. The Kent Fire Chief and Fire Marshal would be designated as SeaTac's Fire Chief and Fire Marshal. The Fire Chief would report to the City Manager. Billing would be in quarterly installments with caps in place.

Upon a question posed by CM Shape, Acting Fire Chief Wiwel stated that the City will receive a quarterly detailed billing.

In response to a question by CM A. Anderson, Acting Fire Chief Wiwel stated that there are many items in the Fire Department that are either broken or on the edge of being broken. This ILA will help the City before more of these items break. There is not enough time for the Fire Chief to also be the Assistant Fire Chief, Fire Marshal and the Emergency Manager.

ICM Cutts stated that one priority of Council was public outreach for fire services, this agreement would address the outreach.

CM Fernald stated that it feels odd that the City has an exploratory committee for the RFA, and now the Council is being asked to approve an ILA with the Kent RFA. It looks like the City is moving towards an RFA before the committee is done researching.

ICM Cutts clarified that once staff started looking into the RFA, some efficiencies were seen. This is a good opportunity to have a test period before making a decision.

CM Gregerson stated that this topic was discussed at the Council committee level before RFA was a top priority.

CM Forschler stated that he does not see the urgency. Some of the positions have been vacant for a long time. He questioned whether the exploratory committee has reviewed the ILA.

**PRESENTATION (Continued):**

**Review the proposed ILA with the Kent RFA for joint operation and administration of specific fire services (see Agenda Bill #3277) (Continued):**

Acting Fire Chief Wiwel stated that the committee has only met once so far and they have not discussed the ILA. The urgency is that because positions have been vacant for so long, it has caused the divisions to deteriorate. The next committee meeting is scheduled for December 9. CM Forschler stated that he would like the committee to review the ILA.

DM Fisher stated that he has been advocating for years for regional fire this so it would be wrong to vote against this; however, the timing doesn't seem right with the exploratory committee.

Kent RFA Fire Chief Schneider stated that the Kent Fire Department changed to the RFA on July 1, 2010 due to the economy. There is some economy of scale savings to be gained by jointly sharing positions and purchasing equipment. He stated that the City needs to look to see if there is potential of working together besides just the exploratory committee. This is the first RFA in the state where one entity already has an RFA and another entity may join. This ILA is a great way to see if it's going to work. The benchmark is 18 months. Either something will happen in the exploratory committee, at the planning session, or if it goes to a vote of the citizens.

There are many good reasons for SeaTac and Kent to come together, including location and training. The Kent RFA wants it to be a win-win for both parties.

Mayor T. Anderson stated that she was not in favor of the ILA in the beginning, but she believes in regional fire.

**ADJOURNED:** Mayor T. Anderson adjourned the Council Workshop at 5:48 p.m.