

FIRE & EMS PLANNING COALITION

Special Meeting Minutes January 29, 2019 – 6:00PM

City of Dallas Civic Center
945 SE Jefferson St, Dallas, OR 97338

Present: Paul Trahan, Jennie Rummell, Frank Pender, Rick Mishler, Chris Greenhill, Scot Breeden, Rod Watson, Tammy Heidt, Dennis Rogers, Gary Brooks, Denis Graver, Brice Ingram, Roy Whitman, Ken Woods Jr., Kelly Gabliks, Keith Moore, Bob Davis, Fred Hertel, Todd Brumfield, Greg Ellis, Ashley Harlow and Audience Members.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER at 6:05pm

Scot Breeden read an announcement from SDAO that allowed the three Fire Boards to be present for the purpose of information sharing and a Q&A period of the facilitators. The statement did not allow any deliberations on any topic.

FLAG SALUTE

INTRODUCTION OF COALITION MEMBERS by Scot Breeden

INTRODUCTION OF BOARD MEMBERS AND CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Each member introduced themselves.

Presentation on Fire & EMS Coalition

Scot Breeden introduced the two speakers there; Steve Abel from Siuslaw Fire District and Terry Ney from Lane Fire Authority.

Terry started, by telling his background at Lane Fire authority, and how it came to be. He explains the merging into one fire authority has accomplished five major things:

1. They have only one Fire chief
2. There are more boots on the ground
3. Response times have improved
4. There is versatility (Career staff, volunteers, students, etc.)
5. It has allowed them to move resources around when necessary

Terry says that overall, there are two things that the entities need to do before they are ready to move into a consolidation. First, they must set aside any egos that may be held. Second, they need to start asking “what’s best for the entire area?” instead of “what’s best for us?”

He pointed out what could potentially be some pitfalls to merging as well. He said that the different cultures of each department can sometimes be difficult. The separate identities are also sometimes hard to consolidate. The goal will be to create a new identity altogether.

Steve spoke next. He emphasized multiple times how a feasibility study of each entity would be beneficial. He briefly discussed his past experiences. He discussed how Tualatin Valley contracted for fire services. He also talked about how Pleasant Hill and Goshen work together. He discussed the common vision and values for departments that merge together. The meeting was then opened for questions from any board or city council members.

Tammy Heidt

Q: Are Lane and Santa Clara under an IGA currently?

A: Lane Fire Authority operates under the model of an IGA that was established in 2012. The merge occurred in 2016. They are currently under a new IGA with Santa Clara.

Dennis Rogers

Q: Does the District you are talking about have paid staff, and are they part of the union?

A: Yes to both. Most of the paid staff come from being a previous volunteer. They have a good relationship, and rely on each other.

Rick Mischler

Q: How did Eugene react to the consolidation? Is mutual aid still occurring normally?

A: Eugene is starting to recognize that the fire team has gotten better. Automatic aid between these entities has gotten better as well.

Rod Watson

Q: What are some things you would say to encourage someone to overcome the fear for loss of identity?

A: There are five things to consider:

1. If it doesn't work, there is always a way to get out of it
2. Make the consolidation what you need
3. Accept there will be some people that will not change, no matter what
4. Do it for the right reason
5. Go slow

Scot Breeden

Q: We have made a Road Map, but was that a good idea to make one?

A: Some things that are in the Road Map just happen quickly. Other items will take longer. It is good to have the vision to rough go off of though.

Jennie Rummell

Q: When it comes to splitting funds, how does West Linn and Tualatin Valley handle that? What do you do with the existing budget?

A: These districts serve the entire area now. They give and take. They determine what engine is best suited for what area. They plan to gradually implement changes such as taxes.

Scot Breeden

Q: We all have paid and volunteer staff. How do you consolidate them?

A: Take it very slow. Start with consolidated trainings. Then go to other small things. Volunteers are still a very important part, and that needs to stay the same way.

Dennis Rogers and Rick Mischler

Q: Were you a part of the 360 study? Does that create problems?

A: No they were not. Paying for productivity will cause problems. They are paying hourly.

Scot Breeden

Q: Each entity has different strengths. How do you use that for benefit?

A: Look at what's best for the end goal. Calculate the different distributions from each entity. Determine what will work best as a whole.

Bob Davis asked about the maintenance shops in the other districts. Dallas is the only one that has a separate shop for their equipment. Sharing it is already in discussion. SCBA's, Lexipol, and a PIO are all areas that are also being discussed for possible IGA opportunities.

Kelly Gabliks states that she would like to see a copy of the IGA in order to see how it is going to work. They will not vote on something until it is reduced to writing.

Roy Whitman commented saying that a consolidation is all about leadership. There are a lot of challenges, but they are very confident it can be worked out. Ultimately, people want to know they will get help when they need it.

Dennis Rogers

Q: When you first designed your fire authority, who makes up the Board of Directors?

A: The Board meetings were held jointly by those that were already on it. This may not be practical with a City Council. Bring things together slowly and progressively.

Get a Fire chief that you trust. He will make the decisions like oil changes, apparatus repairs, etc.

Jennie Rummell

Q: Do the districts and city need to agree separately who will be in charge?

A: Yes. There will need to be individual signatures.

Scot Breeden

Q: How did the selection process occur?

A: All at large

Chris Greenhill explained how West Valley came to be. They went through the merge. During this, some volunteers left. As far as an operating agency, it was beneficial.

The opportunity for questions was then opened to the audience.

Micky Garus

Q: Where does the extra money come from for the expansion of service?

A: The Districts will have to look ahead to the budget in order to make sure things are anticipated for. They will work under the applied ratio that was established. Gary Brooks stated that eventually, some things will be merged as well, in order to save money. This may include training, administration, and other areas. One does not have to go to a full merger all at once. The parties can work under IGA's, and build their way up to a full consolidation.

Expenses are going to go up no matter what. It is all about controlling costs, and reducing overlaps.

Craig Pope

Q: The key is to address the main issue; we need to get more money in order to get more career staff. How is that going to happen?

A: It will never be all staff. There is no way to afford that. Progressively, we will add as many career staff as possible.

Eriks Gabliks commended Dallas for the current staffing that was hired. Major improvements have been made recently. Eriks sees a future with 24 hour coverage. Volunteers cannot sustain the high call volume, and the new additions have helped.

A feasibility study for Dallas was recommended once again.

Questions from any Board members or City Council members to the Coalition

- **City of Dallas**
Kelly Gabliks said that the City Council was very disappointed that they could not all come due to the meeting not being properly noticed as a public meeting. She would like to recommend another meeting at a future date that they can all attend.
Scot Breeden stated that they were also disappointed as well. This meeting was intended to be that way, and would like to discuss having another so that everyone can attend.
- **Sheridan Fire District**
In the end of the consolidation, it will not be cheaper. Everyone is struggling. The fire authority model works out of the same model today. It is all about working together to serve the community the best way possible.
- **SW Polk County RFPD**
none
- **West Valley Fire District**
Roy Whitman states that starting the roadmap is a great start to a consolidation.

CLOSING COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT at 8:27pm