

**CITIZEN'S ADVISORY GROUP ("CAG")**  
**TO**  
**SAN JUAN ISLAND EMS ("SJIEMS")**  
**SAN JUAN COUNTY PUBLIC HOSPITAL DISTRICT #1 ("SJCPHD #1")**  
**SAN JUAN COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT #3 ("FD #3")**  
**AND THE TOWN OF FRIDAY HARBOR ("TOWN")**

**MINUTES**  
**Wednesday August 22, 2018**  
**6:30 pm, 849 Spring Street Unit B5**

**CAG representatives:**

Chuck Dalldorf, Town (Chair)  
George Johnson, SJCPHD #1  
Rick Frazer, at large  
Dan Paulsen, FD #3  
Mark Tompkins, at large

**Others Present:**

Nathan Butler, SJCPHD #1  
SJCPHD #1 Board Recording Sec.  
  
Brad Creesy  
FD #3 Chief

**Absent:**

None

Duncan Wilson,  
Town Administrator

**By Phone or teleconference:**

None

**Public Present:**

Richard Grout

**Call to Order:** Chair Dalldorf called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

**Approve Minutes:** By consent the group agreed that the minutes from 7/18/2018 were acceptable.

**Duncan Wilson, Town of Friday Harbor Administrator.** Per prior arrangement, Duncan Wilson presented on his thoughts on the discussed consolidation between SJIEMS and FD #3 and how it impacts the Town of Friday Harbor and its residents.

Mr. Wilson was asked his thoughts regarding how this discussed consolidation plays into the needs of town residents and the economy of the town. The group engaged in a free-flowing discussion with many questions asked.

Wilson began by discussing the history of how fire services were separated away from the town in years prior, noting that it would have been much easier to have FD #3 annex the town at that time rather than now. Currently the town pays from its general

budget to FD #3 for contract services based on what the property tax revenue would have been on a per person basis but is not a part of the fire district. Town residents fall under the district boundaries of SJIEMS and pay a tax directly to it. Town residents do not get to vote on Fire District commissioners.

Wilson stated that consolidation would probably require annexing the town into FD #3, noting that it's "so complicated to put it together unless the town is also annexed in simultaneously so that all the players are all together and taxed in the same manner, and move forward... many different segments would have to be put to the voters and it would just be so complicated that they would throw their hands up in the air and not want to do it at all."

He then discussed how to handle implementing the new tax that would come with annexation into the Fire District. "We are willing to talk about reducing our property tax levy, somewhat, in order to offset the increased cost they will pay [i.e. if town is annexed into the fire District]," Wilson noted, "but that is really hard to say – we are probably the lowest taxed municipality in the state of Washington, right now we are a little under \$1.96 per \$1,000 assessed value, I mean, you can go to the 'Point Cities' around Bellevue, and it's lower, but they also pay for a Fire District, and you add that on, and they also pay a utility tax, so you add that on."

The town generates revenue from its sales tax and a property tax, each of which is affected differently by economic factors. A Fire and/or EMS service is generally funded only by property taxes.

Wilson noted that many places only have Basic Life Support EMS services, and the advantage on SJI of having Advanced Life Support EMS services is a huge plus for town residents. Wilson noted of both FD #3 and SJIEMS that "there's no complaints, I can't give you one problem that I have overall with either of them from an operational standpoint – you call, they come, they're fast." CAG members agreed that they wanted to ensure that future services remain high whatever the outcome.

Other questions asked included:

- Fundamentally, do you think town must merge or could it continue to pay on a contract basis?
- If town doesn't want to go forward with annexation into FD #3 how would you deal with it?
- Chief Martin stated that 60% of EMS calls are in the city, given that, what is your perception of bringing Fire and EMS together and annexing the town?

- Do you think by merging, setting aside the financial advantages, just speaking of the service that each one delivers, do you think there would be any enhancement or detriment to the town?
- If you had a whiteboard how would you draw out the solution to this problem?
- The rate you charge for fire services, is that sustainable for the town?
- Instead of reducing taxes to offset a tax increase resulting from annexation of town into FD #3 (and paying a FD property levy) could/would you dedicate savings to other projects or new services for residents?
- If a new service is proposed with the residual money saved by the town what success rate do you expect with the ballot measure?

Wilson suggested that if this goes forward that town should hold hearings and ask residents what they want to do with any money saved by town (in losing the liability of paying for fire services) and how they feel about annexation and/or consolidation between Fire and EMS services. Wilson agreed to talk to the town council regarding its opinion(s) on this subject.

**New Business:**


**Discussion of recent Skagit County EMS – Fire actions:** Skagit county is currently reorganizing its EMS services. Dan Paulsen offered to talk to his contacts there. Would like to learn how the process went/is going and to get their input.

**Set CAG September Meeting Schedule:** CAG agreed to meet Sept 5<sup>th</sup> at 669 Mullis Street. It's next meeting is August 29, 2018, 6:30 pm at SJCPHD #1 business offices.

**Public Comment:**

There was no public comment.

**Adjournment: Chair Dalldorf adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m.**

  
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**Signed by Chair**

  
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**Date**

**The original document is retained at the San Juan County Public Hospital District #1 Office at 849 Spring Street, Unit B-5, Friday Harbor, WA 98250 in San Juan County Public Hospital District #1 permanent proceedings file.**

**Attest: Nathan Butler, Board Recording Secretary for SJCPHD #1**