



Fire and EMS Steering Committee Discussion

Prepared for: Board of Commissioners
Prepared by: Norvin Collins, Fire Chief
Date: April 10, 2019

SAN JUAN ISLAND FIRE & RESCUE

Regarding Steering Committee for Integration of EMS and Fire

Document Intent

This is a statement of intent regarding implementation of the April 2, 2019 decision to initiate interagency talks regarding integration of EMS and Fire service on San Juan Island. It is written by and approved by Agency executives but is not binding.

Norvin Collins, Chief Administrator Fire & Rescue
Karl Kuetzing, Chief Administrator SJIEMS
Duncan Wilson, Chief Administrator Town of Friday Harbor
Attest: Nathan Butler, SJCPHD #1

Steering Committee Scope:

The motion passed by the Board on 4/2/2019 states that the steering committee shall “begin the process of working out the details of a possible integration of EMS and Fire services”

The process of merger will have a certain number of details that are the prerogative of the Board – for instance the taxing levy. It will have operational considerations that are the prerogative of the Chief Executive, such as the organizational chart. We see this steering committee as the primary means for cooperation between staff and the Board as this process is worked out.

The steering committee is primarily advisory, but unlike the Citizen’s Advisory Group will actually put together an integration package, i.e. “details of a possible integration of EMS and Fire services,” for approval by the Boards and Town Council – and some of which will then go to the public for a vote.

Board and Council Inclusion

It is essential that this steering committee include both the respective Boards/council. Elected officials can be apprised of committee activities through the following means:

- Regular reports of every meeting written by Nathan Butler
- Monthly reports by agency executives at Board/Council meetings as desired
- Monthly reports by commissioner delegates at Board/Council meetings as desired
- Employees on the Steering Committee are authorized to discuss all committee activities with all commissioners and answer questions

We do not believe that recording audio is necessary for these meetings, nor do we think that formal minutes will be suitable for the types of work sessions that these meetings will involve.

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Public Inclusion

It is essential that this steering committee include the public. The public can be included in the following ways:

- All meetings are by default public
- Meetings will be scheduled in advance, posted on a website(s) (TBD) and/or announced at Board/Council meetings as desired
- Written meeting reports given to the Boards can also be made public

There will be some topics which cannot be discussed publicly. We would like to be open about those topics and propose that we submit those topics in advance for Board approval in public session as confidential discussions much like how the topic of an executive session is announced. This is not legally required but is important to show good faith with the public.

We ask that the following topics be approved for private discussion: legal counsel, tax rates, discussions about the union or employees, and patient centric/specific quality control issues (where HIPAA may be a concern). All final recommendations will be public.

Further topics for private discussion will be submitted to the Boards for approval in open session as needed. Decisions about what is permissible for confidential discussion can only be applied to that Agency's representatives.

Going Forward

The Chief Executives are planning to meet on April 18th to work on Agenda items for the Steering committee.

The first Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for April 29th at 3:00 p.m. and will be public. Location TBD. If Board/Council delegates cannot make that date then it will be rescheduled for some time after May 8th due to other commitments.
