

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 December 5, 2018
6:30 pm, 849 Spring Street, Suite B-5

CAG representatives:

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

Others Present:

Nathan Butler, SJCPHD #1
SJCPHD #1 Board Recording Sec.

Absent:

None

Public Present:

Karin Agosta, Richard Grout

By Phone or teleconference:

None

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

Approve Minutes/Admin Support: By consent the group agreed that the minutes from November 28, 2018 were acceptable. By consent the group agreed to pay Butler for his November services.

Committee Reports:

Outreach Committee— Chuck Dalldorf reported on his meeting with Dave Ralston. Ralston advised that the CAG begin with the question of what level of services voters want, and then ask what that level of service would cost. Ask for what you need and nothing more, but don't undershoot either to avoid having to go back to the public right away for more. During the merger Ralston worked on anti-tax groups and opposition were brought in and they held many meetings to address their concerns; many of them ended up being supportive.

Work Session:

Level of Service— What is the level of service for EMS and Fire? The CAG needs to determine what the current level of service is, and whether either EMS or Fire track level of service. Home owner's insurance is measured in part by Fire response times so that information may be more readily available. Butler agreed to track down the last published run response times for EMS if they exist.

Upcoming meet w/boards— At the last meeting the CAG had discussed approaching the SJCPHD#1 and FD#3 boards. In tandem with that, commissioners from the boards expressed interest in meeting. A meeting was scheduled for 12/12/18, 5 pm, at the Fire Department #3 Headquarters. Chair Dalldorf and Vice Chair Tompkins agreed to represent the CAG to this meeting; other members will do their best to attend.

What to Discuss on Dec 12th—The CAG needs to understand where the elected commissioners are at. A merger of this sort requires commitment from all – if there are commissioners opposed to the process it is likely to fail.

The group discussed how to balance discussion of the process the CAG has gone through with its ongoing efforts to plan for the future. Also need to discuss details that need to be worked out and emphasize the importance of the process. Said Paulson: "It's too important an issue for the people of the county and for the island to rush though... the more we have explored it and educated ourselves and met with other people the more it seems complex, we need to do due diligence... we're looking at the long term viability of this EMS-Fire service and what's best for the public..."

How to package a merger— CAG members discussed the importance of avoid confusing the public by (too) slowly going through the steps of integration or making the process too complicated to understand. George Johnson and Rick Frazer noted that EMS financial difficulties do not seem serious and probably aren't compelling as a primary reason for merger. Rick Frazer noted that "This [merger] is probably a couple years process... I think it's going to go through with a couple cycles of votes." Mark Tompkins noted the difficulty for the EMS agency in waiting to resolve this issue with an outgoing chief, difficulty in hiring a permanent chief when his job may become redundant, and the overall institutional instability resulting from uncertainty.

Possible Interim Steps— Some of what is being discussed could be accomplished by interlocal agreements and contracting. The group agreed it would probably be expensive and unnecessarily confusing – which could stop the entire process.

Messaging— Involving the public will be an essential part of this process. The CAG's report will play an important part of that. It isn't known to what extent CAG members will be asked to participate after their report is filed, but passionate champions are an important part of making a merger process a success.

The group agreed to start putting together a draft for the December 12th meeting.

Summary: Regarding what to say to the boards, said Rick Frazer:

"It appears that a consolidation of some form is going to synergistically give us advantages in operations, it's going to give us advantages in financial, it's going to give us maybe even opportunities of simplicity..."

"Here's how we've gotten here: we've spoken to a fair number of people, we've spoken with management, we listened to some outside people, we've made phone calls, we've got budgets.

Now our goal is... to clearly try to put together an operating financial package, and we need to clearly appreciate what it's going to take the votes for the levies; maybe put together a pathway to get that done, and maybe clearly come up with broad perspectives of operational consolidation.

"What are your thoughts of where we're going? What do you see that might be even significant that we've missed, and is there anything you want to do to change your charge to this group?"

Chair Dalldorf added, "The starting point of this isn't 'what organization, who, when, where.' This discussion is about emergency services – a core, fundamental service that is paid for by the residents of this county, and providing the best services that we can provide for the people who are paying, and what they are willing to pay for it... That's really the context for this discussion."

Upcoming Meetings: December 5, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. and December 18 at 6:30 p.m. There is a combined meeting with the CAG, SJCPHD#1, SJIEMS, FD#3, and the Town of Friday Harbor on December 12, 2018, 5:00 p.m., at the Fire Department #3 Headquarters

Public Comment: Karin Agosta and Richard Grout commented.

Adjournment: Chair Dalldorf adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.



Signed by Chair

Dec. 12, 2018
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