

**Summary Minutes of the Special Joint Commissioner Workshop
January 8, 2019**

The Board of Fire Commissioners for SCFPD #7 and Lake Stevens Fire met in special session on January 8, 2019 at the Lake Stevens Fire Conference Center located at 10518 18th Street SE, Lake Stevens, WA 98258.

Commissioner Elmore called the meeting of the Joint Board of Fire Commissioners to order at 1800 hours. Commissioners Fay, Snyder, Waugh, Wells and Woolery with Snohomish County Fire District 7 and Commissioners Elmore, Gagnon, and Steinruck with Lake Stevens Fire were present. Commissioner Schaub was absent with prior notice.

CHIEF'S UPDATE

Chief O'Brien welcomed everyone and explained that the meeting will discuss the "why" for a merge, benefits of merging, a merger process session from Brian Snure and discussing a merger draft management plan. He thanked the staff of both districts for their hard work over the course of the past 1.5 years for working together on looking at ways of improving the community. He explained the "why" for a potential merge with the main purpose of improving service to our citizens.

A PowerPoint presentation was given on the benefits of a merge. The presentation covered seeking improved regional service, what's been accomplished for today's current partnerships and the benefits of merging. He noted specific efficiencies, fiscal responsibility for the region, enhanced fleet and facility maintenance, general quality improvement, and future strategic planning.

Some specific areas of ongoing partnership with Fire District #7 and Lake Stevens Fire are:

- Community Resource Paramedic
- Combined Training Division
- Regional Fire Academy (District 7 Company Officers helped provide supervision to Lake Stevens Fire)
- CRRD working together
- Shop
- Job Shadowing is in process
- Upcoming Leadership Retreat

ATTORNEY BRIAN SNURE

Attorney Brian Snure introduced himself and his history with legal help in many agency consolidations. He discussed the merger process and the Board of Fire Commissioner roles and responsibilities. Legally a merger is two agencies becoming one where there is a merging district (Lake Stevens) and a merger district (Fire District #7). Two districts now only have to be geographically within reasonable proximity to each other rather than adjacent to each other.

He explained the legal process to be simple:

- Lake Stevens Fire would file a petition to merge into Fire District 7.
- Resolutions would be adopted by both Districts approving the merger
- Begin the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process to identify any environmental impacts of the merge.
- File a notice of intention to merge with the Snohomish County Boundary Review Board. The Districts must prove reasonable proximity. If denied by the Board, the districts must wait a year before applying to merge again
- Lake Stevens Fire calls for an election in August or November. Approval at voter election
- Both Districts would then pass a final resolution agreeing with the voters to merge January 2020.

He felt that financially, there wouldn't be a significant change to the taxpayers since our levy rates are similar.

1 Commissioner Fay questioned if this fire district merger would be the first merge with the new language
2 surrounding proximity. It was confirmed that it would be.
3

4 Commissioner Elmore inquired if Lake Stevens and District 7 need to be reassessed for a new merged
5 WSRB rating. Chief Meek noted that the new merged agency would need to be reassessed.
6

7 By law, the commissioners would eventually be reduced from 8 to 5 when a position term expires.
8 An increase to 7 commissioner member board could go out for election to the voters if desired as well.
9

10 Mr. Snure further presented a Fire District "anatomy" as Title 52 RCW the heart, the Board of
11 Commissioners as the Brain, etc. He further explained what a board can (statutory powers) and cannot do
12 (exclusions). He noted a board of commissioner's duties and responsibilities with a commissioner's
13 purpose being to manage the district and delegate, not micromanage.
14

15 **DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN**

16 Chief O'Brien presented the draft merger management plan. He stressed the fact that this plan is a draft that will be
17 changed and adapted over time but provides a framework to build from.
18

19 The objective was identified as to consolidate the services of the districts through voter approval with
20 recommendations to have Lake Stevens Fire merge into Fire District 7. The philosophy is a new organization, with
21 a new name and to improve the qualities of both districts with neither organization taking over the other.
22 February 2019, the districts will begin a combined strategic planning process and financial plan.
23

24 A cultural integration team will be formed in March 2019 through the merger process. When merged legally, a
25 blend is planned right away to break down divides and build work relationships right away.
26

27 Chief O'Brien is recommended by senior staff to be the Fire Chief with Chief Meek serving as advisor of the merged
28 district and is to be ultimately determined by the Lake Stevens Fire and Fire District 7 Commissioners. The Fire
29 Chief of the new district will select executive leadership positions based on the needs of the district through
30 structured interviews.
31

32 Chief O'Brien then further explained the draft organizational chart and the merger process timeline.
33

34 Chief Meek thanked the board for the opportunity to entertain a merge. He reinforced the benefits of the merge and
35 strongly encouraged the board to seriously look at a merge.
36


37 **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

38 The Commissioners and Brian Snure went into Executive Session at 1930 for thirty (30) minutes per RCW
39 42.30.110(1)(g) to evaluate the qualifications of current employees who are considered as applicants for the Fire
40 Chief position of a merged fire district including the review of the performance of current employees of Lake
41 Stevens Fire and District 7 as such performance relates to identifying the appropriate person to serve as Chief of
42 the merged districts.
43

44 Regular session resumed at 2000 with no action as a result.
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46 The meeting was adjourned at 2000 by Commissioner Elmore.
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48 **Snohomish County Fire District #7**
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53 Janie Silva

Secretary of the Board

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