

WhatComm Prospect Sub-Committee Addendum

This addendum is submitted to provide some clarification to the document submitted by Mayor Korthuis. The document submitted by Mayor Korthuis does not represent a consensus by the committee. This document also does not represent a consensus of the committee but instead provides clarification on the dissenting viewpoint.

In 2017 Whatcom County Fire Departments, Districts, and Authorities promoted an EMS Levy that was meant to provide and stabilize funding for EMS. This included funding for the Prospect Dispatch Center as a dedicated specialized service. Altering the structure of the center is not in line with the voter approved EMS Levy.

DISPATCHING DELAY

While we acknowledge transferring a call from one center to the other will create a delay, the important metric is the outcome for the 911 caller. We reviewed CPR survival rates for Whatcom County against two other counties with consolidated centers and found our survival rates to be more than 20% higher.

DISSENT

In Mayor Korthuis' document under "Dissent" it says that "EMS had stronger feedback: fire fighters are very much in favor of the status quo and really do not want to entertain the thought of consolidation". We believe there needs to be some clarification.

Fire Commissioner's are elected officials who are elected for the sole purpose of providing governance to the fire districts of Whatcom County. That means they are elected by the citizens to make decisions related to fire and EMS issues in their communities. These elected officials have met and have unanimously agreed that maintaining the system as-is is in the best interest of public safety for the communities they were elected to represent.

In addition to these elected officials, the Chief Executive Officers of those same special districts, who's sole purpose is to provide fire and EMS protection, have unanimously supported leaving the system as-is.

The statement that "fire fighters are very much in favor", while true, seems to undervalue the fact that the officials that were elected by the public we serve and the professional executives that have been hired to plan, coordinate and administer these vital emergency services are all in support of maintaining the current program.

FACILITIES

Nothing in Mayor Korthuis' report addresses the issue of having back-up/redundant facilities for emergencies. The current system allows us to quickly (within minutes) relocated crews from one center to the other in the event of a facility issue. Historically, once or twice a year we have an emergency or short-term repair that has required us to move some or all of the staff from one facility to the other.

While neither facility provides a great opportunity for long-term relocations, the historical need has been for short durations that are time sensitive.

SUMMARY OF POSITION

Speed and efficiency do not equate to the most effective level of service. While the current model does provide some redundancies, we believe it is the most effective for our user agencies and statistics show in the most important situations, “Cardiac Arrest” it is the most effective.