

RESOLUTION NO. M-2407

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE CITY OF OLYMPIA AND CITY OF TUMWATER BALLOT PROPOSITION NO. 1, CONCERNING THE FORMATION OF A REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY AND ITS PLAN FOR GOVERNANCE, OPERATIONS, AND FINANCING, INCLUDING IMPOSITION OF A BENEFIT CHARGE, ON THE APRIL 25, 2023, SPECIAL ELECTION BALLOT

WHEREAS, voters of the City of Olympia, Washington, will be presented with a ballot proposition authorizing the formation of a regional fire authority, as authorized by RCW Chapter 52.26 and adoption of its Plan for governance, operations, and financing, including imposition of a benefit charge, at the Special Election on April 25, 2023, with the following official Ballot Title:

PROPOSITION NO. 1

The City of Olympia and City of Tumwater adopted a Joint Resolution concerning formation of a regional fire authority and its Plan.

If approved, this proposition would form the Olympia Tumwater Fire Authority and adopt the Plan to provide fire protection and emergency medical services. The Authority will be funded by property tax (not to exceed \$1.00 per \$1,000 of assessed value) and a six-year benefit charge (not to exceed 60% of the Authority's operating budget). This funding would reduce Olympia's and Tumwater's property tax capacity by the tax rate collected by the Authority.

Should this proposition to form the Olympia Tumwater Fire Authority and its Plan be approved?

- YES
- NO

WHEREAS, demand for fire and emergency medical services continues to increase in the cities of Olympia and Tumwater (hereinafter the "Cities") as population and community needs increase; and

WHEREAS, increased service demand has led to steadily increasing response times to critical fire and medical emergencies that are not in compliance with recommended national and community standards; and

WHEREAS, property tax limitations in Washington State have made it increasingly more difficult for cities to fund fire department budgets to support needed personnel, training, facilitates, and equipment; and

WHEREAS, a Regional Fire and Emergency Services study completed in 2019 recommended formation of a Regional Fire Authority to promote more efficient and effective service delivery and sustainable funding; and

WHEREAS, the Cities entered into an interlocal agreement in May 2021, to study the formation of a Regional Fire Authority and subsequently established a Regional Fire Authority Planning Committee (hereinafter the “Planning Committee”); and

WHEREAS, the Planning Committee, comprised of three council members from each city, as well as fire chiefs and labor representatives, met twice a month and developed the Olympia Tumwater Fire Authority Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Olympia Tumwater Fire Authority Plan, if approved by the voters, provides for a property tax of \$1.00 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation and implementation of a fire benefit charge on all improved properties in the fire authority service area; and

WHEREAS, if the Regional Fire Authority is approved by voters, the City of Olympia property tax capacity and actual property tax rate would reduce by \$1.00 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation; and

WHEREAS, creation of the Olympia Tumwater Fire Authority will provide opportunities for improved response to emergencies and enhance risk reduction efforts in the Olympia and Tumwater communities while funding operational needs and reserves in a sustainable manner; and

WHEREAS, Washington State law allows city councils to express collective support or opposition to a ballot proposition as provided in RCW 42.17A.555(1); and

WHEREAS, the Regional Fire Authority Planning Committee held a properly noticed public hearing on November 14, 2022, to allow members of the public an approximately equal opportunity for the expression of an opposing view on the RFA Plan for governance, operations, and financing, including imposition of a benefit charge, and to comment on the proposed Regional Fire Authority Plan before the Planning Committee took action to recommend the Plan to the Olympia and Tumwater City Councils; and

WHEREAS, subsequently the Olympia City Council held a properly noticed public hearing on December 6, 2022, at a regularly scheduled Olympia City Council meeting to allow the public an approximately equal opportunity for the expression of an opposing view on the RFA Plan for governance, operations, and financing, including imposition of a benefit charge, and to permit those in favor and those in opposition the opportunity to comment before the Olympia City Council took action on Resolution No. M-2400, to send Proposition No. 1 to the ballot in a special election on April 25, 2023; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Committee held a properly noticed public hearing on January 9, 2023, to hear testimony from the public on the proposed fire benefit charge as required by RCW 52.26.230(1); and

WHEREAS, the City of Olympia properly noticed a public hearing on January 17, 2023, which included the title and number of the ballot proposition as set forth herein above, to provide members of the public an approximately equal opportunity to provide testimony in support of or opposed to the Regional Fire Authority ballot proposition; and

WHEREAS, the Olympia City Council finds that it is in the best interests of its residents and the City of Olympia to express a collective decision in support of Proposition No. 1 concerning the formation of a regional fire authority to be known as the Olympia Tumwater Fire Authority and approval of its Plan for governance, operations, and financing, including imposition of a benefit charge.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OLYMPIA AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Support for Proposition No. 1. The Olympia City Council expresses its collective decision to support Proposition No. 1 concerning the formation of a regional fire authority to be known as the Olympia Tumwater Fire Authority, and adoption of its Plan for governance, operations, and financing, including imposition of a benefit charge, which will be presented to the voters in conjunction with the April 25, 2023, Special Election.


Section 2. Ratification. Any act consistent with the authority and prior to the effective date of this Resolution is hereby ratified and affirmed.

Section 3. Severability. The provisions of this Resolution are declared separate and severable. The invalidity of any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section, or portion of this Resolution or the invalidity of the application thereof to any person or circumstance, shall not affect the validity of the remainder of the Resolution, or the validity of its application to other persons or circumstances.

Section 4. Effective Date. This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon adoption and signature as provided by law.


RESOLVED this 17th day of January 2023.

CITY OF OLYMPIA



Cheryl Selby, Mayor

ATTEST:



Sean Krier, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Mark Barber

Mark Barber, City Attorney