

**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 January 2, 2019**  
**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 (vice chair)

**Others Present:**

Nathan Butler  
SJCPHD #1 Board Recording Sec.  
  
Norvin Collins  
Chief, FD #3

**Absent:** None

**By Phone or teleconference:** None

**Public Present:**

Miklos and Leslie Preysz  
Anna Lisa Lindstrum  
Karin Agosta

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

**Approve Minutes:** By consent the group agreed that the minutes from December 19, 2018 were acceptable.

**Discussion with Fire District Chief Collins:**

Chief Collins began by introducing his background. He has been a paramedic since 1987, served as a Navy combat medic, fire fighter, battalion chief, a division chief, and fire chief; he also has a master's degree in psychology.

Question: Now that you've been here a few months are you starting to see some opportunities to work collaboratively? Short term as well as long term?

Answer: Collins replied that there is potential for some changes and collaboration. "If it's a complex call, we're all going, it's that way right now... so why not work collectively to make things better for everybody?" There are a range of options from collaboration to merger.

Question: How do you deal with some of the staffing involved with a merger?

Answer: Based on a general familiarity it seems that "we're going to need the bodies," which should reduce some of the stress and anxiety on the part of staff worried about losing their jobs.

Question: During your career have you ever been involved in an annexation?

Answer: "Yes, I went through a few, not EMS to Fire, but Fire to Fire." One of the biggest issues is that when annexing a city or town is that the city does not have to reduce taxes despite no longer delivering emergency services. Collins said that it's all about "how you message it, but it has to be in partnership with the city." In his experience cities that did reduce their tax and explained what any remainder would be used for were more successful.

Question: How long did these annexation processes take? Who led the charge?

Answer: Anywhere from a year to a year and a half for an annexation. Fire generally led the charge because the public was interested in service levels.

Question: In your past service have you done report cards to the public regarding service levels? How were reflex times (to the rig ready to go after receiving a call)?

Answer: Yes, in one of the places he served they delivered a substantial report card with many metrics broken out into zones (urban, suburban, rural) and delivered it with the budget every year. Reflex time of about 1:30 is about right for a career, fully staffed station. At his last all volunteer department they had a 4:30 minute reflex time, and to the scene in 8-12 minutes. Volunteers going in personal vehicles can't be reflected in response times but add a great deal of value.

Question: At your last department that was all-volunteer did you have trouble getting volunteers and retaining them?

Answer: Collins stated that his last volunteer department was an all hazard service which gave lots of ways for volunteers to be engaged. EMS calls were about 85% of calls. "The more flexible you have in opportunities [for volunteers], the higher your retention rate."

Question: What other advantages do you see in merger?

Answer: Collins stated that a combined services model avoids pitting entities against each other and allows for a single command. "You don't have two separate HRs, you don't have two separate finances... you start working collectively for commonality." Even if you don't have it all under one roof, you still have opportunities for partnership such as with maintenance.

Question: Do you have a sense for the appetite in the Fire Department for this?

Answer: There is maybe some fear with some, and excitement with others. "There's going to be a partnership somehow," and clear communication is crucial. Need to make sure that both citizens and employees are taken care of. "We're fortunate that we're firefighters because we think 'team.'"

Question: Could you speak to one concern we heard namely that dual training might negatively impact the skill levels of staff, particularly the paramedics?

Answer: Collins stated that this is absolutely not a concern. "Everyone that participates in the training will grow in understanding about the greater piece."

Question: How do we make sure that the emergency medicine side of a combined agency gets adequate funding? Where do you draw the line on funding between fire and EMS?

Answer: First, you need a strong leader, and a board that listens to the chief executive about the needs of the agency. "I personally feel that a three-person board is too small" due to quorum requirements – they can't talk to each other at all outside of meetings. It's very likely that people interested in EMS will run for the board. Make sure to get a strong physician advisor.

Question: Do you have any advice for us as we go through this process?

Answer: The CAG has been meeting more than half of a year and has done a tremendous amount of work. That needs documented, both in detail and in summary. "Please give us options and not absolutes," as once the plan is implemented changes may need to be made and the boards will need some flexibility.

The group thanked Chief Collins for his effort and time.

### **Report from subcommittees:**

Chair Dalldorf reported that he did meet with Duncan Wilson regarding the Town talking with the Fire Department about working on annexation. Town will not implement anything until the CAG has made its recommendation, but they will begin talking.

Dan Paulsen reported on the outreach committee. The transition in Skagit has apparently gone smoothly so far.

**Meeting Schedule:**

Both County Assessor John Kulseth and County Auditor Milene Henley agreed to come in January to talk to the group. There is still discussion regarding meeting with Catie Holstein from the Department of Health.

The CAG plans to meet on February 6<sup>th</sup> and February 20<sup>th</sup>. More dates may later be added.

**Next steps/ New Business:**

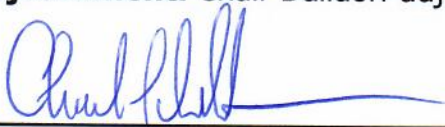
Rick Frazer introduced to the CAG his work on the financial package.

The group generated a list of questions for Kulseth and Henley.

**Public Comment:**

Karin Agosta, Anna Lisa Lindstrum, and Miklos Preysz commented.

**Adjournment:** Chair Dalldorf adjourned the meeting at 8:52 p.m.

  
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**Signed by Chair**

Jan 16 2019  
**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**