

July 2, 2018

Proposed Ambulance Utility Fee Public Hearing



History of EMS in Arlington

- 1905: Arlington Fire Department founded
- 1951: Ambulance began operation
- 1977: Cascade Valley Hospital assumed ambulance service
- 1982: First Paramedics added
- May 1999: City assumed operation of EMS Consortium
- October 1999: City annexed Smokey Point
 - October 2009: Arlington Fire takes over service
- 2000: City pop = 12,475; County pop = 597,931
- 2015: City pop = 18,139; County pop = 757,600
- 2017: City pop = 18,690; County pop = 789,400



Arlington EMS Service Funding

- Revenue options for EMS are limited by State and Federal law

• Revenues:	\$3,123,803
• EMS Levy	\$ 967,313
• District Contracts	\$ 581,266
• Service to Arlington Municipal Airport	\$ 147,819
• Transport Fees	\$1,052,793
• Other (Interest and Loans)	\$ 374,612
• Expenses:	\$4,681,329
• General Fund Subsidy	\$1,557,526



Efforts to Address Gap in Funding

- Command restructuring in Police and Fire
- Streamlined processes
- Increased cost of contracts with adjacent fire districts
- Community Oriented Policing Grant (COPS) for 2 officers
- New focus on training, education and promotion from within
- Law Enforcement Embedded Social Worker Team with Office of Neighborhoods
- Community partnerships
- Police Volunteer program
- Fire Part-paid Volunteer program
- Eliminated Medic Services Officer position and redistributed work with paramedics
- Police Support Officer
- Mental Health Alternatives Program (MAP) Court
- Crime mapping and crime analysis
- Online reporting of property and other low level crimes
- New dispatch software system



Council Analysis of Problem

- Four year process to examine all elements of a sustainable Fire and EMS service
 - ESCI
 - Sustainability Committee
 - FCS Study
 - Regional Fire Authority exploration with City of Marysville and Marysville Fire District



ESCI Study (2013)

- Purpose of study:
 - Assess current budgets, service levels, equipment and building conditions of agencies;
 - Recommend improvements to increase efficiency or eliminate duplications
 - Analyze options and recommend those with the greatest opportunity for success
- 15 agencies invited to participate; 7 actually did
- Results of Study:
 - Forming a Regional Fire Authority with Arlington Fire, District 19 (Silvana) and District 21 (Arlington Rural) is feasible.
 - Fire Districts 19 and 21 decided they did not want to pursue a Regional Fire Authority



Sustainability Committee (2015)

- Mission:

- Explore current service and funding mechanisms
- Analyze acceptable levels of service both by those providing the service and those receiving the service
- Make recommendations for the program that are sustainable, specific, and actionable

- Results

- Explore increased cooperative opportunities with Marysville Fire District
- Evaluate service levels and associated costs
- Determine the sustainability of the Part-Paid Firefighter Program



FCS Study (2015-16)

- Mission

- Study costs of providing fire and EMS services within City limits and to contract fire districts
- Identify proposed rates if the City created an ambulance utility
- Develop a five year cost and rate forecast

- Results

- Demand costs for service is being paid for by the available revenues
- General Fund is subsidizing the availability costs for the service
- Contracts with districts do not capture full cost of service
- Formation of an Ambulance Utility and adoption of an ambulance utility fee could address the availability cost issue



Proposed Ambulance Utility Fee

- \$15 month to all single family, multi-family, commercial, and government and non-profit owned property in Arlington City limits
- Additional population growth assumed in the calculation of the fee
- Includes 40% reduction for qualified low income seniors and low income disabled residents
- Exempts those on Medicaid



Where Ambulance Utility Exists



Why an Ambulance Utility Fee

- Ensures public safety is sustainably funded and staffed to support our community
- Address concerns of the public
 - Increased crime rate
 - Delayed response times
- An Ambulance Utility Fee has proven successful in other communities around Washington State to support and grow public safety.



Key Elements of Ambulance Utility

- Requires that the fee be based on a cost of service study that looks at demand and availability
- Categorizes costs by availability of ambulance service and the demand placed on the service
- Requires that funding go directly to the EMS fund for EMS operations
- Low income senior citizens and Low income disabled residents would be eligible for a 40% discount of the fee.
- Exempts Medicaid eligible persons



Where Does the Ambulance Utility Fee Go?

- Revenues will go directly into the EMS fund
 - Under state law must be specifically used for EMS operations only
- This is a sustainable model to fund increased public services and return borrowed funds to the General Fund so additional public safety programs can be funded and expanded.
 - Revenues freed up will be dedicated to public safety and regularly accounted for
- The Ambulance Utility fee would free up the General Fund to allow the City to hire three new police officers and three new fire personnel over the next three years.



Council Commitment: What You Will Receive

- Three police officers and vehicles
- Part-time contracted domestic violence coordinator
- Community resource paramedic (if matching grant received)
- 24 hour command and control for Arlington Fire
- Fire inspection and fire marshal services for new development, additions, remodels, and tenant improvements
- Two firefighter/EMTs
- One firefighter/Paramedic
- Police Support officer
- Embedded Social Worker (if grant expires)



Public Hearing

- All Council are present to listen to your concerns on the Ambulance Utility Fee
- All comments received by the City as of 6:00 p.m. today have been provided to the Council
- Any questions posed on the Ambulance Utility Fee will be responded to by July 9
- The meeting is being recorded. The recording will be made available through the City's website for listening by July 9

