



Northshore Fire Department

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  northshorefiredepartment



Woodinville Fire & Rescue

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Talks on Track for Northshore Fire Department and Woodinville Fire & Rescue Consolidation

KENMORE, Wash., Oct. 16, 2020 – The Boards of Fire Commissioners for the Northshore Fire Department and Woodinville Fire & Rescue continue to move forward the idea of merging into one agency. The purpose of consolidation is to improve service and be more cost-effective for taxpayers.

Throughout King and Snohomish counties smaller fire agencies are partnering together to provide residents with better service and cost efficiencies. Northshore and Woodinville already share training programs for emergency personnel, administrative positions (fire chief, deputy chief, and a chief administrative officer) and joint departments, including finance, human resources, IT, and payroll. Finalizing the partnership through a merger would make these administrative efficiencies permanent.

Both agencies are approximately the same size and fund emergency services with a fire levy and fire benefit charge. Board members also share the same financial philosophy of maintaining reserve funds to pay cash for capital items to save taxpayers money instead of financing these purchases. In addition, merging would reduce the impact to taxpayers for future capital items (such as stations and apparatus) because costs would be shared by more property owners.

A merger would maintain the same number of personnel but allow better deployment to provide an improved emergency response for both communities. Each agency also owns specialized apparatus and equipment that the other benefits from when responding to emergency calls.

Merging also has the added benefits of providing better training opportunities for firefighters, stronger fire prevention programs in local schools, more community engagement, and economies of scale in purchasing goods and services. There is likely to be a cost savings for taxpayers in both communities, and that information will be shared when data from the county is available later this fall.

Boards of Fire Commissioners from both agencies will hold two public meetings later this fall to take input from the public. If approved, voters could see the merger request on ballots sometime in the

spring of 2021. Because Northshore would merge into Woodinville Fire & Rescue, the election would only apply to Northshore voters. The agencies would develop a new name that reflects both communities if the merger is approved by voters.

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Northshore Fire Department provides fire and emergency medical services to approximately 37,000 people over 10 square miles, including the cities of Lake Forest Park and Kenmore. Its emergency call volumes average 3,600 a year.

Woodinville Fire & Rescue provides fire and emergency medical services to approximately 37,000 people over 30 square miles. Its emergency call volumes average 4,000 a year.