

ATTACHMENT B

Whatcom County Council

Bellingham, WA

Whatcom County Council Members,

We, the voice of the Whatcom County Fire Commissioners, present our collective purpose to you. On March 13, 2024, we voted to request the Council repeal Resolution 2023-054. This decision stems from our concerns regarding the content, process, and procedures surrounding its research, drafting, and approval.

It is crucial to understand the significance of fire protection districts and regional fire authorities as distinct municipal entities, duly authorized by Title 52 RCW. These entities hold perpetual existence, specific powers, obligations, and responsibilities conferred by the citizens within their jurisdictional boundaries. Among their essential functions are determining service levels, funding mechanisms, budgeting, tax levies, hiring and oversight of fire chiefs, strategic planning, policy approval, and public representation. Our agencies have been and are still actively working collaboratively over the past several years to improve operations and efficiencies through MOUs, mergers, contracts for services, consolidations, and forming of Fire Authorities."

However, we regretfully believe Resolution 2023-054 was adopted without a full grasp of the implications and complexities of the proposed study. Moreover, the valuable insights provided by fire commissioners and chiefs during the December meeting were disregarded. As a result, numerous errors exist in the supporting documents, inaccurately portraying the current state of the fire service in Whatcom County. Additionally, there was insufficient research into potential costs associated with the study and a failure to identify a legal source of funding.

We urge the Council to acknowledge our legislatively supported and constitutionally protected duty to evaluate and manage the efficiency, operations, administration, and potential consolidations/mergers within the Whatcom County Fire Service. Therefore, we respectfully request that Resolution 2023-054 be repealed until a more collaborative process is initiated. This process must include robust engagement with elected commissioners and fire chiefs, ensuring that their expertise and perspectives are fully incorporated into any future deliberations.

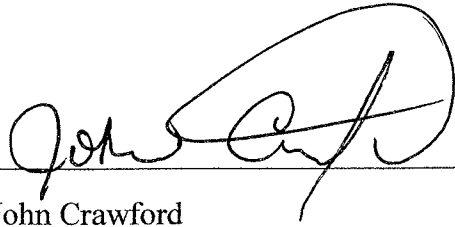
In the spirit of cooperation and mutual respect, we look forward to working together toward a resolution that honors the principles of transparency, inclusivity, and effective governance.

Respectfully,



Whatcom County Fire Commissioners

Signed:



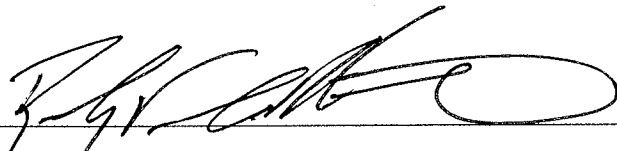
John Crawford
North Region Representative
North Whatcom Fire/Rescue Fire Commissioner



Stephan Paige
South Region Representative
South Whatcom Fire Authority Fire Commissioner

retired, need to fill position

Lester Markham
West Region Representative
Whatcom Co. Fire District #8 Fire Commissioner



Randy VanderHeiden
East Region Representative
Whatcom Co. Fire District #1 Fire Commissioner

Whatcom County Fire Commissioners Association

Attendance - Jan 10, 2024

Name	District
Kendra Cristelli	D7
RobRoy Graham	D14
John Clawson	D21
Greg Macey	D7
Steven Padige	SWFA
Tom Smith	Dist 16
Jeff Hindman	Dist 14
Mitch Nolze	SWFA
Paenel Caruso	WCFD #1
Kurt Bruland	WCFD #1
Roger Buswell	WCFD #8
Rob Nether	WCFD #8
Jim Peoples	SWFA
Kandy VanderHeiden	WCFD 1
Elvin Kalsbeek	WCFD 16
BRIAN MARTIN	SWFA
Rigberg	
Darran	Dist 18
Klepac	
Moye	Dist 11
Maleng	Dist 16
Widner	Glacier
Petrie	Dist 17
Grant	Dist 7
Rinesmith	Dist 17
Wolf	

FEB 05 2024

**DECLARATION OF PROTEST OF
WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2023-054**

ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS
WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL

WHEREAS, fire protection districts (“Fire Districts”) and Regional Fire Protection Service Authorities, “RFAs”, are municipal corporations authorized by Title 52 RCW as separate legal entities that have perpetual existence, specific powers, obligations, and responsibilities and are elected by the voters/citizens within their jurisdictional boundaries to be responsible for:

1. Determining the levels of service and establishing goals.
2. Determining the type and level of funding, approving budgets, and tax levies.
3. Establishing policies and approving operational procedures.
4. Employing key personnel and supervising the fire chief.
5. Guiding strategic planning.
6. Representing the Fire District/RFA to the public.

and,

WHEREAS, the Whatcom County Council (the Council) has no authority over Fire Districts and RFAs as they are not subdivisions of a county; and

WHEREAS, legally independent, volunteer, and professional Fire Districts and RFAs (the Agencies) have been providing exceptional and progressive emergency services in Whatcom County for over 125 years as recognized by the Council; and

WHEREAS, the Agencies have a consistent record of providing excellent, cost-effective service and have a long history of trust with community stakeholders that should not be disturbed, infringed upon, or disrupted for political agendas; and

WHEREAS, the many errors in the data the Council put forward in their Resolution 2023-054 and supporting documents show an alarming lack of knowledge of both the history and current status of emergency services in Whatcom County; and

WHEREAS, the Council ignored the Agencies’ attempts to correct the errors in Resolution 2023-054 and adopted this Resolution despite the incorrect information; and

WHEREAS, the Council displayed fiscal irresponsibility in adopting the Resolution mandating that a study be performed without (i) having obtained Requests for Proposals to know the cost of such study, (ii) identifying the source of funding for the study or (iii) explaining how such study will be of benefit to the County which has no authority over the Agencies; and

WHEREAS, the lack of notice, collaboration, and unwillingness of the Council to partner with the Agencies illustrates the willingness of the Council to interfere with the duties and responsibilities of the elected officials of legal entities with individual and separate powers and gives us reason to believe the Council does not have the best interest of our communities or the Whatcom County fire service in mind; and

WHEREAS, we believe the Council acted irresponsibly by approving, by a vote of 5-1-1, Resolution 2023-054 with no consultation, collaboration, or forewarning to the legally elected officials who govern said Agencies; and

WHEREAS, we believe the Council has conducted itself in a manner both undemocratic and unprofessional.

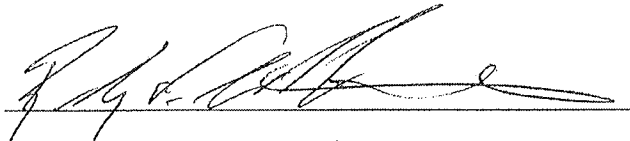
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Whatcom County Fire Commissioners adopt this declaration of protest against the content, process, and procedure by which the Council's Resolution 2023-054 has been researched, drafted, and approved; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Whatcom County Fire Commissioners call for a repeal of Resolution 2023-054; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Whatcom County Fire Commissioners expect the Council to acknowledge our legislatively supported and constitutionally protected purview to evaluate and manage the efficiency, operations, administration, and consolidations/mergers for the fire service in Whatcom County and we call for a cessation of interference, from the entirety of the Legislative and Executive branches of the Whatcom County Government, into our duties and responsibilities as elected officials.

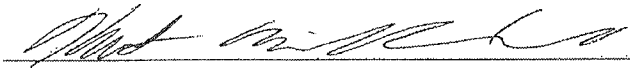
Signed this 11th day of January 2024

By:



Randy VanderHeiden, Chairman

Shannon Whitford-Ahlers, Commissioner



Kurt Bruland, Commissioner

Whatcom County Fire Protection District No. 7

Post Office Box 1599 * Ferndale, Washington 98248 * (360) 384-0303

RESOLUTION 24-0111-01

DECLARATION OF PROTEST OF

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2023-054

WHEREAS, fire protection districts (“Fire Districts”) are municipal corporations authorized by Title 52 RCW as separate legal entities that have perpetual existence, specific powers, obligations, and responsibilities and are elected by the voters/citizens within their jurisdictional boundaries to be responsible for:

1. Determining the levels of service and establishing goals.
2. Determining the type and level of funding, approving budgets, and tax levies.
3. Establishing policies and approving operational procedures.
4. Employing key personnel and supervising the fire chief.
5. Guiding strategic planning.
6. Representing the Fire District to the public.

and,

WHEREAS, the Whatcom County Council (the Council) has no authority over Fire District No. 7 as it is not a subdivision of a county; and

WHEREAS, Fire District No. 7 is a legally independent, volunteer, and professional Fire District and has been providing exceptional and progressive emergency services in Whatcom County for over 67 years; and

WHEREAS, the Whatcom County Fire District No. 7 has a consistent record of providing excellent, cost-effective service and have a long history of trust with community stakeholders that should not be disturbed, infringed upon, or disrupted for political agendas; and

WHEREAS, the many errors in the data as a whole that the Council put forward in their Resolution 2023-054 and supporting documents show an alarming lack of knowledge of both the history and current status of emergency services not only within Whatcom County, but Fire District No. 7 as well; and

WHEREAS, the Council ignored the collective attempts of all County fire service agencies to correct the errors in Resolution 2023-054 and adopted this Resolution despite the incorrect information; and

WHEREAS, the Council displayed fiscal irresponsibility in adopting the Resolution mandating that a study be performed without (i) having obtained Requests for Proposals to know the cost of such study, (ii) identifying the source of funding for the study or (iii) explaining how such study will be of benefit to the County which has no authority over the Agencies; and

WHEREAS, the lack of notice, collaboration, and unwillingness of the Council to partner with not only Whatcom County Fire District No. 7, but all fire service Agencies illustrates the willingness of the Council to interfere with the duties and responsibilities of the elected officials

of legal entities with individual and separate powers and gives us reason to believe the Council does not have the best interest of our community or the Whatcom County fire service in mind; and

WHEREAS, we believe the Council acted irresponsibly by approving, by a vote of 5-1-1, Resolution 2023-054 with no consultation, collaboration, or forewarning to the legally elected officials who govern Whatcom County Fire District No. 7 or any other fire service Agencies; and

WHEREAS, we believe the Council has conducted itself in a manner both undemocratic and unprofessional.

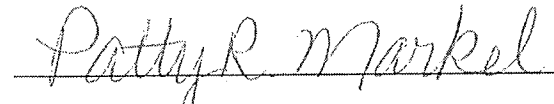
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Commissioners of Whatcom County Fire District No. 7 adopt this declaration of protest against the content, process, and procedure by which the Council's Resolution 2023-054 has been researched, drafted, and approved; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners of Whatcom County Fire District No. 7 call for a repeal of Resolution 2023-054; and

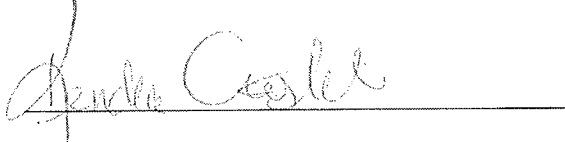
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners of Whatcom County Fire District No. 7 expect the Council to acknowledge our legislatively supported and constitutionally protected purview to evaluate and manage the efficiency, operations, administration, and consolidations/mergers for the fire service in Whatcom County and we call for a cessation of interference, from the entirety of the Legislative and Executive branches of the Whatcom County Government, into our duties and responsibilities as elected officials.

ADOPTED at the regular monthly meeting of the Board of Commissioners, Whatcom County Fire Protection District No. 7, this 11th day of January, 2024.

Attested by:



Patty R. Markel, Board Secretary



Kendra Cristelli, Commissioner



Michael Murphy, Commissioner



Eric Grant, Commissioner



Whatcom County Fire District 14
PO Box 482
Sumas, WA 98295
Phone: (360) 599-2823
FAX: (360) 599-2373
www.wcfd14.org

RESOLUTION 2024-01
DECLARATION OF PROTEST OF
WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2023-054

WHEREAS, fire protection districts (“Fire Districts”) are municipal corporations authorized by Title 52 RCW as separate legal entities that have perpetual existence, specific powers, obligations, and responsibilities and are elected by the voters/citizens within their jurisdictional boundaries to be responsible for:

1. Determining the levels of service and establishing goals.
2. Determining the type and level of funding, approving budgets, and tax levies.
3. Establishing policies and approving operational procedures.
4. Employing key personnel and supervising the fire chief.
5. Guiding strategic planning.
6. Representing the Fire District to the public.

and,

WHEREAS, the Whatcom County Council (the Council) has no authority over Fire District No. 14 as it is not a subdivision of a county; and

WHEREAS, Fire District No. 14 is a legally independent, volunteer, and professional Fire District and has been providing exceptional and progressive emergency services in Whatcom County for over 59 years; and

WHEREAS, the Whatcom County Fire District No. 14 has a consistent record of providing excellent, cost-effective service and have a long history of trust with community stakeholders that should not be disturbed, infringed upon, or disrupted for political agendas; and

WHEREAS, the many errors in the data as a whole that the Council put forward in their Resolution 2023-054 and supporting documents show an alarming lack of knowledge of both the history and current status of emergency services not only within Whatcom County, but Fire District No. 14 as well; and

WHEREAS, the Council ignored the collective attempts of all County fire service agencies to correct the errors in Resolution 2023-054 and adopted this Resolution despite the incorrect information; and

WHEREAS, the Council displayed fiscal irresponsibility in adopting the Resolution mandating that a study be performed without (i) having obtained Requests for Proposals to know the cost of such study, (ii) identifying the source of funding for the study or (iii) explaining how such study will be of benefit to the County which has no authority over the Agencies; and

WHEREAS, the lack of notice, collaboration, and unwillingness of the Council to partner with not only Whatcom County Fire District No. 14, but as fire service Agencies illustrates the willingness of

the Council to interfere with the duties and responsibilities of the elected officials of legal entities with individual and separate powers and gives us reason to believe the Council does not have the best interest of our community or the Whatcom County fire service in mind; and

WHEREAS, we believe the Council acted irresponsibly by approving, by a vote of 5-1-1, Resolution 2023-054 with no consultation, collaboration, or forewarning to the legally elected officials who govern Whatcom County Fire District No. 14 or any other fire service Agencies; and

WHEREAS, we believe the Council has conducted itself in a manner both undemocratic and unprofessional.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Commissioners of Whatcom County Fire District No. 14 adopt this declaration of protest against the content, process, and procedure by which the Council's Resolution 2023-054 has been researched, drafted, and approved; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners of Whatcom County Fire District No. 14 call for a repeal of Resolution 2023-054; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners of Whatcom County Fire District No. 14 expect the Council to acknowledge our legislatively supported and constitutionally protected purview to evaluate and manage the efficiency, operations, administration, and consolidations/mergers for the fire service in Whatcom County and we call for a cessation of interference, from the entirety of the Legislative and Executive branches of the Whatcom County Government, into our duties and responsibilities as elected officials.

ADOPTED at the Special meeting of the Board of Commissioners, Whatcom County Fire Protection District No. 14, this 30th day of January 2024.

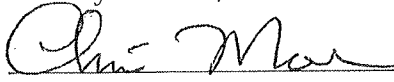
Attested by:



Jo Olson, Board Secretary



Rob Roy Graham, Commissioner



Chris Moe, Commissioner



Russell Vreugdenhil, Commissioner



Whatcom County Fire District #16
P.O. Box 37
2036 Valley Hwy 9
Acme, WA 98220
Phone & Fax: 360-595-2161
Email: contact@wcfid.org

DECLARATION OF PROTEST OF

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2023-054

WHEREAS, fire protection districts ("Fire Districts") and Regional Fire Protection Service Authorities, "RFAs" , are municipal corporations authorized by Title 52 RCW as separate legal entities that have perpetual existence, specific powers, obligations, and responsibilities and are elected by the voters/citizens within their jurisdictional boundaries to be responsible for:

- 1, Determining the levels of service and establishing goals.
2. Determining the type and level of funding, approving budgets, and tax levies.
3. Establishing policies and approving operational procedures.
4. Employing key personnel and supervising the fire chief.
5. Guiding strategic planning.
6. Representing the Fire District/RFA to the public.

and,

WHEREAS, the Whatcom County Council (the Council) has no authority over Fire Districts and RFAs as they are not subdivisions of a county; and

WHEREAS, legally independent, volunteer, and professional Fire Districts and RFAs (the Agencies) have been providing exceptional and progressive emergency services in Whatcom County for over 125 years as recognized by the Council; and

WHEREAS, the Agencies have a consistent record of providing excellent, cost-effective service and have a long history of trust with community stakeholders that should not be disturbed, infringed upon, or disrupted for political agendas; and

WHEREAS, the many errors in the data the Council put forward in their Resolution 2023-054 and supporting documents show an alarming lack of knowledge of both the history and current status of emergency services in Whatcom County; and

WHEREAS, the Council ignored the Agencies' attempts to correct the errors in Resolution 2023-054 and adopted this Resolution despite the incorrect information; and

WHEREAS, the Council displayed fiscal irresponsibility in adopting the Resolution mandating that a study be performed without (i) having obtained Requests for Proposals to know the cost of such study, (ii) identifying the source of funding for the study or (iii) explaining how such study will be of benefit to the County which has no authority over the Agencies; and

Chief: H. Maleng, Assistant Chief: M. Cook
Commissioners: J. Hindman, E. Kalsbeek, T. Smith
Administrative Manager: J. Bass



WHEREAS, the lack of notice, collaboration, and unwillingness of the Council to partner with the Agencies illustrates the willingness of the Council to interfere with the duties and responsibilities of the elected officials of legal entities with individual and separate powers and gives us reason to believe the Council does not have the best interest of our communities or the Whatcom County fire service in mind; and

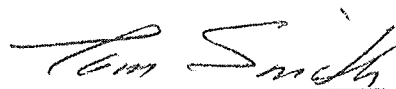
WHEREAS, we believe the Council acted irresponsibly by approving, by a vote of 5-1-1, Resolution 2023-054 with no consultation, collaboration, or forewarning to the legally elected officials who govern said Agencies; and

WHEREAS, we believe the Council has conducted itself in a manner both undemocratic and unprofessional.

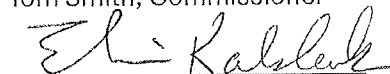
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the East Whatcom County Fire Commissioners adopt this declaration of protest against the content, process, and procedure by which the Council's Resolution 2023-054 has been researched, drafted, and approved; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the East Whatcom County Fire Commissioners call for a repeal of Resolution 2023-054; and

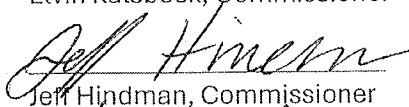
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the East Whatcom County Fire Commissioners expect the Council to acknowledge our legislatively supported and constitutionally protected purview to evaluate and manage the efficiency, operations, administration, and consolidations/mergers for the fire service in Whatcom County and we call for a cessation of interference, from the entirety of the Legislative and Executive branches of the Whatcom County Government, into our duties and responsibilities as elected officials.



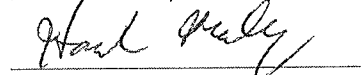
Tom Smith, Commissioner



Elvin Katsbeek, Commissioner



Jeff Hindman, Commissioner



Hank Maleng, Chief

Attested to:



Justina Bass, Administrative Manager