Mayor opened the study session of the Sammamish City Council at 6:30 p.m.

Open Study Session 6:30 pm

Public Comment
This is an opportunity for the public to address the Council. Three-minutes limit per person or 5 minutes if representing the official position of a recognized community organization.

Felicia Beluche, 23904 SE 24th Street, (Kent City Fire Fighter) Feels that the city is getting good value for fire services from Eastside Fire & Rescue (EF & R). The trend is toward regional fire services. She does not feel that the city has done enough research or collected adequate data to start their own fire department. She asked that Council not play Russian roulette with fire services.

Ted Leland, 20584 NE 31st Street, Council is obligated to provide the best services at the lowest cost. He is concerned that the challenges with community based fire services, is that cost could increase. He disagrees that the city can do more with less firefighters. You cannot skip training for firefighters and this cost is not included in the cost. He feels all costs should be included in the study.

Mike Ryan, 209 246th Way SE, Submitted written comments. Emergency Management Coordinator for King County’s northern and eastside communities.

John Wiseman, 7329 Snoqualmie, Representing the Fire Fighters Union, Feels that safety and fire services will be decreased if Sammamish leaves EF & R. He feels the savings the city will realize if they form their own department will come at the expense of training and personnel. They will not provide the same level of service the EF & R provides. He does agree that the funding model needs to be changed. Firefighters are working with the other partners to get them to agree to do this. He urged Council to stay with EF & R.

Dean Alttaris, Vice President of the Firefighters Union, He believes that the Council and the TAB violated the Open Public Meetings Act. They have requested numerous public record requests and have proof that they held secret meetings. He states that Sammamish pays the lowest rate for fire services of any of the partners and only sought public input after being requested to do so.

Scott Hamilton 19729 SE 19th Street, He understands Sammamish’s frustration with the Issaquah city council. But he also understands the fears of the residents here tonight. The city has not done a good job of communicating with the public. He doesn’t feel the FCS study has had enough consideration. He
suggests that Sammamish and the EF & R partners enter into a standstill agreement for a mutually agreeable length of time and hire a mediator or enter into binding arbitration.

**Kristina Previnow, 2518 233rd Place.** She is concerned that the city is moving away from regionalization of services when other agencies are all moving that way. As a hospital worker she has seen how EF & R personnel work with patience. First responders are so important when dealing with medical emergencies. She feels EF & R firefighters are very well trained. She also pointed out the hospitals are now working together to combine services.

**Ed MaGary, 2450 206th Place NE.** Spoke on behalf of the majority of city residents. EF & R volunteer. He vouched for the experience of the EF & R personnel. Establishing a city department will not improve service and will not reduce the costs. This could result in reduced service.

**LaVerne,** She doesn’t think any of the councilmembers could run a fire department. She has used EF & R and believes they give wonderful service. Don’t mess around with something that is not broken.

**Christine Malchow, 20920 SE 8th Place.** She agrees the funding model is unfair, but she doesn’t want to lose fire services just to claim we are not paying more. She is willing to pay more for better service.

**Jim Denice,** He doesn’t understand why the city would want to remove the excellent service provided by EF & R. He said that the last community survey showed that safety is important to the residents and that fire was the service they were most satisfied with after police and parks. A city-run fire department has no guarantees that the service will be as good. He provided a list of questions that he requested answers to at the next meeting. He urged Council to find

**Chris Emery 1306 211 Place NE,** He is a volunteer fire fighter. He stayed in Sammamish primarily because he could become a volunteer firefighters. He doesn’t think the city-run department would include volunteers. He feels the public has spoken. They want the high level of service provided currently.

**Dee Carroll,** Lives in an area where there have been two house fires in the last two years. Have you investigated whether the insurance companies will raise insurance rates if we have a two station fire station and less personnel? Will the city council and city staff manage the fire department? Will they become trained as professional fire fighters? Do you have expertise in managing emergency personnel? Do they know what the cost of contracting for services would be?

**Kim Hillicker,** Requested written response. Have the Councilmembers already made up their minds? Tell us now. Have you individually used fire services? Why are we paying for studies that the citizens have not asked for? Does the report guarantee the same level of service as is currently being provided? What will happen if service is not provided and someone sues the city?

**Sean Jones,** He is embarrassed by the City Council’s actions. He is willing to pay for the value of the current fire service. You should not skimp on safety. He wants a regional fire service, not one that stops at the city boundary.

**Pam Magnussen, 23103 NE 18th Street,** EF & R saved her husband’s life. Because they are so well trained, using the newest technology.
Bob McCoy, 21629 SE 33rd Place, He thinks the current system is fine. He doesn’t mind paying higher taxes for the best service. He is pro EF & R and con Sammamish Fire department. We should be having a financial discussion with the other partners.

Judy McKinly, 1530 367th Pl SE, She agrees the funding issue needs to be addressed. We should not be subsidizing the other partners and she encouraged the council to continue to negotiate with EF & R

Jeff Merritt, (Volunteer Firefighter), His grandfather built the Pine Lake Club. He questioned the fact the city plan does not include battalion chiefs or training officers. He doesn’t think the council is listening to the residents.

David Kaplan, Issaquah resident, He agrees that the funding model needs to change. Sammamish should not be subsidizing Issaquah. If Issaquah annexes Klahanie, there will be less money in the pot. He also feels that contract negotiations are not subject to the Open Meeting Act.

Doug Watson 21626 SE 26th Street, As an account he would not advise the city to proceed with starting their own department. They don’t have enough time to start up a new department. There is too many assumptions in the FCS study. He does not see the savings that would be accomplished.

Chris Merritt, 2340 285th Place NE, He understands the difficult position the council is in. They are trying to save money and the residents don’t want to save money at the expense of fire services. He is a proponent of regional fire services. He advocated a long-term study performed by experts.

John Bromberg, 22309 NE 31st Street, He feels that the decision to leave EF & R should be put to vote of the people. The TAB should have asked for input from special interest groups and the general public.

David Geller 215 272nd Street SE, Feels that the city would suffer during the interim period of developing a new fire department. He feels the city has not been very forthcoming about the negotiations with EF & R. His review of city emails indicate that the city council had a predetermination to leave EF & R.

Walter McCudden, This is an economic issue, not a service issue. Costs for fire service must include potential calls. He encouraged the council to seek arbitration with the other partners, rather than leaving the consortium.

Topics

Fire Services

Adjournment pm