



# Minutes of the Arlington City Council Zoom Retreat

Council Chambers  
110 East Third Street  
June 1, 2020

**Councilmembers Present Remotely:** Mike Hopson, Marilyn Oertle, Debora Nelson, Don Vanney, Jan Schuette, Jesica Stickles and Michele Blythe.

**Council Members Absent:** None.

**Staff Present Remotely:** Mayor Barb Tolbert, Paul Ellis, James Trefry, Kristin Garcia, Bryan Terry, Dave Kraski, Jim Kelly, Dave Ryan, City Attorney Steve Peiffle, and Wendy Van Der Meersche.

**Also Known to be Present Remotely:** 14 YouTube viewers.

Mayor Barb Tolbert called the retreat to order at 3:00 pm, and the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call followed.

## **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Mayor Pro Tem Jesica Stickles moved to approve the agenda as presented. Councilmember Debora Nelson seconded the motion, which passed with a unanimous vote.

## **DISCUSSION ITEM**

### **Regional Fire Authority (RFA)**

City Administrator Paul Ellis opened the discussion reviewing the slide deck distributed to Councilmembers. City Attorney Steve Peiffle acted as facilitator.

- **Today's goal** – an indication from Council whether or not to proceed with RFA annexation discussions
- **Assumptions** – what an RFA is and why Arlington considers this an option
- **Financial Reality Check** – there is no path forward in the RFA where there is no additional cost to the taxpayer without a significant cost to the City's General Fund. Taxpayer costs go up because labor costs go up.
- **Financial Scenarios** were reviewed, with costs to the average taxpayer for the RFA.
- **Impacts of the Ambulance Utility Fee (AUF)** were discussed, with increased costs projected to keep up with labor costs.
- **Bottom Line** – taxes will increase with or without the RFA.
- **Asset Puzzle Pieces** – debt on fire stations, book value on vehicles, employee liabilities, administrative support, and reserves.

- **Governance Structure** - the committee is initially recommending appointing three Arlington representatives by the Council and from the Council to the six member RFA board, which would transition to five districted, elected positions (including two in Arlington) and two at-large positions, which could occur in 2024 or 2026.

City Council was united in staff continuing conversations with North County Regional Fire Authority to move forward with the RFA, agreeing that transparency in city government and Fire and EMS sustainability are top priorities. Staff will continue to provide monthly check-ins with more information to Council.

Mr. Ellis stated that in September when Council returns after summer break, a formal action will have to be reached on whether or not to put this item to voters on the February 2021 ballot.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

  
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Barbara Tolbert, Mayor