

# Snohomish County Fire District #4

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## *Community Advisory Board Guidelines*

### **Purpose and Process**

The primary purpose of the Community Advisory Board (CAB) is to provide the SCFD #4 Board of Commissioners and the Fire Chief with independent observations and recommendations from their constituents which will be used to evaluate current level of service expectations; identify gaps in service and service shortfalls; identify current challenges of the organization and its governance; identify priorities and strategic initiatives that may be incorporated into future planning efforts; and acknowledge the positive things taking place in the organization. Further, the CAB may also provide recommendations and/or suggestions to the Commissioners and Fire Chief regarding current and/or future fire department structure and operations.

It is the intent of the Commissioners and the Fire Chief to let the CAB operate with the least amount of “fire department influence” as possible as they consider the data, analysis and information that has been provided and/or collected and then deliberate over related emergency service delivery issues. This format will afford the CAB an opportunity to offer unhindered input and share insights relative to “*what is working and what could be improved*” throughout the organization. They can then independently craft their findings and recommendations.

### **CAB Development**

It is paramount that the makeup of the CAB is diverse in many ways. This will ensure that opinions and concerns from a wide variety of citizens are obtained. To this end, a carefully prepared advertisement and selection process will be used. It is the desire of the Commissioners and the Fire Chief to attract people from many walks of life and multiple geographic areas within the fire district.

### **Mission and Goals**

The Mission of the Snohomish County Fire District #4 Community Advisory board is to be an active, informed and constructive group of citizens assisting in the development of strategic initiatives for the SCFD #4 Board of Fire Commissioners.

The Goals of the Snohomish County Fire District #4 Community Advisory board are:

- To effectively engage the greater Snohomish Community in the process of determining the desired and needed levels of fire and emergency medical services for the Fire District.
- To remain objective in the examination of data and information, and voice opinions.
- To provide the SCFD #4 Board of Fire Commissioners with educated, informed and independent findings and recommendations regarding emergency services and levels of service for the community.

### **Scope of Work**

Expanding on the scope of work listed in the charter, following are some more detailed examples of what the CAB’s focus:

- Actively participate in an in-depth *Levels of Service* study for the SCFD #4 Community.
- Develop a full understanding of current and historical data and facts pertaining to the services and operations being provided to the community and how they are funded.
- Provide recommendations to the Board of Fire Commissioners for current and future emergency services and levels of service.
- Partner with the Board of Fire Commissioners and local efforts to inform their neighbors and fellow businesspeople of the CAB recommendations and subsequent improvements which may be needed to meet those recommendations

## Governance

The CAB shall act somewhat autonomously with regard to its operation. The Board of Commissioners will be responsible to select a president/chairperson, vice president/chair and a secretary. Aside from that influence, the CAB should act as necessary, and within its scope and responsibility, to fulfill its mission.

Meetings shall be conducted in an organized manner, following Roberts Rules of Order for Small Assemblies (See Appendix A). All members are allowed to offer input and if voting is called for, all members have the right and responsibility to exercise that option.

Should disagreements arise that cannot be resolved within the CAB, a request for mediation and/or determination shall be made in writing to the Board of Commissioners. The Board will make a determination of the best and/or most appropriate course of action.

For questions regarding procedural issues or any other functional uncertainties, contact the Fire Chief.

## Responsibilities

Members of the CAB must always be mindful of the nature of the work they are being asked to do. An advisory board is, by nature, a group of citizens being asked to provide opinions. That position gives members great flexibility, while at the same time requires some degree of discernment and respect. When presenting reports to the Board of Commissioners, be transparent, thorough, and committed. The commissioners truly value your thoughts, ideas, and suggestions. Feel free to share them.

Even though the CAB (and individual members) is not a representative of SCFD #4, nevertheless member's actions and behavior can certainly be viewed by other citizens as having some level of expertise and knowledge regarding Fire Department operations. Members must refrain from entering into dialogue that could convey confidential or erroneous information about the Department, but at the same time must be open-minded in discussions so as to be able to understand the wants and needs of the community.

Keep in mind that service on the CAB is a voluntary position. Members are encouraged to share with the Fire Chief and/or Commissioner(s) any concerns regarding continued involvement, time commitment, or expectations.

## Staff Support

Fire District Staff will be available to assist with logistical needs as scheduling allows. Requests for help should be directed to the Fire Chief.

## Appendix A

Robert's Rules of Order is the most effective tool to ensure efficient, civil, and effective meetings. However, sometimes the formality of Robert's Rules isn't necessary. For small board meetings it may not make sense to follow (the sometimes tedious) formal parliamentary procedure. Under Robert's Rules a "small" board is 12 individuals or less. Robert's Rules recognizes that small boards may want to operate in a more relaxed and informal setting. Small boards may opt to use the "Informal Procedure for Small Boards" described in Robert's Rules, 10th Ed., p. 469-71. Here are the key differences between the formal and informal procedures:

1. Board members do not have to stand or be recognized by the chair in order to speak or make motions.
2. Motions need not be seconded.
3. A board member may speak any number of times on a question, and motions to close or limit debate are generally not permitted.
4. A motion does not have to be pending in order to discuss a subject informally.
5. Votes can be taken initially by a show of hands.
6. If a proposal is perfectly clear to everyone it may be voted on even though no formal motion has been made.
7. In putting questions to a vote, the chairman need not stand.
8. The chairman can participate in debate just as any other board member.