

**Minutes Spokane Valley Business Association
January 14, 2009 - By Dick Behm**

This morning's meeting started with Spokane Valley Fire Chief Mike Thompson's discussion of the Renewal of the Fire Districts M&O Levy for another three years. The fire department forecasts revenues and expenditures into the future in three year blocks. The upcoming Special Levy is for 2010 – 2012 with 52% of the SVFD budget funding in 2010 coming from this Spokane Valley Fire Department's Special Levy

There is little discussion as to the need for the Levy Renewal after last year's Ponderosa fire and the fire efforts put it by the fire department and the successful evacuation by the fire and sheriff's departments.

History of the past Three (3) Year Special Levy's (values estimated if not yet approved).

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
2012								
Special Levy Rate	1.80	1.77	1.57	1.49	1.37	1.36	1.59	
1.59	1.59							
Regular Levy Rate	<u>1.38</u>	<u>1.39</u>	<u>1.37</u>	<u>1.23</u>	<u>1.50</u>	<u>1.43</u>	<u>1.43</u>	
1.43	1.43							
Total Levy Rate	3.18	3.17	2.94	2.72	2.87	2.79	3.02	
3.02	3.02							

Total Levy Rate 2004 – 2009 (6 years) 13%

Total Levy Rate 2004 – 2009 (9 years) estimated at 5%

In an effort to save money the Chief stated that the Fire Levy will be put forth with the West Valley and Central Valley School Districts. With the shared election cost of combining with the School Districts the election expense will be lowered from \$150,000 to a split expense share of \$38,000 at a significant savings to the taxpayer for bringing the levy renewal forward.

Calls for fire response were up 10% over the past year. Total calls for service for 2004 – 2008 were up 36% from 8,530 in 2004 to 11,594 for 2008. At the same time non capital budget increases were up 29% and personnel increases were up 10% from 2004 – 2009.

In response to questions from the audience chief Thompson said that 32% of the annual budget was left in January to carry the department into May 2009. There had been a hole in the service area and in 2004 the Indiana Station had been opened and that Station #9 had been expanded to meet the needs of the Sullivan road general area.

The recent "Snow Emergency" was very active for the Fire Department. Fire service interacted with emergency services to help with the added work load. Additionally the Fire Department purchased three snow sleds to aid in emergency services. They are the type and size ranchers use to haul hay and for work use. They were located at three different stations in ready for

emergency units to get into outlying areas when needed. The machines were equipped with emergency service supplies.

The 211 phone number greatly relieved emergency numbers at the height of the storm as many folks were snowbound and without vehicles that had clearance or would move and navigate in the storm. The Fire Department originally identified seven (7) schools with snow emergency problems. By the end of day, fifteen (15) schools found themselves in need of emergency services.

If you have any questions, please call Fire Chief Mike Thompson or Deputy Chief Larry Rider at 509- 928-1700

The City Spokane Valley's Mayor Dick Munson then discussed the "Snow Emergency" as declared by City, County and the State of Washington.

Mayor Munson related the happenings of the storm in a day by day, blow by blow discussion on events and responses by the City of Spokane Valley and Spokane County. The City of Spokane Valley declared an emergency and by Christmas Eve County Commissioners debated and voted to declare a snow emergency for Spokane County.

The Mayor said that this year's response benefited from last year's experience and that response was much better this time around. He said that he would give the City a "GOOD" rating in their response. The major arterials and residential traffic flow, while not normal, was much better than last winter. Once the main arterials were plowed out the city turned to the residential and neighborhood streets, but before that was completed the next wave of the storms hit and they had to get back on the arterials again.

The audience thought that the response to the snow plowing was better than "good" in the face of the situation and that the City had produced a "great" response to the snow storm over the Christmas Holiday.

Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich and Fire Chief Mike Thompson cited examples of their problems and successes in dealing with the record setting snowfall. It was apparent in the discussion that there was a lot of behind the scene activity that the Sheriff Department, the Fire Department and the City of Spokane Valley all participated in during the snow storm period.

As the day by day snow response discussion continued other facets of the storm came to light and the ability to various stakeholders to get to some of the key meetings enabling the sheriff to declare the snow emergency.

Fresh information came to light on the response effort. It seems that Spokane County negotiated away the Public Works response during Holiday periods. If there is a need, to call out the Road Department during a holiday period then the response is on a "volunteer" basis with County Public Works. Hence Spokane County only responded at 25% of its capability for Snow Plows for the snow storm response. The Spokane Valley Business Association would like to thank the

one (1) snow plow driver who gave up part of his Christmas Holiday Vacation to respond to the needs of the citizens of Spokane Valley.

The audience asked the Mayor how the City planned to respond now that Spokane County has declared their intention to withdraw from the road contract and terminate the snow plowing services in the City of Spokane Valley after this current year 2008-09.

There had been discussion as to what options are available to the City of Spokane Valley for snow removal this upcoming winter; Mayor Munson thought that there were three key options.

1. Build our own Public Works Department for road work.
2. Purchase our own equipment and lease it out to private contractors.
3. Hire private contractors for the service.

The thought that a combination of the three was currently the most realistic as it takes about 18 months to order and receive Heavy Equipment Snow Plows. That is 18 months once the decision is made to place the order for equipment, so there is no doubt that private contractors will be called in for creating a contract for services this next year.

This was a great opportunity to talk with the Mayor Munson on a variety of other issues relating to the City of Spokane Valley. When the Mayor again comes to speak before the Spokane Valley Business Association we would encourage other Valley business to attend and join in one on one interaction.