

**Levy Oversight Committee  
Minutes  
May 1, 2007 Meeting**

**Members Present:** Ken Nakatsu, Mayor's Office; Dwight Dively, Department of Finance; Chris Gilbert, Local 27 Representative, Seattle Firefighters Union; Professor William Bradford, University of Washington

**Staff Present:** Assistant Fire Chief William Hepburn (Seattle Fire Department); Brenda Bauer, Fleets and Facilities (FFD) Director; Dove Alberg, FFD; Mary Pearson, FFD; Ted Maslin, FFD; Chris Potter, FFD; David Kunselman, FFD; Desmond Lee, FFD; Brad Tong, Shiels, Oblatz, Johnsen (SOJ); Kieu-Ahn King, Council Central Staff

**Guests:** Valerie Paganelli, Ross Budden, Garriel Keeble, Concerned Neighbors of Fire Station 20

1. The minutes of the February 27, 2007 meeting were approved.
2. Public Comment  
The irregular attendance at the Levy Oversight Committee (LOC) is of concern.
3. Levy Program Highlights (as presented in a PowerPoint presentation):

**Leschi**

The 108-foot Leschi has been delivered to Fire Station 5 on the waterfront. The project is in close-out.

**Fire Station 2 (Belltown)**

Fire Station 2 is in pre-design. Testing is taking place to determine the structural strength of the car decking and its resistance to lateral movement. The project is now beginning schematic design. The full design contract has been executed.

**Fire Station 14 (SoDo)**

Fire Station 14 is in pre-design. The site is in a liquefaction zone, and we're examining existing piles to ensure they're in adequate condition to use. A Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant is being considered to improve the seismic stability of the station.

**Fire Station 17 (University District)**

Fire Station 17 is in schematic design. Staff are considering applying for a FEMA grant for seismic work. The Landmarks Board will review the project in May.

**Fire Station 28 (Rainier Valley)**

Fire Station 28 completed its second open house, which Mayor Nickels attended. The community warmly received the station design as shown in architectural renderings. Art and landscaping will be installed where the existing building is now. Water reuse will take place in a cistern in the basement of the old building.

Fire Station 30 (Mt. Baker)

Fire Station 30 is in pre-design. The site/building has an interesting location; the historic Mt. Baker Boulevard is an Olmsted Boulevard located near historic Franklin High School and the new light rail station.

Fire Station 31 (Northgate)

The Design Commission gave Fire Station 31 final approval. Asset preservation work is being incorporated into the project. Key features include space for a Hazmat vehicle and an addition of the medic crew quarters.

Fire Station 33 (Rainier Beach)

Fire Station 33 will receive a seismic upgrade and an addition. The existing roof will make integrating the addition into the existing building an interesting challenge.

Fire Station 35 (Crown Hill)

Fire Station 35 is in pre-design. The site is very tight.

Fire Station 37 (W. Seattle/High Point)

Fire Station 37 is in pre-design. The architects are Miller Hayashi.

Fire Station 38 (Ravenna/Bryant)

Schreiber, Starling and Lane are designing Fire Station 38. The project is in pre-design.

Fire Station 39 (Lake City)

Fire Station 39 is in pre-design. The architect is the Miller Hull Partnership.

Fire Station 41 (Magnolia)

Fire Station 41 is in pre-design. Staff are identifying seismic work at the historic station. Ideally, the apparatus bays will be built to "immediate occupancy" and a "life safety" standard will be applied to the rest of the building. To bring the entire building to immediate occupancy would require building a building within the existing building.

Joint Training Facility

The Joint Training Facility (JTF) is moving forward with Phase II. The scope includes civil engineering, landscape work, and a water recirculation system for firefighting training. In April, the contract was awarded to Gary Merlino Construction. Construction will begin in late May and be completed within the October to November timeframe.

Fire Station 10

Stud framing is on-going at Fire Station 10. Concrete work is ongoing on Fifth Avenue. The sidewalk will be closed in one month. The tower crane has been removed. In December, the building is expected to be substantially complete.

Land Acquisition

FFD and SFD staff are ready to discuss Fire Station 6 the community. Staff are working on a draft of the Fire Station 20 Request for Qualifications with the Council and Executive. Fire Station 22 is waiting on the State's 520 plans. A settlement has been reached on the Fire Station 37 purchase price.

### Budget

The entire program and each project are in budget.

### Discussion

#### Pre-design Phase:

The pre-design strategy, to align scope and budget, is especially important in renovating existing buildings. The goal is to uncover issues early to avoid re-design. Pre-design involves the Architect/Engineer teams, and includes the following activities: on-site testing (geotech, hazardous materials, etc.); zoning; diagram layout to identify adjacencies inside and outside the building; existing Fire Station walk throughs; eco-charette (a workshop that focuses on sustainable strategies and technologies) for consideration of sustainable building options early in the process. Examples of issues being raised early include:

- A pedestrian zone at Fire Station 21 (Greenwood) requires an interactive, open façade
- Single Family Residence zoning at Fire Station 28 (Rainier Valley) requires approval from Council
- Structural/seismic issues at historic stations
- Opportunities for efficiency (replace rather than renovate Fire Station 28 for the same amount of money)

Coordination is on-going with the Department of Planning and Development (DPD). A single point of contact in DPD streamlines resolving Levy program issues and aligns staff to expedite Levy projects.

### Issues

#### FS 38:

Staff are carefully considering the timing of work at Fire Station 38 (Ravenna/Bryant) with regard to the soil remediation work. FFD staff are proceeding with pre-design. If necessary, project work will be stopped after the pre-design phase to accommodate the implementation of the cleanup.

#### FS 37:

The substation at Fire Station 37 is being de-energized. FFD staff have signed an agreement with City Light, who plan to de-energize the site by November. On-site survey and geotechnical work is taking place, but the operating substation limits activity on-site.

### Questions

What is the impact of the expensive and uncertain construction environment on Levy projects?

- FFD is watching bids to monitor the construction market
- Some small, recent FFD projects have had successful estimates/bids
- Larger recent public projects have come in substantially over-estimate. Both the Seattle Public Library and Sound Transit have experienced bids much higher than estimates.
- Construction firms prefer private, negotiated work to public bid. Due to a large quantity of work, bidders and sub-contractors are very limited. Limited supply increases price.
- Construction costs are currently increasing at 10% per year

FFD is considering ways to make projects more attractive, such as producing materials that present our projects for the Associated General Contractors and American Institute of Architects.

How will FFD react to bids in excess of estimates?

- Cost of materials is not the only source of high bids.
  - Labor costs are very difficult to estimate.
  - The problem is not enough competition to stabilize prices.
  - Professional estimates are still an important tool and being used on all projects.
- A premium is paid for public work because of more process, regulation and risk.
- Because of low-bid approach, contractors cannot develop a continuing work relationship with the City that they can count on. They prefer to develop these relationships with private firms to improve business stability.

How did bids go on the Phase II work for the Joint Training Facility (JTF)?

- Targeted recruiting of bidders resulted in five, tightly clustered bids.
- \$3.4 million low bid was slightly above the engineer's estimate, and was accommodated within the contingency in the construction budget.

If bids are high, what kind of Executive and Council process is anticipated?

- Flexibility will be built into bids, including contingencies and design alternatives.
- Nothing in the tightly defined construction program is unessential.
- Could get some limited flexibility by reducing Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (FF & E) budget.
- A rolling bid contingency will be discussed as a possibility.
- Further discussion with the Executive and Council is expected if bids are high.

How does the Davis Langdon program estimate look now?

- It is too early to tell; actual bids on Fire Station 28 (Rainier Valley) and Fire Station 31 (Northgate) will give us our first look at costs.

What are the FEMA grants?

- Grants are available by competitive process for projects designed to avoid damage from a future disaster; there are limited funds available.
- The Levy may qualify to pursue funds for seismic work at Fire Station 14 (SoDo) and Fire Station 17 (University District).

Is there consideration of co-locating housing and fire stations?

- The Mayor has directed a review of this possibility and a Councilmember has expressed interest.
- The limited zoning and site capacity of most of our stations limits our opportunities.

What is the status of agreements and settlements on the Joint Training Facility?

- Key agreements are signed.
- Phase II work is moving forward.