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April 21, 2021

Peter Lavelle
Executive Director
Washington State Public Disclosure Commission ("PDC")
PO Box 40908
Olympia, WA 98504-0908

RE: Response to Two Complaints filed Against Citizens 4 Fire Merger ("C4FM"), Case Number 88948, a political committee formed to support Proposition 1 ("Prop 1"), April 27, 2021 special election, to merge the Northshore Fire Department ("NFD") into Woodinville Fire & Rescue ("WFR")

Dear Mr. Levelle:

On April 14, 2021, Tabatha Blacksmith, PDC Compliance Coordinator, sent an email to C4FM), that I received as Chair, of said political committee, but did not see the PDC email until last weekend due to travelling. Rik Holley ("Holley"), Treasurer of C4FM, also received said email. The email delineated three allegations by the complainants, IAFF, Local 2459, and Carolyn Armanini.

To paraphrase without citing RCW citations, Allegation One ("A1") was failure to timely and accurately report political advertising published within 21 days of an election on a C-6 report; Allegation Two ("A2") was failure to accurately identify sponsor of a mailer supporting Prop 1; and, Allegation Three ("A3") was failure to timely and accurately report contributions.

The committee was structured as follows: I, as Chair, was the face of the committee, and publicly promoted the Prop 1 merger as a good deal for the citizens of Kenmore and Lake Forest Park, as well as Woodinville. Holley, as Treasurer, received and deposited the contributions, both cash (there were seven donors), and in-kind (there were two contributions), paid the bills and ran the bank account. Holley, an elderly 75, had never filed PDC reports, so I agreed to take that role, with Holley providing me the information as to contributions and expenditures. I, also, had never filed a PDC report, and it is a somewhat difficult website to use for the first-time initiate.

David Maehren ("Maehren"), a NFD commissioner, prepared and produced the one C4FM postcard mailer and the yard signs, but was not an officer of C4FM. Commissioner Maehren has the Constitutional right to volunteer and participate in a ballot measure campaign as a resident citizen of the fire district.

Since the PDC reporting process started three weeks ago, I have totally relied on PDC staff to help me set up the C4FM in the PDC's system and file the C-1pc, then the C-3s and C-4s, and inform me of the dates when said reports were due. I worked initially on April 2, with Jenny, for over an hour, who was very professional and helpful to get the initial C-1pc, C-3 and C-4 filed. It was like a tutorial over the phone with the website in front of me. Your records will reflect these initial filings.

Concerning A1, I did not know and was not told by PDC staff that I needed to file a C-6 if an expenditure was

over \$1,000 for a communication (mailer) to the public 21 days or less before the April 27 special election. The first that I knew about the requirement came from the complaints filed. I have now corrected that error and a C-6 has been filed today, April 21, with the considerable help of Colin, PDC staff, confirmation number 10812, in that I had to be instructed/assisted, in that filing a C-6 involved having C4FM open another account entirely separate from the original account and not involving ORCA. The C-6 filed today shows that ASM DirectMail, that printed and sent out 5,907 mailers on April 7, 2021, arriving in mailboxes on April 8 and 9, 2021, was paid in the amount of \$3,921.53 on March 30, 2021. I simply was unaware of a C-6 requirement, and once it was brought to my attention, I corrected the C-6 mistake quickly.

Concerning A-2, the one C4FM postcard mailer and yard signs prepared and produced by Maehren, that a sponsor was not accurately identified, is refuted according to Maehren, in that he contacted the PDC on or about March 18, 2021, and asked four questions of Scott Haley, PDC staffer, to clarify the rules for campaign materials. Those four questions, as follows, were all answered directly by the PDC staffer:

- (1) Does C4FM, as a political committee, not a Political Action Committee (“PAC”), have to identify anything on a campaign mailer other than the name, C4FM, and the address? PDC Answer: NO; Do the top five donors of a political committee, not a PAC, have to be identified on the campaign mailer? PDC Answer: NO.
- (2) Can C4FM reference the NFD and WFR logos in a campaign mailer? PDC Answer: YES, as long as each logo is publicly available and is not copyrighted, which neither logo is.
- (3) Can C4FM reference NFD’s website in campaign materials? PDC Answer: YES, as long as the link is to a public/governmental body’s website that is available to the general public. State law requires that any information posted on a governmental body’s website to be accurate and truthful, and campaign material can direct the public to NFD’s website by including the url link or a QR code. C4FM’s campaign material statements came from the NFD website itself available to the public, so how could C4FM be “an agent” for the NFD?
- (4) Can C4FM use a photo of a generic fire truck with a kid in the driver’s seat, taken approximately six years ago, used with the parent’s permission, with no identifying fire district identification on campaign literature? PDC Answer: YES, if it was not staged using NFD equipment. The campaign mailer from the IAFF in opposition to Prop 1 had a staged photo using NFD equipment and building with a person (employee?) who had on a NFD logo patch on his jacket.

The Maehren questions preemptively asked of the PDC should answer the arguments raised by the IAFF complaint concerning: 1. Political Advertising Requirements; 2. False and Misleading Statement in Political Advertisement; 3. and, Agent for NFD and Using Public Facilities to Promote Prop 1. Also, Maehren has had no involvement in the content of NFD’s website concerning the information provided to the public on the Prop 1 NFD merger with WFR and Maehren has had no involvement with NFD’s mailer, or the contents thereof, to the citizens of Kenmore and Lake Forest Park. C4FM asked Maehren to prepare the campaign mailer, as to content and logistics, and getting the yard signs for promoting Prop 1.

Concerning A3, as stated above, Holley, as Treasurer, received and deposited the contributions, paid the bills, and ran the bank account for C4FM. He provided me, who was doing the PDC reporting, with the contribution and expenditure information.

On the contribution side, two contributions were not included on the original C-3, one for \$50.00 from Holley himself and one for \$100 from Maehren. The reason for the Holley confusion was that Holley’s wife, Nancy Presley Holley had also contributed \$50.00, which was properly filed with the C-3 on April 2, 2021, and I did not realize that Holley himself had also contributed an additional \$50.00 on March 21, 2021, which was not filed on the April 2, 2021 C-3.

The same confusion with Maehren, in that he contributed \$1000.00, which was recorded by me on the C-3 on April 2, 2021, but I was not aware that he had contributed an additional \$100.00 on March 17, 2021, which was not filed on the April 2, 2021 C-3.

Both of these inaccuracies were quickly corrected in a new C-3 filings yesterday on April 20, 2021, with confirmation number 110016998, for Holley, \$50.00 contribution, and confirmation number 110016997, for Maehren, \$100.00 contribution.

On the expenditure side, one expenditure was not included to me by Holley on the original C-4, to ASM Direct Mail expenditure for \$3,921,53, which occurred on March 30, 2021, for 5,907 postcard mailers (printing and postage). I simply reported what was provided to me and did not realize that the mailer expense had not been included on the original C-4 filed on April 6, 2021. This inaccuracy was quickly corrected yesterday on the C-4 that was due yesterday, April 20, 2021, confirmation number 110016994.

All required PDC filings have now been filed either on-time or as now amended for C-3, C-4 and C-6. No additional contributions or expenditures are anticipated going forward and appropriate filings will be made on the future due dates.

The present PDC filings show \$5,399.00 of cash and in-kind contributions and \$5,232.60 of expenditures, with a balance remaining of \$165.87.

I have attached each of the mailers sent out by C4FM and IAFF (NoProp1), respectively, for your reference. The learning curve of this experience has been difficult and high, due to having a separate Treasurer (Holley) and PDC filer (me), and the cumbersomeness of the PDC website which I find quite difficult. We are citizens simply trying to do what we believe is best for our community and we hold no malice toward anyone.

If there is any further information that you need, please let me know. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Paul Hess

Citizen and Chair of Citizens 4 Fire Merger
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206-335-9404

cc: Rik Holley

VOTE



YES

FIRE MERGER

Proposition 1



WOODINVILLE
FWR
FIRE & RESCUE



19235 73rd NE
Unit Main
Kenmore WA 98028

FOR OUR FUTURE

citizens4firemerger.org

VOTE



YES

Proposition 1

**Northshore Fire and Woodinville Fire & Rescue
will merge to create a new fire department
EVERYONE BENEFITS**

Improved services

- ✓ Most days one additional aid car or fire engine will be in service district-wide.
- ✓ Free patient transportation to local hospitals. Most agencies either charge for this service or utilize a private ambulance service that bills the patient, as Northshore Fire does today.

Lower taxes

Average tax rate is reduced by 8.5% due to reduced administrative costs and economies of scale.

Local control retained

Existing boards of commissioners are merged. Your representation is preserved.

New agency

A new agency name will be selected with input from all stakeholders. Administrative headquarters will be combined at the Kenmore Fire Station 51.

Less Government

One special purpose taxing district is eliminated.

Strong Partnership

This is a merger of two well-run fire departments of similar size, population and tax base. Financial positions are strong with fully-funded reserve accounts. Administrative functions have already been successfully integrated. Together they provide support services the other agency lacked. Truly stronger together.

No reductions

All current fire stations will remain open with no reductions of uniformed fire fighters.

One unified labor group

The two existing labor groups will be unified as a single team, operating under one labor agreement and a single set of policies and procedures.

Firefighters will receive a wage increase

Labor negotiations will determine the exact wage and benefit package. Funds are budgeted for this increase. No firefighter's pay will be reduced.

**GOOD GOVERNMENT
DOES NOT HAVE TO
COST MORE**

The Northshore Board of Fire Commissioners diligently examined a variety of alternatives.

Cost models were reviewed by an independent financial consultant who assessed alternatives and savings.

Early in 2020 the Northshore and Woodinville boards combined administrative functions.

Once this option proved viable, the two agencies agreed a merger was in the best interest of both agencies and the citizens they serve.

More info at: <https://www.northshorefire.com/merger-updates/>





The proposed merger between Northshore and Woodinville Fire Districts, Prop. 1 on our ballot:

- **Offers no increase to emergency services**
- **Proposes an unsustainable budget**
- **Reduces the wages of our Northshore firefighters**
- **Merges two jurisdictions that don't share borders**


Join local firefighters, current and former Fire District Commissioners and elected leaders:

Vote NO on Prop. 1!

NO
Prop 1
SUPPORT OUR
FIREFIGHTERS

LEARN MORE AT:

 noprop1.com

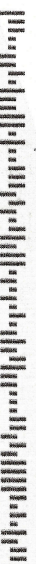
 425-739-5228

 CitizensForASaferNorthshore@gmail.com

Janice Hess

Or Current Resident

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PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SEATTLE, WA
PERMIT NO. 5544

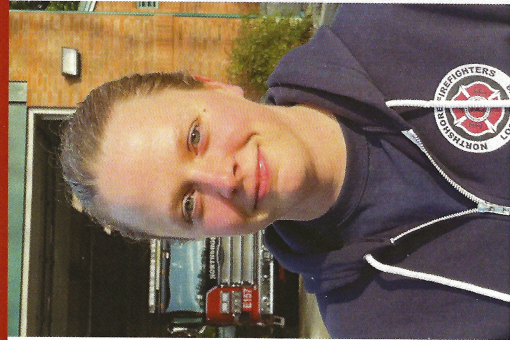


SUPPORT OUR FIREFIGHTERS: Vote NO on Prop. 1



"Our community deserves a thoughtful merger that improves emergency service and saves tax dollars. Unfortunately, Prop. 1 doesn't do that. I am proud to stand with local firefighters, elected leaders, and neighbors in opposing Prop. 1."

- Rick Verlinda
Northshore Fire District Commissioner



"Prop. 1 proposes a merger that won't allow us to sustain the same high level of emergency services. It is not the right solution for our community. Please join local firefighters across our region in voting NO."

- Lauren Peterson
Northshore Firefighters Local 2459

Vote NO on Prop. 1 by Apr. 27th!

PROP. 1 is OPPOSED BY:

City Councilmembers:
Nigel Herbig, Kenmore
Corina Pfeil, Kenmore
Mark Phillips,
Lake Forest Park

Fire District Commissioners:
Rick Verlinda, Northshore
Tim Osgood, Woodinville
Eric Adman, Northshore (fmr.)
Carolyn Armanini, Northshore (fmr.)

Local Firefighters:
Northshore Firefighters
Woodinville Firefighters
Shoreline Firefighters
Bothell Firefighters

