



**State of Washington  
PUBLIC DISCLOSURE COMMISSION**

711 Capitol Way Rm. 206, PO Box 40908 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0908

(360) 753-1111 • FAX (360) 753-1112

**Toll Free 1-877-601-2828 • E-mail: [pdcc@pdcc.wa.gov](mailto:pdcc@pdcc.wa.gov) • Website: [www.pdcca.wa.gov](http://www.pdcca.wa.gov)**

June 30, 2021

Sent electronically to [admin@northshorefire.com](mailto:admin@northshorefire.com), [david.maehren@comcast.net](mailto:david.maehren@comcast.net), [gahearn@wfr.org](mailto:gahearn@wfr.org), [mpaxton@chmelik.com](mailto:mpaxton@chmelik.com)

Subject: Complaints filed by Jeremy Jamerson and Richard Verlinda, PDC Case 89263

Dear Matt T. Paxton, attorney for King County Fire Protection District 16:

Enclosed is a copy of an electronic letter sent to Jeremy Jamerson and Richard Verlinda concerning complaints filed April 7 and 20, 2021 with the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) alleging a violation of RCW 42.17A.555 by using public office or agency facilities to promote a ballot proposition, specifically supporting the merger of King County Fire Protection District No. 16 on the April 27, 2021 ballot.

As noted in the letter below, the PDC has dismissed this matter in accordance with RCW 42.17A.755(1) and will not be conducting a more formal investigation into these allegations or taking further enforcement action in this matter.

PDC staff is reminding King County Fire Protection District 16 officials in the future, when publishing election related information about a ballot proposition to the media, the information be in accordance with the statutes, rules and PDC Interpretation No. 04-02.

If you have questions, contact Alice Fiman toll-free at 1-877-601-2828, or by e-mail at [pdcc@pdcc.wa.gov](mailto:pdcc@pdcc.wa.gov).

Sincerely,

/s

Alice Fiman  
Compliance Officer

Endorsed by,

/s

Barbara Sandahl  
Deputy Director  
For Peter Lavalley  
Executive Director



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June 30, 2021

Sent electronically to [citizensforasafenorthshore@gmail.com](mailto:citizensforasafenorthshore@gmail.com), [franco@workerlaw.com](mailto:franco@workerlaw.com),  
[valenzuela@workerlaw.com](mailto:valenzuela@workerlaw.com), [rverlinda@gmail.com](mailto:rverlinda@gmail.com)

Subject: Complaints regarding King County Fire Protection District 16, PDC Case 89263

Dear Jeremy Jamerson and Richard Verlinda:

The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) completed its review of the complaints you filed April 7 and 20, 2021. Your complaints allege King County Fire Protection District 16 officials violated RCW 42.17A.555 by using public office or agency facilities to promote a ballot proposition, specifically supporting the merger of King County Fire Protection District No. 16 on the April 27, 2021 ballot.

PDC staff reviewed the allegations, the materials you provided, materials provided by the respondent, the applicable statutes and rules, and the response from Matt T. Paxton, attorney for King County Fire Protection District 16, to determine whether the record supports a finding of one or more violations.

Based on staff's review, we found the following:

- On November 17, 2020, the Commissioners of King County Fire Protection District No. 16 (d/b/a Northshore Fire Department) approved Resolution 20-11, calling for a special election April 27, 2021 concerning the merger of Northshore Fire Department into Woodinville Fire & Rescue.
- Resolution 20-11 "would merge King County Fire Protection District No. 16 d/b/a Northshore Fire Department into Woodinville Fire & Rescue, creating one fire protection district to provide fire and emergency medical services for the areas currently served by the two districts."
- Resolution 20-11/the ballot measure was defeated on April 27, 2021.
- In its findings in PDC complaint 88948, PDC staff issued a written warning to Citizens 4 Fire Merger, concerning the Committee's failure to timely file accurate reports of contribution and expenditure activities as required for a ballot committee and to include a complete sponsor identification on political advertisements sponsored by the Committee.
- In its review of PDC complaint 89263 and the response, PDC staff found the publication provided in the complaint was an objective and fair presentation of facts and also found no evidence David Maehren misused public office or agency facilities to promote or oppose the ballot proposition.
- In response to the allegation of Interim Chief Greg Ahearn, "making statements to the press in support of Proposition 1", Paxton provided information noting "on March 12,

2021, the District was made aware that some of the content on the District’s website appeared to support Proposition 1” and provided a statement from Ahearn, which reads “I sent this quote to Shoreline Area News on March 11, 2021. When I sent this quote, I did not realize that this statement tends to support Proposition 1. I only meant to suggest that the Board of Commissioners for the District had originally petitioned for the merger and that the District was the entity that had placed the measure on the ballot for April 27, 2021. In hindsight and after consulting with the District’s legal counsel, I see how this statement could appear to support the ballot measure. Once the issue was brought to my attention on March 12, 2021, the District changed its messaging as follows: The Northshore Fire Department is asking voters whether to approve merging with Woodinville Fire & Rescue. The proposal will be on the April 27, 2021 Special Election ballot.”

- In Paxton’s response, he noted it was the updated version of the District’s messaging was shown on the District’s mailer.

Based on these findings, staff has determined, in this instance, the alleged violation of RCW 42.17A.555 by using public office or agency facilities to promote or oppose ballot propositions does not amount to a violation warranting further investigation.

PDC staff is reminding King County Fire Protection District 16 officials when publishing election related information about a ballot proposition to the media, the information be in accordance with the statutes, rules and PDC Interpretation No. 04-02.

Based on this information, the PDC finds no further action is warranted and has dismissed this matter in accordance with RCW 42.17A.755(1).

If you have questions, contact Alice Fiman toll-free at 1-877-601-2828 or by e-mail at [pdcc@pdcc.wa.gov](mailto:pdcc@pdcc.wa.gov).

Sincerely,

/s

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Alice Fiman  
Compliance Officer

Endorsed by,

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