

RFA Annexation Provides Another Opportunity

We all recognize that our city is in the midst of a financial crisis. As a community, we took a significant step forward by approving the RFA annexation ballot measure. The community supported annexation according to the terms laid out in the official annexation agreement, which was carefully negotiated and signed by both the RFA and the city ([Agenda - Tuesday, May 20, 2025](#), page 4). This agreement, with 11 signatures, underwent thorough review and served as the legal basis for what voters approved.

Now, both the city and the RFA should be moving forward with the terms of this agreement, transitioning from our current contract for fire and EMS services to full RFA membership. On June 1, 2025, the annexation becomes official, and our existing contract ends, as specified in the agreement. Importantly, the agreement clearly states that the RFA will assume all responsibilities after annexation, with no further contractual obligations or payments required from the city beyond June 1st. Paragraph 10.13 of the document further clarifies that only the written agreement is binding—no oral promises, past or future, have any legal weight.

Currently, the city pays South County Fire about \$1 million each month for fire and EMS services. With the contract ending at 11:59 pm on May 31st, the city stands to save roughly \$7 million for the rest of the year—a fact that city officials have not addressed. Why the silence? Does this conflict with their argument for another levy lid lift?

I'd like to suggest an alternative approach. Rather than rushing another property tax ballot measure this year, why not use the \$7 million in savings to cover the 2026 budget shortfall? In the meantime, we can explore and implement other ways to generate revenue and then determine what, if any, additional levy lid lift is truly necessary—once a full financial recovery plan is in place. In essence, this \$7 million could serve as a down payment on a comprehensive solution. Let's restore order to our budgeting process and proceed in the right sequence. We have a real opportunity here—let's not waste it.

Unfortunately, our city leaders have been making decisions behind closed doors, promoting their own ideas. Let's remember, they are the ones who led us into this crisis. Can we trust them to lead us out?

Jim Ogonowski

Edmonds resident