

President's Message for October 2018 by Richard C. Warbrouck

We have scheduled a special RFFOW Directors meeting on October 11, 2018 with Jerry Taylor, President of the Retired Seattle Police Officers Association and Ken Crowder, Retired Snohomish County Deputy Sheriffs Association. The meeting is to continue the discussion on the future representation for the retired fire and law enforcement officers of Washington, LEOFF I and perhaps LEOFF I and LEOFF II. We have also scheduled a meeting on October 25, 2018 with Dennis Lawson, President of the Washington State Council of Firefighters (WSCFF) to discuss the future representation for the Retired Firefighters of Washington, LEOFF I and perhaps LEOFF I and LEOFF II. I have addressed the problem and the options in past Newsletters and have discussed this issue with individual RFFOW members and also members of other city police and fire retiree groups. Everyone agrees that there is a problem but none have a solution. Perhaps they are waiting for us as elected representatives to make a recommendation. Our board is still seeking information in order to make a recommendation. I personally feel that the Directors should make a recommendation and we should list two options with additional information for a referendum vote of our membership.

One of the options previously discussed was to form a statewide retired police and law enforcement officers association with a dues structure, by-laws, elected officers and proper authorization to represent their members similar to the Retired Firefighters of Washington (RFFOW). I have discussed this option with some regional law enforcement groups with no success. No group has shown any interest in administrating a statewide law enforcement retiree organization. We have met with several of these groups from time to time, they are more social in nature than political. They are pleased with what we do, very supportive, eager for information and occasionally make a small donation to help with our expenses.

We did reach out to the one statewide retired law enforcement organization that I know of, the Washington State Retired Deputy Sheriffs and Police Officers Association (WSRDSPOA). They have a dues structure, by-laws, elected officers and regular meetings. As I said last month in the September Newsletter "I think they are also more of a social group in respect of their dues structure and their by-laws." I could be wrong, I didn't mean to offend

anyone but that's my impression from what I have seen over the years. I do believe they have a good organization and are doing what they are chartered to do. They would be an excellent group to expand their representation of the Washington State retired deputy sheriffs and police officers.

In a recent discussion with Joe Dawson, President of the WSRDSPOA, Joe had no interest in meeting with us to discuss this issue. It appears this takes the option of forming a statewide retired law enforcement group off the table. The WSRDSPOA is the only group that is currently affiliated with the LEOFF I Coalition. The problem is that the Coalition has no dues structure, no membership list and no authorization cards signed by retired police and fire officers authorizing the Coalition to represent them. This makes it illegal for an employee of the Coalition, as they have no elected officers to contact the Department of Retirement Systems, a Pension Board, a LEOFF I Disability Board or even the Legislature for information regarding an individual retiree. More importantly, is it in the best interest of a group of retired law enforcement officers to make contributions to an organization and to rely on that organization for representation, when the organization has no elected officers, no membership list and no financial reports?

At this time the only options are:

- Form one new statewide retiree fire and law enforcement officers association.
- This organization would be open to LEOFF I or LEOFF I and LEOFF II.
- Restructure the Retired Firefighters of Washington (RFFOW) to include all retiree fire and police officers to join and hold office. Change the by-laws as necessary LEOFF I or LEOFF II.
- Have the retired firefighters affiliate with the Washington State Council of Firefighters (WSCFF).
- Restructure the LEOFF I Coalition to represent retired fire and police officers, changing by-laws as necessary to include meetings, elected officers, dues structure and financial reports.

When we send out our first mailing it will go to every LEOFF I member and every LEOFF II retiree and surviving spouses. Every member will have a voice including those who belong to other organizations. As of this date the only donations we have received are from individual RFFOW members and

we thank you. Jerry Taylor, President of the Retired Seattle Police Officers Association has pledged to help with the mailing expenses.

Although it's not fair to criticize at this point as only our members receive our Newsletter and are the only retirees who have been getting the information on this issue. We have the same problem with legislative issues. We had very little help in past years when we were successful in getting nineteen bills passed to benefit the LEOFF I members. We were also the first organization to report the first attempt to transfer the LEOFF I surplus funds to the General Fund and the later attempt to terminate the LEOFF I Retirement System We were also the first group to report the two bills to merge the LEOFF I system. Where will the LEOFF I retirees be in the future if the RFFOW can't continue at its present level? Our members have represented all the LEOFF I members in the LEOFF I retirement system. How long can or should we continue?