## REVISED STAFF REPORT

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| **Agenda Item:** |  | **Name:** | Sam Porter and Lise Kaye |
| **Proposed No**.: | 2017-0431 | **Date:** |  |

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

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| ***Proposed Substitute Ordinance 2017-0431 would codify and formalize the roles and responsibilities for King County’s internal Emergency Management Coordinating Committee, passed out of committee on February 27, 2018 with a “Do Pass” recommendation. The motion was amended in committee with Amendment 1 to clarify language pertaining to county department and agency participation in the committee, and makes non-substantive technical changes to the subsections.*** |

**SUBJECT**

Proposed Ordinance 2017-0431 would codify and formalize the roles and responsibilities for King County’s internal Emergency Management Coordinating Committee.

**SUMMARY**

Proposed Ordinance 2017-0431 would add a section to King County Code to formalize the roles and responsibilities of the Emergency Management Coordinating Committee, an executive sponsored cross-departmental committee tasked with emergency management coordination including reviewing, developing and maintaining the King County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and departmental Continuity of Operations plans.

**BACKGROUND**

State law requires King County to establish a local organization for emergency management.[[1]](#footnote-1) Accordingly, King County Code establishes the Office of Emergency Management within the Department of Executive Services[[2]](#footnote-2) to

“provide for the effective direction, control and coordination of county government emergency services functional units, and to provide liaison with other governments and the private, nongovernmental sector, in compliance with a state-approved comprehensive emergency management plan and to serve as the coordinating entity for cities, county governmental departments, and other appropriate agencies during incidents and events of regional significance.”[[3]](#footnote-3)

King County’s Emergency Management Executive Board, which consists of the Executive’s cabinet plus separately elected offices, meets periodically to consider emergency management issues. In addition, the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) works with an Emergency Management Coordinating Committee, created under the auspices of the Emergency Management Executive Board, to coordinate internal emergency management planning. Attachment 1 to this staff report lists the current membership of the Emergency Management Coordinating Committee, as developed by the Emergency Management Executive Board.

In its June 14, 2016 report, the King County Auditor’s Office found that OEM, “does not have authority within King County Code to compel emergency preparedness, resulting in varied levels of preparedness across county agencies.”[[4]](#footnote-4) The Auditor’s Office conducted an analysis of sign in sheets for Emergency Management Coordinating Committee held between 2013 and 2015 which showed that only three out of 25 agencies sent representatives to at least three-quarters of Emergency Management Coordinating Committee meetings between 2013 and 2015. Ten agencies sent representatives to fewer than 20 percent of meetings.[[5]](#footnote-5)

The Auditor’s Report recommended as follows that the Executive should transmit to Council an ordinance formalizing the role of the Emergency Management Coordinating Committee:

*The County Executive should recommend legislation to the County Council to formalize the role of the Emergency Management Coordination Committee, defining it as the emergency management coordinating body for King County, led by the Office of Emergency Management and requiring participation by the emergency manager or designee from each county department and separately-elected office.*[[6]](#footnote-6)

**ANALYSIS**

Proposed Committee Functions. Proposed Ordinance 2017-0431 would establish the Emergency Management Coordinating Committee in the King County Code as the coordinating body for emergency management issues concerning King County government. The committee would advise and assist OEM and review issues that arise in order to enhance preparedness for King County. The Committee would:

* Address and elevate issues and concerns related to emergency preparedness on behalf of their respective department or agency
* Assist in the reviewing, developing and maintaining the King County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, department and agency continuity of operations plans, and any other plans, programs, or other activities as requested by OEM
* Participate in regional strategic planning efforts and provide input to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's annual Core Capabilities assessment

Membership and Attendance. Proposed Ordinance 2017-0431 states that the membership of the committee “should include, but not be limited to, at least one representative from each county department and agency and the office of emergency management, as determined appropriate by the head of each department or agency.” According to Executive staff, this language is intended to allow the Emergency Management Coordinating Committee to compel leadership within the executive and separately-elected offices to assign critical divisions to the Committee. Executive staff also note that the language is intended to be flexible enough to add members based on changing needs and that if the ordinance is passed, OEM and the Emergency Management Executive Board will consider how to fill positions and which departments and divisions should be in attendance.

It is not clear whether simply establishing the Emergency Management Coordinating committee by code will address the question of historically low participation. Council staff’s analysis indicates that the transmitted ordinance does not compel departments to participate but rather leaves it to the discretion of each department. OEM has indicated they have not yet decided which departments and/or agencies would be considered “critical” for participation and have noted these departments or agencies could change, in the event that not all departments are asked to participate. At least two county agencies, the King County International Airport or the Medical Examiner, each of which could have a significant role in a large disaster, are not included on the list of current members.

**AMENDMENT**

There is an amendment to the Proposed Ordinance that would clarify language pertaining to county department and agency participation in the committee. The amendment also makes non-substantive technical changes to the subsections.

1. Chapter 38.52.070: Each political subdivision of this state is hereby authorized and directed to establish a local organization or to be a member of a joint local organization for emergency management in accordance with the state comprehensive emergency management plan and program [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. King County Code 2.16.035 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. King County Code 2.56.030 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Emergency Management: Insufficient Authority and Communication Hinder Emergency Preparedness Response in King County*, King County Auditor’s Report, June 14, 2016, p. 1 <http://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/auditor/auditor-reports/all-landing-pgs/2016/emergency-mgmt-2016.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *Ibid, p. 20* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *Ibid, p. 33.* [↑](#footnote-ref-6)