FIRE DISTRICT ANNEXATION
STEP-BY-STEP ANALYSIS

I. City or town initiates process (RCW 52.04.061)
   a. Adoption of an ordinance proposing annexation to the fire district.
   b. Board of Fire Commissioners must concur.
   c. Notification of the county legislative authority.
      1. Board has 60 days from notification to either revise the annexation or to
         waive jurisdiction.
      2. Board has 120 days after request for review to make a determination.

II. Election (RCW 52.04.071)
   a. Election approval required separately in both the city or town and in the fire
      district.
   b. Election to be held at least 45 days after the declaration of finding.
   c. Ballot question:
      “Shall the city or town of _______________________________ be annexed to and be
      a part of _______________________________ fire protection district?
      Yes _____
      No _____”
      Annexation must be approved by the voters in both the unincorporated areas
      and within the city or town separately.
   d. Election must be certified by March 1 for annexation to be effective the
      following calendar year.

III. Tax Rates (RCW 52.04.081)
   a. Fire district property tax levy applies within the city after annexation.
   b. Maximum city property tax levy subsequent to annexation. Lower of:
      1. $3.60 per $1,000 less fire district and library district (if annexed by library
         district) levies.
      2. City property tax levy as limited by the 101% property tax lid law.

IV. Withdrawal (RCW 52.04.101)
   a. After three (3) years, city legislative authority may initiate by resolution a
      proposal for withdrawal from the fire district.
   b. Proposal for withdrawal shall be submitted to voters within the city or town
      for their approval or rejection.
   c. If approved, the city or town shall have a vested right in the assets of the
      district proportionate to the taxes levied within the boundaries of the city or
      town and utilized by the fire district to acquire such assets.
V. Key Factors in Considering Annexation to the Fire District

a. Benefits.
   1. Financial.
   2. Avoidance of annual contract negotiations.
   3. Absence of responsibility for fire protection services.
   4. City residents may participate in fire district elections and may serve as commissioners.

b. Disadvantages.
   1. Loss of control.
      (a) Service levels.
      (b) Financial.
      (c) Accountability to the city legislative authority.
   2. Increase in tax rates unless city tax rates are reduced.

c. Timing.
   1. Election must be certified by March 1 for annexation to be effective for the following calendar year.
   2. Election dates (RCW 29A.04.330):
      (a) 1st Tuesday after the 1st Monday in February.
      (b) 2nd Tuesday in March.
      (c) 4th Tuesday in April.
      (d) 3rd Tuesday in May.
      (e) 3rd Tuesday in August.
      (f) 1st Tuesday after the 1st Monday in November.

NOTE: Contact your local county elections office for additional details.