
Re: Clarification Needed on Fire Department Staff Activity and Resident Equity

From Suzanne Wrede <swrede@bellevueidaho.us>

Date Fri 5/29/2026 8:41 AM

To Christina Giordani <cgiordani@bellevueidaho.us>; Frederick Allington <frederick@allingtonlaw.net>; Greg Beaver <bfdchief@bellevueidaho.us>

Cc Doro Schinella <doroschinella@gmail.com>; Evan Stelma <elstelma@ctshelp.net>

Dear Mayor and City Attorney:

A review of City records appears to show that Bellevue's Community Development Department coordinated and facilitated tree-removal activities on behalf of a single private applicant, including the use of City staff and City resources, without any documented public authorization or permitting process.

Under Idaho law, public officials are required to apply land-use regulations uniformly and to avoid granting special privileges or benefits to individual applicants. Statutes including the Idaho Ethics in Government Act (§74-401 et seq.), the Public Integrity statutes (§59-703), the Bribery and Corrupt Influence provisions (§18-1351 et seq.), and the uniform-application requirement of the Local Land Use Planning Act (§67-6535) all prohibit the use of public resources for private advantage. If the City intends to offer such assistance, it must be formally documented, publicly authorized, and made equally available to all applicants. If not, the selective provision of City labor and equipment to a single property owner raises significant concerns under these statutes.

If this offer has not been uniformly offered to all other applicants, then this is either a penalty under ethics and corruption laws or it is a precedent meaning that the City must now offer free tree removal service to all applicants and deliver it with the same level of service provided to this applicant. It is also possible that the City would need to re-imburse previous applicants who were denied this offer depending on when it was created, how it was authorized and whether the offer should have been made to them.

Please advise the residents as soon as possible to the details of this situation and to any new services they should expect as a result.

Thank you,

Suzanne Wrede
Bellevue City Council

From: Suzanne Wrede

Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2026 9:23 AM

To: Christina Giordani <cgiordani@bellevueidaho.us>; Frederick Allington <frederick@allingtonlaw.net>; Greg Beaver <bfdchief@bellevueidaho.us>

Cc: Doro Schinella <doroschinella@gmail.com>; Evan Stelma <elstelma@ctshelp.net>

Subject: Clarification Needed on Fire Department Staff Activity and Resident Equity

Dear Mayor, City Attorney and Fire Chief,

I am requesting clarification regarding the recent statement that Fire Department staff used municipal fire-fighting equipment to provide tree removal services on private property, described publicly as "training," and performed on their "personal time."

Because payroll records confirm that these individuals are **staff**, not volunteers, I am trying to understand the City's legal authority and the potential financial exposure to residents. Specifically:

1. What policy or statutory authority permits City staff to use municipal fire equipment for private construction or tree-removal work, regardless of whether they were compensated for the hours?
2. Was the City's insurer notified that staff were operating fire-fighting equipment for a private project, and is this activity covered under the City's liability and workers' compensation policies?
3. How does the City ensure compliance with Idaho's restrictions on using public resources for private benefit, particularly when other residents have been required to pay out-of-pocket for similar tree-removal services?
4. If this is being characterized as "non-compensated training," where is the risk assessment and policy governing it, and how was this private arrangement made when no comparable training-related services have been communicated or offered to the broader public?

My goal is to understand how the City ensured legal compliance, protected residents from liability, and maintained equitable access to services. I would appreciate a brief explanation and the specific policy references, risk-assessment and insurance coverage documentation, and administrative approvals that governed this activity, so I can accurately understand the City's procedures and compliance obligations.

Thank you,

Suzanne