



## **BOARD MEETING AGENDA SUBMITTAL**

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**TO:** GCSB Board of Directors

**FROM:** Pete Kampa, General Manager

**DATE:** April 13, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Agenda Item 6A. Discussion and Board Direction on Groveland CSD Fire Department Operational and Financial Matters Including Tuolumne County Fire Authority's Measure V, Intended to Provide Funding for Fire and Emergency Response Services

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### **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Staff recommends the following action:

*No action required at this time.*

### **BACKGROUND:**

The GCSB Board of Directors has within one year of the receipt of the 2020 Fire Master Plan Update, has accomplished most of the recommended next steps as listed below:

1. Review and absorb the content, findings, and recommendations of this Fire Master Plan Update.
2. Prepare a staff report and draft resolution for consideration by the District Board of Directors adopting the included recommended response performance goals.
3. Aggressively pursue one or more of the suggested funding strategies to ensure longterm fiscal sustainability.
4. Provide additional daily staffing if/when funding becomes available; consider seeking a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant to provide partial reimbursement of those costs over the first three years.

Items #1 and #2 have been completed and Item #3 is partially accomplished with the County picking up the cost of the Amador station in Groveland. The District was also instrumental in the formation of the Tuolumne County Fire Authority (TCFA) which is intended to fulfill the second half of Task #3 above; to submit a fire funding measure to the voters.

TCFA has submitted the special tax funding measure to the county elections department; which was subsequently titled "Measure V". Measure V is scheduled as an all-mail ballot measure, meaning that there will be no formal physical polling location. Ballots will be mailed to all

registered voters within the TCFA starting the first week of May 2021. Ballots must be postmarked no later than June 8, 2021, and there will also be ballot dropoff locations identified in the ballot information. The TCFA also prepared the attached “Argument in Favor” of Measure V, which will be included in the mailed ballot material.

If approved by the voters, Measure V will generate approximately \$552,525 in revenue specifically to fund the Groveland Fire Department. The District is also establishing development impact fees and considering formation of a Community Facilities District to help in funding the purchase and replacement of park and fire service capital equipment and facilities. With voter approval of Measure V, the combination of these revenue sources will provide funding for fire engine and equipment replacement and upgrade, as well as moving the department much closer to the recommended increased firefighter levels with two staffed engines.

Measure V, if approved will provide \$3,117,975 in funding to the Tuolumne County Fire Department, who has expressed their interest and desire to staff a fire station in the Groveland area to provide primary response to areas outside the GCSD boundaries and mutual aid into GCSD.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Measure V Argument in Favor as submitted by TCFA
- Measure V FAQ (provided with GM Report)

## **Argument in Favor of Measure V:**

A YES vote for Measure V creates a consistent, predictable source of funding that will only be used by fire departments for firefighter safety, protecting lives and property, replacing aging fire engines, purchasing emergency response equipment such as “Jaws-of-Life”, reducing wildfire risks and improving emergency response capabilities. If approved by the voters, this funding will be distributed directly to the Tuolumne County Fire Department, Sonora City Fire Department, Groveland Fire Department, Jamestown, Columbia and Tuolumne Fire Districts only, based on the number of properties served by each.

Changes in state law over decades have reduced the amount of funding local Fire Departments like ours receive. Current funding for Fire Departments does not keep pace with rising costs or allow them to replace aging fire engines and expensive rescue equipment. Demand for state and federal grants is at an all-time high with departments throughout the state competing for limited funds. Almost all of Tuolumne County is designated a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone and now is not the time to risk reductions in our local fire protection services. We simply cannot afford the devastation caused by fires like other areas of the state.

For the first time in our history, local Fire Departments have joined forces to form the Tuolumne County Fire Authority. The TCFA has a common vision to solidify fire and emergency response services in the region and give our local communities the opportunity to vote on a secure, consistent and reliable source of funding for your Fire Departments. Through citizens’ oversight and with annual reports, your Measure V tax dollars are protected, and funding can ONLY be spent for fire and emergency services. This specific source of fire service funding cannot be taken or diverted for any other purpose by federal, state or county governments.

Signed,

Ryan Campbell, Chair, Tuolumne County Fire Authority

Nick Casci, Chief, Tuolumne County Fire Department / Groveland Fire Department / Jamestown Fire Protection District\*

Mark Ferreira, Chief, Columbia Fire Protection District\*

Aimee New, Chief, Sonora City Fire Department\*

Nick Ohler, Chief, Tuolumne Fire District\*

\* title used for identification purposes only