



BOARD MEETING AGENDA SUBMITTAL

TO: GCSO Board of Directors

FROM: Peter Kampa, General Manager

DATE: October 13, 2020

SUBJECT: Agenda Item 6B: Discussion Regarding Modifying the Groveland Amador Station Contract With CALFIRE

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff recommends the following action:

This is an information only item at this time

BACKGROUND:

For several months GCSO management has been in conversations with County administration regarding the cost of providing fire and emergency response services on the Highway 120 corridor between Groveland and Yosemite National Park. The conversations and concerns escalated as two additional new resort lodging projects have been proposed in the County approximately 20 miles from the district boundaries. The district understands that there will be impacts on Groveland fire services by responding to calls so far out of the district boundaries. At our September 16, 2020 special board meeting, we held a lengthy discussion about this matter and the possibility of terminating responses over long distances outside of the boundaries.

On September 22nd, the County Board of Supervisors during budget deliberations considered options related to the Groveland CALFIRE Amador station and its funding. The County administrator, Tracy Riggs, presented the attached memorandum to the board and provided a lengthy and supportive discussion associated with the level of effort and cost Groveland fire puts in to responding to calls outside of the district boundaries under automatic aid agreements. Ms. Riggs recommended to her board that the County contract directly with CALFIRE to pay the cost of the Amador station in Groveland. That motion was subsequently approved, and staff was directed to secure revised agreements with CALFIRE.

It is anticipated that in the near future meeting both the County and the district will be presented revised contracts with CalFire for approval that would remove the funding obligation for the Amador station from the district contract and add it to the County

contract. This agenda item is for information and discussion only at this point and will certainly be discussed more when the draft contracts are considered by this board.

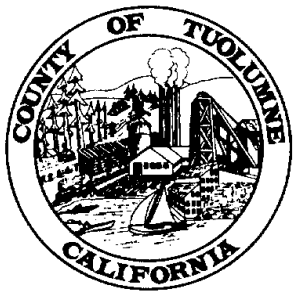
Much appreciation should be extended by this Board to the county board and county administration for recognizing the District's contribution to fire and emergency response to areas outside of our boundaries and honoring our request for funding assistance toward those services.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Should the district be removed of its obligation to pay for the Groveland Amador station, the fire Department budget expenses will reduce buy up to \$263,000 in the 2020/21 fiscal year.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors Memo



County Administrator's Office

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Eric Erhardt
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Maureen Frank
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September 21, 2020

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Tracie M. Riggs, County Administrative Officer
SUBJECT: Groveland CALFIRE Amador Station

Background

Over the course of the last several years, fire has become a major topic, not only for government but also for individuals. California has experienced the largest fires in history, in the last three years, with this year being one of the worse in terms of acres burned. Fire is also one of the highest priorities for the Board.

Last year, Supervisor Gray and staff attended a Groveland Community Service District (GCSD) board meeting. During the staff presentation, General Manager, Pete Kampa, stated that the district would not be able to afford the cost of providing fire services in the coming years. Over the course of the last year, Mr. Kampa has continued to work towards solidifying data and financial capabilities for ongoing fire services for GCSD. During the presentation, the General Manager stated that within three years they will find themselves in a difficult place to financially afford to fund the contract, with CALFIRE, for fire services.

Most recently, the conversation of fire services along the Groveland corridor has heated up again, due to the potential of some large scale development projects. This has preempted the need for GCSD to complete financial impact studies for providing services outside the GCSD service area and possibly the Auto Aid boundaries. I have had several conversations with Mr. Kampa regarding this topic. During the GCSD Board meeting last week, there were two agenda items related to fire. The first, was the financial impact of providing services to commercial lodging businesses such as Rush Creek and Evergreen as well as two projects currently in development. The second item was consideration of withdrawing from the County Auto Aid agreement. Consequently, the GCSD Board directed their General Manager to work with the County towards future fire revenues and/or services.

Staff has been listening to all of the conversations and concerns related to fire services along the Groveland corridor in an effort to provide some options to your Board. The Board has also provided direction to staff to work with County fire districts to determine the best mechanism for fire services within Tuolumne County and also the best option to putting a fire tax on a ballot next spring.

We support the Board of Supervisors in achieving their goals through service and collaboration with County Departments and the Community.

After listening to the issues GCSD is facing and the accompanying comments that the County does not provide any fire services along the Groveland corridor, staff is recommending the County explore contracting directly with CALFIRE for the operation of the Groveland Amador station. An Amador station is a CALFIRE fire station, with CALFIRE staff and equipment. The cost of running the station is borne by the state during fire season. During the winter months, GCSD is charged for providing the service. This action provides for the Board to move towards their goal of providing additional first responder services along the Highway 120 corridor as well as providing some much needed financial relief to GCSD.

GCSD has \$263,466 budgeted for the Amador station this fiscal year (see attachment). If the County were to contract directly, with CALFIRE, for the operation of the Groveland Amador station, this cost would be paid by the County. This equates to an annual, recurring savings for GCSD and could provide almost \$800,000 for the three year term of their recently approved contract. This action is also a good stop gap while fire districts and County staff work on the ballot initiative as well as developing the best model to provide fire services in our county.

Next question is how does the county take on this cost? There are two options: 1) take the cost of the amended CALFIRE contract (\$263,466) out of contingencies; or 2) do not place \$250,000 in reserves at this time. Rather place these funds into contingencies and provide direction to staff to begin working with GCSD and the State to amend the two CALFIRE contracts moving the Groveland Amador station from the GCSD contract to the County contract.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that your Board direct the County Administrator to work with Groveland Community Services District towards amending the two entities CALFIRE agreements moving the Groveland Amador station from the GCSD contract to the County contract.