



Lou Ann Texeira
Executive Officer

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July 13, 2011 (Agenda)

July 13, 2011
Agenda Item 9

Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)
 651 Pine Street, Sixth Floor
 Martinez, CA 94553

Fire Service Update – East Contra Costa County

Dear Commissioners:

INTRODUCTION

This report is in response to the Commission’s request for an update regarding fire service activities in East Contra Costa County.

In June, the Commission received an update regarding fire service in East County. As previously reported, actions are underway among East Contra Costa Fire Protection District (ECCFPD), the cities of Brentwood and Oakley, San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District (SRVFPD), Cal Fire and other interested parties, which could potentially lead to significant changes in the delivery of fire and emergency medical services in East County.

DISCUSSION

East Contra Costa Fire Protection District (ECCFPD) - As previously reported, on June 6, the ECCFPD Board adopted a preliminary budget which maintains the current staffing model. This budget will utilize \$2.8 of the \$3.4 million in the District’s reserve funds, leaving an estimated \$600,000 in reserve funding. Also in June, the ECCFPD Board formed an Ad Hoc Committee to explore revenue options.

On June 27, the District held a special meeting at which time the Board took action on two items. The first involved reviewing the process and options for selecting District Board officers for the remainder of the 2011 calendar year, in response to Director Stonebarger’s stepping down as the Board President on June 6. The Board deferred action on this item to a special meeting on July 11 at which time it plans to appoint a new Board President. The second item was to receive the Ad Hoc Committee’s update and consideration of revenue options. We understand that the Committee is meeting weekly and has focused on three areas as summarized below:

- 1) *Service models* – Considering different service models (i.e., number of stations, staffing levels) to meet current and future service needs, along with cost estimates;

- 2) *Service providers* – Researching whether a larger agency such as Contra Costa County FPD could provide improved service for ECCFPD with regional resources; and
- 3) *Election dates and voter turnout* – Reviewing past elections data and voter turnout within the District to help forecast optimal time to go to the voters with a parcel tax.

The Board will hold a special meeting and workshop on July 11 to further discuss these issues.

City of Brentwood – As previously reported, in May, the Brentwood City Council discussed its concerns and need for a fire service back-up plan given the fiscal challenges faced by ECCFPD. The Council directed City staff to prepare the necessary paperwork to apply to LAFCO for a Brentwood-only fire service option and return to Council for review. On June 28, the Brentwood City Council approved moving forward with plans to apply to LAFCO to detach from ECCFPD and form a new fire district. The City Council directed its staff to prepare the necessary paperwork in conjunction with a LAFCO application. The City Council could be asked to consider further action in July or August.

City of Oakley – As previously reported, in May, the Oakley City Council discussed a plan similar to the Brentwood-only fire service option, and instead voted to continue to look for ways to keep ECCFPD fiscally sound. The City of Oakley has taken no formal action with regard to fire since its discussion in May, and may revisit the issue at its meeting on July 12.

San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District (SRVFPD), Cal Fire and Marsh Creek/Morgan Territory (MCMT) Area – As reported in June, the MCMT residents are concerned with the future of fire service to their area given the fiscal challenges ECCFPD faces. Consequently, the residents have initiated discussions with SRVFPD regarding possible service through that district. The MCMT area is served by the Sunshine station located on Marsh Creek Road, east of Clayton. The Sunshine station is currently staffed year-round by Cal Fire. ECCFPD currently contracts with Cal Fire for operation of the Sunshine station during the wet season, and Cal Fire directly finances staffing the station during fire season. The SRVFPD Fire Chief previously met with MCMT residents and with Cal Fire officials to discuss fire service options. The SRVFPD Fire Chief has discussed the issue further with Cal Fire, with the ECCFPD Fire Chief, and with the SRVFPD Board, and expects to present a final recommendation to his Board in August.

Additional information regarding far East County fire service issues may be available following the upcoming local agency meetings on July 11 and 12.

RECOMMENDATION

Receive report and provide input and direction as desired.

Sincerely,

LOU ANN TEXEIRA
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

c: Distribution