



BOARD MEETING AGENDA SUBMITTAL

TO: GCSB Board of Directors

FROM: Peter Kampa, General Manager

DATE: February 13, 2024

SUBJECT: Agenda Item 6A: Discussion and Board Direction for the Groveland Community Services District to Continue to Maintain, Provide and Manage Fire Protection and Emergency Response Responsibility and Services within the District's Boundaries

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

No specific action is recommended, as we seek Board confirmation and direction on their position regarding the provision of fire and emergency response services within the GCSB boundaries and throughout the county.

BACKGROUND:

For at least five years, your district management has been representing GCSB's interests in fire and emergency response services county wide, and specifically within the GCSB boundaries. In recent years, the county has completed a study of the structure of the fire departments in the county, in hopes of determining the most reliable and cost effective manner in which to provide fire and emergency response services going forward. There has been discussion of dissolution of various districts who may not have the budget to survive long term or that may be better served by the Tuolumne County Fire department; either by a county staffed department or under the Cal Fire cooperative Schedule A Fire Protection agreement. There has also been discussion, primarily lead by the fire districts and City of Sonora, regarding consideration of expanding the various department boundaries to encompass the areas currently served by, and potentially replacing the County Fire department.

Most recently, county administration in cooperation with the fire chiefs is conducting a detailed evaluation of the cost of establishing a county staffed and managed fire department. The reason for this evaluation is reported to be the continuously increasing cost of the Cal Fire schedule a contract. We expect that within the next few months, the standard of coverage evaluation and the County Fire cost evaluation will be complete. That said, as your management represents the policy direction of this Board, we want to make sure that we have clarity and alignment going forward into these discussions.

The district board of directors and management have not had a direct public conversation regarding the direction of the district in this matter, and therefore we should address the following questions directly or/and provide feedback on additional information needed to answer the questions:

1. Does GCSD have a position on whether County Fire should be expanded to encompass areas where fire districts are unable to provide consistent 911 responses?
2. Does GCSD have a position on whether the fire services should be provided by a county staffed fire department, or with Cal Fire under a Schedule A agreement?
 - a. Should the decision be based solely on cost, or level of service, or both?
3. Does GCSD have an interest in being part of the County Fire Department?
 - a. Does the success of a local tax funding measure for Groveland Fire come into play?
 - b. Is management expected to hold firm on GCSD control of the level of services provided locally?
4. Does GCSD support expansion of the special district fire department boundaries to encompass or reduce the County Fire response area(s)?

Management wants to ensure that it is representing the consensus of the Board's in this sensitive policy matter. This topic can certainly be touched upon today, staff directed to gather needed information and/or county/CalFire representatives and scheduled for a Board workshop for a robust discussion.

ATTACHMENTS:

None