



BOARD MEETING AGENDA SUBMITTAL

TO: GCS D Board of Directors

FROM: Pete Kampa, General Manager

DATE: December 8, 2020

SUBJECT: Agenda Item 7C. Consideration of Adoption of a Firefighting Staffing Standard for the Groveland Fire Department

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff recommends the following action:

I move to direct the General Manager to prepare the staffing, facility improvement and equipment budget projections, financial analysis and funding plans to accomplish a Groveland CSD Fire Department standard consisting of a minimum of four staff and two engines at all times

BACKGROUND:

The Groveland Fire Department is a service provided by the Groveland Community Services District with contract fire an emergency response personnel provided through a Schedule A Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement with CAL FIRE. The current contract with CAL FIRE provides for two full time professional staff, 24 hours per day/seven days per week at the Groveland CSD station 78 in downtown Groveland. The Amador agreement for the Cal fire station on Merrell Rd, currently paid by the County, provides for two to three additional staff on a Cal Fire engine in that location. This provides for a total of a minimum of two to a maximum of five full time professional firefighting staff available between the two locations, so long as the Merrell Rd station is staffed by the state during the fire season. As detailed in our 2020 Fire Master Plan Update, this level of staffing is barely adequate to perform critical tasks as detailed below:

(FIRE MASTER PLAN 2020 UPDATE) CHALLENGE #2—DAILY STAFFING CAPACITY
Citygate finds that the Department's physical resources are appropriate to protect against the hazards likely to impact the District; however, the daily staffing of two to five career response personnel¹ and no volunteers is barely adequate to safely perform the critical tasks associated with small, emerging fires and routine single-patient EMS incidents as described in Section 2.5. Even a best-case staffing level of nine career personnel (two District personnel and seven CAL FIRE Groveland Station personnel including a Chief Officer) is insufficient to safely and effectively perform the critical firefighting/rescue tasks at a confined building fire, moderate vegetation/wildland fire, serious multiple-patient EMS incident, or complex rescue incident in a timely manner without additional assistance. In addition, the District is not geographically located

for timely mutual aid, thus a worst-case District staffing of two personnel reflects a likely outcome of not even being able to confine building fires to the building or parcel of origin, an inability to confine a rapidly developing vegetation/wildland fire, and the non-survival of some EMS patients.

There are occasionally times during peak fire season when the CAL FIRE Merrell Rd station staff is assigned to fires in other areas of the state, leaving the station without staff until a backup crew can be moved from another location to Groveland. This occurred for an unconfirmed period of time recently during the Moc Fire and state fire disaster in August 2020. When the Merrell Rd station is not staffed, the GCSD Fire Department is left with two personnel to respond to all calls in the District and under mutual and automatic aid. The Fire Master Plan clearly identifies the risk of operating in this manner.

As the board is painfully aware and the Fire Master Plan update documented, there is no funding available in the Fire Department budget to even replace existing apparatus, let alone fund additional staffing and engines at this time. Even with the county's assumption of the Amador contract cost, there are virtually no financial resources remaining after funding the cost of the CAL FIRE Schedule A contract. However, the fact remains that GCSD must plan for the future of the fire department to remedy the current deficient staffing situation. The cost of supporting the existing fire services and expanding staffing to achieve the optimal staffing levels identified in the Master Plan, must be equitably spread among the beneficiaries of the services.

We are currently in the process of planning with the County for both the Fire JPA and for increased fire services needs and staffing on the Highway 120 corridor. We are also preparing to establish a Community Facilities District (CFD) within the District boundaries. Both of these processes require that we identify our optimal desired service level, which will then result in a formal implementation plan, budget and identified funding sources. Other than accepting the Fire Master Plan Update, there has been no action by the Board to adopt a fire department staffing standard as suggested in the Master Plan. If so approved today and directed by the Board, a Resolution will be prepared for Board consideration documenting the staffing standard and implementation plan at the January 2021 Board meeting.

ATTACHMENTS:

- [Fire Master Plan \(Link only for reference\)](#)

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

None for this specific action. The Implementation Plan to be considered at a future meeting will detail the funding necessary to increase fire department staffing.