



TO: GCSB Board of Directors

FROM: Peter Kampa, General Manager

DATE: February 17, 2022

SUBJECT: Agenda Item 4B: Discussion of the Groveland Fire Department Future Funding, Potential Fire Special Tax and Potential Formal Request for Tuolumne County to Develop a Staffed Fire Station in the Groveland Area or to Contract for Fire Department Services with GCSB

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

No specific Board action is recommended as this is intended to be an opportunity to further develop the Board and public understanding of and options available for the fire and emergency response services on the Hwy 120 corridor in the response area of GCSB Fire.

BACKGROUND:

The board of directors has clearly stated its objective that the fire department maintain its capabilities to respond to emergency calls within the adopted response times as identified in the recently completed fire masterplan. As growth in population and tourism continues to occur outside of the GCSB boundaries, emergency response calls are continuing to increase as well. Now is the time to plan for the future growth of the Groveland Fire Department and its capabilities to accommodate the nature and number of emergency calls expected.

As has been discussed many times, the cost of expanding the GCSB Fire Department staffing and operating expenses must not be paid by GCSB taxpayers to accommodate growth outside the district boundaries. At the same time under the mutual aid agreement with all fire departments in the county, the GCSB fire will continue to respond to calls within our response area. The county, hearing the concerns of GCSB and seeing growth in resorts outside of Yosemite National Park, has begun consideration of expanding fire and emergency response capabilities in the Groveland region. The district has been involved in discussions with the county, but it continues to remain unclear on whether they intend to proceed with the development of a new fire station on the highway 120 corridor or whether they are going to continue to expect GCSB fire to respond to all calls.

During these discussions, the county agreed to begin funding the Groveland Cal Fire station during the offseason under an Amador contract. This action has allowed emergency response services to remain at the same level and for the district funds available for the fire department to not be depleted quickly. However, as identified in our fire masterplan, even with the staffing of both stations and due to our remote location, we are marginally staffed for minor emergencies and understaffed to adequately respond to larger emergencies. As we run additional calls far outside the district boundaries, the risk increases of a call occurring inside the district boundaries at the same time, which could have disastrous results. It is time to come to agreement with the county on the emergency response standards of coverage for the region and how we are going to get there financially and logistically.

The county has voiced its desire to increase emergency response staffing in the region and planning should begin immediately toward that end.

ATTACHMENTS:

None

FISCAL IMPACT:

None