



Lou Ann Teixeira
Executive Officer

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August 10, 2011 (Agenda)

August 10, 2011
Agenda Item 10

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 a monthly update regarding fire service activities in East Contra Costa County.

As previously reported, discussions 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, in June, the ECCFPD Board adopted a preliminary FY 2011-12 budget that will utilize \$2.8 of the \$3.4 million in the District’s reserve funds, leaving an estimated \$600,000 in reserve funding.

The ECCFPD Board has established an Ad Hoc Committee to review options to address the revenue shortage. The Committee meets weekly and is 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 met on August 1 and discussed pursuing a parcel tax and possible consolidation with Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (CCCFPD). The Board directed its staff to work with CCCFPD staff on cost and service estimates. CCCFPD continues to face its own fiscal and service challenges as noted in the attached communication (Attachment 1).

City of Brentwood – As previously reported, the Brentwood City Council is concerned with the future of fire service, and is working on a back-up plan for a Brentwood-only fire service option. In June, 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. On July 26, the City Council received a verbal update from staff regarding the progress to date on the LAFCO application. The Brentwood City Council next meets on August 9.

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. The Oakley City Council next meets on August 9.

San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District (SRVFPD), Cal Fire and Marsh Creek/Morgan Territory (MCMT) Area – As previously reported, 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.

Since the last update to the Commission in July, we have learned that the Governor signed a bill (ABX 129) which imposes a fire protection and prevention fee on rural residents. Specifically, it establishes an annual fee, capped at \$150, to be paid by residents living in a State Responsibility Area (SRA) where Cal Fire is responsible for providing fire service.

Cal Fire provides fire protection, prevention and investigation services within an SRA, and has primary responsibility for wildland fires in the SRA; whereas structural fire protection and EMS are the responsibility of the local fire providers whose boundaries overlap the SRA. Cal Fire will respond to all other types of service calls in the SRA at the request of the local fire provider. In the interface areas, where fires in the Local Responsibility Area (LRA) could easily spread to the SRA, Cal Fire coordinates response plans with the local agency.

In Contra Costa County, Cal Fire contracts with East Bay Regional Park District to supplement its services in West Contra Costa County. Cal Fire also provides fire protection and EMS service to the western portion of ECCFPD during the winter months by Amador Plan contract. Cal Fire primarily serves Contra Costa County from its Sunshine Fire Station east of Clayton, which is staffed 24 hours a day, year-round.

We understand that the MCMT residents will be assessed by the State the \$150 for Cal Fire prevention services; and that at this time, the money cannot be used for fire suppression.

Additional information regarding far East County fire service issues may be available following the upcoming local agency meetings on August 1 and 9.

RECOMMENDATION

Receive report and provide input and direction as desired.

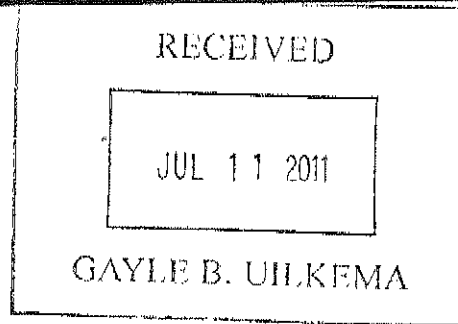
Sincerely,

LOU ANN TEXEIRA
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

c: Distribution

Gayle B Uilkema

From: Louder.Daryl <dloud@cccfd.org>
Sent: Monday, July 11, 2011 2:56 PM
To: Gayle B Uilkema
Cc: Steve Dexter
Subject: Fire District Issues



Greetings Supervisor Uilkema,

As you are aware, the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District is facing a number of challenges. Additionally, there are a number of external issues emanating from other cities and districts that are affecting or threatening our District operationally or fiscally. I wanted to ensure the Board is aware of these issues as well.

In West County, the City of Pinole closed Fire Station – 74 and there is a possibility that the Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District will close a station on a rotating basis beginning in November. This would reduce the capacity of our Battalion-7 resources by 33%. In order to replace those resources, our District would have to rely more heavily on automatic aid from the City of Richmond. Unfortunately, we have to pay a per incident fee for any responses above the number of responses that we provide to them. As an example, in FY-2009/2010, we paid the City of Richmond more than \$354,000 for 793 responses into our District. The only other option is to dispatch units from Martinez which would significantly increase the response time to get the required units on the scene.

The East Contra Costa Fire Protection District is facing serious fiscal challenges as well. The City of Brentwood has discussed trying to separate from the District and form its own fire department. I have met informally with the City of Oakley at their request to discuss different concepts and options they might have to provide service to the City. We have also responded to an informal request from Chief Henderson regarding the cost of the our District providing similar levels of service. As you are aware, the ECCFPD is contemplating placing a special tax on the ballot, but the timing is undetermined at this point. My concern is that there may be an expectation for our District to provide service to East County should their fire district fail.

I wanted to ensure that our Board of Directors was briefed on the external issues facing the District. However, I wasn't sure what the most appropriate methodology should be, i.e. through the Public Protection Committee, closed session, or at a regular BOS meeting.

I look forward to your recommendation. Please contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.

Regards,
Daryl

Daryl Louder
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