

**ROSS VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT**

For the meeting of: December 13, 2017

To: Board of Directors

From: Roger Meagor, Acting Fire Chief
Management Committee- Garrett Toy, Executive Officer
David Donery, San Anselmo Town Manager
Joe Chinn, Ross Town Manager

Subject: Shared Services / Fire Chief

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) For the Board to receive a presentation from Marin County Fire Chief Jason Weber
- 2) That the Board continues to explore both shared services and the recruitment for a Fire Chief.
- 3) That the Board directs staff to develop an RFP for the shared service option, while at the same time contracting with a recruiting firm to conduct the initial phases of the Fire Chief recruitment to see if there is a well-qualified group of candidates.
- 4) Authorize the Executive Officer to: a) spend up to \$15,000 for a firm to assist with the preparation of a RFP and b) spend up to \$23,000 for a recruitment firm.

BACKGROUND

At the September Board meeting, the Board considered two options to fill the Fire Chief vacancy created by the retirement of Chief Mills. The Board directed staff to explore a shared services option at the executive management level (Fire Chief). Staff was also directed to prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP), to be sent to executive recruiting firms to provide full recruitment services for the position of Fire Chief.

Following the September meeting, the Management Committee and Chief Meagor met with Chief Weber from Marin County Fire Department. Additionally, Chief Meagor met with Chief Pomi from Kentfield Fire District, the Ross Valley Fire Battalion Chiefs, and had a follow-up meeting with Chief Weber. The discussions involved looking at the basic concept of an executive management shared services arrangement.

At the October Board meeting, staff provided additional information regarding the shared service option. Staff was directed to include a public workshop on the agenda for the November Board meeting.

AGENDA ITEM # 4
Date 12/13/17

At the November Board meeting, a facilitated workshop was held to receive input from the Board, staff, and public. The workshop included a series of topics and questions which were used to assist in the discussion and the gathering of information. A summary of the comments is attached to this staff report.

DISCUSSION:

As a result of the November workshop, several next steps and options were identified.

- Have interested agencies make presentations at the Board's December meeting based on the discussions and public comments received at the November meeting.

Status: Chief Weber will make a presentation at the December meeting to provide additional information about Marin County Fire Department and to outline the general concepts for a shared service option between Marin County Fire Department and Ross Valley Fire Department.

- Develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Shared Service option.

Recommendation: The Management Committee is recommending utilizing consulting services to assist with the RFP preparation and review. We are recommending that the Executive Officer be authorized to spend up to \$15,000 for services to assist with the preparation of the RFP. Staff does not have the capacity to prepare the RFP document, but most certainly has the time and expertise to assist a firm with the content of the RFP. Staff hopes to have some costs estimates available at the meeting. We would bring the RFP back to Board for approval before issuing it.

- For staff to contact the firms that responded to the Request for Proposals (RFP) for executive recruitment and ask them to provide a cost estimate for a limited scope of service. The scope would include the initial recruitment of candidates.

Status: In response to the RFP for executive recruitment services, five proposals were received with prices ranging from \$19,000 to \$30,000. The proposals were reviewed by the Management Committee. The Management Committee is recommending that two of the five be considered, Teri Black and Company and Bob Murray. The cost for full recruitment services is as follows: Teri Black & Company – \$20,000 plus expenses, not-to-exceed (NTE) \$10,000; Bob Murray – \$17,500 plus expenses, NTE \$6,500. The scope of services differs slightly between the proposals.

The two companies were asked to provide a cost estimate for a limited scope of service (Phase I). The scope would include the initial recruitment of candidates, which would give the opportunity to see if there is a well-qualified group of candidates prior to making a decision on whether to proceed with shared services or stand-alone fire chief. The cost for limited

scope of services is as follows: Teri Black & Company – \$15,000 plus expenses, NTE \$8,000; Bob Murray & Associates – \$14,500 plus expenses, NTE \$5,000.

If RVFD chooses to move forward with the interviews of the most qualified candidates, the additional costs would be as follows: Teri Black - \$5,000 plus expenses, NTE of \$2,000; Bob Murray - \$3,000 plus expenses, NTE \$1,000.

It should be noted the recruitment would not begin until January 2018. As part of the process, the recruitment firm does meet in person with Board members, staff, and key stakeholders to discuss the ideal candidate. With the upcoming holiday season, it would seem prudent to schedule these meetings in January.

Recommendation: Authorize the Executive Officer to spend up to \$23,000 for a recruitment firm for Phase I services. The Management Committee and Fire Chief would select one of the two firms identified above in December and coordinate with the firm to begin in January 2018.

RECOMMENDATION

As stated above, we are recommending that the Board receive the presentation from Chief Weber. That, prior to making a final decision on whether to proceed with the shared service option or stand-alone fire chief, the Department continues to explore both options; this would include the development of an RFP for the shared service option, while at the same time contracting with a recruiting firm to conduct the initial phases of the Fire Chief recruitment to see if there is a well-qualified group of candidates.

Both the Management Committee and Acting Fire Chief believe it would be premature to eliminate an option at this time. The added cost is minimal when compared to the overall impact such a decision will have on the organization. The cost will have a nominal effect on the departmental budget of \$10M. The preliminary timing for both the RFP and the recruitment process could coincide with a key decision point for the Board in March 2018. Ideally, the Board would be able to consider both the response(s) to the RFP and review the pool of potential candidates for Fire Chief at that time.

Other options for the Board to consider this evening are to only pursue the Shared Services model or only pursue the Fire Chief recruitment.

Attachment: Workshop Comments

Ross Valley Fire

Shared Services/Fire Chief Workshop

November 8, 2017

The following are the comments that were captured from the workshop exercise:

Department needs current and future:

- Performance management system
- Organization rebuilding
 - Fire Prevention – Inspections
 - Loss of Fire Inspector recently
 - Hire/Train 4 new firefighters in next year
 - Updating policies and procedures (Lexipol)
 - Facilities
 - Mentoring
 - Equipment
 - Capital Expenditures
 - Staffing Levels
 - One Voice for department
- Enhance response
- Advanced medical service
- Lifesaving – beyond fighting fires
- “This is an opportunity for the department”
- Cost effective options”
- County – (Sleepy Hollow) contracted with County
- Expanding the concept of prevention
- Prevention/Community involvement (CERT/Get READY Marin)
- Look at prescriptive burning for fire prevention
- For RVFD how organization would approach the division of labor/day to day
- Handling existing projects/needs if shared service model is selected – concern
- Public communication/engagement
- Balance Chief responsibility and high level staff (Deputy and BC) propose how these positions would work together (identify in RFP)
- Need scope clarity

Essential Job Functions/expectations of fire chief position:

- In the public/events, etc.
- Be at council meetings for fire related items
- Greater responsiveness than last 3 years
- Concern about availability of quality stand-alone chief candidates
- Choice
- In RFP: address issue of expectations around responsiveness
- Address concerns in RFP, allow response
- Responsiveness important, accountability
- Include list from PowerPoint/current job description

Stakeholder needs/Expectations

- Management committee meeting in person important
- Responsiveness – contact person is clear/address needs
- Clear chain of communication
- BC and Chief work as a management team
- Sleepy Hollow is not currently represented on the management team
- Strong leader(ship)
- Accessibility is important (Chief)
- Accountability is important (Chief)
- Physical presence of Chief – establish minimum time spent leading how would that look in shared services vs stand-alone chief
- Create vision, hold staff accountable through chain of command
- Do not design to an individual
- Create strategic plan, to include staff, training, equipment, etc.
- What is 5 year vision? Would shared services lead to merger?

Shared services option: Comments

- Reflex time for a shared services chief vs. a stand-alone chief
- Provides more admin depth
- Unique opportunity: status quo vs. new model “thinking out of the box”
- Potential for operational and financial efficiencies
- Two qualified shared services chiefs
- Accessibility of chief: shared services chiefs are here
- Close relationships exist between agencies
- Department cultures will be affected no matter what
- New hires add to/changes culture
- Chief sets tone/direction
- Cultures will merge to an unknown degree
- Cultures change with an organization when there is change
- Will there be fiscal benefits: probably not in this scenario (or either scenario)
- Uncertainty in shared services model
- Need to decide whether stand-alone chief recruitment would be effective before making choice
- Tough sell if it does not save money
- May not move past shared services model
- Limited potential for promotion past the battalion chief level
- Fire chief would have multiple bosses/potential conflict
- Will the fire chief have the capacity based on this model
- Would Ross’ fire station be eliminated? With Kentfield Agreement?
- Sleepy Hollow relationship has evolved, but has worked – rough points along the way– contract needs to be developed to assist and strengthen the JPA
- Depth is a strength (organizationally)
- Both sides need to benefits – addressed in RFP

- Fire Chief has big impact on the culture of organization
- Concerns expressed, it may not work

Stand-alone fire chief:

- Applicant pool may be limited
- Cost of living may be a recruitment hindrance
- Smaller agencies produce well rounded skills
- Existing salary among highest in county
- Greater accessibility
- 100% commitment to RVFD
- New perspective to the organization - Less depth is a challenge
- Unless perfect candidate exists, change is necessary
- Shared services chiefs are young and dedicated
- Fiscal strain to continue with stand-alone
- Less depth on the administrative side

Stakeholder Needs/expectations:

- Increased admin support – concern that models emphasize deputy chief
- If shared services is w/ County, deputy chief exists – calls to add admin deputy chief
- Need “to spell out” how organization will be structured and how it would operate to meet stated expectations
- Concern over finance support for larger dept
- Not “a merger” – contract for services
- Develop a strategic plan for RVFD
- Continue to advance the organization
- Important discussion for county + Kentfield to understand how they could be addressed

General Comments:

- Living in time with fire risk – good time opportunity to explore new ideas
- Opportunity to not be status quo – new direction
- Availability to develop positive relationships with those they lead
- Restore and rebuild relationships with stakeholders
- Uncertainty about shared services and the time it may take to develop and work
- Need buy-in from rank and file
- Do we commit \$ to develop RFP like we would for a recruitment – staff opinion is crucial
- Make choice based on an informed discussions
- Already collaborating and working together
- Established relationships will benefit agreement
- Time (Quality) is more valuable than just time
- Looking at org beyond just the fire chief
- Explore CMPA development for org development
- Operationally Marin County is exceptionally well run cooperative agencies, work seamlessly together
- Concern about turmoil of the direction taken (years, it will take to get to running model)
- Adequate time to evaluate Shared Services
- Moving too quickly?

Long-term vision:

- Costs could be addressed in future mergers
- "The devil is in the details" with any merger
- District concept is worth exploring
- Lot of pluses (+)
- Marin Co – wide fire dept? Can be too big
- If shared service agreement, structure in a way that would not obstruct future options
- Avoid poison pill – could lead to good future
- There were growing pains at each step of the JPA
- Ross needs to have decision making authority over any future mergers
- Shared services agreement could be approved at the board level

Next steps:

- Get feedback/response from shared services chiefs
- Move ahead w/ shared services
- Develop RFP, give it to 2 agencies
- Let chiefs digest this info and respond w/ comments
- RFP should reflect content on worksheets from public workshop
- Creating a comprehensive RFP is important
- Show benefits to RVFD in RFP responses
- What is the opinion of rank and file?
- To explore shared services option see what it could do for dept?
- Is the board interested in shared services because it's the best option for the organization or because they don't feel that a recruitment would not be successful?