

**ROSS VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT**

For the meeting of May 12, 2021

TO: Ross Valley Fire Board
FROM: Jason Weber, Fire Chief
SUBJECT: Receive Town of Ross/Civic Center Facility Update

RECOMMENDATION

That the Fire Board receives an update from Staff on the options regarding the Town of Ross's fire facilities and the process moving forward. Direct Staff as appropriate.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

The public safety facilities in Ross are nearing 100 years old. Over the last several years, the Town of Ross has engaged architectural firms and consultants to assess the facilities and provide options for replacement or rehabilitation, including costs. In August 2020, Town staff presented the results of the facilities studies to the Council and were asked to move forward in assessing options and community support for maintaining all or part of the existing public safety and town facilities complex. In October 2020, a community workshop was hosted to discuss options and alternatives to the current service level and facilities.

Subsequent to the October workshop, a community survey was distributed to residents in an effort to gauge support and willingness to fund the replacement of the Police Station, Fire Station, Ambulance Quarters, and Town Administrative offices. The survey results indicated reaching the required threshold of two-thirds voter support for a large bond measure to fund all the facilities was unlikely to be attainable. Additionally, the survey results indicated support for the rebuilding of law enforcement facilities, ambulance quarters, and administrative offices.

At a January 14 Ross Town Council meeting, the information from the survey was presented to the Council. The Council opted to give the community additional time to see if private fundraising efforts could fill the approximately \$14 million gap in funding for a fire station. At the March Council meeting, Town staff reported that private fundraising efforts fell substantially short of the funds needed to rebuild the fire station.

A decision was made by the Council directing staff to move forward with negotiating impacts related to the decision not to include a fire station in the Ross Town facilities complex. Parties impacted by the decision include the Ross Valley Fire Department (RVFD) Joint Powers Authority (JPA), RVFD Labor, the Ross Valley Paramedic Authority JPA (RVPA), and neighboring jurisdictions, including the Kentfield Fire District (KFD).

Following the Ross Town Council's decision on March 11, 2021, the RVFD Managers (Joe Chinn, Dave Donery and Garrett Toy), a director of the Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District (SHFPD; Tom Finn), and RVFD Fire Executive Staff (Management Team) began to meet and discuss potential impacts and options to ultimately present to the RVFD Board and other stakeholders.

The combined group's first meeting centered around a brainstorming exercise focused on alternative service models for the RVFD JPA services without a Ross fire station. This exercise provided eight options for Fire Staff to review and comment on related to operational impacts, labor impacts, JPA member agency impacts, cooperating agency impacts, and fiscal impacts.

This process enabled Staff to vet multiple options and develop impacts and possible trade-offs that could eventually be shared with the RVFD Board and the Town Councils for policy direction to Staff. The options from the brainstorming exercise included:

1. Eliminate Engine 18 (E18), move three personnel to Station 19, and attrite three personnel, moving from 9 on-duty personnel to 8 on-duty personnel daily.
2. Eliminate E18, move 6 personnel west to other Stations with positions/ranks to be adjusted (e.g., Captains and Engineers transitioned) as appropriate.
3. Same as Option 2 but downgrade 3 positions to an apprentice-type position.

4. Same as Options 2 and 3 but add 3 positions, bringing all engines to 3 personnel each (net gain of 3 personnel increasing daily staffing from 9 to 10 personnel).
5. Eliminate E18, Ross withdraws from the JPA and enters into a negotiated contract for services with RVFD.
6. Eliminate E18 and attrite 6 personnel.
7. Move E18 to Station 19; Station 19 would become a two-engine station.
8. Move E18 to Station 17 (KFD) and E18 serves Ross from that location.

Following a careful review of each of the foregoing options, the Management Team is recommending narrowing the scope of the discussions to the possible elimination of E18 and subsequent transfer of personnel (6) west to other stations. It is understood that each of these two remaining options (Options #2 and #3) would have impacts to all parties involved and will require negotiating those impacts between RVFD JPA member agencies, RVFD Labor, neighboring agencies, and the RVPA.

At this time, Staff is developing information that can be provided to the RVFD Board surrounding the remaining two options for policy consideration. Direction to Staff as to any negotiations that may be needed with internal and external stakeholders will be considered upon presentation of complete information and data.

The Management Team is recommending the process outlined below to allow the RVFD Board to move forward in a deliberate and informed way, providing the RVFD Board, and ultimately the Town Councils and the SHFPD Board, with the information needed to make a final policy decision related to RVFD's services.

The recommended steps include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Consider tonight's presentation regarding the recommended process to move forward and provide any direction to Staff surrounding the process.
2. Hold Labor-Management sub-committee meeting(s) as needed; schedule a meeting within 2-3 weeks of today's Board meeting.
3. Hold Management Team meetings to review information from the Labor-Management sub-committee and develop information to present to the RVFD Board.

4. Convene Closed Session meeting(s) with RVFD Board to inform negotiations with RVFD Labor.
5. Conduct negotiations with RVFD Labor group(s).
6. Concurrent with RVFD Labor negotiations, hold meetings with the KFD and the RVPA.
7. Provide reports to the RVFD Board on negotiations with stakeholders.
8. Conduct workshops with the RVFD Board to receive additional public input.
9. Hold Management Team meetings to facilitate any adjustments requested by the RVFD Board.
10. Convene RVFD Board meetings to discuss and consider key policy decisions surrounding possible RVFD JPA Agreement amendments, possible amendments to agreements with RVFD Labor, a possible FEMA SAFER grant, and possible other cooperative agreements as necessary or advisable.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this update.