

**ROSS VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT**

For the meeting on May 11, 2022

To: Board of Directors

From: Jason Weber, Fire Chief

Subject: Review RFP for a Study to Develop Policy Options for the Board surrounding Future Leadership/Governance, and Authorize the Fire Chief to Release the RFP and Provide Responses to the Board

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board reviews RFP for a study to develop policy options for the Board surrounding future Leadership/Governance and authorize the Fire Chief to release the RFP and provide responses to the Board.

BACKGROUND:

The Ross Valley Fire Department is a consolidated department protecting lives, property, and the environments of Ross, San Anselmo, Sleepy Hollow, and Fairfax. The Department's history can be traced to the early 1900s, starting with the formation of small volunteer fire departments in the newly formed towns of Ross, San Anselmo, and Fairfax. Built near the wildfire-prone slopes of Mount Tamalpais, these communities were and continue to be acutely aware of the risk of fire.

In 1982, the Fairfax Fire Department and the San Anselmo Fire Department joined forces and became the Ross Valley Fire Services. At the time, Sleepy Hollow was receiving fire protection from the Town of San Anselmo through a service contract. Sleepy Hollow chose not to become a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) member while maintaining a non-voting seat on the Board. In 2010, the JPA expanded to make Sleepy Hollow a full JPA member, ending its contract for service with the Town of San Anselmo.

In 2012, Ross Valley Fire Department's Board of Directors voted to consolidate fire services with the Town of Ross, incorporating the Town of Ross Fire Station 18 into the Ross Valley Fire Department. Therefore, the current aggregate population of the Department's service area is estimated to be 24,785, served from 4 fire stations with nine (9) suppression personnel on duty daily.

In 2015 RVFD outsourced financial services to the Town of San Anselmo to provide accounting services such as account receivables (AR), account payables (AP), payroll, and other general finance services. In August 2018, the RVFD entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Marin County Fire Department (MCFD) to provide

administrative and executive services. However, the MOU between RVFD and MCFD terminates on August 1, 2023.

In 2017 the Ross Valley Fire Chief was on extended leave and the RVFD Fire Board hired an interim Chief. Upon the retirement of the Fire Chief and the limited hours the Interim Chief could work (max 960 hrs annually) the Board studied two options for leadership 1. A standalone Fire Chief and 2. A shared services agreement with a neighboring agency. The two processes were moved forward in parallel. Ultimately, after preliminary interviews from the recruiter and those results shared with the Board, a decision was made to pursue a shared services agreement with the Marin County Fire Department for 5 years. This term expires in August of 2023 and the County has elected not to renew the agreement under its current form. The costs associated with exploring the two options in 2018 as well as the cost of an interim fire chief are outlined below:

Program / Project	Cost
2018 Fire Chief Recruitment	\$23,000
2018 City Gate Shared Services Consulting	\$20,000
2017-18 Interim Fire Chief	\$96,000
Total	\$139,000

DISCUSSION:

The Ross Valley Fire Department has used the services provided by MCFD as outlined in the MOU for “Fire Chief” and other command/leadership since August of 2018. However, The MOU won’t be renewed. Instead, the Department is using the opportunity to recommend a path forward for governance and leadership, ensuring the long-term sustainability of Fire and Emergency Services.

The Department is seeking options for the succession of the MOU, which could include multiple scenarios that require research and, ultimately, policy options to be presented to the RVFD Fire Board. Therefore, the RVFD proposes a phased approach to gather information, compile and narrow options, and present to the RVFD Board several policy considerations.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item. Staff will return to your Board with responses to the RFP and ultimately cost for such services being requested.

Attachments: RVFD Governance Leadership RFP – **Attachment #1**

Links to MOU between RVFD and MCFD for shared services, RVFD Standards of Coverage Study and RVFD Joint Powers Authority “JPA” – **Attachment #2**