

**ROSS VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT**

For the meeting of January 11, 2023

To: Board of Directors

From: Jason Weber, Fire Chief

Subject: Workshop from Local Motion Solutions related to Governance and Leadership Study

RECOMMENDATION

Receive draft report and presentation from Local Motion Solutions on options surrounding future Governance and Leadership of the Ross Valley Fire Department. Direct staff regarding next steps in the process.

BACKGROUND:

The Ross Valley Fire Department (RVFD) 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 June 30, 2023.

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.

The RVFD released a request for proposal after your May board meeting, soliciting a contractor to complete a leadership and governance study. RVFD received three proposals from well qualified vendors to complete the study. RVFD Management Team including a member of the Sleepy Hollow Fire District reviewed the three proposals. Your board selected Local Motion Solutions (LMS) to complete the “Governance and Leadership” study. The attached draft report from LMS and accompanying presentation will be the first opportunity for your board to review different options for future department leadership and governance.

Staff is recommending you take this first opportunity to review the information presented in the workshop. The management team is recommending a presentation to each Town Council during the months of January and February and will return to your Board for policy direction.

FISCAL IMPACTS:

The receipt of this staff report and Local Motion Solutions presentation has no direct fiscal impacts. Any fiscal impacts will be brought back to your Board at a future date.