

**ROSS VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT**

For the meeting of June 12, 2024

To: Board of Directors

From: Dan Mahoney, Interim Fire Chief

Subject: Creation of a New 40-Hour-Per-Week Battalion Chief Position and a Command Vehicle Purchase Funded through Undesignated Reserves.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board consider approving the creation of a new 40-hour-per-week Battalion Chief position with a funding start date of July 1, 2024, which includes a Side Letter with the Ross Valley Chief Officers Association, an updated Battalion Chief job description, and approve \$140,000 to be used from undesignated reserves to purchase a new command vehicle.

BACKGROUND

At the January 12, 2024 Special Meeting of the Ross Valley Fire Department (RVFD) Board of Directors (Board), a staff report (Attachment #1) was presented recommending the Board consider the remaining option that Local Motion Solutions identified in their “Leadership and Governance Study”. That option was as follows:

- Pursue the development of a stand-alone fire agency (Fire Chief & Executive Staff)

Staff was directed to bring back details and fiscal impacts on this option for the Board to further discuss at the February 2024 Board meeting.

At their February 14, 2024 Board meeting, a staff report (Attachment #2) was presented recommending an “RVFD Stand Alone Fire Chief Command Structure” be developed with the intention that the staffing structure be **re-evaluated in 12 months** to ensure the proposed positions are sufficient to support the organization. The proposed command structure also takes into consideration and allows for flexibility relating to shared services discussions in the future.

One of the positions within the “RVFD Stand Alone Fire Chief Command Structure” was a 40-hour-per-week Battalion Chief position. The Board directed staff to develop a proposal to establish a new 40-hour-per-week Battalion Chief position and authorized the Executive Officer to begin the meet and confer and negotiations process with the Firefighters Association and Chief Officers Association.

Since then, Executive Officer Dave Donery and Interim Fire Chief Dan Mahoney worked with the Firefighters Association relating to the meet and confer process and the Chief Officers Association relating to the negotiations process. The Board was provided status updates at the March, April, and May Board Meetings.

DISCUSSION

During a closed session at their May 8, 2024 meeting, the Board discussed the proposed creation of a new 40-hour-per-week Battalion Chief position. Staff presented a draft side letter identifying salary/benefits, which was negotiated and developed by Executive Officer Donery/Interim Chief Mahoney in consultation with Battalion Chief Tim Grasser, representing the Chief Officers Association. Updates/edits to the Battalion Chiefs Job Description were also made to reflect the newly proposed position. Both parties have agreed to the following documents:

Side Letter - Both parties worked on a Side Letter (Attachment #3) to ensure the new 40-hour-per-week Battalion Chief position was represented in the Chief Officers Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU), which currently only represents the 56-hour-per-week Battalion Chief.

The overall goal was to ensure the new 40-hour-per-week Battalion Chief position had similar salary and benefits to the current 56-hour-per-week Battalion Chief, as the new 40-hour-per-week position is still within the same rank as the 56-hour-per-week position. A Side Letter was created to complement the current Chief Officers MOU.

The following methodology was taken into consideration while creating the Side Letter:

- Leave accruals (Vacation, Sick) needed to be adjusted to account for a similar amount of time off for the new 40-hour position and monetary value. (**You will notice that a 40-hour position does not accrue as much time off as a 56-hour position, as the 40-hour position works fewer hours a week.*)
- A salary adjustment was necessary to ensure the position was equitable to the current 56-hour-per-week Battalion Chief. A 5% salary increase (day rate) was included, as this is common practice for all agencies in Marin with this position. In addition, holiday pay was also factored into salary.

Job Description—The current Battalion Chief's job description (Attachment #4) was identified as needing updates relating to the 56-hour-per-week and proposed 40-hour-per-week Battalion Chief position. Updates were made in the following sections: duties/responsibilities, important/essential duties, job-related duties, essential qualifications, experience/training, and working conditions.

FISCAL IMPACTS

Battalion Chief Salary/Benefits - Costs for this position will be \$316,794 (fully burden). This new position is expected to impact member agency costs in Fiscal Year 2024-2025 as estimated below. The cost has already been factored into the proposed Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget.

ESTIMATED FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025 COST INCREASE				
FY	Fairfax	Ross	San Anselmo	Sleepy Hollow FPD
Percent Share	23.30%	23.37%	40.53%	12.80%
FY24-25	\$73,813	\$74,035	\$128,397	\$40,550

Battalion Chief Emergency Response Vehicle Cost - The new Battalion Chief position will have the same operational qualifications as the current three Battalion Chiefs (shift), providing much-needed depth to the organization not just administratively, but during emergency incidents and staffing challenges. The estimated cost of a new Battalion Chief’s emergency response vehicle is approximately \$140,000.

Staff recommends that the Board consider funding the vehicle cost of approximately \$140,000 through “Undesignated Reserves”. After the purchase of this vehicle, the reserve account balance will be approximately \$2,621,805.

Note: If the 40-hour-per-week Battalion Chief command vehicle (\$140,000) and the Fire Chief command vehicle (\$125,000) are both approved at the June 12, 2024, Board meeting, the reserve account balance will be \$2,496,805, which is 16.7% of the current budget and still within the Department’s Reserve Fund Policy of 10%.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment #1 – Staff Report January 2024

Attachment #2 – Staff Report February 2024

Attachment #3 – Ross Valley Chief Officers Association Side Letter

Attachment #4 – Battalion Chief Job Description