



To: Board of Directors
From: Steve Leighton, Fire Chief
Date: February 8, 2021
Subject: Fire District Long-term Planning with North Tahoe Fire

Background

At previous meetings, the following items were discussed:

- LAFCO is receiving incentive from El Dorado County for smaller agencies to consolidate with larger agencies;
- El Dorado County LAFCO might be able to take the lead with the county's portion of any type of merger/consolidation/unification;
- Expense increases have been outpaced by revenue increases;
- Both districts are having difficulty filling board vacancies, and board compensation issues may become a large factor in filling those vacancies;
- The two districts are better together;
- All safety staff are trained to the same level;
- Following Office Manager Crawford's retirement in late 2021, there will no longer be any Meeks Bay Fire employees;
- Concern of LAFCO process being led by Placer County;
- How would El Dorado County work with North Tahoe Fire being predominantly in a separate county?
- Counties have no responsibility to support fire districts;
- Consolidation/unification is inevitable and should be board-driven as opposed to staff-driven, although the board would rely heavily on staff input;
- The county is encouraging consolidations, but Meeks Bay Fire is not in similar condition as those agencies on the west slope.

Meeks Bay Fire has been working with LAFCo and South Fork Consulting to complete the Municipal Service Review (MSR) and Sphere of Influence (SOI) studies.

Following board direction, staff invited El Dorado County Supervisor Sue Novasel and Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) Executive Director Jose Henriquez to attend an upcoming meeting. Both of them have made themselves available for this meeting. Executive Director Henriquez also invited Amanda Ross of South Fork Consulting to attend.

Recommendation

After receiving answers and input from El Dorado County, LAFCo and South Fork Consulting, direct staff to develop options for long-term planning with North Tahoe Fire staff and Boards including, as one option, the steps and timeline to merge/consolidate/unify Meeks Bay and North Tahoe fire agencies.