

**Local Emergency Services Study Group  
Minutes  
Thursday February 25, 2021  
9:00 am**

1. Call to Order & Attendance

Chair Tom Cooley called the meeting to order. Each attendee introduced themselves, the following were present:

Beckwourth Fire Dept: Daniel Smith, Bret Russell  
City of Portola: Tom Cooley, Pat Morton, Lauren Knox  
EPRFPD: Jeanne Graham –via zoom  
Gold Mtn. CSD: Cary Curtis, Bill Seney – via zoom  
Sierra Valley Fire Dept: Vicki Anderson  
Plumas County: Dwight Ceresola  
Plumas LAFCo: Jennifer Stephenson – via zoom

2. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Daniel Smith, seconded by Jeanne Graham, to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2020 meeting. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

3. Agency Reports

*Gold Mountain CSD* - Cary Curtis reported that the CSD board continues to have a standing agenda item to allow for a report on the group’s meetings and actions.

*Beckwourth Fire Dept.* – Daniel Smith reported that they also had a standing agenda item to allow for reports and that the Board was supportive of the progress being made by the group to move forward and select a consultant.

*Sierra Valley Fire Dept.* – Vicki Anderson reported that the board has been convinced to hang in there with the group and continue to participate. She also noted that Wayne Despaine would no longer be attending the Study Group meetings.

*EPRFPD* – Jeanne Graham reported that their board also had a standing agenda item to allow for reports from the group and that they were working on the MSR update. She explained that C-Road Fire would continue to follow the lead of EPRFPD and had been asked to work on their MSR update.

*City of Portola* – Pat Morton reported that the City Council also had a standing agenda item to discuss the group’s actions and were fully supportive of the process. Tom Cooley reported that the some City representatives had attended a two day seminar on wildfire protection.

4. Report on actions of agency boards

Leslie Chrysler noted that due to recent changes in various board memberships that each agency should review their appointments to the study group as required by the MOU and make any necessary changes. She also reminded the group that the MOU provided direction on withdrawal from the group by an agency.

Cary Curtis reminded the attendees of the progress made so far:

January 17, 2020 – MOU executed by 6 agencies

October 7, 2020 – Group approved moving forward to create a new fire district and requested each agency to take action to confirm their approval of the direction being taken by the Study Group.

November 10, 2020 – 5 of the 6 agencies approved moving forward with the group. Sierra Valley reported that they would be withdrawing.

November 17, 2020 – A letter was sent to Sierra Valley explaining the Study Group’s action.

Today Sierra Valley has reported a change and has approved remaining with the group. Cary Curtis explained that the group wants to ensure that Sierra Valley gets all the information they need.

Vicki Anderson noted that there was still concern from the Sierra Valley Board on where the group is going, how much funding will be required, the impact on property taxes, how much it will cost ranchers, how it will impact Long Valley’s contact and how it will all work.

Cary Curtis and Daniel Smith discussed the need to wait until the group has more information before engaging in public forums other than the agency board meetings. They also discussed how the withdrawal of Sierra Valley may impact the group and the department, they explained how once a feasibility study is complete, we will know more about the obstacles and opportunities for all involved.

Tom Cooley explained the need to have a consultant complete a feasibility study to ensure that when the request is presented to LAFCo for approval LAFCo is confident that the change will be in the best interest of the community and have adequate funding.

Various funding issues including tax sharing agreements with the county, property tax and sales tax were reviewed.

5. Report on meeting with County Administrator and County Counsel

Tom Cooley reported that a meeting was held with County Administrator Gabriel Hydrick and County Counsel Craig Settlemire. Study group representatives Tom Cooley, Cary Curtis and Daniel Smith attended along with City Manager Lauren Knox and LAFCo representative Jennifer Stevenson. Mr. Cooley reported that they had received a positive response from the County regarding the study group activities and were reminded that the 2019 Grand Jury report included a recommendation for consolidation.

He explained that County representatives felt positive about transferring present tax sharing agreements to a new district and would make that recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. They also discussed equalizing tax sharing rates throughout a new district as long as there was no financial impact to the County. A discussion of a sales tax proposal was also held, and some talk of a master tax agreement for future annexations.

Vicki Anderson questioned how the proposed change would impact Dixie Valley, an area that is not in their district but is in their sphere of influence. Jennifer Stevenson explained that creation of a new district gives the opportunity to draw a boundary where service will be provided, the County could offer a tax sharing agreement for parcels that were included in the new district but not previously in a district. If a parcel tax was proposed it would be for all parcels in the new district.

6. Discussion of options for selection of a consultant or consulting firm

Tom Cooley and Cary Curtis explained that the group need to ensure a firm commitment from each agency to participate throughout the process. Once a consultant is selected the area being studied will need to be consistent throughout the process, if one agency were to drop out, the study would need to be revised costing additional funding.

A draft resolution was presented to the group that would be taken back to each agency's board for approval. The resolution outlines approval for support of the process.

Daniel Smith noted how important this step is to allow everyone to protect their own agency and commit to participation. He explained that there is still no firm figure on how much a consultant will cost and that once there is a determination of cost approval will then go back to each agency.

Jeanne Graham asked who drafted the resolution, it was explained that the City's attorney Steve Gross had reviewed the resolution after it was prepared by Leslie Chrysler with input from Tom Cooley and Cary Curtis. Ms. Graham indicated that she could support it as long there wasn't a commitment to an amount of money.

Dwight Ceresola stated that he thought it would be good if there was a least a proposal for a split of the cost.

Leslie Chrysler noted that she would revise the Resolution to include the Sierra Valley Fire Department and send it out, she also noted that if an agency wanted to reformat it to their standards it would be fine.

Mr. Cooley explained that the Resolution should be presented to each board for consideration and that the group would like to have the approved resolutions back by May 1, 2021.

It was determined that the best way to work on finding a consultant would be to have a committee work to get proposals and bring them back to the group. Daniel Smith and Tom Cooley each offered to be on the committee. Cary Curtis noted that either she or Rich McLaughlin would be able to participate. No other group members requested to be included. Jennifer Stephenson offered her support to the committee.

7. Discuss status of MSR updates

It was reported that the City, Gold Mtn., Beckwourth and Eastern Plumas were all working on the updates. Tom Cooley explained the MSR process to Vicki Anderson.

8. Review of meeting schedule

Although it had been discussed and decided to change the meetings to the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month it was determined that the original 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday schedule could remain since the Board of Supervisors only meets on the first three Tuesdays of each month. The next study group meeting will be held on Tuesday March 23, 2021 at 9am.

9. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:47 am.

Respectfully Submitted

Leslie Chrysler, Secretary