

Local Emergency Services Study Group
Minutes
Tuesday March 23, 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
City of Portola: Tom Cooley, Pat Morton, Lauren Knox
EPRFPD: Jeanne Graham –via zoom
Gold Mtn. CSD: Cary Curtis, Rich McLaughlin
Bill Seney, Bill Robinson– via zoom
Quincy Fire: Robbie Cassou – via zoom
Plumas LAFCo: Jennifer Stephenson – via zoom

2. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Daniel Smith, seconded by Cary Curtis, to approve the minutes of the February 25, 2021 meeting. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

3. Agency Reports

City of Portola – Tom Cooley reported that the resolution would be on the City’s April 14, 2021 meeting agenda for consideration.

Gold Mountain CSD - Cary Curtis reported that there had been some absent board members at their last meeting so they had only reviewed the proposed resolution. She explained that quite a few questions were posed along with requests for more information. Due to the questions they will be holding a workshop to review the Study Group’s progress and actions. The workshop will be scheduled for the first week of April and she invited everyone to attend. Following the workshop the resolution will be considered at their April 19 meeting.

Beckwourth Fire Dept. – Daniel Smith reported that the Board had discussed the proposed resolution at their March 18 meeting and would consider it on their April 15 meeting.

EPRFPD – Jeanne Graham reported that their board would consider the resolution on the April 5 meeting and had sent it to their legal counsel for review. She also noted that they were working on the MSR update.

4. Report on actions of agency boards

Bill Robinson noted that when promoting the consolidation efforts there should be discussion of ISO ratings and their impact on insurance rates.

Daniel Smith reported that Denise Downs had been appointed to the Study Group by their Board.

Tom Cooley noted that he would like to have a representative from Sierra Valley in attendance at the meeting to provide the group with an update on their actions and discussions.

5. Update on status of RFP preparation and selection of consultant or consulting firm

Daniel Smith reported that he and Rich McLaughlin had finished a draft RFP. The RFP outlines the process for responses to questions posed by interested consultants, details the interview process and selection criteria. The RFP requires a sealed bid process. He requested to be provided with logos from EPRFPD, C-Road and Sierra Valley so they could be included on the RFP. He also explained that the draft RFP would be reviewed by LAFCo, an attorney and an editor.

Mr. Smith continued with discussion regarding the need for one agency to take the lead with legal and financial dealing of the group. The study group doesn't have the authority to enter into a contract or the means to pay a consultant. He noted that it may be easier to have an agency that had the capability to pay their own bills take this role, as it is harder for the agencies that have their finances handled by the County to engage in this activity. The City and Gold Mtn. are the two group members who are financially independent. He also reviewed the LAFCo application process noting that the City is in the best position to make the application.

Cary Curtis discussed the need to have a commitment from each agency to participate through the feasibility study prior to releasing the RFP. The RFP will include the participating agencies and direct the consultant to work with them all. She noted that she would have liked to see a representative from Sierra Valley at the meeting to report on their position.

6. Discuss the status of MSR updates by each agency

Rich McLaughlin reported that their update is about half way finished and should be completed in about two weeks.

Daniel Smith explained that they had received annexation updates from LAFCo and should be able to complete the update in two or three weeks.

Tom Cooley explained that the City was only working on the fire portion of the MSR and he was scheduling meetings with City staff to get the final information.

Jeanne Graham reported that theirs needed quite a few changes but that they were making progress on the update.

Daniel Smith reminded the agencies to remember to provide current budgets and audits with the updates.

There was no report from Sierra Valley on their progress.

Jennifer Stephenson offered assistance to anyone that needed help.

7. Presentation of estimated costs of fire districts reorganization process currently under study

Daniel Smith presented a draft of estimated costs associated with the RFP, feasibility study, formation application, election, mapping and other county fees. He explained that costs were only estimates but would be a good tool to take back to agency boards when they were discussing and considering the resolution. Jennifer Stephenson noted that the LAFCo costs listed were appropriate.

Tom Cooley reviewed the discussion with the County regarding tax sharing and their support of the consolidation efforts. He explained it seemed like the County would be in favor as long as it didn't take away any of their revenue sources.

Daniel Smith also pointed out notes on the cost estimate where actions would be required of agency boards.

8. Discussion of options for division of reorganization costs among participating agencies

Tom Cooley presented data on different aspects of each agency that could be used to develop a formula for financial participation. He also presented maps of the agency boundaries and spheres of influence (SOI).

There was discussion regarding the difference between agency boundaries and SOI as it seemed the SOI or service area may be a more realistic area than exact boundaries. Jennifer Stephenson would be double checking to make sure the maps are the most recent.

Jeanne Graham asked if the amount of direct tax provided to C-Road and Gold Mountain contained just revenue for fire/emergency service or if there were additional revenues in the figures. It was determined that the figure for Gold Mountain may need to be adjusted.

Discussion continued regarding the difference between agencies with higher commercial uses, the effect that the railroad and its associated hazards would impact each agency and the differences between service areas.

Daniel Smith suggested that it may be best to only look at splitting up the estimated \$45,500 cost for the consultant at this time. It may be best to just ask each agency how much they would be able to contribute to that cost, instead of choosing a formula at this time.

Bill Seeney explained how the “value proposition” would need to be explained differently for each agency and the need to counter the “if it ain’t broke don’t fix it” stand, what is broken will need to be explained.

9. Is it time to start public education of the “Why” or reorganization?

It was the consensus of the group that it was not quite time to begin a public outreach process. Gold Mountain will be scheduling a workshop, that information will be sent to each agency and everyone interested should attend. It would be good to see members of Sierra Valley attend the workshop.

10. Review of the next meeting schedule

Tom Cooley reported that the next meeting would be scheduled for Tuesday April 27, 2021 9:00 am at the City of Portola South Side Fire Hall, zoom attendance will be provided.

11. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:06 am.

Respectfully Submitted

Leslie Chrysler, Secretary