



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 2019-0359, **Version:** 2

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**To:** Board of Supervisors, County of Sonoma

**Department or Agency Name(s):** County Administrator, Fire and Emergency Services

**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Jim Colangelo / 565-1152 Terri Wright / 565-3775

**Vote Requirement:** Majority

**Supervisorial District(s):** All

**Title:**

Fire Services Project Update

**Recommended Actions:**

- A) Accept an update on the Fire Services Project
- B) Authorize the County Administrator to enter into a 2 year agreement with North Bay Fire to provide Volunteer Fire Company (VFC) support for an annual amount not to exceed \$2,451,500 through June 30, 2021 (pro-rated for 3 months in FY 18-19)
- C) Authorize the County Administrator to enter into the following agreements using Fire Services Project Funds to support Service Level Enhancements through June 30, 2021 (pro-rated for 3 months in FY 18-19).
  - North Bay Fire to provide VFC stipends and to contract with Cal Fire for Petaluma Amador contract for an annual amount not to exceed \$550,000.
  - Cloverdale FPD to provide 2.0 staffing for annual amount not to exceed \$275,000.
  - Bodega Bay FPD to provide an additional 24/7 paramedic coverage for an annual amount not to exceed \$500,000.
  - Geyserville FPD to provide 2.0 staffing for an annual amount not to exceed \$275,000.
  - Gold Ridge FPD to provide 2.0 staffing for an annual amount not to exceed 600,000.
- D) Approve the formation of a Fire Service Policy Council, which is an expansion of the existing SLG advisory group with the addition of one seat for a labor representative and one seat for a representative of the Sonoma County Fire Districts Association.

**Executive Summary:**

On January 29, 2019, the Board approved several actions to improve Fire Services in Sonoma County, including agreeing to coordinate with the Strategic Leadership Group (SLG) on a potential fire tax measure and the feasibility of consolidating the Fire Protection Districts into a single fire protection district. The Board also approved a property tax transfer agreement with the Windsor Fire Protection District (FPD) to support its

consolidation efforts with the Rincon and Bennet Valley FPDs. The Board asked staff to continue collaborating with stakeholders and return with recommendations regarding the transfer of program and administration support of the 11 Volunteer Fire Companies (VFCs) and service level enhancements for the most critical needs of other identified Fire Protection Districts. These actions further add to the strategies approved by the Board on October 23, 2018, August 18, 2018, and June 11, 2018.

Consistent with the Board's directions, staff and the members of the SLG continued to collaborate with key stakeholders, including representatives from the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and the Chiefs from Rancho Adobe, Windsor/Rincon, Healdsburg, Bodega Bay, and Wilmar to craft the alternative recommendations presented. The recommendations were further discussed with Supervisor's Rabbitt and Hopkins, who represent Fire Services Ad-Hoc at three separate meetings that included representation from the SLG and labor.

The report before you represents a consensus plan and includes recommendations that will finalize the third and final phase of dissolving the Fire and Emergency Services (FES) Department, which was directed by your Board on June 11, 2018. The recommendations provide a plan to support the 11 VFCs through two different contracts with Gold Ridge Fire Protection District (GRFPD) and North Bay Fire (formerly the Volunteer Fire Company Association) with \$2.5 million funding from Community Services (CSA) Area 40. The report also includes recommendations to provide \$2.2 million of Fire Services Project Funds to several districts with some of the greatest service level needs to enhance service levels towards achieving "Silver" level plan staffing. All funding agreements are slated to terminate as of June 30, 2021, at which time the outcome of a potential fire tax measure would be known.

**Discussion:**

**Volunteer Fire Company Program Support and Administration from CSA 40 Funds**

The proposal provides a strategy for meeting the immediate administrative, operational, and financial support needs of the County Service Area (CSA) 40 volunteer fire companies and contract areas in a more cost efficient manner. The proposal is a transitional approach that will allow for the dissolution of the Fire and Emergency Services Department while efforts continue to support ongoing fire agency consolidations. It is the express intention of this plan to last no longer than two years and that the time provided allows for consolidation and/or annexation of the current VFCs into existing, neighboring, fire protection entities.

Total annual contract for North Bay Fire will be \$2,451,500.

Services will start in FY 2018-19 at a pro-rated amount once the agreement is executed.

The agreement will go through FY 2020-21 and North Bay Fire will support consolidation efforts involving its VFCs.

CSA 40 assets currently serving the VFCs will be assigned to North Bay Fire. The County will retain ownership

of the assets, but would assign via an agreement similar to other agreements the County executes for Homeland Security Equipment Grants.

North Bay will sub-contract with Gold Ridge FPD for the following services for an approximate price of \$650,000 (paid from the total annual contract amount) per year, final terms to be negotiated by North Bay and Gold Ridge and shall be approved by the County Administrator.

- Shared Fire Chief
- Shared Battalion Chiefs
- Volunteer coordination and logistics
- Part-time admin and finance support

North Bay Fire will be responsible for the following components of the agreement to support the VFCs

- \$1.1 million per year (paid from the total annual contract amount) for equipment, training, vehicle fuel and maintenance, rents, and other priorities included in a standard VFC MOU.
- \$400,000 (paid from the total annual contract amount) per year for Camp Meeker, Fort Ross, Knights Valley, and Mayacamas program support that will shift as annexation or other consolidation efforts occur. Division of the \$400,000 into individual agency amounts subject to further negotiation amongst involved partners.
- \$325,000 (paid from the total annual contract amount) per year to service the Incident Response Program (IRP's) and Fitch Mountain.
- \$18,850 (paid from the total annual contract amount) per year for the Camp Meeker debt service.

### **Service Level Enhancements Activities from Fire Services Project Funds**

On August 14, 2018, the Board received a report on the Sonoma County Comprehensive Fire Services Deployment Plan also known as the "Silver Plan". The plan, developed through the leadership of the Strategic Leadership Group (SLG), created a vision and long-term framework for planning, funding, and implementing fire and emergency medical service within Sonoma County. The plan would increase the total number of paid first responders by 44%, from 400 to approximately 575 and cost approximately \$42 million.

The following proposed agreements are being entered into to meet the spirit of the Silver Plan and the priorities adopted by the Board on January 29, 2019. At that meeting staff was directed to work with Sonoma County Fire agencies and key stakeholders to improve fire services in Sonoma County through the pursuit of a revenue tax measure and the exploration of fire agency consolidations, either as regions or into a single fire agency. Agencies accepting funding under these agreements are expected to use the money to increase staffing and participate in fire agency consolidation discussions.

- North Bay Fire will receive up to \$300,000 per year to pay for stipends at Bodega, Lakeville and Wilmar

stations and \$250,000 per year to sub-contract with Cal Fire for an Amador Agreement for Petaluma. If there are any unspent funds, North Bay will coordinate with County staff to target unspent funds towards equipment or apparatus needs to facilitate potential consolidation efforts.

- Bodega Bay FPD will receive up to \$500,000 per year to provide additional 24/7 paramedic coverage. Bodega Bay will coordinate with County staff to ensure that funding is not disbursed until assurances for the provision of an additional paramedic staffing is confirmed.
- Gold Ridge FPD will receive up to \$600,000 per year to provide 2.0 career staffing, which means two full-time benefitted fire fighters on an engine 24/7. Gold Ridge will coordinate with County staff to ensure that funding is not disbursed until assurance for the provision of 2.0 staffing is confirmed.
- Cloverdale FPD will receive up to \$275,000 per year to provide 2.0 career staffing, which means two full-time benefitted fire fighters on an engine 24/7. Cloverdale will coordinate with County staff to ensure that funding is not disbursed until assurances for the provision of increased staffing are confirmed.
- Geyserville FPD will receive up to \$275,000 per year to provide 2.0 career staffing, which means two full-time benefitted fire fighters on an engine 24/7. Geyserville will coordinate with County staff to ensure that funding is not disbursed until assurances for the provision of increased staffing are confirmed.
- Enhanced service levels will meet minimum requirements as set forth in the funding contracts to be negotiated.

As described above, a condition of the funding to the above entities is that the entities participate in fire agency consolidation discussions over the next 2 years and not undertake any activity that would be contrary to the Board's interest in working towards achieving sustainable regionalization of fire services.

Additionally, the Ad Hoc and Strategic Leadership Group (SLG) mutually support the expansion of the existing SLG advisory group through the addition of one seat for a labor representative and one seat for a representative of the Sonoma County Fire Districts Association resulting in the formation of a Fire Service Policy Council.

Lastly, the County Administrator under the delegated authority granted will coordinate with the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) to determine if any of the agreements would trigger a LAFCO review.

**Prior Board Actions:**

1/29/19: Received an update on a proposed tax measure and consolidation efforts. Approved Property Tax Transfer Agreement with Windsor FPD.

11/23/18: Approved a Concurrent Resolution Supporting the Annexation of Territory to the Windsor Fire Protection District

08/14/2018: Approved the Fire Services Deployment Plan and the Priority Steps

06/11/2018: Received an Update on the Fire Services Project

07/19/2016: Approved allocating a percentage of Transient Occupancy sales tax funds towards fire services.

04/19/2016: Adopt a resolution creating the Fire Services Advisory Council and appointing its initial members.  
 12/09/2015: Receive the interim report on the Fire Services Project and give direction on recommendations of the Advisory Committee

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY 18-19 Adopted</b>	<b>FY19-20 Projected</b>	<b>FY 20-21 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses	1,162,875	4,651,500	4,651,500
Additional Appropriation Requested			
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>1,162,875</b>	<b>4,651,500</b>	<b>4,651,500</b>
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF	0		
State/Federal	0		
CSA 40 FSP Funds	612,875 550,000	2,392,721 1,842,008	2,436,575 1,841,156
Use of Fund Balance CSA 40 FSP Funds		58,779 357,992	14,925 358,844
Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>1,162,875</b>	<b>4,651,500</b>	<b>4,651,500</b>

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

There is sufficient appropriations in FY 2018 within the CSA 40 fund and the Fire Services Project fund to cover the pro-rated costs. Expenses for CSA 40 for 19-20 and 20-21 is \$2,451,500 and \$2,200,000 for the Fire Services Fund for the same time period. The use of Fund Balance in both funds will be required to cover costs in future years.

<b>Staffing Impacts:</b>			
<b>Position Title (Payro</b>	<b>Monthly Salary Range (A - I Step)</b>	<b>Additions (number)</b>	<b>Deletions (number)</b>

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

None

**Attachments:**

None

**Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:**

None