



Legislation Text

File #: 2019-0679, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Supervisors and Board of Directors

Department or Agency Name(s): County Administrator's Office; Fire and Emergency Services

Staff Name and Phone Number: Terri Wright 565-3775; James Williams 565-1154

Vote Requirement: 4/5th

Supervisorial District(s): All

Title:

Fire and Emergency Services Department Closure

Recommended Actions:

- A) Authorize the closure of the Fire and Emergency Services Department effective July 1, 2019.
- B) Authorize the County Administrator's Office, in coordination with and oversight by the Human Resources Department, to administer layoff proceedings and to mitigate layoffs to the extent possible, in accordance with Civil Service Rule 11: Layoffs.
- C) Adopt a Resolution approving the deletion of allocations from the Fire and Emergency Services Department's Department Allocation Table, effective July 1, 2019

Executive Summary:

On June 11, 2018, and August 14, 2018, the Director of the Fire and Emergency Services Department made several recommendations related to the provision of fire protection and emergency services performed by the Department. As a result of these recommendations, the Board of Supervisors directed staff to implement the activities needed to dissolve the Fire and Emergency Services Department. These strategies, which have been completed include the creation of a new Emergency Management Department, the transfer of Fire Prevention and Hazardous Materials activities to Permit Sonoma, and the transfer of Volunteer Fire Company (VFC) administration to North Bay Fire. This item seeks authorization of the final actions required to formally dissolve the Fire and Emergency Services Department.

Discussion:

Background

The Board of Supervisors has received two separate reports on June 11, 2018, and August 14, 2018, that provided updates on the Emergency Operations Center Program Assessment and the Fire Services Project efforts to provide more efficient, effective, and sustainable fires services in Sonoma County. The recommendations previously presented to the Board include creating and a separate Emergency Management Department and working with the Fire Chief's Strategic Leadership Group to implement the Fire Services Deployment Plan. To enable the County to more fully focus on these high priority efforts, staff was tasked with developing a plan to transition the activities performed by the Fire and Emergency Services Department.

The Fire and Emergency Services Department had historically provided services via four program areas:

1. Emergency Management
2. Hazardous Materials Services
3. Fire Prevention Services
4. Fire Operations

The plan to transfer the activities historically performed by the Department were reorganized into three separate phases.

Phase 1 - Transfer Fire Prevention and Hazardous Materials

The Board approved the first phase of this multi-phase effort on December 11, 2018, when it authorized the transfer of the Hazardous Materials and Fire Prevention sections to Permit Sonoma effective January 1, 2019.

The Hazardous Materials program is supported by 1.0 Fire Services Officer, 4.0 Fire Inspector II, and 1.0 Senior Office Assistant. The Hazardous Materials section regulates the storage and handling of hazardous materials in Sonoma County through the inspections of some [approximately](#) 1,400 businesses located in Unincorporated [unincorporated](#) Sonoma County and the cities of Rohnert Park, Cotati, Cloverdale, Sonoma, and the Town of Windsor.

The Fire Prevention program is supported by 1.0 Senior Fire Inspector, 3.0 Fire Inspector II, 1.5 Material Handlers, and 1.0 Senior Office Assistant. The Fire Prevention section enforces the County Vegetation Management Ordinance, and works with Permit Sonoma to enforce the Fire Code for new construction projects through Permit Plan Review and Final Occupancy approval.

Both the Hazardous Materials and Fire Prevention programs are managed by the 1.0 Assistant Fire Chief, who is responsible for supervising the sworn and non-sworn staff and acts as the County's Fire Marshall in the areas supported by Community Service Area (CSA) 40. Beginning March 31, as a result of the transition of Jim Colangelo as the Interim Fire and Emergency Services Director, a portion of the Assistant Fire Chief's time has been allocated to the Fire Operations Section to perform supervision duties for the one remaining fire operations staff member.

Phase 2 - Formal Creation of the Emergency Management Department

Following the October 2017 Wildfire disaster, the Board directed staff to assess and make recommendations regarding the County's Alert & Warning program capabilities, and make recommendations regarding the organization and alignment of the County's emergency management program, and the performance of the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Emergency management is the organizational function charged with creating the framework within which communities reduce vulnerability to hazards and create the capability to respond to, and recover from disasters. To properly address this critical need, the Board of

Supervisors approved the second phase of the multi-phased effort to reorganize the Fire and Emergency Services Department and formally created the Emergency Management Department on March 19, 2019.

Seven new positions in addition to five existing positions were authorized to support the new Department. They include:

- Director of Emergency Management
- Deputy Director of Emergency Management,
- Community Alert and Warning Manager
- Community Preparedness Manager
- Community Alert and Warning Program Coordinator (CST: Deputy Emergency Services Coordinator)
- Administrative Services Officer I
- Secretary

The five existing positions that were transferred to support the Department include:

- Department Program Manager (will function in the capacity of Department Public Information/Communications Officer)
- Deputy Emergency Services Coordinators
- Administrative Aide to manage grants (currently .75 and will add .25)
- Deputy Emergency Services Coordinator that is being converted from the existing Emergency Services Coordinator position.

Phase 3 - Volunteer Fire Company Administration and Operations

The key component of the third and final phase of this effort was the approval of the contract with North Bay Fire on March 19, 2019. The approval of this contract, along with several other financial commitments to enhance fire protection services in Sonoma County, is the lynch pin that enables Sonoma County to implement the recommendations of the Sonoma County's Fire Chief's Strategic Leadership Group to cease its role in providing fire protection services.

The proposal approved by the Board on March 19, 2019, provides a strategy for meeting the immediate administrative, operational, and financial support needs of the County Service Area (CSA) 40 volunteer fire companies (VFCs). Total annual contract for North Bay Fire is \$2,451,500 and the agreement will go through FY 2020-21. North Bay Fire will sub-contract with Gold Ridge Fire Protection District to share a Fire Chief and Battalion Chiefs, and to provide volunteer coordination, logistics and part-time admin and finance support. North Bay Fire will be responsible for provisions necessary to support the VFCs, including equipment, training, vehicle fuel and maintenance, rents, and other activities typically performed by a fire agency.

Authorization to Administer Layoff Proceedings and Delete Allocations

Since the administration and oversight of the VFCs has now been transferred to North Bay Fire, the work of

the one remaining permanent position is no longer needed, the County Administrator is requesting Board approval to begin implementing Civil Service Rule 11 that details the layoff provisions of the Sonoma County Civil Service Commission. This approval will authorize the County Administrator, in coordination with the Human Resources Department, to develop a timeline, engage the employee organization in the meet and confer process, and to create and issue a layoff notice. Timely action will ensure the County Administrator's Office meets the requirement to provide formal notice of 21 calendar days to affected employee.

With this item, we are also requesting authority to delete the one remaining filled position and vacant allocations left in the Department Allocation list, effective July 1, 2019, as follows:

Job Classification	FTTE Total	Vacant
Senior Fire Inspector	1.0	
Assistant Fire Chief	1.0	1.0
Materials Handler	1.0	1.0
Director of Fire and Emergency Services	1.0	1.0
Senior Storekeeper	1.0	1.0
Department Analyst	1.0	1.0

Prior Board Actions:

June 11, 2018 - Emergency Management Program Assessment and Fire Services Project Update

August 14, 2018 - Creation of Fire Services Implementation Ad Hoc and Approval of the Fire Services Deployment Plan.3/28/2017 - Receive an update on the implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and appointed initial representatives to the Groundwater Sustainability Agency Boards.

March 19, 2019- Approve a contract with North Bay Fire to administer the Volunteer Fire Companies. Approved the creation of the Emergency Management Department.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 19-20 Adopted	FY20-21 Projected	FY 21-22 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	0	0	0
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	0	0	0
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance from Tribal Mitigation			

Contingencies		0	0
Total Sources	0	0	0

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

There is no fiscal impact directly associated with this action.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll)	Monthly Salary Range (A - I Step)	Additions (number)	Deletions (number)
See Position Allocation			

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None

Attachments:

Attachment: Position Allocation Resolution

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

N/A