

Local Emergency Services Study Group - Update

This brief is being provided to inform the board, staff, and public of the details of an agenda item that requires no action from the board. The President of the Board will provide board members, staff, and the public the opportunity to ask questions about this topic when this agenda item is announced.

Date: January 21, 2022

Originator: Cary Curtis

Agenda Topic Title: Local Emergency Services Group (LESSG)

Purpose of Brief: Update of LESSG

Supporting Documents Included: No

1. **Agenda Topic Brief or Update:**

The Fire Study Group last met on Sept. 28, Oct. 14, Oct 26, 2021, and Dec. 15.

Updates since the GMCS D brief on Sept. 27, 2021, include:

- a) On Sept. 28, 2021, the Group selected Plan West Partners as the consulting firm to conduct the Feasibility Study.
- b) The cost to complete the first phase of delivering the results of the study is \$30,000. This is in line with initial estimates by the Group.
- c) Based on a positive outcome of the study, additional expenses are expected covering outreach, communications and LAFCo process fees. Additional fees will be assessed by the County. The total collective funds of the Group for this are currently \$57,000.
- d) Due to delays and to ensure the Group does not rush the public outreach component, it is anticipated the ballot measure will be Spring of 2023.
- e) At the Oct. 26 meeting, it was announced that the Chair of LESSG received communication from Eastern Plumas Rural Fire Protection District of their board decision to withdraw from the Group's effort. The reason for withdrawal was overwhelming response from their constituents that continuing in the effort was not in the best interest of the EP Fire District. It is estimated the EP Fire board of directors received 15-20 letters in opposition and 3-5 letters in support in making the decision to withdrawal. The Study Group is now comprised of four fire agencies, the City of Portola, Beckwourth Fire, Sierra Valley Fire and Gold Mountain CSD.
- f) At the Group's Oct. 26, 2021, meeting, Plan West Partner leadership and project managers met virtually with the Study Group in a kickoff meeting.

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- Group participants had the opportunity to ask questions and provide input into the process that were received by Plan West.
- g) Completion of the feasibility study is anticipated to be early spring 2022. This is when the Study Group, participating agency boards and city council will know if the effort to create one new fire services district in Eastern Plumas County serving the geographical boundaries of all four agencies is a positive path forward.
 - h) On Nov. 8, Tom Cooley, chair of LESSG reported that during the Plumas LAFCo meeting that same day, two County Supervisors, Kevin Gross representing District 2 and Sherrie Thrall representing District 3 expressed their support of the effort. In addition Dwight Ceresola representing District 1 is an active supporting Supervisor since the start of the Study Group's effort.
 - i) Representing PlanWest, subject matter expert Fire Chief John McFarland toured the four agencies to obtain a ground level assessment of territories, challenges and opportunities. Chief McFarland spent Dec. 9th in the Nakoma Community where the Study Group leadership and GMCS D committee representatives Curtis and McLaughlin were present and facilitated the tour. Dec. 10th, Chief McFarland toured the City of Portola, Beckwourth Fire and Sierra Valley Fire agencies and on Dec. 11th, Chief McFarland observed Plumas County Fire interagency training at the Reno fire training facility.
 - j) At the Dec. 15, 2021, meeting, PlanWest Consultants discussed changes to the proposed new fire district service areas. An agreement was reached with group representatives, including GMCS D, GM Rich McLaughlin and Executive Director Jennifer Stevenson of Plumas LAFCo. Next steps are to engage Graeagle FD to review the proposed service area as they abut to each other.
2. **Anticipated Impacts to the District - (Consider financial impact, change in procedures, customer, and staff communication):**
The next step is to support development of a communication plan that will begin to inform constituents of the effort underway.
3. **Anticipated Impacts to the Customer – Standby, Residential, Commercial:**
Once a communications plan is developed, customers and owners will be invited to hear more about the efforts of the Fire Study Group. Forums and town hall meetings are being discussed.

4. Next Steps for this Topic:

- a) Study Group to support development of a communications plan
- b) Feasibility Study results early spring 2022