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:** March 1, 2021

**Originator:** Cary Curtis

**Agenda Topic Title:** Eastern Plumas Rural Fire Protection District (EPRFPD) Updates and Recommendations

**Purpose of Brief:** To update the board, staff, and community on EPRFPD.

**Supporting Documents Included:** No

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Updates since the Jan. 19, 2021 GMCSD board meeting most recent first –

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

**March 1, 2021 – EPRFPD Board Meeting**

Chief Frank reported that the department has 13 volunteers now, three of which are new and in the certification process, with one of the three just completing their basic 32 training. The transition of coverage of fire protection and emergency services for the City of Portola from EPRFPD to Beckwourth Volunteer Fire is complete with just a few details to close out. Chief Frank reported the primary firehouse for EPRFPD response is from their Delleker Station with their Iron Horse and Lake Davis facilities being used “as necessary”. Although it was not discussed at their March 1 meeting, EPRFPD was onsite to provide support for the Feb. 22nd slash pile burn operation conducted by GMCSD and Nakoma Community Association.

**Feb. 11, 2021 – Meeting with Jeanne Graham, EPRFPD Board Chair and Board Member Kevin Sankey**

Rich McLaughlin, GMCSD General Manager and Cary Curtis GMCSD Board President met with representatives from EPRFPD to discuss the recent firefighter resignations and potential service impacts the resignations might have to the Nakoma Community. The representatives from EPRFPD assured that service level agreements to the Nakoma Community would not be interrupted and that recruitment of additional volunteers has been successful. Additionally, they stated with no longer servicing the City of Portola, their operational needs including reduction in firefighting officer levels had diminished. It has been reported however, that on at least one occasion, a callout for EPRFPD response to the Lake Davis area resulted in just one available responder from the department. It is also concerning that when EPRFPD requested backup through dispatch that response from a distant agency was requested vs. that from Beckwourth Fire who was onsite at the Portola North Area Station. Subsequently, dispatch overrode the request for outside backup and Beckwourth Fire was dispatched to assist.

**Feb. 1, 2021 – EPRFPD Board Meeting**

During Public Comment, four firefighters resigned, including their Assistant Chief and Battalion Chief for reasons stated as unprofessional behavior and actions filed by firefighters against Chief Frank and a lack of board action to follow up on those complaints. These resignations represented at the time, about 25% of the firefighters in the department. The dissent within the department might be tied to the recent litigation filed by the Assistant Chief against the board of directors for violations of the Brown Act. The litigation case is public and can be viewed here. <https://eprfpd.specialdistrict.org/notices>

Two new board members were sworn in at the Feb. 1, 2021 meeting and now the EPRFPD board has a full board of 5 members.

A revised budget was presented at the Feb. 1, 2021 meeting which can be viewed here [Amended fy20-21 budget working.xlsx (specialdistrict.org)](https://eprfpd.specialdistrict.org/files/c5001aa50/DRAFT+Amended+fy20-21+budget.pdf) Of interest is the reduction of revenue due to termination of the City of Portola contract effective Feb. 1, 2021, a decrease in fuel expense and an increase in Professional Fees from $12,000 to $102,500.

1. **Anticipated Impacts to the District -** (*Consider financial impact, change in procedures, customer, and staff communication*):

The recent firefighter resignations are concerning for GMCSD as these were tenured firefighters who carried out several high-level duties for the department and recruiting new volunteers is challenging. Beckwourth Volunteer Fire has been heavily recruiting and is staffed up to cover both the north and south side fire stations in Portola with between 12-15 new recruits. Additionally, bringing on new firefighters is a lengthy process due to training and certification requirements.

1. **Anticipated Impacts to the Customer –** *Standby, Residential, Commercial***:**

With firefighter resignations, restructuring and firefighter response capabilities, the District must be diligent tracking incidents, response times and contractual support requirements and response from EPRFPD.

1. **Next Steps for this Topic**:

The GMCSD Fire Protection Committee will maintain close contact with EPRFPD as they work through their recent issues.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the GMCSD Fire Protection Committee develop additional metrics to help the District track and monitor service levels from EPRFPD. It is also recommended that these additional metrics be included in an amended contract with EPRFPD. Additional metrics would also prove beneficial to the Board of EPRFPD when evaluating performance against requirements.