

EASTERN PLUMAS RURAL FIRE ANNUAL CONTRACT REVIEW

D-R-A-F-T

This document represents the Annual Contract Review against Performance for 2020/2021

BACKGROUND: In 2019, Gold Mountain CSD entered a 5-year evergreen contract with Eastern Plumas Rural Fire Protection District (EPRFPD) for fire protection and emergency response services. The contract terms outline EPRFPD service obligation agreement and the financial agreement between EPRFPD and GMCSO. The contract states, *“This Agreement shall remain in full force and effect from the Effective Date through June 15, 2024. Either party may withdraw from and terminate this Agreement by providing written notice to the other Party 90 days in advance of the date when the termination shall be effective. Either party reserves the right to re-negotiate this contract at any time within the 5-year contract period.”*

FINANCIAL AGREEMENT: CONTRACT COST

Fiscal Year	Increase 3%	FY Fire Contract Budget
2019/20		\$36,050
2020/21	\$1,110	\$37,132
2021/22	\$1,143	\$38,245
2022/23	\$1,178	\$39,393
2023/24	\$1,213	\$40,575

SERVICE OBLIGATION AGREEMENTS AS STATED IN CONTRACT AGAINST PERFORMANCE PERIOD. *Note: Contractual agreements are listed as 1-7 in this document.*

- 1) *EPRFPD agrees to furnish such fire protection and/or emergency incident personnel, resources, and facilities to Gold Mountain as may be necessary to suppress fire or mitigate any emergency incident.*

To our knowledge, EPRFPD has responded to all calls within the Nakoma Community for this review period as required by contract.

June 2021, GMCSO implemented a new incident callout report with EPRFPD which provides more specific details on response and resolution to dispatched calls to the Nakoma community. Additionally, the CSD recently acquired a current roster and apparatus list from EPRFPD which now allows the CSD to analyze how incident callouts are being managed and determine if they conflict with our contractual agreement with EPRFPD. As this new reporting process matures, it provides an opportunity to advance the detail of the annual review of performance and reporting of enhanced detail to the CSD board.

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On the 29th of October 2021, EPRFPD was dispatched to a Nakoma residence for a smoke alarm sounding, 9800/Command Vehicle, 9856/Rescue Vehicle, and 9851/Rescue Vehicle responded. The cause for the alarm was a bad battery in one of the residential alarm units. Personnel responding to the call were Chief Frank, Captain Frank, and three firefighters.

The concern of how this response was coordinated is an engine was not brought to the scene, however, the response team was fully capable of bringing an engine. It is understandable that alarm calls are often nuisance or false alarms however, had this callout been for an actual structure fire, the outcome without a fire engine on scene would have played out negatively or at minimum, the fire fight would have been delayed until an engine arrived. Depending on trained fire engine drivers and operators, the estimated time for an engine to be on scene from the Delleker station is 15-20 minutes and as high as 30-40 minutes if required for on scene personnel to double back to the EPRFPD Delleker station to bring an engine.

For the review period of Jan-Oct. 2021, EPRFPD responded to six incidents in the Nakoma community. The average dispatch for on scene time for the six incidents is eleven minutes, with a low of arriving in 8 minutes and a high arriving in 15 minutes. The number of incidents for 2020/21 is consistent with the 2019/2020 review.

Contract verbiage includes," EPRFPD *will make every endeavor to respond as expeditiously as possible with the goal being within 10 minutes from time of incident notification.*"

Eastern Plumas Rural Fire Incident Call Out Report – Jan to Dec. 2021

Date	Dispatch Time	En Route	On Scene	Released	Detail
Jan					No incidents
Feb					No incidents
Mar					No incidents
Apr					No incidents
May					One incident
6/30/2021	2207	2211	2222	2347	Male fall victim - Dream Maker
7/8/2021	1937	1938	1948	2021	Medical
8/12/2021	2226	2228	2238	2300	Medical
8/16/2021	1849	1849	1857	1901	False Fire Alarm Response
Sept.					No incidents
10/29/2021	1618	1618	1627	1650	False Fire Alarm Response

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- 1) *EPRFPD agrees to request mutual aid as needed from nearest fire or emergency response agency depending on apparatus, equipment or personnel needed, immediately upon being dispatched to an incident within the Gold Mountain community.*

There is concern that mutual aid cooperation from EPRFPD has declined over the past year. It is believed that personalities and contractual fire protection changes with the City of Portola have eroded the partnership built between EPRFPD and Beckwourth Fire. Although mutual aid issues have not impacted service to the Nakoma community, it is understood that incidents of refusal by EPRFPD to call for mutual aid when needed have created delays and hampered response and service to the communities served. Feedback of these incidents are concerning for GMCSO because Beckwourth Fire provides fire services for the City of Portola and due to operating in the City, Beckwourth Fire is the closest department to the Nakoma community. In the District's 2019/20 review report, it highlighted the great co-operation in place between EPRFPD and Beckwourth Fire. This new lack of partnership between these agencies is concerning and could impact response to the Nakoma community in the event of a major incident.

- 2) *EPRFPD agrees to notify Gold Mountain of any responses to or affecting the Gold Mountain community monthly at the EPRFPD board meeting in the form of an acceptable standard "run report."*

A new process for distribution of incident reporting agreed upon by EPRFPD and implemented June 2021. GMCSO now receives incident reporting monthly via email vs. hardcopy by attending the EPRFPD board meetings. Also, starting June 2021, a more detailed run report form that captures reported response times was agreed upon and implemented thus giving the CSD more detail to measure against performance.

- 3) *EPRFPD will respond to requests for emergency assistance with available equipment and personnel. It is understood by the Parties that the level of EPRFPD response shall be subject to the availability of equipment and personnel as determined by the EPRFPD Chief in his or her sole discretion, or his or her next available in command.*

As noted in contract obligation #1, there is concern of the proper type of equipment not responding to call outs in the community. It is understood that equipment deployment is at the discretion of the Chief however, the CSD should revisit the vagueness of this agreement statement. If shortage of response personnel with proper certification is an issue, Mutual Aid should be requested by EPRFPD.

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- 4) *EPRFPD's response time will be dictated by weather and road conditions. EPRFPD will make every endeavor to respond as expeditiously as possible with the goal being within 10 minutes from time of incident notification.*

With known limited personnel resources, there is concern that response times will increase starting this winter as Chief and Captain Frank have moved their residence from Delleker to Lake Davis. As frequent first responders, it is estimated that Chief and Captain Frank, are the furthest possible from the Nakoma community while still residing in the EPRFPD response area. Navigating the icy road from Lake Davis to Portola will increase response times to Nakoma for the Chief and Captain. Good monitoring of response times and monitoring radio call out details will enable the CSD to measure response against contract.

- 5) *EPRFPD agrees to provide certain non-emergency ancillary services to include familiarization and training, fire preventive inspections of commercial property, and upon request, EPRFPD agrees to interface on Gold Mountain's strategic fire plan and will consult with the Gold Mountain Firewise Committee. A Pre-Incident Plan in accordance with NFPA 1620 will be developed after fire prevention inspection corrections are completed.*
- 6) *EPRFPD will perform semiannually training within the Nakoma Community, to be coordinated with the GMCSD's Fire Services Coordinator. Semiannually, EPRFPD will report or brief the CSD board on the specifics of training that has been conducted.*

There has been one training exercise in the Nakoma community for this review period. This training consisted of drafting water from the golf course ponds where three vehicles and at least six members of EPRFPD participated. The contract calls for EPRFPD to report or brief the CSD board on the specifics of training that has been conducted. EPRFPD did not directly brief the CSD board of the result of this training exercise, however, CSD Fire Services Coordinator Bill Robinson assisted in arranging the training and reported back to the CSD board. The CSD does encourage leadership of EPRFPD to attend and speak at CSD board meetings. The CSD includes EPRFPD on their distribution of all CSD board meeting agendas. To our knowledge, familiarization training did not occur within the district this review period aside from sending a wildland engine when the CSD notified EPRFPD of a joint burn operation being conducted by the HOA and CSD. Actual pre-planned training by EPRFPD did not occur during the burn session.

The reason given by EPRFPD for limited training in 2021 is COVID-19. Chief reported they have conducted familiarization drive-throughs in 2021 although, GMCSD's Fire Services Coordinator has never been informed of when these familiarization drive-throughs occur and EPRFPD presence in the community has not been observed or reported.

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With protective measures in place, it is inexcusable that training is not conducted as outlined in the contract agreement, particularly when training did occur in the district in 2020 during the COVID-19 surge. Aside from the golf course drafting training exercise, EPRFPD made no actual attempt to organize other training sessions in the district and semiannual briefing to the CSD board has not been coordinated or received.

It is also noted is that EPRFPD continues to disregard contract agreement related to complying with a Pre-Incident Plan for training. In other words, EPRFPD does not conform to NFPA 1620 Pre-Incident Planning.

Fire inspections of Nakoma commercial buildings (FLW Lodge, Altitude, and the Inn) were completed July 14th with results presented to the CSD's Fire Services Coordinator on Aug 24th. A follow up inspection scheduled within 90 days to confirm corrections was to have been made. On the 28th of October Chief Frank sent an e-mail to the Nakoma Resort Manager and Fire Services Coordinator, Bill Robinson that due to, *"the abrupt arrival of winter weather and due to the expected winter closure of Nakomas we will reschedule the walk through until spring 2022."*

This rescheduling does not make sense for the reasons given as the weather and closing of the buildings are not an issue. FLW Lodge is open as is the fitness center and the Inn. It would take about two to three hours at the most to complete a compliance inspection. What does make sense is Chief Frank and Capt. Elaine are on seasonal/family leave, 11/03/2021 to 01/15/2022. We only know this from a fire department roster update we received on 11/03/21. No other communication was received at GMCSO that Chief and Captain Frank would be out of the area for an extended period. It is also noted EPRFPD Battalion Chief is out on leave until November 30, 2021.

Chief and Captain Frank are often the first responders to Nakoma community incident call out. Their absence and absence of their next in line authority during the same time is concerning and even more concerning that GMCSO was not notified of these absences and what the district should expect.

On the 8th of November, GMCSO Fire Services Coordinator Bill Robinson toured the three Nakoma commercial buildings to check compliance of the issues raised by EPRFPD during the July 14th inspections. The compliance review required 2.5 hours to locate and check if corrections were made. Overall, most deficiencies were addressed. Anything requiring signage or electrical rewiring has not corrected. Sample photos of electrical wiring issues are included as exhibits A and B.

As a side note, the 2019/2020 CSD annual review report of EPRFPD reflects that commercial property inspections were completed and finalized in 2020.

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Firewise Community Support:

Challenges existed in 2021 for holding a large indoor face to face Firewise Annual Meeting. A hybrid in person/virtual annual Firewise meeting was held on August 7, 2021, where Capt. Elaine Frank from EPRFPD was in attendance via Zoom. In past years, prior to COVID, Firewise was able to host a variety of community events, all which had participation from EPRFPD.

A finding in the 2019/20 review called out that Chief Frank is concerned about the visibility of address signage on granite markers in the community. With the effort of Firewise addressing this issue, momentum has increased with residents requesting the reflective 911 address signs that can be obtained through the HOA.

Communication:

It has been increasing difficult to communicate with EPRFPD. The GMCSO Fire Services Coordinator sets the date with EPRFPD for commercial facility inspections in the spring each year and this year, EPRFPD did not show up on the decided day and gave the excuse that they did not receive a reply of confirmation, this after the date had been confirmed. What was later learned is that reception of cell and data service at Lake Davis is sporadic and information is not always received promptly by the Chief, Captain, or board president Graham. This is an obvious concern for GMCSO when we are unable to reach leaders who provide services for the CSD and Nakoma community.

GMCSO Board President has experienced a breakdown in communication from the EPRFPD board chair where scheduled meetings went unattended by EPRFPD. Response from Jeanne Graham is lack of cell reception, lack of time, and unavailability due to family matters.

More concerning was the absence of contact from EPRFPD during the critical time of the Dixie Fire as it neared the City of Portola. Outreach to Jeanne Graham from GMCSO board president to discuss the EPRFPD evacuation strategy and how the Nakoma community could interface in the planning details was answered with, *"I'm too busy."* Ultimately, GMCSO board president Curtis reached out to Portola's City Manager and subsequently was included on an evacuation strategy planning and emergency mitigation email list that included Beckwourth Fire, City officials and staff, and supporting emergency agencies. It was Beckwourth Fire who offered support and assistance to the CSD if needed and they provided rapid response to questions posed by GMCSO board president.

Recently, Bill Robinson, GMCSO Fire Services Coordinator, was informed Chief Frank came by the CSD office looking for GM Rich McLaughlin. Since Rich was out of the office on travel, Bill Robinson sent Chief Frank an e-mail asking, *"Is there was anything I could help?"* GMCSO leadership has made

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clear to Jeanne Graham and Chief Frank that Bill Robinson is the district's point of contact for fire related items. There is a pattern of EPRFPD dismissing Bill and by-passing him for fire related questions/issues and even responses to his emails. In previous conversations with Jeanne Graham, EPRFPD hesitates to work through Bill. They have not been specific on their reasoning; however, their actions are in direct conflict with the direction from GMCSD board president Curtis and GM McLaughlin.

There is also confusion on the EPRFPD chain of command for communications. It seems Chief Frank has been removed from responding to requests and when responses are received, they come from Captain Elaine Frank. GMCSD board president Curtis has requested their communication protocol from board president Graham, however, has not received that detail.

COMMENTS - PERFORMANCE TO CONTRACT OBLIGATIONS:

Our last review found EPRFPD meeting expectations and contract agreements. There were suggestions made to increase the level of communication and develop an enhanced incident callout report form, which was move forward and accomplished until communication issues raised again. It is apparent that much has changed at EPRFPD where standards agreed upon with the CSD are being by-passed. As an excellent customer of EPRFPD, the CSD's expectations are at minimum that contractual agreements and obligations are met. This review finds deficiencies with EPRFPD performance. It is possible that a few deficiencies can be partially explained by staff shortages and COVID 19 requirements. However, the issues related to lack of communication and follow through by the leadership of EPRFPD is not acceptable and must be addressed.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) Continued analysis of incident response against contracted performance. Good monitoring of response times and radio call out details will enable the CSD to measure this agreement more effectively.
- 2) Begin incorporating equipment and responding personnel detail on the GMCSD Incident Call Out Report to better monitor management of incidents within the community and provide direct feedback to EPRFPD.
- 3) In discussion with EPRFPD, determine the types of incidents where normally fire engines are dispatched and on scene. What can the district and community expect?
- 4) Solve for breakdown in communications between EPRFPD, CSD and CSD Fire Services Coordinator and report back to CSD board with resolution.

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- 5) Review this list of recommendations with Chief Frank and EPRFPD Board Chair, Jeanne Graham and develop next steps for solving for noted deficiencies against contract agreements. Report back to CSD board.
- 6) It is recommended that GMCSD revisit the EPRFPD contract and revise vague and non-measurable statements of service to be as specific and detailed as possible. This will allow for GMCSD to better measure performance against contractual agreements.
- 7) If noted issues are not rectified, GMCSD holds the right to pursue structural fire and emergency service response by contract from other nearby agencies.