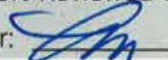


Agenda Report Reviewed by:
City Manager: 

**CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
AGENDA ITEM**

Meeting Date: September 26, 2023
To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: Fire Ad Hoc Committee Meeting
Mayor Hinton
Councilmember McLewis
Interim Fire Chief Piccinini
City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin
Assistant City Manager/City Clerk Gourley
Subject: Report out from Fire Ad Hoc Committee
Recommendation: That the City Council Conduct the Special Meeting; Hear the Report Out;
Conduct a Town Hall/Receive Public Comment; and Discuss Next Steps
Funding: Currently Budgeted: Yes No Not Applicable

Account Code: [Account Number or N/A] N/A
Costs authorized in City Approved Budget: Yes (Finance Initialed _____) No (Finance Exempt)

PLEASE NOTE: It would be appreciated if members of the public would submit their comments and concerns in advance of the meeting to citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.org so that the committee can address them. If comments/questions are submitted in advance, there will still be opportunity for the submitter/member of the public to provide additional comments during the Public Comment portion of the meeting.

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INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE: This item is to submit to the City Council Conduct the Special Meeting; Hear the Report Out; Conduct a Special Meeting/Town Hall; Receive Public Comment; and Discuss Next Steps.

FORMAT OF MEETING:
It is proposed that the format of the meeting will be as follows:

- Introduction of Item (Mayor Hinton)
- Presentation of Slide Show (Ad Hoc Committee)
- Ending Comments (Mayor Hinton)
- Questions from Councilmembers
- Open for Public Comment (Two Minutes Per Speaker)

- Last steps will be Council discussion and direction to the Ad Hoc Committee.

BACKGROUND/EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

For the last several years, fire services has been of concern for the City of Sebastopol and we have been keenly aware of the struggles currently facing the fire department. With the many changes facing today’s fire department, such as retirement of Fire Chief Braga, staffing/loss of volunteers and volunteer recruitment, funding, vehicles, equipment, infrastructure; trend of increased response times, trouble getting the truck out the door or recruitment of volunteers to name a few, it is critical that a comprehensive long-range vision toward the future of fire services is established whether it is status quo or other potential actions.

Sebastopol Fire Department serves a population of approximately 7800 residents from their single fire station located at 7845 Bodega Avenue and provides mutual aid to neighboring fire departments as well as for out of town/state incidents. Per the Matrix report, Sebastopol responded to the following calls:

Sebastopol Calls for Service

Type of Call	2019	2020	2021	Total	Pct.
Auto Accidents	53	26	34	113	3.9%
Medical Calls	608	567	629	1,804	62.6%
Total Medical and Auto Accidents	661	593	663	1,917	66.5%
Fire Alarm – Activation	38	32	52	122	4.2%
Fire Alarm – False	6	0	0	6	0.2%
Fire Alarm – Malfunction	50	22	22	94	3.3%
Mutual Aid	1	6	2	9	0.3%
Other Type Fire	9	12	6	27	0.9%
Smoke Scare	10	8	10	28	1.0%
Structure Fire	12	9	7	28	1.0%
Vegetation/Brush/Debris Fires	14	26	26	66	2.3%
Vehicle Fire	2	2	5	9	0.3%
All Fire Calls	142	117	130	389	13.5%
Rescue Calls – Extrication	1	5	5	11	0.4%
Rescue Calls – Other	12	14	7	33	1.1%
Rescue Calls – Technical				0	0.0%
Rescue Calls – Water	8	0	1	9	0.3%
All Rescue Calls	21	19	13	53	1.8%
Dispatched/Canceled	1	3	1	5	0.2%
Good Intent Calls	17	16	22	55	1.9%
Hazardous Condition	83	60	67	210	7.3%
Hazardous Materials	1	1		2	0.1%
Overpressure Rupture/Explosion/Overheat	2	0	1	3	0.1%
Service Calls	82	91	75	248	8.6%
Severe Weather Alerts	0	2	1	3	0.1%
Other Type of Calls	186	173	167	523	18.1%
Total Calls for Service	1,010	902	973	2,882	

Overall, medical calls represent approximately 62.6% of the call volume with auto accidents accounting for an additional 3.9% of the call volume. Fire alarms, structure fires, vegetation fires, and other fire calls account for approximately 13.5% of the calls for service.

The Sebastopol Fire Department consists of the following approved staffing:

One Full Time Fire Chief This position is currently staffed with an Interim Fire Chief.
Two Full Time Fire Engineers Currently there is one full time engineer and one full time fire engineer recruitment ongoing.

Typical schedule for First Fire Engineer Position: Monday – Thursday 7:00-5:30 for one fire engineer position

Typical schedule for Second Fire Engineer Position: Hours will cover additional days as well as one day of overlap. (This position is currently in the recruitment process).

One ½ time Senior Administrative Assistant

The City of Sebastopol Fire Department also has approximately 30 volunteers as follows:

2 Assistant Fire Chief(s)
4 Captains
24 Volunteer Fire Fighters

The current budget for the Fire Department which reflects the current full time employees as well as volunteers is listed below:

FY 2023-2024: Salary, Benefits, Stipends/calls/shifts/trainings for Volunteers: Total: \$998,976.00
In 2022, the City of Sebastopol paid \$409,475 to Fire Volunteers as listed below:

Fire Captain Weekends	Fire Calls/Drills	Fire Outside Services	Fire Retention	Fire Shifts
\$28,500	\$106,072	*\$97,845	\$78,458	\$98,600

*If fire outside services is removed as it is reimbursed by outside agencies, the total in stipends paid to the Fire Volunteers is \$311,630 for 2022.

As the Council is aware, the City has been reviewing options for the future of Fire Services for the City of Sebastopol. The Council has received multiple reports from previous Ad Hoc Committees as well as contracted a Consultant to conduct a Fire Services Delivery Study which was presented at the January 31, 2023 Special City Council Meeting. A copy of the MATRIX Report is attached for reference with corrections noted as Attachment 2.

At the City Council Meeting of February 7, 2023, the council appointed a Fire Ad Hoc Committee to continue the process of addressing Fire and Emergency Services Options project. Since that meeting, the committee met and developed a work plan specific to the consideration of all options of Fire Delivery Services to guide the committee through the tasks necessary to provide a final report on the fire and emergency response options. The Council approved that work plan at the March 21, 2023 Council meeting.

The mission of this ad hoc committee was to:

- Identify and evaluate optimum fire and emergency service delivery options for the City of Sebastopol

- Provide potential strategies to address the short and long-term fire station remodel options and future plans for 24 hour staffing
- Develop strategies to address the needed fire engine replacement
- Develop a strategy to address immediate staffing challenges
- Compare and contrast financial implication with different options

The committee was tasked with the following:

- Succinctly define exact nature of the problem we are dealing with
- Conduct a thorough analysis of the SFD Short and Long Term Plan for the future of the SFD proposal of two-years ago
- Conduct a thorough analysis of the annexing agency in terms of the agency’s capacity, economy of scale, greater efficiencies and apportionment
- Provide an overview of the LAFCO process
- Provide an overview of the governance models for each option
- Provide a detailed overview of a potential parcel tax/sales tax initiative
- Provide an overview of the county-wide fire sales tax initiative in 2024
- Investigate fire insurance implications associated with options
- Hold a “town hall” meeting
- Provide a conceptual facility repair and improvement plan with estimated costs and timelines
- Provide conceptual temporary housing facility options on the station site
- Develop a volunteer recruitment training and retention plan
- Provide a detailed overview of Gold Ridge’s master plan of annexing other fire service agencies
- Provide staffing options and strategies with different options: independent versus consolidated versus JPA or contract for services
- Outreach to business owners (SDA/Chamber/etc.)
- Conduct an examination of cost of annexing district’s parcel tax on residents and annual increase and impacts on commercial property
- Examination of PERS costs (if status quo; career; consolidation)
- Identify likely items or terms of negotiations that maybe associated with various options
- Investigate potential shared services agreements with other agencies
- Apparatus purchasing strategies
- Provide the updated Matrix report to council
- Keep stakeholders informed and involved throughout the process
- Examination cost recovery for EMS responses

For analysis and information for this report, the Committee, either as a whole, or individually conducted the following meetings and has provided information in attachments related to those meetings.

February 23, 2023	Ad Hoc
March 7, 2023	Ad Hoc
March 13, 2023	Ad Hoc
April 4, 2023	Ad Hoc
April 11, 2203	Ad Hoc
April 27, 2023	Ad Hoc
May 15, 2023	Ad Hoc
May 15, 2023	(Meeting with Graton)
June 14, 2023	Ad Hoc

September 7, 2023	Ad Hoc
September 11, 2023	Ad Hoc
September 18, 2023	Ad Hoc

DISCUSSION:

The Ad Hoc Committee has been meeting with various agencies to obtain information, input, statistics, factual data in response to the requested deliverables. A copy of the work plan with status of tasks/deliverables is included as Attachment __5__ ; comparison table with other agencies is attached as Attachment __3__ ; and proposals submitted in 2022 from former Sebastopol Fire Chief, Gold Ridge and Sonoma County Fire.

The Council is asked to receive the presentation, ask questions, open for public comment and then provide direction to the Ad Hoc Committee for next steps.

NEXT STEPS:

It is not the intention of this report to make an ultimate recommendation. An absolute recommendation is difficult due to the specific interests of the policy makers and stakeholders. The goal of this report is to provide information, understand that additional information is required for the Council to move forward with the best decision for the City of Sebastopol in what is needed to provide the best method of fire services delivery whether it is consolidation, shared services, JPA, Assignment of Administrative Functions, or to retain the Fire Department with the understanding that restructuring is required. Items for consideration that need additional information include detailed financial data and numbers that will help to:

- Incrementally improve the staffing model to provide more reliable 24/7 response coverage ensuring a guaranteed response and improved response times and ultimately advancing 24-hour career staffing to support the volunteers. This can be done with either plan.
- Incrementally improve the staffing model to provide possible 16 hour staffing coverage ensuring a guaranteed response and improved response times
- Continue the progress and commitment to the apparatus replacement plan. This can be done with either plan.
- Evaluate funding requirements following the outcome of the Sonoma County fire sales tax initiative in March 2024, including the potential of a subsequent parcel tax to enhance or reinforce new funding allocations. It is anticipated that a parcel tax may be required for either plan. Please see Attachment __6__ for the Sales Tax Initiative.
- Consideration of Fire Services Delivery includes the option of consolidation but that any plan will require the City to follow appropriate process, and any potential changes are set up for success no matter what the decision.
- Review application for a Municipal Service Review (MSR)/sphere of influence study by LAFCO with a specifically identified agency (and only 1 can be selected)
- Consideration of shared services, JPA; or administrative assignment options to be reviewed further.
- Continue to maintain a robust volunteer recruitment, training, and retention program. Per the MATRIX report, to keep each of the stipend volunteer members at or under the FLSA ceiling, the system will need approximately 47 volunteer members just to serve the 24-hour staffing model to stay a volunteer fire department.
- City Council will need to conduct a closed session for FLSA legal review.

- Develop and execute a fire station remodel/upgrade plan to include gender, ADA and 24-hour staffing requirements. This is required for either plan.

CITY COUNCIL AND/OR GENERAL PLAN GOALS:

GOALS:

Goal 5 – Provide Open and Responsive Municipal Government Leadership

The City of Sebastopol is committed to maintaining a high quality of life for current and future members of our community, through excellent public service and careful stewardship of its financial, human, and natural resources.

Goal 6: Maintain a highly qualified Staff that works to provide services to serve and protect the residents of this community.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

This action is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) and 15378 in that there is no possibility that the implementation of this action may have significant effects on the environment, and no further environmental review is required.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

As of the writing of this staff report, the city has not received any public comment. However, if staff receives public comment from interested parties following the publication and distribution of this staff report, such comments will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials before or at the meeting. In addition, public comments may be offered during the public comment portion of the agenda item.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

This item was noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to schedule meeting date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact with this item tonight other than staff time to review/analyze additional information or response to direction from City Council.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council conduct the Special Meeting; Hear the Report Out; Ask Questions of the Committee; Receive Public Comment; and Discuss Next Steps.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 Presentation Slides
- Attachment 2 Updated Matrix Report with Corrections Noted
- Attachment 3 Comparison Table
- Attachment 4 Proposals from 2022 (Sebastopol Fire Department, Gold Ridge, Sonoma County Fire)
- Attachment 5 Ad Hoc Committee Work Plan
- Attachment 6 Sonoma County Sales Tax Ordinance