

**TOWN OF FAIRFAX
STAFF REPORT**

To: Mayor, Members of the Town Council

From: Roger Meagor, Fire Chief 

Date: March 7, 2012

Subject: Update on status of discussions to expand the Ross Valley Fire Department JPA to include the Town of Ross

RECOMMENDATION

Acknowledge and file staff report on the status of discussions to expand the Ross Valley Fire Department JPA to include the Town of Ross.

BACKGROUND

The Ross Valley Fire Department was formed in July 1982 when the Towns of Fairfax and San Anselmo merged fire departments through a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA). The Ross Valley Fire Department provides fire protection and other emergency services to Fairfax, San Anselmo, and Sleepy Hollow. Until July 2010, services to Sleepy Hollow were provided through a longstanding contract with the Town of San Anselmo, at which time Sleepy Hollow FPD became a full member of the JPA. Additionally Ross Valley Fire Department currently provides Battalion Chief services to the Town of Ross through a contract for service.

January 2011, Ross Fire Chief Tom Vallee and I began discussions on the feasibility of merging Ross Valley Fire with Ross Fire.

April 2011, Michael Rock and I met with Ross Town Manager Gary Broad, Ross Councilman Scot Hunter, and Chief Tom Vallee. During the meeting we exchanged information and discussed the feasibility of merging the two fire departments.

July 2011, Chief Vallee made a presentation to the Community Protection Committee of the Ross Town Council outlining a potential consolidation of the two fire departments. Ross Council members Hunter and Russell recommended bringing the presentation to the full Ross Town Council.

September 2011, Chief Vallee and I made a presentation to the Ross Town Council. The presentation included the history of the two departments, the current staffing, the general operations, as well as the advantages of an expanded JPA that would include Ross. We explained the current governance of the JPA and the basic concepts for a JPA expansion that would include Ross as a member.

November 2011, the Ross Valley Fire Department Ad-Hoc Shared Services Committee and the Community Protection Committee of the Ross Town Council began formal exploration of expanding the Ross Valley Fire JPA. Meetings were held in November and January. These meetings also included representatives from the labor groups.

January 2012, presentations were made to the Fairfax and San Anselmo Town Councils on the basic concepts and advantages of an expanded JPA.

February 2012, the Town of Ross held two public workshops to discuss Ross joining the Ross Valley Fire JPA.

DISCUSSION:

The next joint meeting of Ross Valley Fire Department Ad-Hoc Shared Services Committee and the Community Protection Committee of the Ross Town Council is scheduled for March 14, 2012. In the last couple of months, staff has made considerable progress in bringing the necessary information together in order to move forward. At the meeting on March 14, staff will present detailed information on the anticipated financial savings, cost sharing options, existing liabilities and assets, labor related issues, 2012/13 fiscal year budget estimates, and the various sections of the JPA document that will need to be amended.

Once the joint committee reaches consensus on how best to address the various elements, these items will be brought to the Town Councils and the Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District (SHFPD) Board for consideration and approval. If all parties reach agreement, staff will work with legal counsel to make the necessary amendments to the Joint Powers Agreement. The amended agreement will be brought to the Town Councils and SHFPD Board for approval.