

## Agenda Item No. 15.

**To:** Mayor and Ross Town Council  
**From:** Tom Vallee, Fire Chief  
**Re:** Town Council consideration/action on entering into an agreement with Ross Valley Fire Department (RVFD) for RVFD to provide contract Battalion Chief coverage to the Town of Ross Fire Department.  
**Date:** March 9, 2009

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### I. Background

Currently the Town of Ross does not have a dedicated Battalion Chief for 24 hour coverage of Town emergencies. Chief Meagor (RVFD) and Chief Vallee (RFD) had several meetings regarding the proposed contract which would provide 24/7 operational Duty Chief coverage in the form of one (1) on duty Battalion Chief, qualified acting Battalion Chief, or other Chief Officer for immediate response. The duty chief will have a response area that includes the Ross Valley Fire service area and the Town of Ross. We then met with Councilman Hunter and Town Manager Broad to explain the proposal.

Response will be provided to 1<sup>st</sup> alarm and other incidents in the Town of Ross that would normally include a battalion chief. The duty chief will respond in a dedicated vehicle as part of the Town of Ross emergency response.

During response and upon arrival, the Ross Valley Fire chief officer is to direct and oversee the emergency event in an incident command role and function.

### II. Discussion

Currently in the event of the need for a Battalion Chief at a Town of Ross emergency, the Marin County Master Mutual Aid program will provide a Battalion Chief. This Chief is very capable of running the emergency event, but there are downsides also. This outside duty chief may not know the Ross area, large homes/structures and associated long driveways, hazards, equipment, water supply, or the Ross personnel and level to which they are trained.

The proposed dedicated duty chief would be responsible for knowing the above concerns. Each Ross Valley Fire battalion chief (3) would be required to spend 4 hours per month in gaining this knowledge of the Town. They will spend time with each of the Ross engine companies to learn their abilities and gain knowledge of structures and hazards within Town.

A dedicated battalion/duty chief will also:

- 1). Count towards a Chief Officer for possibly improving Ross ISO rating.
- 2). Facilitate training and standard operating guidelines between Ross Valley Fire and Ross Fire department.
- 3). Ross engine 18 will probably be used on more initial attack to Ross Valley Fire engine 19's zone.

- 4). Provide an insight to a Battalion Chief's position and what it takes to achieve it, possibly helping Ross employees to set their sights on advancement.
- 5). Open the door to pursuing future movement towards further shared operations of the two departments (joint purchasing, training, prevention, etc.)
- 6). Allows for a trial period to see how both the agencies work together.
- 7). Extremely reasonable cost for 24/7 duty chief coverage. A Battalion chief costs over \$200,000 (salary and benefits) x 3 shifts = \$600,000 per year.

### **III. The proposal:**

The contract that Ross Valley Fire is proposing to provide a 24/7 dedicated Battalion Chief to the Town of Ross is as follows:

- 1). \$2,000 per month (\$24,000 per year).
- 2). Term of contract to run 5 years. Renewable.
- 3). Inflation clause to be the increase/decrease in labor cost associated with the RVFD "engineer" position.
- 4). Release clause by either party to be 180 days.
- 5). Contract to be prepared by RVFD counsel for review by the Ross Town Attorney.
- 6). The Ross Valley Fire Board of Directors has this on their agenda for discussion on 3/12/2009.

### **IV. Recommendation**

The Public Safety committee recommends that the Town of Ross enter into a contract with the Ross Valley Fire Department to provide a 24/7 operational Battalion Chief for the Ross Fire Department.