



EL DORADO HILLS FIRE DEPARTMENT

PUBLIC COMMENT #1
T. KEATING 6/13/16

"Serving the Communities of El Dorado Hills, Rescue and Latrobe"

December 23, 2015

District III - Brian Veerkamp – Chair
District I – Ron Mikulaco
District II – Shiva Frentzen
District IV – Michael Ranalli
District V – Sue Novasel

El Dorado County Board of Supervisors
330 Fair Lane
Placerville, California 95667

From: Dave Roberts – Fire Chief
Tom Keating – Deputy Chief - Operations
Serving the Communities of El Dorado Hills, Latrobe, and Rescue.

Re: Request for Temporary Financial Assistance to Rescue Fire Protection District

Dear Supervisors,

As you are aware since the removal of "Aid to Fire Funding" and subsequent inception of the Commission for Collaborative Fire Departments in late 2011 Rescue Fire Protection District, El Dorado Hills Fire Department, the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors Fire Committee members (Veerkamp and Mikulaco), and other County Fire Agencies have been working collaboratively to solve the underfunding issues faced by the smaller Fire Districts in El Dorado County. As you are also aware Rescue Fire Protection District and El Dorado Hills Fire Department have been the only agencies that have achieved every goal as set forth by the Board of Supervisors, including a functional consolidation through a shared services agreement which has proven beneficial to each community through enhanced service delivery and increased operational efficiencies.

Recently we met with the County Supervisors Fire Committee members and CAO to present our next steps toward a full annexation, which included the projected fully burdened cost and equivalent AB-8 rate adjustment required to make the annexation palatable to both agencies. We left that meeting with the understanding that, at least for now under the current requirements and conditions, the money is not available from the County for this annexation. As you might imagine we were disappointed to have come so far over the last four years and have the finish line in sight, but not be able to get there. With that said, we fully understand the financial constraints the County is currently dealing with, so we do appreciate and respect your position.

It is important for each of you to know that just because we have had a setback our organizations do not intend to abandon our collective efforts. The El Dorado Hills Fire Department and Rescue Fire Protection District are still very committed to maintaining the Shared Service Agreement which better serves our citizens. We are also very committed to continue our work with the Supervisors Fire Committee in an effort to reverse the steady decline in the smaller agencies ability to provide Emergency Services throughout the County. With that said we also understand that the finish line is now much further away than we had hoped.

As we continue to work collaboratively toward a permanent funding solution, the reality is that Rescue Fire Protection District continues to spend its limited reserves just to maintain a minimum two-person engine company. Without additional funding, further reductions in staffing will need to occur. It is also important to keep in mind that this current two person staffing level is a reduction from the three person staffed engine that was a Rescue FPD standard prior to the loss of Aid to Fire. Since Rescue Fire Protection District appears to be the only small fire agency that has truly met every goal asked of them by the Board of Supervisors we feel justified in asking for continued temporary financial aid from the County.

With continued patch funding of \$161,000 annually for the next two years, Rescue Fire Protection District could reconstitute their apprentice program and hire three additional personnel. This would not only allow us to protect the current minimal staffing level from degrading further, but staff the on duty engine with three people on a 24/7/365 basis as well. This amount is still significantly less than what was received by Rescue FPD in the way of "Aid to Fire", but it would financially stabilize the district and restore the critical "weight of attack" that was lost over the last few years.


As we continue to work toward a long term funding solution we appreciate the willingness of the Board of Supervisors to address this critical Public Safety Concern and we fully support the understanding that County Government has many facets, but Public Safety must remain among the highest priority.

We look forward to your continued support as we work to ensure that the critical Fire and Emergency Medical Systems are preserved for the safety, health and well-being of all our residents throughout the County.

Respectfully,



Dave Roberts – Fire Chief



Tom Keating – Deputy Chief – Operations

Cc. El Dorado Hills Fire Department Board of Directors
Rescue Fire Protection District Board of Directors
El Dorado Hills Professional Firefighters Association
Rescue Fire Protection District Professional Firefighters Association