

DATE: June 4, 2024
TO: Plumas Local Agency Formation Commission
FROM: Jennifer Stephenson, Executive Officer
Melat Assefa, Policy Analyst
SUBJECT: Initiation of Consolidation of Crescent Mills Fire Protection District and Indian Valley Community Services District.

Background

The Crescent Mills Fire Protection District (CMFPD) was established in 1950 to provide fire protection services to the residents of the District. CMFPD provides structural fire, emergency medical, and emergency rescue services.

Situated in the southwestern part of Indian Valley in Plumas County, CMFPD is entirely surrounded by the Indian Valley Community Services District (IVCSD), which also provides fire protection services. The district spans approximately 3.5 square miles and includes the small communities of Crescent Mills and Indian Falls.

Governance of CMFPD falls under a five-member board of directors elected at large to staggered four-year terms. The District has faced challenges maintaining a full board. The chairmanship of the board rotates with each meeting, which occurs a minimum of once every quarter, typically on a Sunday at 4:00 PM, at the District's Station 1.

CMFPD maintains a formal automatic aid agreement with Indian Valley CSD and informal mutual aid agreements with all fire service providers in Plumas County. It is an active member of the Plumas County Fire Chiefs' Association and Special District Association.

Meanwhile, the Indian Valley Community Services District (IVCSD) delivers a range of services including retail water, fire protection, emergency medical, street lighting, park and recreation, and wastewater collection and treatment. Additionally, the district offers contract general manager services to the Indian Valley Ambulance Service Association through a Joint Powers Agreement.

IVCSD was established in 1993 following the reorganization of Greenville Community Services District, Taylorsville Fire Protection District, and Taylorsville County Service Area into a single district. It continued to provide services that were previously offered by its predecessor agencies.

The Indian Valley CSD is overseen by a five-member Board of Directors. Board meetings are scheduled on the second Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM. For ten months of the year, meetings are held at the Greenville town hall, while for the remaining two months, one meeting takes place in Taylorsville and one in Crescent Mills.¹

Current Sphere of Influence

In 2015, Resolution No. 2015-0007 was adopted, making determinations and approving a consolidated Fire and EMS Services Sphere of Influence Update for the fire protection and emergency medical services (EMS) provided by the Indian Valley Community Services District (IVCSD) and the Crescent Mills Fire Protection District (CMFPD).

According to the 2016 Sphere of Influence Study by Plumas LAFCO, the SOI update for CMFPD and IVCSD indicates an expansion of the SOI for Crescent Mills FPD. This expansion aligns the SOI for

¹ Adopted Sphere of Influence Fire and EMS (Resolution No. 2015-0007), Crescent Mills Fire Protection District and Indian Valley Community Services District. February 8, 2016.

Crescent Mills FPD with that of the Indian Valley CSD, potentially allowing for the future expansion of the combined district.

Recommendation

Many recent concerns have been identified regarding CMFPD's administration, management, and operations. In particular lack of transparency has been a consistent issue, challenges maintaining a full board has been ongoing, and questionable operational practices have been voiced by constituents.

It is therefore recommended that the Commission initiate a consolidation of the Indian Valley Community Services District (IVCSD) and the Crescent Mills Fire Protection District (CMFPD). LAFCO is empowered to initiate consolidation according to Government Code Section 56375(a)(2)(A). Pursuant to Government Code Section 56375(a)(3), the Commission may only initiate a district consolidation if the consolidation is consistent with a recommendation or conclusion of a study, including a special study, Sphere of Influence study, or Municipal Service Review (MSR).

Both CMFPD and IVCSD were last included in the 2013 Central Plumas Fire MSR, which contains outdated information regarding service delivery and transparency. Plumas LAFCO recently attempted to conduct a fire-specific services MSR for CMFPD and IVCSD. However, CMFPD did not respond to any information requests, raising concerns about its transparency and operational capability as a special district. This situation provides another reason for LAFCO to proceed with the consolidation between CMFPD and IVCSD.

Furthermore, as mentioned IVCSD's boundaries overlap the entirety of CMFPD, and they have been providing fire services to CMFPD through an automatic aid agreement. This highlights the consolidation of the two districts as an ideal option for enhancing efficiency and ensuring consistent service delivery.

Although a recent MSR is unavailable to initiate the consolidation, the 2016 SOI study for Crescent Mills FPD and Indian Valley CSD Fire Protection SOI update could be utilized for this purpose under 56375(a)(3). The SOI study indicated the potential for a combined district that facilitates cost reduction and the coordination of all fire protection services in the area under a single agency.

Recommended Motion

It is recommended that Plumas LAFCO hold a public hearing to consider the initiation of consolidation either during a special meeting in July or at the regular meeting in August. This would only initiate the process and consideration of the actual consolidation would occur following the required processing guidelines.

Following approval at a LAFCO hearing, LAFCO is not obligated to submit a consolidation proposal to voters unless written protests are filed. Such protests must meet specific requirements outlined in Section 57113, which include signatures from a percentage of landowners or voters within the affected district. If protests are sufficient, LAFCO must proceed with submitting the consolidation to voters, specifying election details and consolidation terms. If a majority of voters reject the consolidation, LAFCO terminates proceedings. Conversely, if the majority approves, LAFCO confirms the consolidation. If no election is needed, LAFCO's Executive Officer executes a certificate of completion.

Other Options

CMFPD and IVCSD also have the option to initiate consolidation through their legislative bodies by adopting a Resolution of Application to consolidate the districts or annexation/dissolution, as outlined in Section 56853(a).

LAFCO must approve or conditionally approve a consolidation or reorganization proposal from districts unless a protest petition is received, as specified in Section 56853(a). If a conflicting proposal is

submitted within 60 days, LAFCO cannot approve the consolidation until considering the conflicting proposal (Section 56657). An election is required if an affected city or agency has not objected but a valid protest petition is received (Section 56854(a)(1)). If an affected city or district objects, an election is mandated if a written protest meets the threshold set in Section 57114(a).

Upon filing the certificate of completion, the consolidated district assumes all powers, rights, duties, obligations, functions, and properties of the predecessor districts, as outlined in Section 57500. This includes assuming liability for all debts of the predecessor districts (Section 57502). The consolidated district effectively "steps into the shoes" of the predecessor districts as if it had been originally formed under the principal act.

The Districts also have the option to adopt a similar application, such as the dissolution of CMFPD and annexation to IVCSD and submit it to Plumas LAFCO for review and approval. It is important to note that while LAFCO can initiate consolidation processes, it does not have the authority to initiate annexations. Instead, LAFCO reviews and approves annexation and dissolution proposals submitted by cities or special districts, ensuring compliance with state laws and promoting efficient service delivery.

Indian Valley Fire and EMS Sphere of Influence

