Local Agency Formation Commission of Napa County
Subdivision of the State of California

1754 Second Street, Suite C
Napa, California 94559
Phone: (707) 259-8645
www.napa.lafco.ca.gov

We Manage Local Government Boundaries, Evaluate Municipal Services, and Protect Agriculture

Agenda Item 7b (Discussion)

TO: Local Agency Formation Commission

PREPARED BY: Dawn Mittleman Longoria, Analyst II *DML*

MEETING DATE: October 4, 2021

SUBJECT: **CALAFCO U Course: Fire and Emergency Medical Services**

RECOMMENDATION

This item is for discussion purposes only. No formal action is required as part of this item. It is recommended the Commission discuss the report on fire and emergency medical services (EMS) and consider providing direction to staff with respect to any appropriate future actions. Staff recommends the Commission give consideration to scheduling a future countywide fire and EMS municipal service review, which would involve a review of operational area mutual aid plans and response capability within these plans.

DISCUSSION

California Wildfires: the Numbers

- County of Napa (2020): over 200,000 acres burned, loss of over 600 residences[1]
- The 1964 wildfire in Calistoga took four days to reach Santa Rosa. The 2017 wildfire travelled that same distance in four hours.
- Half of largest wildfires in California's history have occurred in the past four years.[2]
- Acreage burned across the state (2020): 4.2 million (map counties: LA, Orange, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz) or larger than Connecticut.
- Lightning strikes (15,000) on August 15, 2020. California made 935 requests for help, but only received 193, due to fires out of state.
- Air pollution from smoke (2020): more than 120 times the total amount of all of cars, buses and trucks in California that year.
- Cost to fight the fires (2020): Cal Fire more than $1 billion
- Dixie Fire (2021): "urban sprawl" over 950,000 acres (map SF, Sacramento, LA)

---

[1] County of Napa Planning, Building and Environmental Services
[2] Sacramento Bee

Margie Mohler, Vice Chair
Councilmember, Town of Yountville

Mariam Aboudamous, Commissioner
Councilmember, City of American Canyon

Beth Painter, Alternate Commissioner
Councilmember, City of Napa

Diane Dillon, Chair
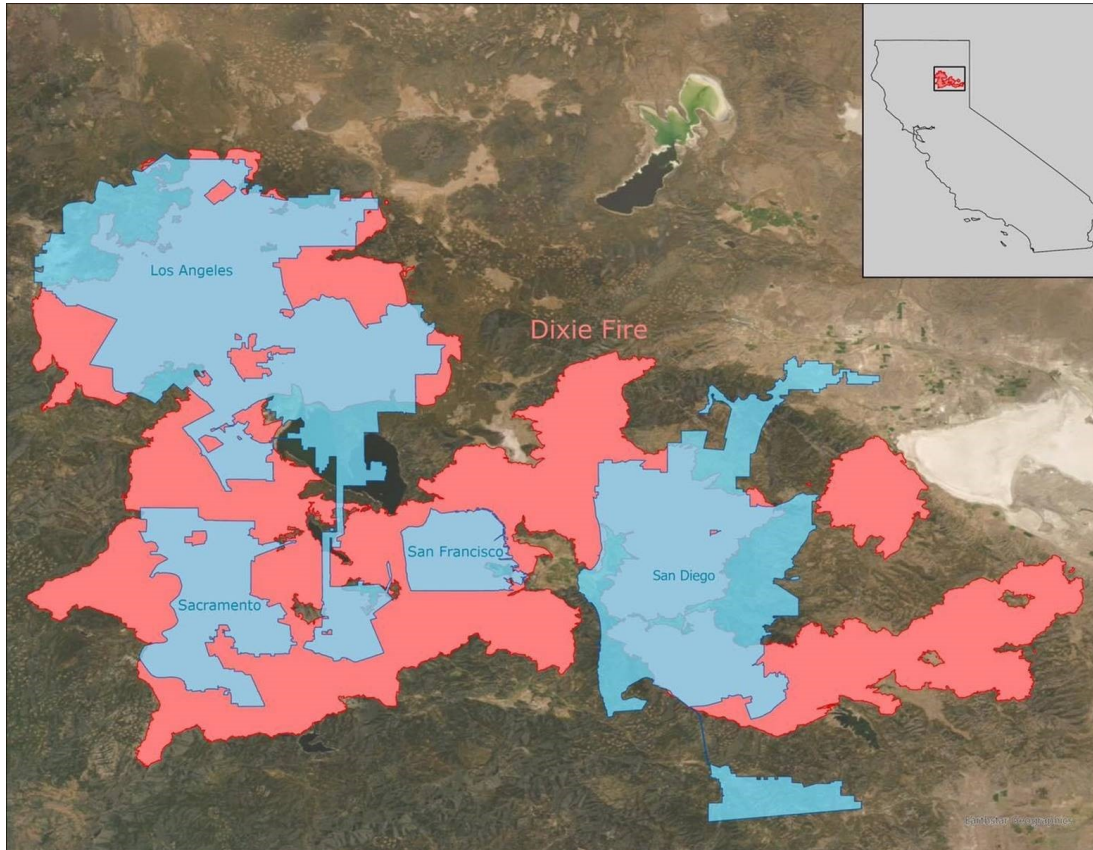County of Napa Supervisor, 3rd District

Brad Wagenknecht, Commissioner
County of Napa Supervisor, 1st District

Ryan Gregory, Alternate Commissioner
County of Napa Supervisor, 2nd District

Kenneth Leary, Commissioner
Representative of the General Public

Eve Kahn, Alternate Commissioner
Representative of the General Public

Brendon Freeman
Executive Officer

CALAFCO U Course: Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

Purpose: Create municipal service reviews (MSRs) with information and determinations that have meaning and create value both short-and-long term.

First CALAFCO U four-part series. Deep dive into Fire and EMS services with each session building on the previous one.

The Course is recorded and available for CALAFCO members on the website along with the course materials.

Panelists included Dawn Mittleman Longoria (Napa LAFCO), Mark Bramfitt (Sonoma LAFCO), Kurt Lapitow (AP Triton), Richard Berkson (Berkson Associates), Martha Poyatos (San Mateo LAFCO), Holly Whatley (San Diego LAFCO), Tom Cooley (Plumas LAFCO), and Mike McMurry (Monterey LAFCO).

A brief summary of each of the four sessions follows. A more detailed overview of the four sessions will be provided by staff during the presentation of this item.

Consultant's Method

1) Wait until the study is complete to draw conclusions

2) Don't just count number of agencies (i.e. 15 agencies/2 = 7.5 agencies)

3) Goal: efficient delivery of government services; current and future

4) Sample Request for Information tailored to paid/combination or volunteer organization (samples provided)

5) Interview stakeholders
   a. Include representatives of all agency groups
   b. Include community representatives
   c. Consistent questions for each group (samples provided)

Session One:

1) Services of an all-risk agency
   a) More than fire suppression and wildfire response
   b) Delineated differences between urban/rural, paid/combination/all volunteer agencies
   c) Provided extensive list of terms and acronyms

2) Standards that apply to all-risk agencies
   a) Summarized applicable standards
   b) Provided links to standards and agencies that established standards

3) The MSR: Getting the information needed:
   a) Emphasis on LAFCO neutral party; no conclusions before end of study
   b) Provided consultants process to obtain information
   c) Included samples, both urban and rural, requests for information and stakeholder interview questions

4) Evaluation of community needs
   a) Risk assessment necessary
   b) Everyone wants urban level of service
   c) What service can the community afford?

Session Two:

1) Evaluation of current staffing, training, facilities, operations and equipment.
   a) Critical staffing by risk type explained and charts provided
   b) Training requirements for various services explained
   c) Criteria for evaluating facilities and equipment with sample charts provided
   d) Response reliability and unit hour utilization explained charts provided

2) Growth and projected need for services
    a) Population is not the only factor for increased service needs.
    b) Call volume and call types are indicators
    c) Type of new development can increase call volume (i.e. senior care facility, hospital, multi-story building, tourist serving, parks and recreation, etc.)

3) Financial ability to provide services
    a) Provided financial indicators of service provision
    b) Financial best practices included
    c) Analysis of revenue trends and possible sources of revenue
    d) Analysis of expense trends
    e) Reserves best practices and Asset Management provided
    f) References provided regarding financial ability to provide services

Session Three:

1) Evaluation of governance
    a) Fire and EMS governance options explained
    b) Board operations (compliance to legal requirements, staff and public interaction)
    c) Board members role and understanding of chain of command

2) Opportunities for shared services
    a) Advance auto-aid reviewed
    b) Functional consolidation: options for shared services
    c) Operational consolidation and Joint Powers Authority explained
    d) Review of legal unification options

3) Service to disadvantaged unincorporated communities

4) Evaluation of SOIs
    a) Current and future funding sources need to be identified
    b) Should result in continued or improved services
    c) Address all required determinations

5) Evaluation of contracts for service
    a) Union must be notified for new service
    b) Application to LAFCO and independent fiscal analysis required

Session Four:

Case studies provided:

1) San Diego LAFCO

2) Plumas LAFCO

3) Monterey LAFCO

SUMMARY

The stakeholders of Napa County are responding in a variety of ways to the threat of fires. Senator Bill Dodd, the Board of Supervisors and FireSafe Council, to name a few, are addressing fire safety and emergency preparedness in the County. These efforts should be included in a LAFCO MSR.

The Commission's last comprehensive countywide MSR of fire service was conducted 14 years ago (2007). A lot has changed since then. Climate change and multiple year droughts have increased fire risks across the country. No single agency can handle massive fires alone. The mutual aid system was developed to address these situations. However, the current reality of numerous large fires occurring simultaneously results in limited responses to requests for aid.

Wildfires do not respect jurisdictional boundaries. The fires of 2017 and 2020 were examples of fires occurring in Napa County that crossed the County line into Sonoma and Solano Counties. Wind conditions could result in the opposite occurrence; fires originating in Sonoma, Solano or Lake County could cross the line into Napa County. California fire service is divided into operational areas. These areas have operational mutual aid plans.

The recent catastrophic fires in Napa County suggest there is value to LAFCO conducting a new countywide fire and EMS MSR. Notably, a regional review of fire services in collaboration with neighboring counties may be warranted. At the least, a review of operational area mutual aid plans would be of substantial benefit. Part of this review should include response capability within these plans.

ATTACHMENTS

None