

Ebbetts Pass Fire District



MINUTES

Board of Directors
December 11, 2018

APPROVED 02/19/2019

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by President J. Scott McKinney and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Directors present: Mike Barr, Denny Clemens, Jon Dashner, Scott McKinney, and Thomas Sullivan.

District personnel present: Fire Chief Mike Johnson, Cheryl Howard
Matt O'Donnell, Aaron Downing, Rodney Hendrix
Jim Eaves, Bryn Buhler, Chuck Hatcher
Nathan Attaway, Sean Bitner, Dana Johnson
Nick Landuyt

Others present: Many Members of the Public

Media present: Charity Maness, Calaveras Enterprise

PRESENTATION HANDOUT: EPFD COMMUNITY MEETING "DECIDING OUR FUTURE"

2. **Presentation and Community Survey:**
Community Meeting "Deciding our Future"

After opening the meeting, Mr. McKinney introduced Fire Chief Mike Johnson who then gave a presentation and asked the attendees to fill in and then turn in the Survey included on the back of the distributed handout.

Ebbetts Pass Fire District
Community Meeting
"Deciding Our Future"





Ebbetts Pass Fire District

Community Meeting "Deciding Our Future"

- Thank you all for being here today!
- Our purpose this evening is to share with you our Advanced Level Life Support program financial status and gather your input on "Service versus Fiscal Value". In addition we have additional services to gather input on as well from the attendees.



Ebbetts Pass Fire District

Community Meeting "Deciding Our Future"

Overview

Our agency has evolved into an Advanced Life Support provider with an Ambulance and Paramedic Engine program brought online with the support of the community.

For a rural response model we are proud that we have paramedic services for our community - it is critical to provide the highest level of first responder medicine at the earliest possible time.

"The Golden Hour" - Get patients to hospitals within an hour for the best possible outcome. Most transports are 35 miles one way to the hospital, every second counts! Having Paramedics with Ambulances in our community reduces response time to emergencies.

Paramedic Fire Engine Staffing provides Advanced Life Support if an ambulance is not available or delayed

All responders are firefighters and ambulance attendants. This helps leverage resources to maximize responder numbers responding to emergencies (Example: Wildfire suppression by our ambulance attendants because they are firefighters)





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Current Staffing / Performance

- 2 Ambulances with Paramedics 24/7/365. One in Hathaway pines and the other in Arnold
- 1 Paramedic Engine 24/7/365. Stationed in Arnold
- 1 Supervisor 24/7/365
- 1 Prevention Officer part-time
- 1 Administrator / Secretary full-time
- 1 Fire Chief
- Intern Program
- Volunteer Staff

Statistics

- 2017 Emergency calls 1074 / 652 Medical
- In 2017 we had 2 Ambulance calls simultaneously 140 times (two medical emergencies at once)
- In 2017 we had 3 Ambulance calls simultaneously 33 times (three medical emergencies at once)
- Response time 13 minutes at least 90% of the time
- 167 emergencies Big Trees State Park and East
- Our agency covers 225 Square Miles



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Current Staffing / Performance

- Insurance Survey Office Class 2. This public protection class 2 rates our agency in the top 4,700 of 48,000 fire agencies.
- Ebbetts Pass Fire District Ambulances are the East Zone emergency transport providers since 2005- **“No out of pocket expense for residents”** transported by agency ambulance.

Statistics

- Insurance Survey Office Class 2 rating is based on our ability to respond all the current resources each day. With a drop in staffing our ISO Class will lessen and will result in higher homeowners' insurance.
- In 2016/17 this program saved a total of \$1,151,324.14 “Out of Pocket Expense” for Ground Emergency Ambulance Transports



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Paramedic Engine Program

- Approved by the community in 1998
- To provide a Paramedic on the Fire Engine
- Approved cost is \$39 Improved \$11 Unimproved properties annually
- Flat Fee - no increase
- Designed to fund the program for 10 years and we are at year 20



Ambulance Program

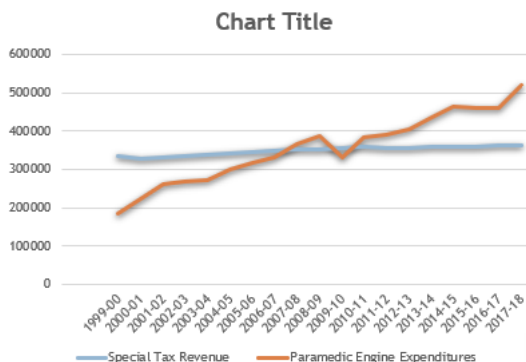
- Approved by the community in 2004
- To provide Ambulance Service to Community (2 Ambulances - no out of pocket ground transport)
- Approved cost is \$89 Improved \$27 Unimproved properties annually
- Flat Fee - no increase
- Designed to fund the program for 10 years and we are at year 15



Ebbetts Pass Fire District

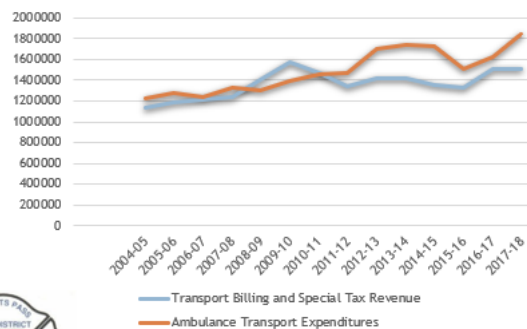
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Paramedic Engine Program



Ambulance Program

EPFD Ambulance Program



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- Currently the two programs combined are operating at -\$398,913 for this fiscal year.
- We have managed to extend going to the community for more funding by leveraging District Reserve funding and freezing capital outlay (not purchasing items such as Fire Trucks and Pickup trucks for example) to offset the deficit.
- At the end of this fiscal year we will no longer be able to use District Reserve funding, and our lack of capital purchases has left our fleet aged, worn out, and in need of replacement (total of 21 vehicles).
- Without additional funding going into next fiscal year, we will be forced to not always fill daily personnel openings and effectively go from 2 ambulances each day to 1 ambulance frequently. This will effect our ISO Rating and likely raise homeowner's insurance.



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Contributing factors for financial shortage

- 1998 and 2004 tax measure funding has not kept pace with higher costs for operations and maintenance. It was designed as a flat fee.
- Cost of nearly everything has increased since 1998 and 2004.
- Without additional funding going into next fiscal year, we will be forced to not always fill daily personnel openings and effectively go from 2 ambulances each day to 1 ambulance frequently.



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Contributing factors for financial shortage

2004 cost

- California Minimum Wage - \$5.50 Hour
- Fuel (Diesel) price per gallon - \$1.67
- Paramedic Heart Monitors - \$2,750
- Ambulance replacement - \$99,092
- Healthcare - \$180,255 (Annual)

2018 cost

- California Minimum Wage - \$10.50 Hour
- Fuel (Diesel) price per gallon - \$3.70
- Paramedic Heart Monitors - \$22,500
- Ambulance replacement - \$203,000
- Healthcare - \$516,554 (Annual)



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Have we done our part to avoid going back to the community for additional funding?

- Our agency has worked hard to manage the provided funding and extended the timeline it was anticipated to last.
- Reduction in overhead cost such as Station 1 loan percentage decrease in 2016 saves both payment and interest over the term of loan.
- Labor and Management working close together to reduce expenditures through cost containment measures including “Trading Shifts versus filling with Overtime” when possible.
- Healthcare costs reduced by joining JPA with Special Districts Risk Management Authority.
- Assistant Fire Chief Position vacant since 2011
- Capital outlay put on hold for Fire Engines, pickups, ambulances (we recently had to lease one), and firefighter self contained breathing apparatus
- We have actively submitted for alternative funding through grants and begun receiving funding from “1993 Proposition 172” and “Transient Occupancy Tax” for the first time starting in 2017.



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Some commonly asked questions about our Fire District

- Are Ambulance Transports free for the residents of the district? There is no out-of-pocket expense for EPFD Ambulance Transports for residents we accept insurance payment as payment in full.
- If funds are voted in by the community to fund a tax measure for our fire district are those funds or a portion of those funds subject to a “General Fund”? No: Our fire agency is not a county or city and therefore is not a “General Fund” agency. Your funding goes directly to providing services from our fire district, these are your dollars working for you directly.
- Is Ebbetts Pass Fire District a value? Yes: If you combine an ambulance ticket fee for “No out-of-Pocket Expense” and common fire tax measures in other areas of the county or state we are even less expensive (even with an increase) in some cases and providing additional benefit to the community having firefighters on our ambulances bettering our ISO Rating- more firefighters to keep fires small!



Ebbetts Pass Fire District

Community Meeting “Deciding Our Future”

Process for a solution

- Our agency has prepared options to address the mentioned Advanced Life Support Programs deficit and maintain current ambulance/fire level of service
- An extended focus group including community members worked in groups to provide input
- Some options include new additional services as well
- We have prepared some question and answer booths to help answer your questions



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Process for a solution

- We need your help Deciding Our Future!

Are you ready?

- In your hand-out packet the last 2 pages is a survey we would like your input on.
- Ask our education booths about the options listed in the survey.
- Get your questions answered by our staff.
- Check the box you best support or write in your suggestion, remember it is important to get your input.
- Leave the survey with John Vattuone at the back before you leave.



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Process for a solution

- Here is what you will see on the option form.



Option: Advanced Life Support Program Sustainability

What does this option offer?

- This keeps our current service level with 2 ambulances 24/7 365, Paramedic staffed Fire Engine, and some budget to staff a 3rd ambulance on peak times (likely 10 days a year)

Cost

- \$82 dollars per household annual increase (\$6.83 per month)
- Grand total **\$210 Annually**
- Unimproved lots \$25 dollars per lot annually (\$2.03 per month)
- Flat annual increase of \$4.80 per year is the estimated inflation trend for improved lots and \$1.43 per year for unimproved.



Advanced Life Support Program Sustainability and build toward 1 additional firefighter

What does this option offer?

- In time it allows to add a single firefighter, then 2, eventually 3 (One per shift) as funding allows
- All of the previous items listed under “Advanced Life Support Program Sustainability”

Cost

- \$96 dollars per household annual increase (\$8.00 per month)
- Grand total **\$224 Annually**
- Unimproved lots \$29 dollars per lot annually (\$2.42 per month)
- Annual increase \$5.38 per year is a flat increase for improved lots and \$1.63 per year for unimproved. .



Advanced Life Support Program Sustainability and 1 additional firefighter

What does this Option offer?

- Increases our Fire Engine Staffing from 2 each day to 3 each day
- Also maintains service level with 2 ambulances 24/7 365, Paramedic staffed Fire Engine, and some budget to staff a 3rd ambulance on peak times (likely 10 days a year)

Cost

- \$134 dollars per household annual increase (\$11.17 per month)
- Grand total **\$262 Annually**
- Unimproved lots \$43.10 dollars per lot annually (\$3.59 per month)
- Flat annual increase of \$6.28 per year is the estimated inflation trend for improved lots and \$2.42 per year for unimproved.



Advanced Life Support Program Sustainability and Opening Station 2 in Dorrington

What does this option offer?

- Opens Station 2 in Dorrington with 2-person staffing 24/7/ 365 (mirror the Hathaway Pines model). Paramedic always available
- This also maintains our current service level with 2 ambulances 24/7 365, Paramedic staffed Fire Engine, and some budget to staff a 3rd ambulance on peak times (likely 10 days a year)

Cost

- \$203 dollars per household annual increase (\$19.92 per month)
- Grand total **\$331 Annually**
- Unimproved lots \$61.85 dollars per lot annually (\$5.15 per month)
- Flat annual increase of \$7.94 per year is the estimated inflation trend for improved lots and \$3.48 per year for unimproved.



Option: Do not increase funding - Accept lower service

What does this option offer?

- No annual increase - keep current fee structure

Impact

- Reduction in services
- Loss of 100% staffing each day. Shut down an ambulance as needed initially and eventually more reduction in time as operational cost rise.
- Longer response times
- Loss of ISO Class 2 Public Protection Classification: Higher homeowners' insurance, less firefighters on duty to stop fire spread, less paramedics on duty to respond to medical emergencies.



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Comments Section

Please write....

- Add any notes you want us to look at.
- Propose new options
- All input is valued and reviewed.

Lets get started! Please ask an Ebbetts Pass Fire District representative for assistance

Thank You!



3. **OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO REVIEW EPFD INFORMATION**

As Chief Johnson completed his Powerpoint-assisted presentation, he encouraged the members of the public to review the handout and to ask questions at the various information booths placed around the room.

4. **RECESS FOR COMMUNITY MEMBER REVIEW OF EPFD INFORMATION**

Mr. Barr made a motion to recess the Board meeting to allow the members of the public to review the information stations and to mark their choices on the survey forms.

Mr. Sullivan seconded; motion passed unanimously 5-0 (AYES: Barr, Clemens, Dashner, McKinney, Sullivan). The Board members remained available individually for comments and questions from members of the public but did not discuss anything among themselves.

5. **RECONVENE OF BOARD FOR ADDITIONAL INPUT**

Mr. McKinney reconvened the meeting after all those present seemed to have had ample opportunity to review the information presented in the various displays.

6. **PUBLIC APPEARANCES/COMMENT**

There were only a couple of people that specifically addressed the Board at this time. One lady asked about how the annual increase actually helped the District so Chief Johnson explained that the proposed annual increase would help the District from having to go back to the voters as soon as the special tax was not enough to support the program.

Mr. Dale Pilgeram for further clarification on the annual increase and percentage possibilities that he had been trying to calculate. Chief Johnson was able to explain some of the thought processes that had been undergone when the focus groups had met and the possibilities that had been discussed but it was determined that he and Dale Pilgeram needed to meet further to fully understand what was being asked. Dale Pilgeram agreed to meet with the Chief personally to get the answers he was seeking.

When there seemed to be no more questions, Mr. McKinney encouraged everyone present to be sure to turn in their survey responses as they left Independence Hall.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Dashner made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Barr seconded; motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Howard
District Secretary