

**Ad Hoc Fire Integration Study Committee  
A Joint Committee of the  
Ukiah Valley Fire District  
And the  
City of Ukiah**

**MINUTES  
Regular Meeting  
October 1, 2007  
6:30 p.m.**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

John Strangio  
Dan Grebil  
Rob Gattenberger  
Joyce Boghosian  
Larry Goodman  
Nancy Parker  
Tony Clarabut  
Douglas Crane  
Duane Mahan  
John McCowen

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT**

Mike Mayfield

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Kelly Denham - UVFD Admin. Secty  
Jimmy Rickel - Citizen  
Cindy Stanford - Recording Secty

The meeting was called to order by Ukiah Fire Chief Tony Clarabut at 6:40 p.m. at the Ukiah Valley Conference center, Riesling Room.

1. ROLL CALL  
The Committee Members present are listed above.
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
3. INTRODUCTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND GUESTS  
Each member introduced themselves and indicated what group they were representing.
4. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS  
Tony Clarabut explained that this is a Brown Act governed meeting and all appropriate rules would apply.

Jimmy Rickel: Wants to encourage the combination of these two units again and wants to eliminate any sort of barriers that might exist.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

There was correspondence from Employers Council of Mendocino County. (see attached)

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Committee Organization  
Leadership

A general discussion ensued as to whether or not Dan Grebil and Tony Clarabut would be best in this position since they are both chiefs of the involved agencies. Rob, Nancy, Douglas and Joyce voiced their agreement. Dan suggested that Tony should be Chair since it is a task that has been specifically assigned to him. Dan would like to be the technical expert representing UVFD. Douglas suggested a co-chair with either the two fire chiefs or the two elected officials, Rob and Douglas, sharing the position. More discussion ensued.

**ACTION: Group Consensus – Chair: Tony Clarabut  
Vice-Chair: Dan Grebil**

Tony Clarabut and Dan Grebil accept positions.

Committee Decision Making process

**ACTION: Group Consensus - The group will proceed by consensus and if a bottleneck is reached, then any member may call for a vote.**

What represents a quorum – “simple majority” by consensus of the group.

Tony discussed the “Keys to Success”, i.e.,

1. Everyone is heard both internally and externally
2. All reasonable options are considered, analyzed, and every option given an honest chance.
3. Information and progress is regularly shared. Committee Members should share information with the groups they represent. Media coverage would be useful.

It is hoped that this Committee can have a recommendation to hand off to the City Council and fire district board members within two months.

For us to be successful we need to be guided by common sense and ambition to provide a more efficient and better level of service to the community.

A general discussion ensued i.e., What has changed to make us think that the efforts of this committee will result in changes for the better when a committee

tried this very same thing previously and it failed.? Tony suggested that previously a specific desired outcome was identified up front, and that the effort of the committee was to achieve that specific outcome. He believes that the current effort should have a goal to provide more efficient services to the public and the committee should work to identify steps to achieve that goal. That way we can move forward incrementally and improve efficiency in steps. More discussion ensued regarding previous failure to achieve a plan. Dan suggested that maybe people are more receptive this time. There has been a 10 year fire protection strategic plan for the City done by a third party who recommended that we need to reconsider this option, and we now have a Council and District Board in support of that. Larry thought the previous committee was doomed from the beginning, nobody was willing to give an inch, but now we seem more open and receptive. Additional suggestions were that meetings were all over the place, outsiders were offering opinions that were not constructive. Tony noted that this effort will not necessarily result consolidation as there are other opportunities, short of consolidation that will provide some level of improved efficiency and stated that it is incumbent upon all of us to set aside our own self interest and look at the bigger picture and the greater good. Hopefully with this smaller group we can get there.

b. Discussion and Approval of Committee Goals

After discussion the Committee settled on the following draft goal: The goal of the Fire Services Integration Committee is to identify and analyze more efficient options for providing fire and emergency medical services to the citizens and visitors to the Greater Ukiah Area.

Committee members were asked to think about this draft and be prepared to comment on and approve the final draft at the next meeting.

c. Review Department Profiles

Tony handed out the Profile sheet and briefly went over each division. Minimal discussion ensued.

e. Initial Discussion of integration of Fire Protection and EMS Services

Committee Goal - Discussion ensued with general group consensus that they were here with open minds, interest in mutual aid from a safety standpoint, savings on equipment, desire that UVFD and UFD work more closely, suggestion that UVFD and UFD volunteers get together a list of talking points, analyze boundaries and growth projections, disaster recovery etc.

Tony suggested that we now have a draft goal and that maybe the next step would be to identify specific objectives that work to achieve the goal. After discussion, they were identified as follows:

**Objectives:**

- Reduction in duplication of effort

- Consider future growth in the context of being able to maintain the existing level of service
- Improve response times
- Assuring appropriate staffing levels at incidents
- Assuring that the ability of the fire departments to provide services is not impaired through formal reorganization including boundary changes
- Develop performance standards for levels of service – urbanized and city – response criteria would help erase artificial boundaries
- That recommendations be cost neutral to the extent possible.

There is a large disparity in funding between the two departments. General discussion ensued regarding using what we have to get the most bang for our buck, not shifting funds, but services.

Dan stated that the number 1 item for the District is if the City is going to annex, that when they do, consider not detaching from the Fire District, and taking the District's tax base. If the City is interested in long term cooperation with the District they need to allow the District to retain fire protection responsibility and the District needs to have the ability to collect property taxes, assessments and ultimately mitigation fees in order to be able to continue to provide protection to the remainder of the district that is not annexed.

General discussion ensued regarding boundary and tax issues. Additionally, the general public needs some awareness of boundaries. UFD Deputy Fire Marshal can provide GIS maps showing boundaries. John suggested that the real issue is to be able to provide service at the current level or better and not be impeded – are there other ways of accomplishing that besides saying no to detachment and hopes we can stay open minded about how we can address the concerns.

**Objective No.1: Reduction in duplication of efforts:**

The following were suggested and discussed:

- Bringing the Volunteer Firefighter organizations closer together through training, joint responses and coordinated policies - Joyce and Mike will review and discuss combining volunteers. Issues such as - Is it a good idea? Does it work toward our goal of being more efficient? Fears of loss of control? Loss of ownership? Great thing to share experiences? General discussion re: gains to be made by sharing volunteer force, i.e., more volunteers available at any time, none of UFD volunteers remember the split nor why there were any bad feelings. Joyce said that most of the UFD volunteers would enjoy training on Thursdays with UVFD volunteers and there would be a lot more people to train with and new level of initiative for people to become new volunteers. Larry thinks this would liven up our volunteer participation which has dwindled. Tony said that Ukiah City policy allows volunteers to go to the scene, but many of UFD volunteers are so new that they need more training. Dan handed out the Volunteer Policy for UVFD.

**HOMEWORK: Tony asked Joyce and Mike to get together and discuss options. Joyce agreed.**

- Career Fire Fighter Training - Discussion regarding joint career training and is there room for standardized evolutions in career training, i.e., Doing operational evolution to the same standard so that when the agencies work together on incidents, they know what to expect from each other. Working closer together would be helpful to have a familiarity with different set ups. Dan brought up the issue of joint dispatch center and the need for standardized training if we are going to be doing the boundary drop.

**HOMEWORK: John and Larry will take this standard evolution concept back to Career Firefighters for input.**

- Fire Prevention – Dan suggested taking a look at merging plan checks and development inspections. City has 2 full-time staff and District has no designated staff, so has to provide the services within the daily routine. That is one of the main reasons why UVFD plans to adopt the same Fire Codes. Discussion ensued regarding costs recovered by people paying for plan check fees, having someone from District work with Fire Marshal and Deputy Fire Marshal, reduction in duplication of work and more consistency with building contractors, pre-plan checks, same format with both District & City, and do cross over pre-plan checks.

- Fleet Maintenance: Are there opportunities for reduction of duplicated effort here?

**HOMEWORK: Tony and Dan will take on Fire Prevention and Fleet Maintenance issues**

**Objective #2: Consider growth in the context of providing services:**

General discussion ensued regarding growth, revenues, overall picture rather than District or City view only, fire mitigation, needed fire protection infrastructure for the growth

Tony suggested we could bring in some information regarding zoning and the City's sphere of influence. Dan noted that UVFD is getting a consultant to review impact fees on future growth.

Tony stated that the City does not have a defined level of service, and in order to plan appropriately for fire protection infrastructure it is important to define exactly what the level of service is in terms of desired response times. Stations should be placed based on response time or at the most appropriate spot based on response time studies regardless of who is providing the services. Doug noted that the goal to do more things together and the concept of regional planning for infrastructure made sense. Jimmy Rickel commented that information can be shared and become a mitigation issue in dealing with parity.

**Objective #3 Definition of the desired level of service.**

General discussion regarding level of service from what standpoint, doing research and take recommendation to Council for approval as representatives of the

citizens. Dan noted that we need good stats in order to measure if we are providing an appropriate level of service, response time goals on EMS and Fire calls. Dan does not have the available staff to compile these stats.

Discussion regarding response time, distances, having practice runs and timing them, comparing distances achieved in same amount of time and not to forget to include contingency for east side of town as well.

Nancy Parker questioned CERT participation and joint training sessions. Dan stated that he did not duplicate CERT or the Explorer program, but now would consider expanding the CERT team and Explorer program into the District, maybe alternating meetings

General Thoughts for next meeting:

- How will we phase change recommendations?
- Think of other ways to reduce duplication.
- Determination of regularly scheduled meeting dates. Keep meetings on Tuesday nights, but reconfirm next date at the end of each meeting. If you are unable to attend a meeting please send an alternate.

Potential Agenda for next meeting:

- Merging volunteer programs
- Merging fleet
- Merging fire prevention inspection programs, duplication of programs that go on with both departments.
- Items we could achieve in a short period of time that can occur with little to no resistance.
- Eliminate redundant/duplicate efforts.

Tony will e-mail Minutes from 10/1/07 meeting and Agenda for the next meeting ASAP.

Adjournment at 8:40 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING: - October 9, 2007 at 6:30 p.m.**