

## CITY COUNCIL AGENDA STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** November 12, 2022  
**TO:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
**FROM:** Jon Kennedy, Interim City Manager  
**MEETING:** November 15, 2022  
**SUBJECT:** LESSG Request For Funding

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### **Background**

Please see attachment for background information

### **Recommendation:**

Your Ad Hoc Fire Committee requests approval of an expenditure of \$20,000 by the City as its contribution to funding the remaining expenses of the LESSG. Any unexpended funds will be returned to the participating agencies in proportion to their respective investment.

### *Attachments:*

*Ad hoc fire report  
Scope and Budget*

November 10, 2022

Report of the Ad Hoc Fire Committee, as City representatives to the Local Emergency Service Study Group (LESSG).

Subject: Request for funding to complete the work of the LESSG

The City has previously authorized the expenditure of \$20,000 as its contribution among the four participating agencies to fund a contract with Planwest Partners LLC to produce a feasibility study on the formation of a new fire district, a plan of work, and an application to LAFCo. The contract amount is \$57,000, which is the total paid by the participating agencies. The work is now either complete or authorized and in progress. Performance under contract is on time and within budget.

Only two substantial expenses remain in the process of taking the proposed district to a ballot for approval by the electorate. First, informing the public about the proposed new district, eliciting comments, and answering questions. The proposal includes mailings, public meetings, and a web and social media presence. The cost is approximately \$30,000 and will add to the contract with Planwest Partners LLC. Second, while Plumas LAFCo has substantially reduced its fees for our new district formation project, \$8,550 must accompany the application to LAFCo. Included in the report are details of each of these expenditures.

Your Ad Hoc Fire Committee requests approval of an expenditure of \$20,000 by the City as its contribution to funding the remaining expenses of the LESSG. Any unexpended funds will be returned to the participating agencies in proportion to their respective investment.

Submitted by Committee Members Pat Morton and Tom Cooley

Detail of the public information outreach program is available in the attached proposal by Rollins PR Consulting, which will work as a subcontractor to Planwest Partners LLC.

Detail of the Plumas LAFCo fees

Description and order due	Fee paid to	Cost
1. Formation application	LAFCo	\$10,450
2. CEQA Notice of Exemption	LAFCo	\$400
3. GIS Deposit	LAFCo	\$200
4. Dissolution x 2 @ \$2,000 ea. (SVFD, BFD)	LAFCo	\$4,000
5. Relinquishment x 3@\$2,750 ea. (GMCSO, City of Portola)	LAFCo	\$5,500
LAFCo approved fee reduction		-\$12,000
<b>Total LAFCo application and approval costs</b>		<b>\$8,550</b>



## **Public Outreach Scope**

– Submitted by RollinsPR Consulting

### **Situation Analysis**

Four Fire Protection Districts (FPD)\*, Beckwourth FPD, Eastern Plumas Rural FPD, Graegle FPD, Sierra Valley FPD and two Community Services Districts (CSD), C-Road CSD and Gold Mountain CSD, have been providing fire protection and emergency services to Eastern Plumas County for decades. Services are mostly volunteer-based. Three general revenue sources contribute to operations and maintenance: property taxes, special taxes and fundraising efforts. Property taxes and special taxes have not changed since established roughly 45 years ago. The revenue stream is severely outdated, which has placed districts in financial distress and unable to adequately maintain resources.

In 2020, The Local Emergency Services Study Group (LESSG) was formed with the goal of exploring a more effective, efficient way to strengthen and improve fire protection and emergency services in Eastern Plumas County. Representatives from Sierra Valley FPD, Beckwourth FPD, Eastern Plumas Rural FPD, City of Portola and Gold Mountain CSD serve as committee members. After months of discussions, the LESSG, with approval from representative boards of directors, decided it most beneficial to pursue a feasibility study for a new, consolidated fire district.

Currently, the feasibility plan has been completed and LAFCo has issued a Municipal Service Review (MSR) regarding the effort to form one new FPD with boundaries that encompass Eastern Plumas County. A measure needs to be placed on the ballot to: approve formation of a new FPD + approve a special tax to fund the new FPD + elect board members for the FPD. All registered voters within the newly established boundaries will be eligible to vote. The ballot measure must pass by 2/3 votes to be able to pursue establishment of a new FPD.

LESSG and its represented boards and constituents need to engage, educate and secure support for a new FPD. Community outreach will be essential to inform the community-at-large about the significance, value and efficiencies of having one FPD for Eastern Plumas County. Key education messages will be to explain that, while operating as one district, there will be Division Chiefs for Gold Mountain, Beckwourth, Portola and Sierra Valley that will operate out of existing service stations. Furthermore, a voter-approved special tax will replace previous special fire taxes collected per parcel.

*\*The City of Portola maintained fire and emergency services through 2017. The city now contracts those services through an agreement with Beckwourth FPD.*

### **Outreach Goal**

Implement outreach measures that result in an informed decision by voters whether or not to support the formation of a new FPD.

### **Outreach Objectives**

- Inform and educate stakeholders and the community-at-large about the numerous challenges of having multiple FPDs (multiple boards, volunteers, lack of financial resources, confusing boundaries, etc.)
- Provide a clear explanation about how one FPD for Eastern Plumas County will consolidate efforts and maximize resources, ultimately securing more exemplary emergency and fire protection services for the county

- Explain funding mechanisms and cost-sharing, and equity among all parcels in Eastern Plumas County who will benefit from the new FPD
- Engage influencers and stakeholders who may serve as champions of the effort
- Inform the community about options to attend their representative board meetings, community meetings and other opportunities to learn and ask questions

### Challenges\*

- Decades-old promise that assessment/tax would never increase for fire and emergency services
- Those that currently pay nothing, yet receive fire and emergency services, may not want to contribute
- Perception that one FPD replaces “local” FPD (familiarity, response time, etc.).
- Assessments are not affordable for all
- Lack of knowledge about current fire and emergency services agencies

*\*This is not a complete list of outreach challenges. More will emerge as outreach begins.*

## Task 1 – Community Engagement

### 1.1 – Project Identity

Develop a tagline to give unity to the outreach effort. The tagline will be used on all materials and will encompass the purpose of forming one FPD.

**Deliverables:** Tagline

### 1.2 – Develop Key Messages

All communication efforts must have one unified voice to eliminate confusion and the perception of doublespeak. There are several boards in this process representing their constituents. Key messages agreed upon and shared among boards will help to unify the effort and hopefully eliminate confusion about where each FPD/CSD stands in their support.

**Deliverables:** Key messages

### 1.3 – Interested Parties Communications and Engagement

Engaging with stakeholders and other interested parties will be a key part of success. The outreach effort will showcase support from: local county officials and representatives; LAFCo; FPD volunteers/staff; Boards of Directors from existing FPDs/CSDs; and other entities. Identified individuals will be asked to serve as project champions.

Contributions may include testimonials, public service announcements, letters to the editor, editorials, endorsements as an outside agency, participation at workshops and other opportunities as identified.

**Deliverables:** Interested party matrix with names, knowledge areas, recommended contribution(s)

### 1.4 – Outreach Materials

Outreach materials will be developed to help inform voters/community about the effort and opportunities for engagement. Materials will provide the background and what led to the feasibility study, challenges of existing fire and EMS agencies, benefits of a new single district, funding mechanisms, and educate specifically about the ballot process.

### **Deliverables**

- LESSG newsletters (4)
- Fact Sheet
- Two additional communication pieces – format TBD

### **1.5 – Community Workshops**

Community workshops\* will be one specific tool to engage the community-at-large. Workshops will be offered to each representative member within LESSG to individually address their communities.

Workshops will be structured in a way to address their specific sphere of influence, discuss financial impacts, benefits and drawbacks, and offer an opportunity for the community to ask questions from their current representative agencies.

*\*In essence of time, workshops may be held in conjunction with regularly scheduled board meetings.*

#### **Deliverables (5 workshops):**

- Workshop Notification (Newsletter, postcard, inserts, posters or combination)
- Internal and public agendas
- Applicable handouts
- Workshop summaries
- Presentation/facilitation assistance, if needed

### **1.6 – Website**

LESSG has a website that will be made public and serve as a clearinghouse for the public to obtain information. All meeting agendas, minutes, reports, announcements, and documents will be placed on the website. Any recorded meetings and workshop summaries will be posted. Quick polls may also be incorporated during the outreach process to gauge public knowledge and openness toward a new consolidated fire district. A website announcement will be placed on the Plumas News website and advertised on social media platforms.

#### **Deliverables:**

- Content review and development as needed
- Polls (3)
- Website announcement

### **1.7 – Social Media**

Social media will be used as appropriate to share information about upcoming workshops and other engagement opportunities. Platforms will include Facebook (all agencies with pages), City of Portola's twitter, and Nextdoor. LESSG may want to consider establishing their own Twitter, Facebook and Nextdoor presence to post timely updates.

Social media platforms may be overall positive, but may also invite negative statements and sharing of false information. A quick Facebook search yielded Holding Portola CA Accountable (mostly negative) and Portola Portal (neutral). Platforms will be monitored and falsities addressed. However, sometimes it is not prudent to engage if it is clear that nothing good will result.

**Deliverables:**

- Posts will be created to advertise public involvement opportunities (hearings, Board meetings, community workshops).
- Content monitoring
- Establish LESSG social media presence, if desired

**1.8 Media Relations**

An active media campaign will provide another opportunity to be transparent with the community. Plumas News will be regularly used for announcements, engagement opportunities, and project updates. Letters to the editor and editorial pieces may also be drafted and submitted by project champions. Public notices may also be published as needed.

Public service announcements (PSAs) will be submitted to Plumas County Radio (KQNY)

**Deliverables:**

- News releases (3)
- Calendar announcements (5)
- Letters to the editor/editorials (2)
- Public notices as needed TBD
- PSAs (5)

**Task 2 – Outreach Management**

RollinsPR Consulting will manage project team communications, task items, schedule and budget over a 8-month period. A final outreach summary will be provided to demonstrate due diligence with outreach efforts.

Finally, the provided scope is fluid and may be modified to address new situations that may arise over the project period.

**Deliverables:**

- Monthly reports and invoicing
- Scope adjustments
- Project Summary

## Qualifications

### Summary

Twenty-seven-year veteran of public relations and outreach with 23 years specifically working with municipalities in outreach campaigns that effectively communicate and engage the public. Experienced in gauging public sentiment through interviews, polling, surveying and general research. Broad experience in managing public outreach programs for informational and educational purposes or for more formal outreach efforts such as those required under CEQA or for rate increase hearings and fee adoptions. Skilled at consensus building and working with governing boards and councils.

### Professional Experience

*Independent Strategic Consultant, 2011-current*

- Work in tandem with clients to develop and implement public outreach plans and elements to obtain identified outreach goals and objectives.
- Conduct strategic planning sessions to identify mission, vision and short- long-term strategic plans for special districts and small communities.
- Conduct public outreach and notification as required by the California Constitution, ballot initiatives, public noticing for CEQA, and fee-setting projects.
- Provide research strategy and execution.
- Facilitate stakeholder meetings, workshops and public hearings.
- Write copy for program materials: newsletters, brochures, flyers, bill inserts, advertisements; coordinate design and printing of materials; write and post social media content.
- Develop website content.

*Crocker & Crocker, Client Services Manager (part-time contract) 2004-2017; Account Supervisor - 1997-2000*

*Rogers & Associates, Onsite Media Specialist, CA Dept. of Health Services – 2000-2002*

*Dairy Council of California, Communications Manager – 2002-2004*

*Latimer Burch Public Relations, Account Executive - 1996-97*

*Prima Publishing – Publicity Coordinator - 1994-95*

### Education

California State University, Chico-Bachelor of Arts, English 1994

California State University, Chico-Technical Writing Certificate Program 1994

Regular participation in industry related webinars, seminars and conventions

### Sample Clients

San Andreas Sanitary District Utility Rates, Construction, Community Outreach Consultant

Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA Regulatory Fee and Community Outreach Consultant

Carson City Transportation Funding Plan and Community Outreach

Gold Mountain CSD Utility Rates and Community Outreach

Linden County Water District Utility Rates and Community Outreach

Donner Summit PUD Utility Rates and Community Outreach

Salinas Valley Basin GSA Regulatory Fee and Community Outreach

## Project Budget

The proposed budget is based on an 8-month period October 2022 through May 2023. Should the voting by ballot not take place in Spring 2023, LESSG may request RollinsPR Consulting to extend services. Additional budget, if needed, and outreach efforts will be evaluated prior to May 2023.

## Terms

- 1) This is a not-to-exceed budget. Any additional, unanticipated costs will only be billed with prior client approval.
- 2) RollinsPR Consulting reserves the right to move budget between tasks as needed so long as the total budget is not exceeded.
- 3) Only hours incurred will be billed.
- 4) Budget is for an 8-month time table. Should the project extend into November 2023, LESSG and RollinsPR Consulting will review budget remaining and tasks to be completed.
- 5) Materials Direct costs are based on (4) 3,500 printed newsletters, mailing and first-class postage.
- 6) Workshop materials are based on (2) 3,500 printed over-sized postcards to announce meeting dates, mailing and first-class postage; (25) community posters; handouts (agendas, fact sheets, other materials)
- 6) Direct Costs are best estimates. Additional costs will be approved by the client. There is no mark-up on direct costs.



# LESSG Budget – New Fire District

LESSG New Fire District							
Public Outreach							
	2022/23 Rates:	\$125	\$70	\$40	\$80		
Tasks	Total Hours	Principal	Assistant	Travel	Graphic Design	Total Fees	
1.1 Project Identity	4	2			2	\$ 410	
1.2 Key Messages	4	4				\$ 500	
1.3 Interested Parties Engagement	7	7				\$ 875	
1.4 Outreach Materials Content (4 newsletters, fact sheet)	24	14			10	\$ 2,550	
1.5 Community Workshops (5) - Planning, materials, attendance	42	12	5	25		\$ 2,850	
1.6 Website	10	10				\$ 1,250	
1.7 Social Media	16	16				\$ 2,000	
1.8 Media Relations	14	14				\$ 1,750	
2.0 Outreach Management (8-month project)	8	8				\$ 1,000	
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<b>FEES SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>\$13,185</b>	
Spanish-language Translation						\$1,000.00	
Outreach materials (4 pieces)						\$11,000.00	
Workshop materials (Postcard Announcements, Community Posters)						\$5,000.00	
<b>DIRECT COST SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>-</b>					<b>\$ 17,000</b>	
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>\$ 30,185</b>	