

CAMBRIA COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

TO: Board of Directors

AGENDA NO. **6.B.**

FROM: Jerry Gruber, General Manager

Meeting Date: January 18, 2018

Subject:

DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION REGARDING FIRE DEPARTMENT STAFFING LEVELS AND POSSIBLE BALLOT MEASURE FOR SPECIAL TAX ELECTION TO FUND THREE (3) FULL TIME FIREFIGHTERS

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends that the Board of Directors continue to consider the issue of Fire Department staffing levels and provide direction regarding a possible ballot measure to create a Special Tax to fund three (3) full time Firefighters.

FISCAL IMPACT:

If the Board decides to proceed with a ballot measure to fund the continued employment of the SAFER Grant firefighters, the measure would need to raise approximately \$300,000 annually, which would mean an annual per parcel tax of approximately \$50 assessed on each of the estimated 6,000 parcels in Cambria.

DISCUSSION:

In December 2017, Chief Hollingsworth made a presentation regarding Fire Department staffing levels. The Board of Directors provided direction to hold another discussion about the issue on the January Board meeting agenda, and to consider whether or not to proceed with a ballot measure to provide funding to maintain current Fire Department staffing levels.

As noted in the December staff report, on September 10, 2015 the Board of Directors adopted Resolution 32-2015, accepting the 2015 SAFER Grant Award (the "Grant"). Under the Grant, the CCSD received funding for three firefighters for a two-year period, which allowed for the addition of one Firefighter on daily staffing and provided for a four-person engine company consisting of a Captain, Engineer, SAFER-funded Firefighter and a reserve Firefighter.

As was noted at the time the Grant was accepted, unless additional funding is available, at the end of the period of time covered by the Grant, the SAFER-funded firefighter positions would end and the staffing would have to go back to a three person staffed engine. In June 2017, as part of the approval of the current fiscal year budget, the Board approved the transfer of \$84,000 from General Fund reserves to pay for Firefighter salaries. At that time, it was noted that the budget anticipated that the three SAFER Grant Firefighters would be hired as permanent full time Firefighters at a salary that is 83% of the current Fire Engineer Salary. This would add an additional \$70,650 in salary costs for the four months in Fiscal Year 2017/18 after the SAFER Grant funding ends, and about \$306,000 per year after that.

In order to cover the approximate \$300,000 necessary to fund continued employment of the SAFER Grant Firefighters, a special tax would need to be assessed at \$50 per parcel annually, based upon the approximately 6,000 parcels in Cambria.

With regard to a special election, Staff has consulted with the San Luis Obispo Clerk-Recorder's Office and they have advised that February 21, 2018 is the last day for the District to submit the required resolution calling for and placing the measure on the June 5, 2018 General Election ballot. The resolution must contain the full text of the measure, and the exact form of the question as it is to appear on the ballots. Also, as was noted in the December staff report, in order to call for such a special tax election, Government Code Section 50077 requires a noticed public hearing to consider the ordinance or resolution for the special tax, which must include the type of tax and rate of tax to be levied, the method of collection, and the date upon which an election is to be held. Therefore, if the Board decides to proceed with a special election and ballot measure in June, staff is seeking direction to schedule a special meeting to hold the required public hearing and consider adoption of the necessary legislation.

Attachment: Firefighter Staffing Level Review Cambria CSD Fire Department PowerPoint

BOARD ACTION: Date _____ Approved: _____ Denied: _____

UNANIMOUS: ___ RICE ___ FARMER ___ BAHRINGER ___ WHARTON ___ PIERSON