

## Tuolumne Fire District



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Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for the previous opportunity to meet and discuss fire protection opportunities in Tuolumne. As mentioned in our meeting, the Tuolumne Fire District is seeking opportunities to enhance services and provide for greater redundancies in the Fire Protection services offered to our communities.

To provide some additional information, the district currently employs two full time staff members, 1 Captain and our Chief as well as, four Volunteer Internship Firefighters, and approximately 10 relief staff/volunteers that provide greater depth in responding to calls and provided service. Additionally, our current fiscal situation is very sound with an annual operating budget of approximately \$500,000 and a reserve of approximately \$1,000,000.

Current district operations are overseen by seasoned professionals, and they are conducted with a focus on continued efficiencies, providing for sound fiscal policies and management to meet the demands of our community. While the dedication of our staff is beyond commendable and their experience and capabilities exceed industry standards, the ongoing staffing model of only two fulltime staff, providing 24/7 services on a 3 on 3 off schedule, is recognized as a model that will ultimately lead to staff burn out and a degradation in their quality of life. With this understanding and a firm commitment to serving Tuolumne, our Board recognizes an opportunity to discuss how the retention and wellbeing of our staff can be addressed while looking at greater ways to provide efficiency and redundancies in fire protection services across the board.

The Tuolumne Fire District is proposing a Joint Powers Authority agreement with the Tuolumne Band of Me Wuk Indians, Tuolumne Rancheria Fire Department, to provide this enhanced level of Fire Protection to the community of Tuolumne. The district is proposing creating a combined Board of Directors from each organization to oversee fire protection operations. We propose that a JPA Board consist of four Tribal representatives and three district

representatives to administer the ongoing operations of a combined fire operation. The district is proposing to make its staff, equipment, facility, and benefits available to the JPA board to use at their discretion for the purpose of recruitment, retention, enhanced redundancies, and increased depth in providing services. The district is willing to consider the alteration of current staff positions and titles to benefit the newly formed JPA in a way that meets fiscal and operational sense. Our goal is to support the fire protection system and provide the best level of service to the community while creating an attractive place to work for employees.

Included in the benefits and equipment of the district is a CalPERS retirement system for its full-time employees in which the district is willing to extend as an option for all full-time employees covered in the JPA. We currently have three front line engines, one support vehicle, and one command vehicle that can be used to support the fire system. In addition to that, the district has a healthy contingency fund that is currently slated for new apparatus purchases and to offset ongoing equipment needs.

If this is a direction that you and your Tribal government, feel would be mutually beneficial and you would be willing to explore further, we are proposing to move forward with developing a draft proposal of a JPA for consideration by both parties.

Thank you again for your time and consideration on this proposal and we look forward to discussing this matter further at your convenience.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Bell', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Brian Bell  
Board Chair  
Tuolumne Fire District