

To the Mayor and City Council of Leadville

4/6/10

This paper is meant to convey the ideas that we as commissioners have for emergency services and the fire department. We were disappointed that we did not get to share more of these ideas at our Monday night meeting, as we had discussed them in anticipation at our regular commissioner meeting that day. While there were some good items to come out of our Monday night meeting, we left feeling deflated. We were hoping to hear more flexibility from the mayor and council and recognition of some of the issues that we feel need to be addressed in talking about county-wide fire protection and fiscal management. Instead, we felt like our concerns were generally ignored and that there were few offers from the city in reaching a good faith solution. The commissioners are starting to feel as though we are being 'backed into a corner'. We have heard from many citizens this morning already and have been rethinking the idea of what service we can provide for the county using our share of fire protection monies. Please note that we are not talking about the Sheriff's ideas for public safety officers, but rather what a county-only fire department would look like. This is not meant as a threat, but as information for you as you consider the options we are putting forth.

From Commissioner Olsen:

It is my belief in light of the lack of concern by the Mayor and City Council of County-wide fire protection issues from last night's meeting that the County should diligently place their efforts in forming a County fire department with the money the County now pays to the City. It appears to me that no intention exists in servicing the County in any manner different than in the past. This is simply unacceptable. We lack depth in fire-fighting service in Lake County and I believe a combination paid/volunteer department under the commissioners would be the best system for the future. I see no movement under the current systems management to provide the backup that is needed for multiple responses to take care of ourselves. The tail has wagged the dog long enough and it is time to have the County control its own destiny and manage its own money for a better result. Also it is my intent that the City start cost-sharing in dispatch starting January 1, 2011 at approximately 40% of the annual \$200,000+ cost.

From Commissioner Schaefer:

ITEMS FOR A RENEGOCIATED I G A

- Item 2.0 Set annual meeting (suggestion mid year) for full participation meeting of City / County to Discuss priorities for fire protection services.
- Item 3.0 Establish a new term. Suggest last work day in August.
- Item 4.1 This item has not been done and an honest assessment of what could be done needs to take Place. This should also include and define response to structural/wildland/forrest fire, Hazardous material, natural and man made disaster response in the county.
- Item 4.3 If the Twin lake station is used by LLCFD, their needs to be a lease agreement with the county. This item could be eliminated from the document, however the county believes it is an asset, and Should be utilized until something more desirable can be constructed.

Item 4.4 Outdated items should be struck from the document.

Item 5.0 Funding Procedures - MANAGEMENT BOARD
Establish a NEW FIRE DEPARTMENT MANAGEMENT BOARD consisting of four (4) Members.

2 from county, selected annually by the seated BOCC

2 from City (designation of City Councils choice)

The board would meet with the Fire Chief at a designated monthly time to approve Fire Department expenditures and give management direction. This board would rule by consensus. Should there be a conflict that cannot be negotiated in good faith, the parties would defer to Section 8.0 of the agreement.

Item 5.1.1 Joint Fire Budget to be 70% County contribution, 30% City contribution of BUDGETED. Expense.

Item 5.1.2 Extraordinary Fire Budget to be a minimum of 7.5% of the agreed yearly budget.

Item 5.1.3 New Item Any over spending of agreed budget to be split 50/50 by each funding agency. Any under spending of agreed budget, Balance amount to be placed into Extraordinary Budget.

From Commissioner Bordogna:

1.) Because of concerns voiced by the city over the service and communication that they receive from the county-wide emergency manager, I would suggest the OEM be moved back under the commissioners, where we can direct them to provide equal service and communication with the city council and be held accountable by the BOCC.

2.) I feel strongly that a management board should be formed to authorize, monitor and approve expenditures and capital planning for the fire department. Originally, I thought that an equal split of board members would be feasible, but I now feel that it would only continue ongoing disagreements and instead feel that a three person board, one commissioner, one council person and one other county representative to be chosen by the commissioners would provide equity based on the funding that the fire department receives from the county and the distribution of population throughout the county (roughly 1/3 of county residents live in the city). At the current 70% of funding, we contribute more than 2/3 of the total fire department funding and so should go the representation. Please remember that 2/3 commissioners live in the city of Leadville and that the commissioners are all tasked with looking at all of the county's needs, not just those outside the city limits. I would propose that this management group be advised by the fire chief in their decisions. I would also agree not to do away with our paid fire department. I would expect an outreach to attract and train volunteers to support their functions and enable more areas to be served, but not to replace our paid department.

3.) I have also heard a lot of from the city police, mayor and city council about their concerns over dispatch. I feel that with our request to have a controlling vote on a fire board, it would be fair to offer dispatch to the city completely. If the complete takeover option was chosen, I would propose that the city support the operating costs (roughly

\$200,000) and that the county pays for all of fire costs (including the share currently paid by the city- over \$250,000).

Other possibilities could include a representative board to oversee dispatch or to have it brought under the commissioners.

4.) Following any agreement that is reached, I feel that a meeting of our sheriff's deputies and firemen is needed. They must all come together, preferably with us there, to air their grievances with one another and agree to put aside their past baggage for the good of our citizens, who pay their salaries. If they cannot agree to let things go and move on, I think that we should ask them to resign their positions immediately. We are allowing too much pettiness from the bottom up. We cannot kid ourselves to think that any agreement will work between us if we or our employees continue to harbor grudges and talk negatively about each other.

We would like you to consider all of the options presented above at our 4/12/10 meeting. I have already had requests that this meeting be a work session rather than an executive session and I believe that in the spirit of transparency and accountability, we should use that forum. Though we already vetted the idea of an executive session with our employment attorney, questions over the legality and honesty of an executive session have already been brought to our attention.

Kenneth L. Olsen
Emergency Services Meeting
Questions/Answers Session 03-13-10

Areas of frustration with Intergovernmental Agreement with City of Leadville

- A) Lack of direct accountability for fire service as a whole in the County. The Board of Commissioners has contracted out its responsibility for fire service with the City of Leadville. With this transfer of responsibility should be equal concentration of fire protection by the City Council for all Lake County residents within the budget that already exists. Input by Commissioners for suggestions is generally treated as "meddling" in the fire departments or City's business and leads to all issues being political as opposed to helpful. I believe I have a responsibility for fire protection to all County residents. Commissioners have little or no say in management direction or priorities in the County.
- B) Lack of depth of fire service for major incidents or multiple calls and a reluctance to acknowledge this or change it. I have a deep belief in a strong volunteer support and backup system for these type of situations. I do not believe this concept is equally shared by the City and its current management. This boils down to my philosophy that many citizens are willing to assist in aiding their government functions but you have to encourage this and allow for it to happen within reasonable means. I believe the current structure will not be tolerable of this concept. People will not participate when it is too difficult or uncomfortable to do so. The Twin Lakes Volunteer system was dismembered by poor treatment and lack of respect, not lack of desire and commitment. Please look around Colorado and see that these backup systems work in other communities and are strongly supported by citizens.
- C) Lack of known planning initiatives by the fire service on a 1 year and 5 year basis. This is a basic tool that to my knowledge does not exist and should. It needs to be done with the existing budget.
- D) A reluctance to acknowledge the Sheriff's statutory responsibility of wildland fire control duties. We must obtain a working relationship in this area. I believe that current management of the fire service is overtly working against the County's desire to improve fire service for the County as a whole as evidenced by the attached February 1, 2010 letter from Leadville/Lake County Fire Rescue to the Colorado State Forest Service regarding trucks requested to be stationed at Leadville and Twin Lakes.