



**SAN BENITO COUNTY
AGENDA ITEM
TRANSMITTAL FORM**

Dom Zanger
District No. 1
Vice-Chair

Kollin Kosmicki
District No. 2
Chair

Mindy Sotelo
District No. 3

Angela Curro
District No. 4

Ignacio Velazquez
District No. 5

Item Number: 3.4

MEETING DATE: 05/06/2025

DEPARTMENT: HUMAN RESOURCES

AGENDA ITEM PREPARER: Gracie Rodriguez

DEPT HEAD/DIRECTOR: Henie Ring

SUBJECT:

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE - H. RING, INTERIM COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Approve new job specifications for the recruitment of a Fire Chief, to be filled on either an interim or permanent basis, requiring specialized expertise in Emergency Response, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Prevention, Environmental Services (including Hazardous Materials), and Emergency Preparedness, with the Fire Chief playing a pivotal role in shaping the structure and operations of the new County Fire Department to ensure effective fire protection services for San Benito County, allocate 1.0 FTE Fire Chief to a newly created budget unit for the Fire Department and set the salary at \$178,080.86 to \$236,406.35 yearly, and delegate authority to the Interim County Administrative Officer and Human Resources to carry out the necessary actions for the recruitment selection of the next Fire Chief for the County of San Benito.

SBC FILE NUMBER: 630

AGENDA SECTION:

REGULAR AGENDA

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:

On March 25, 2025, the County received a 270-day notice from the City of Hollister indicating that it will conclude its provision of fire services to the County, effective December 20, 2025.

In response, on April 22, 2025, the Board of Supervisors held further discussions regarding the future of fire protection services. County staff recommended initiating efforts to establish a new County fire department. Since that meeting, two planning sessions have taken place involving the County Fire

Department Ad Hoc Committee, project consultants, and representatives from the City of San Juan Bautista.

As an outcome of these discussions, the Ad Hoc Committee has recommended that the County take the initial step of hiring a fire chief—either interim or permanent—to help guide the development and planning of the new department. In support of this recommendation, County staff is requesting approval of proposed job specifications for the fire chief position.

Conversations with the City of San Juan Bautista have included preliminary discussions about the possibility of a fire protection partnership. These discussions remain ongoing.

In addition, the County has temporarily paused its participation in the regional Fire Feasibility Study. This allows the County to reallocate its share of the study's funding toward internal fire service planning efforts. A determination regarding future participation in the study will be made at a later time.

County staff will continue to provide regular updates as planning progresses.

RESOLUTION OR ORDINANCE NEEDED FOR THIS ITEM:

N/A

CONTRACT NEEDED FOR THIS ITEM:

No

RFP AND BID HISTORY:

Since 2013, the City of Hollister has provided fire protection services to the County of San Benito under a formal agreement. The current contract is set to run from January 1, 2013, through December 31, 2025.

Key developments are as follows:

- On June 20, 2024, the city of Hollister issued a written letter advising of a 270 termination clause.
- On January 7, 2025 the City of Hollister Council created an ad-hoc committee and on January 14, 2025, the County Board of Supervisor's created an ad-hoc committee that collaborated together on finding solutions to the current fire protection services contract.
- On February 3, 2025, the city issued a letter eliminating the 270-day termination clause.
- On Tuesday, March 18, 2025, County Administration presented the details of the amendments of the existing contract for fire protection services based on the recommendations of the City's and the County's ad hoc.
- On March 21, 2025, the City of Hollister held a special meeting to report the County's request of the draft amendment #1, including the removing of the redline section regarding the implementation of a "Brown Out" of Station 3. The City of Hollister rejected the County's requested draft amendment and further proposed a new option for fire services.
- On March 24, 2025, the City of Hollister held a special meeting to adopt a resolution approving and authorizing the City Manager to provide notices to termination regarding fire protection services agreements with the County of San Benito and the City of San Juan Bautista.

To support negotiations, the County retained William L. Adams, Attorney at Law, PC, as Special Counsel for fire services strategy and negotiations.

LAST CONTRACT AMOUNT OR N/A:

N/A

CONTRACT HISTORY (Describe all amendments and previous contracts):

N/A

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 1. Operational Development & Excellence

Yes

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 2. Planning And Sustainable Growth

Yes

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 3. Technology

No

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 4. Community Engagement

Yes

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS: 5. Health & Safe Community

Yes

BUDGETED:

No

BUDGET ADJUSTMENT NEEDED:

No

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

N/A

UNFUNDED MANDATE:

N/A

SBC BUDGET LINE ITEM NUMBER:

N/A

CURRENT FY COST:

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve new job specifications for the recruitment of a Fire Chief, to be filled on either an interim or permanent basis, requiring specialized expertise in Emergency Response, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Prevention, Environmental Services (including Hazardous Materials), and Emergency Preparedness, with the Fire Chief playing a pivotal role in shaping the structure and operations of the new County Fire Department to ensure effective fire protection services for San Benito County, allocate 1.0 FTE Fire Chief to a newly created budget unit for the Fire Department and set the salary at \$178,080.86 to \$236,406.35 yearly, and delegate authority to the Interim County Administrative Officer and Human Resources to carry out the necessary actions for the recruitment selection of the next Fire Chief for the County of San Benito.

ATTACHMENTS: