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Resolution 2014-0002

of the

Calaveras Local Agency Formation Commission

*Approving a Municipal Service Review of Fire Services Provided by the Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District and Adopting Written Determinations Thereon*

WHEREAS, California Government Code Section 56425 requires that the Local Agency Formation Commission ("LAFCO") adopt and periodically review Sphere of Influence Plans for all agencies in its jurisdiction; and,

WHEREAS, California Government Code Section 56430 requires that LAFCO conduct a review of the municipal services provided by and within an agency prior to updating or adopting its Sphere of Influence Plan; and,

WHEREAS, the Sphere of Influence Plan is the primary planning tool for LAFCO and defines the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency as determined by LAFCO; and,

WHEREAS, the Commission adopted guidelines for conducting Municipal Service Reviews (MSRs) included in its Policies, Standards and Procedures adopted on August 17, 2009, which applies to this MSR for fire and EMS services; and,

WHEREAS, at the time and in the manner provided by law, the Executive Officer gave notice of the date, time, and place of a public hearing by the Commission for the MSR, including approval of the report and adoption of the written determinations contained therein; and,

WHEREAS, the Commission hereby determines that the hearing draft of the Municipal Service Review for fire services provided by the Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District and written determinations contained therein will provide information for updating its Sphere of Influence, and is otherwise consistent with the purposes and responsibility of the Commission for planning the logical and orderly development and coordination of local governmental agencies so as to advantageously provide for the present and future needs of the county and its communities; and,

WHEREAS, the Commission has heard all interested parties desiring to be heard and has considered the report by the Executive Officer and all other relevant evidence and information presented at said hearing;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Calaveras Local Agency Formation Commission hereby resolves, orders and determines the following:

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Growth and Population Projections

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- ❖ In 2010, Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District (MHFPD) had an approximate population of 1,323. In 2013, according to the district, the population served is 1,368.
- ❖ The District observed an increase in service demand in the last few years. MHFPD has two major highways passing through it, which may have experienced



an increase in the transient population. The increase in demand may also be attributable to improved reporting of service calls.

- ❖ MHFPD anticipates moderate growth in population and similarly in service demand within the District in the next few years. An increase in demand is anticipated, due to several potential developments and an influx of tourists.

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#### The Location and Characteristics of Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities Within or Contiguous to the Agency's SOI

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- ❖ Based on 2010 Census income information for Census Designated Places in Calaveras County, there are no communities that meet the definition of a disadvantaged unincorporated community within or adjacent to MHFPD's bounds and sphere of influence.

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#### Present and Planned Capacity of Public Facilities and Adequacy of Public Services, Including Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies

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- ❖ Although the District's response times are within identified standards for rural areas, currently, the District is improving its service capacity to provide adequate services within its service area and future growth areas which are due in part to many factors such as narrow mountain roads resulting in slow responses. Although, the District's station is in excellent working condition, MHFPD needs and is planning an additional fire station to improve its response times, particularly in the community of Palomar and potentially in Golden Hills. A challenge also lies in outdated equipment and a lack of personnel.
- ❖ Capital improvement projects are planned in MHFPD's strategic plan; however, the plan is outdated. It is recommended that the District conduct long-term capital planning in order to adequately plan for future funding needs and sources.
- ❖ Infrastructure needs include a new fire station in Paloma, and potentially Golden Hills, minor upgrades at the District's existing station, and replacing outdated equipment. The district is continuously replacing and purchasing new equipment such as a new electrical generator installed in 2013.
- ❖ While services provided by the District appear to be adequate based on a comparison of response times, station coverage, staffing resources and ISO ratings with other districts, (ISO of 5 in Mokelumne Hill and 9 in rural areas). The district was evaluated in 2013. However, updated ratings have not been released. Overall, service adequacy is consistent with neighboring districts. As with most fire districts this district is continuously working on improvements to District's operations and enhancements to accountability and transparency.

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#### Financial Ability of Agencies to Provide Services

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- ❖ The District reported that its current financing levels were not adequate to deliver services, as there are capital and equipment needs that are underfunded. The



district is continuously improving staffing levels, which is a challenge due to current financing levels.

- ❖ Grants were identified as possible additional sources of financing to remedy the fiscal constraints that the District is experiencing. The district's general operations are funded by a special tax, which amounts to \$75 per improved parcel with a maximum payment of \$150 per landowner for contiguous parcels. The tax does not have an expiration date.
- ❖ The District's general operations are funded primarily by property taxes and a special tax.
- ❖ MHFPD has one outstanding loan through an agreement with the USDA used to purchase a wildland fire engine.
- ❖ Although not a formal policy, the District has a management practice to hold financial reserves for emergencies and engine replacements. As of the end of FY 10-11, the District maintained reserves comparable to 15 months of operating expenditures.

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#### Status of, and Opportunities for, Shared Facilities

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- ❖ The District has mutual and automatic aid agreements with all fire providers in Calaveras County. MHFPD responds to wildland fires through agreements with OES and CalFire.
- ❖ MHFPD is a member of the Fire Chief's Association. It also regularly collaborates with other fire providers in applying for various grants.
- ❖ MHFPD has a fuel reduction plan in conjunction with CalFire.
- ❖ MHFPD, WFPD, and CCFRPD are interested in collaborating through shared resources and joint training.

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#### Accountability for Community Service Needs, Including Governmental Structure and Operational Efficiencies

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- ❖ The District attempts to reach its constituents by posting agendas and other information at Station 1, at the Mokelumne Hill post office, and on other message boards in the community.
- ❖ If a resident is dissatisfied with the District's services, complaints may be submitted to the Fire Chief or to the Board directly. Complaints are addressed first by the Chief and, if not resolved may be addressed by the Board of Directors.
- ❖ Complaints against the District were filed with the State of California Labor Commission and with OSHA in 2012. These complaints have been resolved. The district recently updated its Standard Operating Policies and Training Policies.
- ❖ The District reported that a highly critical report about the District was issued by the 2012 Calaveras County Grand Jury. The Grand Jury report alleges Brown Act violations by the Board of Directors and other illegal or improper actions by the District similar to the complaints filed with the Labor Commission and OSHA.



The District was unaware of the nature of the complaints until after the report was made public, and was unable to provide information or defend itself prior to the issuance of the Grand Jury Report.

- ❖ The MHFPD demonstrated accountability in providing information as requested and has cooperated with Calaveras LAFCO.
- ❖ The District conducts Brown Act training to ensure Board members are aware of legal requirements and sends board members to AB-1234 training, as required. The district has hired legal counsel to assist with legal requirements regarding operations, accountability, and board actions.
- ❖ The District does not have a formal capital improvement plan. MHFPD plans for its capital improvement projects in its strategic plan. Funds for planned large purchases such as a new station or engine are put in reserve accounts until sufficient funds to go forward are available.
- ❖ In regards to governance structure options, consolidation with other fire and EMS service providers may be an option. MHFPD as well as other agencies are reportedly looking into a shared services agreement. Areas of cooperation with other agencies include active participation in the Fire Chief's association, Mutual and Automatic Aid Agreements and "closest unit" response with Central Calaveras and San Andreas Fire Protection Districts.

The foregoing resolution was duly passed by the Calaveras Local Agency Formation Commission at a regular meeting held on January 27, 2014 by the following roll call vote:

Ayes:

Noes:

Abstentions:

Absent:

Signed and approved by me after its passage this 27th day of January 2014.

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Jack Lynch, Chair  
Calaveras Lace

Attest:

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John Benoit, Executive Officer  
CALAVERAS LAFCo



## 10. MOKELUMNE HILL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District (MHFPD) provides structure fire protection, wildland fire protection and emergency medical response.

### AGENCY OVERVIEW

#### Background

MHFPD began its existence in 1851 as the Mokelumne Hill Ladder and Engine Company. In 1947 the Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District was established for the purpose of providing fire protection for the residents of MHFPD.

The principal act that governs the District is the Fire Protection District Law of 1987.<sup>1</sup> The principal act empowers fire districts to provide fire protection, rescue, emergency medical, hazardous material response, ambulance, and any other services relating to the protection of lives and property.<sup>2</sup> Districts must apply and obtain LAFCO approval to exercise services authorized by the principal act but not already provided (i.e., latent powers) by the district at the end of 2000.<sup>3</sup>

MHFPD is located in the northwestern portion of Calaveras County. The District is adjacent to Calaveras Consolidated FPD in the southwest, San Andreas FPD in the south, and Central Calaveras FRPD in the east. MHFPD borders Amador County in the north.

#### Boundaries

MHFPD is located along SR 49 and SR 26 in the town of Mokelumne Hill. MHFPD is surrounded on three sides by hills, and a canyon on the north side.

Prior to 2000, MHFPD served a 1.5 square mile area and provided contract services to Calaveras County for an additional 40 square miles. In 2000 Calaveras County Fire Department underwent reorganization and the Mokelumne Hill FPD boundary area grew to 35 square miles.

The District has undertaken seven annexations since its formation. The latest annexation took place in 2000 and included territory previously protected by County Fire. The District's boundary changes are shown in Figure 10-1.

Figure 10-1: MHFPD List of LAFCO Approved Boundary Changes

<i>Project Name</i>	<i>Type of Action</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Recording Agency</i>
Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District	Formation	1929	LAFCO
Certain Territory	Annexation	1969	LAFCO
Unknown	Annexation	1972	BOE
Health and Safety Code §13800-13970.	Annexation	1976	BOE
Unknown	Annexation	1984	LAFCO
Health and Safety Code §13862.	Annexation	1989	BOE
Government Code §56824.10.	Annexation	1989	LAFCO, BOE
Wenden	Annexation	2000	LAFCO, BOE
Belle	Annexation		
Calaveras County Fire Reorganization #1	Annexation		



### *Sphere of Influence*

In 2005, during the SOI updates, LAFCO elected to keep the MHFPD sphere of influence coterminous with its boundaries.

### *Extra-territorial Services*

The District reported that its responses were not limited to the territory within its boundaries; when called upon MHFPD engines respond throughout the State of California as part of State or Federal strike teams.

In accordance with its mutual aid agreements MHFPD responds to all Calaveras County Fire Districts and occasionally to neighboring counties.

### *Areas of Significance*

Although the District meets or surpasses the standards for response time to remote areas of the District, including the community of Paloma, the District desires to reduce response time wherever practical. MHFPD has purchased land in Paloma and is in the process of planning a new station to improve response times in Paloma and the western portion of the District.



**Figure 10-2: Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District Boundaries and SOI**



## Accountability and Governance

Accountability of a governing body is signified by a combination of several indicators. The indicators chosen here are limited to 1) agency efforts to engage and educate constituents through outreach activities, in addition to legally required activities such as agenda posting and public meetings, 2) a defined complaint process designed to handle all issues to resolution, and 3) transparency of the agency as indicated by cooperation with the MSR process and information disclosure.

The principal act orders that the board of directors of a fire protection district must have an odd number of members, with a minimum of three and a maximum of 11 members. Directors may be appointed or elected.<sup>4</sup> MHFPD is governed by a five-member board of directors elected at large to staggered four-year terms. Current board member names, positions, and term expiration dates are shown in Figure 10-3.

The Board meets on the third Thursday of every month at seven in the evening at the District's Station 1. Board meeting agendas are posted at Station 1 and the post office. Minutes are available upon request from MHFPD.

Figure 10-3: Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District Governing Body

Mokelumne Hill FPD				
District Contact Information				
Contact:	David H. Spitzer, Fire Chief			
Address:	8160 Church Street, Mokelumne Hill, CA 95245			
Telephone:	(209)286-1389			
Email:	<a href="mailto:chief@mokehillfire.org">chief@mokehillfire.org</a>			
Board of Directors				
Member Name	Position	Term Expiration	Manner of Selection	Length of Term
Suzie Coe	Chair	November 2014	Elected	4 years
John Dell'Orto	Director	November 2016	Elected	4 years
Larry Robertson	Secretary/Treasurer	November 2014	Elected	4 years
Del Albright	Director	November 2014	Elected	4 years
Ted Shannon	Director	November 2016	Appointed	4 years
Meetings				
Date:	Third Thursday of every month at 7pm.			
Location:	Meetings are held at Station 1.			
Agenda Distribution:	Posted at Station 1 and post office.			
Minutes Distribution:	Available upon request.			

The District attempts to reach its constituents by posting agendas and other information at Station 1, at the Mokelumne Hill post office, and on other message boards in the community. The District is working on a fire safety clearing program, smoke and carbon monoxide program, improving home identification, participating in fundraising events, and conducting educational activities in local schools.

<sup>4</sup> Health and Safety Code §13842.



If a resident is dissatisfied with the District's services, complaints may be submitted to the Fire Chief or to the Board directly. Complaints are addressed first by the Chief and, if not resolved to the complainants satisfaction, are addressed by the Board of Directors. In the past, complaints submitted were primarily regarding the District's special tax and vegetation clearance around fire hydrants. The District reported that there was one complaint regarding cleared vegetation around fire hydrants in 2011.

The District reports that in 2012 a State of California Labor Commission complaint was filed against the District alleging retaliation by the District against a former member. After investigation by the Retaliation Complaint Investigator the investigation was closed because "the complainant expressly withdrew the complaint." The District was not found to have retaliated against the former member.

The District also reports that in 2012 an OSHA complaint was filed by the same former member, alleging numerous violations of OSHA regulations. The District was investigated by OSHA and cited for five inadequacies in its Standard Operating Policies. The District updated its Standard Operating Policies and training, and the citations were reduced to "minor" status. The OSHA case was closed after the District paid a nominal fine.

The District further reports that in 2012 a legal suit was filed in Superior Court by the same former member, alleging discrimination in employment by the District. The suit was dismissed by the Superior Court; the District was not found to have violated the former members employment rights.

A second, separate legal suit was filed in 2013 by the same former member, alleging that the District retaliated against him for filing an OSHA complaint. The suit is in the preparatory stages, but the District denies the allegations and is confident that the current lawsuit will also be decided in the District's favor.

The District also reports that a highly critical report about the District was issued by the 2012 Calaveras County Grand Jury. The Grand Jury does not identify persons who have filed complaints, but allegations of Brown Act violations by the Board of Directors and other illegal or improper actions by the District exactly mirror complaints made in other venues by the same former member who filed the Labor Commission and OSHA complaints. The District was not made aware of the nature of the complaints by the Grand Jury until after the report was made public, and was unable to correct misinformation or defend itself prior to the issuance of the report.

The District recently learned, from documents filed by the former member's attorney, that the former member who filed the Labor Commission and OSHA complaints and law suits was in fact the source of the complaint to the Grand Jury. The Board of Directors of the District strongly denies the allegations and is prepared to disprove them.

Finally, the District reports that the draft version of this LAFCO report, as provided to the District for review and comment, later appeared in a highly modified and derogatory form in the final, published version. The District did not see, and was not provided an opportunity to comment on, the published version prior to its release to the public. No explanation was provided by LAFCO as to why the report was altered from the original version approved by the District. After vigorous dissent by the Board of Directors of the District, publication of the Mokelumne Hill FPD portion of the report was delayed for six months to allow the District to respond to and correct inaccuracies in the report. This report is the corrected version.



MHFPD demonstrated accountability in its disclosure of information and cooperation with Calaveras LAFCO. The District responded to the questionnaires and cooperated with interview and document requests.

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### Planning and Management Practices

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While public sector management standards vary depending on the size and scope of the organization, there are minimum standards. Well-managed organizations evaluate employees annually, track employee and agency productivity, periodically review agency performance, prepare a budget before the beginning of the fiscal year, conduct periodic financial audits to safeguard the public trust, maintain relatively current financial records, conduct advanced planning for future service needs, and plan and budget for capital needs.

The District reported that it does not perform formal employee evaluations for its volunteers. The Fire Chief is evaluated by members of Board of Directors at least annually. MHFPD evaluates district-wide performance through monthly and annual reports submitted to the Board of Directors by the Fire Chief.

The District's financial planning efforts include an annually adopted budget and annually audited financial statements. MHFPD does not adopt a capital improvement plan (CIP), but plans for capital improvements in its strategic plan. The most recent strategic plan was adopted in 2010 and had a planning horizon of five years. A new strategic plan is currently in process.

MHFPD has one part-time Fire Chief, one volunteer Assistant Chief, two volunteer Battalion Chiefs, one fire Captain, seven volunteer firefighters, and three probationary firefighters. The Chief is responsible for day-to-day operations of the District. The Board of Directors oversees the Chief, who supervises the Battalion Chiefs. The fire Captain reports to the Battalion Chiefs and manages the firefighters.

The District employs one part-time paid maintenance person responsible for maintaining the station and servicing apparatus.

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### Existing Demand and Growth Projections

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This section discusses the factors affecting service demand, such as land uses, and historical and anticipated population growth.

### Land Use

Land uses within the District are general agriculture, agriculture preserve, rural residential, residential, and industrial. The District's bounds encompass approximately 35 square miles.

### Population

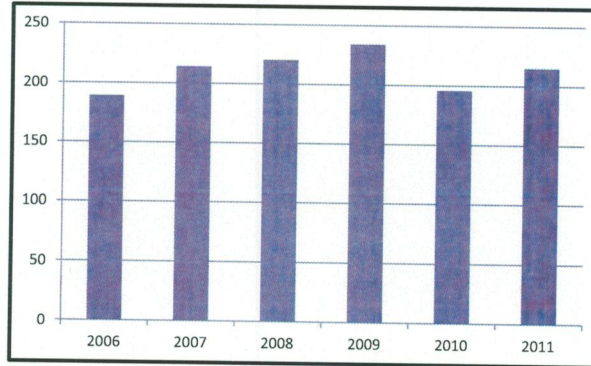
According to the District, the MHFPD boundary area currently contains approximately 1368 full-time residents.

### Existing Demand

The District reported that its peak demand occurred from 12 pm to 6 pm. Calls for medical emergencies are consistently high in volume throughout the year, similar to other fire districts in the region.

The District reported that it had observed an increase in call volume in the last few years. The increase may be attributed to more accurate reporting. MHFPD has two major highways passing through the District that have experienced an increase in traffic and population due to commuting workers, service vehicles, vacationers, and recreational activities that occur within and outside the District's boundaries.

**Figure 10-4: MHFPD Number of Calls by Year, 2007-2011**



As shown in Figure 10-4, the number of calls increased from 2006 to 2009; there was a decline in calls in 2010, and calls went back up in 2011. Current volume (2012 and 2013) exceeds 300 calls per year.

### Projected Growth and Development

The State Department of Finance (DOF) projects that the population of Calaveras County will grow by eight percent in the next 10 years. Thus, the average annual population growth in the County is anticipated to be approximately 0.8 percent. Based on these projections, the District's population would increase from 1368 in 2013 to approximately 1,620 in 2020. It is anticipated that demand for service within the District will increase minimally based on the DOF population growth projections through 2020.

MHFPD anticipates little growth in population and in service demand within the District in the next few years, in part because of the recent decline in housing construction. However, no formal population projections have been made by the District. No housing developments are currently announced for the District. The Stockton Hills development was put on hold by the County until the General Plan update is completed, but it is believed that this development has been abandoned.



East Bay Municipal Utility District may in the future increase the size of its water reservoir, potentially increasing tourist or recreational traffic, but such changes would take place 10 to 20 years in the future and do not affect current needs.

The District reported that it has sufficient capacity to serve the area around Mokelumne Hill but will need additional revenue to better serve outlying areas of the District. Lack of funding, available volunteers, aging equipment and a need for an additional fire station present a significant capacity constraint. MHFPD is looking into obtaining grants, more sustainable staffing options, is actively planning for a second station in Paloma, and is a participant in efforts to increase volunteer participation in the County.

### Growth Strategies

The District is not a land use authority, and does not hold primary responsibility for implementing growth strategies. The land use authority for unincorporated areas is the County. The County's General Plan is presently being updated. Some of the fire districts, including Mokelumne Hill, reported that the County had sought input from them on the General Plan update.

Mokelumne Hill FPD is not considering consolidation with neighboring districts. MHFPD has had informal discussions with neighboring districts; all parties are reportedly interested in enhancing collaboration through shared resources and joint training, and implementing "closest resource" dispatching. The districts are looking into a shared services agreement; however, there has been no outcome to these negotiations to date.

### Financing

The financial ability of agencies to provide services is affected by available financing sources and financing constraints. This section discusses the major financing constraints faced by the District and identifies the revenue sources currently available to the District.

The District reported that its financing levels are not adequate to deliver services at the level the District desires. Although MHFPD has come a long way to improve the level of its service, staffing remains a challenge. The District has standardized training, improved the level of equipment maintenance, and applied for grants. Hiring paid (career) firefighters has been considered, but financial constraints preclude hiring them at present. Currently all members are volunteer, with the exception of a half-time paid Fire Chief. The District reported that the primary financing need was more funding to improve indicators for better service provision.

The District's general operations are funded primarily by property taxes and a special tax passed in 2005. The special tax amounts to \$75 per improved parcel with a maximum payment of \$150 per landowner for contiguous parcels. The tax does not have an expiration date.

MHFPD does not charge any other fees. During the summer fire season the District responds to fires throughout the State with its strike team and is reimbursed by the State of California for State responsibility fires or the Federal Government for Federal fires.

MHFPD's revenues for FY 10-11 were \$157,525, a decrease of \$5,758 from the prior fiscal year; program expenses were \$169,432. An annual principle and interest payment of \$14,236 for the purchase of a new engine is due every July 28th. Other expenses included the Chief's salary of \$1,500 per month, the Board Secretary/Treasurer's stipend of \$300 per month, professional services, station maintenance wages, equipment expenditures, clothing and personal supplies, communications, a contribution to LAFCO, food and household expenses, gas and oil expenses, general liability insurance, group health insurance, building maintenance, equipment maintenance, memberships and dues, office supplies, reimbursement for mileage, small tools and equipment, special department expenses, strike team wages (which are reimbursed by the State or Federal government), payroll taxes, training, utilities, worker's compensation insurance, and attorney's fees related to the OSHA case, LAFCO, the Grand Jury, and two lawsuits filed by a former member.

The District does not have a formal capital improvement plan. MHFPD plans for its capital improvement projects in its strategic plan. Funds for planned large purchases such as a new station or engine are put in reserve accounts until sufficient funds to go forward are available.

MHFPD has long-term debt represented by one loan for the purchase of a wildland fire engine. In July 2011, the District converted its lease with an option to buy to a federal loan agreement with USDA in the amount of \$254,825, which includes loan fees of \$2,150. \$114,000 was in the form of a loan, \$118,000 was in the form of a federal grant. The term of the loan is 10 years at 4.250 percent interest.

The District does not have a formal policy to maintain financial reserves; however, MHFPD puts aside money every year for engine replacements and emergencies. The fund balance that consisted of unrestricted reserves at the end of FY 10-11 amounted to \$164,738.

The District is a member of Fire Agencies Self Insurance System (FASIS), which is a joint financing mechanism for worker's compensation insurance. Only one injury has been recorded as of the end of FY 10-11, with a net payment of \$600.00.



## FIRE AND EMS SERVICES

### Service Overview

MHFPD provides comprehensive fire protection services to residents of the District. A detailed description of the services offered by MHFPD is shown in Figure 10-5.

**Figure 10-5: MHFPD Service Matrix**

<b>Calaveras County Fire Services Matrix</b>	
<b>Service</b>	<b>Provided ?</b>
Structural fire protection	Yes
Wildland fire protection	Yes
Vehicle fire protection	Yes
Ladder truck capabilities	No
Emergency medical services	Yes
Basic life support	Yes
Advanced life support	No
Advanced life support transport	No
Hazardous materials emergency response	Yes
Fire prevention	Yes
Fire safety education	Yes
First responder swift water and low angle rope rescue	Yes
Public service assists	Yes
Oxygen filling for breathing apparatuses	No
Helicopter facilities	Yes
Jaws of Life (Hurst) tools	Yes
Response to boating accidents	No
Water rescue	Yes
Dive and ice recovery	No
Fire investigation	Yes
Home inspections	No
Welfare Checks / address sign installation	Yes

### Collaboration

MHFPD reported that it had mutual and automatic aid agreements with all fire protection providers in Calaveras County, including CalFire. The District frequently responds in Central Calaveras FPD and San Andreas FPD along SR 26, Jesus Maria Road, River Ranch Road, Hawver Road, and SR 49. Occasionally MHFPD responds across the county line into Amador County.

The District is currently looking into implementing "closest unit" response with Central Calaveras FPD and San Andreas FPD, which might provide faster responses in remote areas or when engines are out-of-position due to prior calls.

MHFPD is a member of Fire Chiefs' Association. It also regularly collaborates with other fire providers in applying for various grants.

### Dispatch and communications

The District's emergency dispatch and communication needs are served through a Calaveras County contract with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's (CalFire) Emergency Command Center (ECC) in San Andreas. There is currently no fee charged to local government fire protection agencies by Calaveras County.

Dispatching is handled through joint use of the command frequency assigned to the Tuolumne-Calaveras Ranger Unit. The CalFire Office of Emergency Services and County assigned tactical frequencies are also available for local use.

The Calaveras County Sheriff's Office serves as the Primary Public Safety Answering Point where all landline calls within the County are originally directed. Fire incidents are directed to the ECC. Off-duty paid personnel and volunteers are alerted by "pager" and by cellphone text messaging.

In 2002, the Calaveras County Fire Chief's Association jointly purchased a 9-1-1 screen printing system that allows information on the 9-1-1 computer screen in the Sheriff's Office to be immediately printed out in the CalFire command center. This gives CalFire dispatchers a head start in alerting first responders of a pending 9-1-1 medical call.

### Staffing

MHFPD has 15 sworn personnel—one Fire Chief, two Battalion Chiefs, one fire Captain, and 11 firefighters. The Fire Chief is a half-time paid position; the rest are volunteers. Firefighters are reimbursed \$8 per call and officers are reimbursed \$10 per call. Firefighters are also reimbursed for two training sessions totaling 4 hours per month.

The median age of the firefighters is 40, with a range from 20 to 72. The District tries to recruit more volunteers through a CSFA SAFER-grant-funded recruitment program, and word of mouth.

According to the California State Fire Marshal, all paid, volunteer and call firefighters must acquire Firefighter I certification. Firefighter I certification requires completion of the 259-hour Firefighter I course or in-house equivalent training, which includes training on various fireground tasks, rescue operations, fire prevention and investigation techniques, and inspection and maintenance of equipment. In addition to this course, Firefighter I certification also requires that the applicant have a minimum of six months of volunteer or call experience in a California fire department as a firefighter performing suppression duties.<sup>5</sup>

The minimum level of training required by MHFPD entails Firefighter I, first responder, hazmat First Responder Operations (FRO), confined space awareness, CPR, and California Incident Command Certification System (CICCS) trainings. Prospective firefighters may receive their training through the Calaveras Firefighting Academy, at district expense. All MHFPD firefighters meet these requirements before moving up from probationary status. MHFPD has 12 Firefighter I (or higher) and four EMT certified personnel. The District's firefighters are required to train for a minimum of four hours per month. MHFPD offers over 200 training hours per year to its firefighters. The District has certified California Fire Instructors, who deliver both certified and non-certified trainings to district firefighters. Given that all of the District's firefighters are volunteers, it is often difficult to attend training sessions, which presents a challenge in attaining state-mandated training levels.

<sup>5</sup> State Fire Marshal, *Course Information and Required Materials*, 2007, p. 44



## Facilities and Capacity

MHFPD currently owns two properties and operates one fire station, built in 1999. The condition of the facility was reported to be excellent. A second station is in the planning stage. During winter months the current station is staffed for 20 hours per week by a maintenance person. During the summer fire season the station is staffed six days per week by a maintenance person.

The District's station houses one type VI rapid response engine, one type I structure engine, one type II/III urban interface engine, one type III wildland engine, one light rescue unit, one type I water tender, and one command vehicle.

The District's water supply consists of a 1.5 million gallon storage tank and 1.0 million gallons of water in the supply pipeline. The communities of Paloma, Golden Hills, Boston-Yale, and Mokelumne Hill are hydranted, with most hydrants supplying 500 gpm or more. Hydrants in commercial areas supply 1000 gpm or more. Other areas in the District are supplied by the District's 3000 gallon water tender, as well as water tenders available by mutual aid from neighboring districts.

A new electrical generator was purchased and installed in 2013 to give the station stand-alone power during power outages. This will give the station the ability to assist citizens with critical power needs (oxygen generators and telecommunication needs, for example) when needed.

## Infrastructure Needs

With the increase of territory from the County Fire reorganization in 2000, the District expanded by over 30 square miles. The existing fire station in Mokelumne Hill serves all citizens in the District at a level that exceeds the standards cited, but the District strives to improve its level of service. A fire station planned for Paloma will better serve the community's citizens and reduce response times. Newer equipment is also planned for and purchased as funds become available.

Additions and renovations to the District's existing fire station intended to provide living quarters in the second-story portion of the Station have been derailed by requirements for ADA access. That portion of the building may have to be repurposed to storage space because of the anticipated \$100,000 of taxpayer monies required to make the space ADA and OSHA compliant for residential occupancy, an expense deemed by the Board of Directors not to be financially prudent or cost effective.

Other infrastructure needs include replacing aging equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE). Purchases of new equipment are made as funds are available; PPE are replaced immediately when needed.

## Challenges

MHFPD reported that a majority of the District is served by narrow mountain roads resulting in slow responses. The most challenging area for service is Jesus Maria Rd, Road and a small part of Hawver Ranch Rd. Service to these areas is improved by mutual aid response from Central Calaveras FPD and from San Andreas FPD, whose district includes most of Hawver Ranch Rd.

The community of Paloma, situated five miles away from Mokelumne Hill and seven miles from Valley Springs, is the largest distant population center from the current station. Response times to this area from Mokelumne Hill are typically 11 minutes. Measured response times from Valley Springs, which is in the Calaveras Consolidated District, are greater than 15 minutes due to greater distance and difficult roads. Paloma has had several serious fires in the past, and medical aid emergencies also prove to be a challenge, due to the current drive time. The planned new station will reduce response times dramatically.



## Service Adequacy

While there are several benchmarks that may define the level of fire service provided by an agency, indicators of service adequacy discussed here include ISO ratings, response times, and level of staffing and station resources for the service area.

Fire services in the communities are classified by the Insurance Service Office (ISO), an advisory organization. This classification indicates the general adequacy of coverage, with classes ranking from 1 to 10. Communities with the best fire department facilities, systems for water distribution, fire alarms and communications, equipment, and 24/7 staffing receive a rating of 1 (very few cities in the United States receive this rating.). MHFPD has an ISO rating of five in Mokelumne Hill and nine in rural areas, consistent with neighboring districts. The District was reevaluated in 2013; updated ratings have not been released.

The guideline established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) for fire response times is six minutes at least 90 percent of the time, with response time measured from the 911-call time to the arrival time of the first-responder at the scene. The fire response time guideline established by the Center for Public Safety Excellence (formerly the Commission on Fire Accreditation International) is 5 minutes 50 seconds at least 90 percent of the time.<sup>71</sup> MHFPD currently reaches addresses in Mokelumne Hill in under 5 minutes and all other population centers in the District in 8-13 minutes. Response times to remote locations vary depending on distance and road conditions.

Emergency response time standards vary by level of urbanization of an area: the more urban an area, the faster a response should be. Calaveras County is not broken down into wilderness, rural and urban designations for response time standards like other counties. Instead, Mountain Valley Emergency Medical Services Agency has divided Calaveras County into three zones for EMS and ambulance services. The northern and southern zones are served by American Legion and the eastern zone (which is the same as the Ebbetts Pass FPD boundary area) is served by Ebbetts Pass FPD. In the northern and southern zones the response time guideline is 20 minutes 90 percent of the time, and 13 minutes 90 percent of the time in the eastern zone. These standards are intended for the ambulance contract providers; however, they indicate what is considered appropriate response times for medical emergencies. MHFPD tracks response times for each incident using a third-party, online data management system purchased for the District by the firefighters association. Mokelumne Hill FPD's response times to all parts of the District are better than the stated standards.

<sup>71</sup> Commission on Fire Accreditation International, 2000.

<sup>72</sup> Service area refers to the area that the agency will respond to, based on a first responder map used by the Sherriff's office.



Figure 10-6: Mokelumne Hill FPD Fire Service Profile

Fire Service				
Facilities				
Firestation	Location	Condition	Staff per Shift	Vehicles
MHFPD Station	8160 Church Street, Mokelumne Hill, CA	Excellent	one staffperson	1 type I structure engine, 2 type II urban interface engines, 1 type III engine, 1 light rescue unit, 1 type I water tender, and 1 command vehicle.
Facility Sharing				
Current Practices:				
MHFPD has a fuel reduction plan with CalFire and gave input on bridge closures in the County.				
Future opportunities:				
No additional opportunities for shared facilities were identified by the District.				
Infrastructure Needs and Deficiencies				
There is a need to finish renovations at the MHFPD station, to build a new station in Paloma, and to replace outdated equipment.				
District Resource Statistics		Service Configuration		Service Demand
Staffing Base Year	2012	Configuration Base Year	2011	Statistical Base Year
Fire Stations in District	1	Fire Suppression	Direct	Total Service Calls
Stations Serving District	1	EMS	Direct	% EMS
Sq. Miles Served per Station <sup>1</sup>	35	Ambulance Transport	American Legion	% Fire/Hazardous Materials
Total Staff <sup>2</sup>	15	Hazardous Materials	Direct	% False
Total Full-time Firefighters	0	Air Rescue/Ambulance Helicopter	PHI, Reach	% Misc. emergency
Total Call Firefighters	15	Fire Suppression Helicopter	CalFire	% Non-emergency
Total Sworn Staff per Station <sup>3</sup>	15	Public Safety Answering Point	Sheriff	% Mutual Aid Calls
Total Sworn Staff per 1,000	11	Fire/EMS Dispatch	CalFire	Calls per 1,000 people
Service Adequacy		Service Challenges		
Response Time Base Year	2011	Majority of the District is served by narrow, mountain roads making responses very slow and time consuming.		
Median Response Time (min)	4 in Moke Hill; 11 in Paloma	Training		
90th Percentile Response Time (min)	NP	Firefighters receive Firefighter I, first responder, hazmat PRO, confine space awareness, CPR, and CICCIS trainings. MHFPD requires minimum of 4 hours per month of training.		
ISO Rating	5/9 2003	Mutual & Automatic Aid Agreements		
The District has automatic five-party agreement through OES and CalFire. MHFPD has mutual aid agreements with all fire providers in Calaveras County and Amador FPD.				
Notes:				
1) Primary service area (square miles) per station.				
2) Total staff includes sworn and non-sworn personnel.				
3) Based on ratio of sworn full-time and call staff to the number of stations. Actual staffing levels of each station vary.				