

Untitled

Commission Meeting

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Comments:

Last Thursday, May 14th, the La Madera Fire District residents just became aware of the proposal for an Intergovernment Agreement between BCFD and SCFD when our volunteer firefighters received an email notifying them that they were "fired." Today we were invited by the BC Commissioner to discuss the proposal, along with the BCFD Fire Chief. We have not been invited to any type of community discussion about this from Sandoval County.

I am a property owner in San Pedro Creek Estates in Sandia Park, Sandoval County, NM. My husband and I bought a lot there in 2017 and just finished building our dream retirement home there. One of the many reasons that we purchased in that area was the great proximity to fire and rescue services coming from the LMFD. As we were building the house, we attended several meetings at the fire station and were very impressed with the professionalism of the volunteer staff and the attention, support and education that they provide to the residents within their district.

The LMFD has been in existence for 22 years. It is well-supported and highly valued by the entire East Mountain community. The highly trained and certified volunteer firefighters not only support our local community but have also supported firefighting efforts across the state, as well as assisted with National Forest fires in California and Oregon.

We have 18 trained and experienced volunteers who are well-versed in our neighborhoods, trails, etc. because they live there themselves! Among our current volunteers, we have 5 certified Firefighter II's, 7 certified Firefighter I's, 1 advanced EMT, 4 EMTs and 3 Emergency Medical Responders. In addition, 14 members carry a Red Card Certification as wildland firefighters and we have 3 wildland engine bosses. In the last year, we've added 4 new recruits, 3 of whom are under the age of 40.

The Intergovernmental Agreement calls for a binding agreement with Bernalillo County Fire Department (BCFD) to take over ownership of the La Madera Fire District. We already have a mutual aid agreement with BCFD. On fire calls, BCFD waits for LMFD to request support, if needed. On medical calls, BCFD automatically provides support and arrives with Albuquerque Ambulance. So, there is no need to create a new mutual agreement, since one already exists. This arrangement has been working extremely well. LMFD averages a response time of 6.5 minutes and routinely arrives at calls before BCFD, so there will be no improvement to services by "outsourcing" all responses to the BCFD.

In addition, the Intergovernmental Agreement places the burden of 44 additional square miles of coverage onto the BCFD without any additional resources for the BCFD to take on this additional area. It would also remove the mutual aid provided by LMFD to BCFD for water tender support and wildland fire support.

The LMFD is a high-performing station, with rapid response times, highly trained and certified volunteers, an active and successful recruiting program, a dedicated community support group (Tecolote Auxiliary) and high community service ratings. Given these strengths, and the demonstrated value of the LMFD to the residents of East Mountain, I would request that the vote on this Intergovernmental Agreement be postponed in order to allow more time for public review and comment from the impacted La Madera Fire District residents of Sandoval County. Of course, this may mean that we need to wait until group gatherings are permitted again. I hope you agree with me that this would be the right thing to do, considering the severity of the impact to the large East Mountain community.