

With Representation the Fire Consolidation Plan will be solid

The decision to consolidate with a professional fire service organization is logical, given the City's historical neglect of essential services like the fire department in favor of other expenditures. The staff document highlights past city leaders' lack of oversight. Measure H, a crucial funding source for the Sebastopol fire department, was underutilized due to errors by the past fire chief and city manager. Gold Ridge would not have missed this critical decision.

The proposal lacks sufficient city oversight:

1. \$1MM in city funds, \$1MM Measure H money, and \$1.1MM Sebastopol Homeowner parcel taxes will go each year to Gold Ridge. This represents approximately 20% of the future consolidated revenue. This is a lot of city money being spent without any city oversight.
2. Proportional representation would be 2 positions on an expanded 9 person board (The current board has 7).
3. This representation is particularly crucial for the first year or two of the transition.

Given the city's financial contribution, Gold Ridge must ensure informed representation from the start. Two board positions should be dedicated to Sebastopol:

- One permanently filled by the City Manager to oversee spending and address city issues.
- The other position should be appointed until an election and filled by someone knowledgeable about the city's fire service needs.

This consolidation differs from other West County consolidations. Fighting fires in the city is different from rural areas. With Sebastopol not represented, Gold Ridge board members from West County might prioritize wildfire equipment and training, neglecting the city's unique fire challenges. Additionally, we are sharing payments on new equipment and will have to ensure decisions made about the fire station are acceptable to the community.

Negotiate to include 2 new Board positions permanently filled by Sebastopol representatives. This is critical to ensure a successful transition period and to ensure Sebastopol's citizens' interests are represented longer term.