



## Staff Report

May 17, 2021 Council Workshop

Professional Services Agreement with Merina +CO

Presenter: Nick Swinhart, Fire Chief

Time Estimate: 20 minutes

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**BACKGROUND:** Since 2014, CWFD has been in a functional consolidation that brought together CFD and WFD in to one organization. The financial cost-sharing agreement that comprises the merger ILA has led to difficulties in the ability of both cities to fund the growing needs of the fire department. Updating/changing the cost-share formula was identified in the organizational scan conducted by the Novak Group. At the 2/16/21 workshop, Council gave direction to begin an RFP process to solicit assistant from a consulting group to conduct a facilitated review of the merger.

**SUMMARY:** The cost sharing formula that forms the basis of the CWFD merger has created friction in the partnership, and has at times, threatened the continuance of it. Both cities have expressed frustration at their inabilities to fund the necessary growth of the fire department. Councils in both cities have expressed interest in having a facilitated review of the merger completed in 2021. Three proposals were received and administration from both cities has selected Merina +CO as the most qualified to conduct this assessment. Merina +CO will make a short presentation and will be available for Council questions.

### **EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS:**

What are the desired results and outcomes for this agenda item?

Council discussion of the proposed vendor contract with Merina +CO. The contract will be placed on the regular council agenda for May 17.

What's the data? What does the data tell us?

The data shows that both cities are having difficulty funding the department with the current cost-share agreement and that the department needs assistance in reviewing the partnership by an outside neutral vendor.

How have communities been engaged? Are there opportunities to expand engagement?

There has been no community outreach on this topic at this time, but Council and the public will be involved and afforded the opportunity for discussion on any proposed changes to the merger ILA.

Who will benefit from, or be burdened by this agenda item?

The fire department will benefit from a stabilized funding mechanism that this assessment may provide. The fire department budget will be negatively burdened by approval of this item, but there are adequate reserves available to fund the contract.

What are the strategies to mitigate any unintended consequences?

There will be discussion with council and the public to ensure that any potential increase in the cost-share formula, or in the partnership, are supported by the facts and the data.

Does this agenda item have a differential impact on underserved populations, people living with disabilities, and/or communities of color? Please provide available data to illustrate this impact.

Changing the cost-share formula or the partnership structure itself, such that it becomes desirable to both communities, would benefit underserved populations. If the CWFD merger were to end, response times would increase. This would negatively impact underserved populations and people living with disabilities, as they tend to be more frequent users of the EMS system.

Will this agenda item improve ADA accessibilities for people with disabilities?

This item will not directly impact ADA accessibility.

What potential hurdles exist in implementing this proposal (include both operational and political)?

Council has given direction that a facilitated review of the partnership is needed, so there should be no political challenges. There will be no operations challenges posed by this contract.

How will you ensure accountabilities, communicate, and evaluate results?

The vendor chosen to conduct the facilitated review of the merger will be monitored closely for results. City administration member, elected officials, and fire department officials, will be closely involved in this process.

How does this item support a comprehensive plan goal, policy or other adopted resolution?

Changing or modifying the cost-share formula of our service merger was recommended in the organizational scan conducted by the Novak Group.

**BUDGET IMPACT:** Hiring Merina +CO to conduct the facilitated review will have a budgetary impact that can be accommodated by CWFD reserves. Changes in the cost-share formula could have future budgetary impacts in both cities.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Discussion with staff and representatives from Merina +CO. This contract is also on the May 17, 2021 Regular Agenda for Council's consideration.