



City of Ketchum

CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA MEMO

Meeting Date: Staff Member/Dept:

Agenda Item:

Recommended Motion:

Reasons for Recommendation:

- Landowners in Ketchum petition to form a new fire district.
- Ketchum City Council votes to join the petition.
- County Commissioners are asked to approve the proposal.
- Ketchum voters vote to approve the formation of the district with a simple majority.
- The new "Ketchum Fire District" board votes to consolidate with Wood River Fire District.
- City of Ketchum dissolves the fire department and transfers assets to the new consolidated fire district.

Policy Analysis and Background:

As you are aware, the subject of fire department consolidation in the Wood River Valley has been discussed for over thirty years. Over the past 18 months, more progress has been made toward consolidating some of the fire departments than at any time in the past. At this point, we have narrowed the procedural options to a single set of recommendations. (above)

City Council will need to decide what to do with the funding currently allocated to the fire department. This could include reducing property taxes that go to the general fund, or re-allocating funding to other uses. This new fire district would be funded by a new property tax. Currently, the fire department is funded through LOT, fire inspections and fees and the general fund.

Refunding the taxes would increase the probability of a successful vote. Alternatively, the city could seek advice on retaining the taxes through surveys or voting.

We are proposing taking the fire district question to the voters in November. While this is a more aggressive timeline than normally advisable, it avoids the possibility of further possible legislative changes taking this option off the table. The Idaho Legislature has not been friendly to fire department consolidation or to local control.

This fire district proposal sidesteps problems in the other methods to consolidation. Annexation would require a supermajority vote of 67% to pass. Annexation would also turn full control over to the Wood River board. The new fire district proposal would have 3 Ketchum residents representing the area.

We still intend to pursue a JPA, however it has been scaled down due to issues found in the process. The main issue is the possibility of significant fees to the retirement system (estimated at \$621,000) caused by moving employees. While not logical, it would require a state legislative fix to overcome. A contract for services poses the same retirement fee problem. The JPA will still be required as Smiley Creek Fire District is not currently ready to consolidate fully.

In the meantime, Wood River Fire District and West Magic Fire District are planning to fully consolidate this summer.

Sustainability Impact:

None

Financial Impact:

None OR Adequate funds exist
in account:

No immediate financial impact.

Attachments:

1. Presentation