

Ophir Hill Fire Protection District

P.O. Box 940 ♦ 12668 Colfax Hwy ♦ Cedar Ridge, CA 95924
(530) 273-8351 ♦ Fax (530) 273-0453 ♦ ophirhillfire.org



June 19, 2024

Nevada County Grand Jury

950 Maidu Avenue, Nevada City, CA. 95959

Honorable Grand Jury.

As requested by the Grand Jury the Ophir Hill Fire Protection District is responding in writing to your requests for response to your report, Fire! Challenges of a Small Rural Fire District. The Grand Jury has asked for response to findings 1.2.3.4. and 5 and also to recommendations 3 and 4.

Finding 1.

The district believes this has been adequately addressed with the Board of Directors unanimous vote to seek a merger with Nevada County Consolidated Fire District, Penn Valley Fire Protection District, and Rough and Ready Fire Protection District. This merger will enhance qualified staffing as well as make the new district a destination to work. Ophir Hill will no longer just be a training ground or stepping stone for new employees.

Finding 2.

The shift schedule of the Fire Captain in question has been adjusted. He currently is working a four on two off, four on, two off, two on then 18 days off. We feel that at this time this is the best option to keep optimal staffing during this upcoming fire season. With limited qualified Company Officer staffing we have few options. Once the merger is in place and we are one fire district it is our understanding that this Fire Captain will have to return to a normal two on, four off schedule.

Finding 3.

It is true the district lacks the funding to adequately staff the station with two personnel twenty-four hours a day seven days a week. The Board of Directors has worked diligently to provide the best staffing within our financial constraints. Thus, a new Fire Suppression Assessment, contract with Grass Valley City

Fire Department, and merging with Nevada County Consolidated, Penn Valley, and Rough and Ready were all researched and discussed at length. The Board felt that merging was the most feasible and most importantly would provide the best level of service in the near future to the residents of the fire district.

Finding 4.

As mentioned above. The Board explored this option and felt that the time, money, and effort in today's economic climate may be an uphill and potentially losing battle. After many discussions it was determined merging was the best option for the district.

Finding 5.

As was in The Grand Jury Report the Board of Directors agrees. Merging with other fire districts is the most realistic option. The Board of Directors voted unanimously at their meeting on May 13, 2024 to enter into talks with mergers with Nevada County Consolidated, Penn Valley, and Rough and Ready Fire districts. We are currently moving forward with this with the three agencies mentioned above.

Recommendation 1.

The Board of Directors has in fact addressed the financial challenges faced by the district as well as the ability to retain qualified staff. The merger with other fire agencies will mitigate this continuing issue and provide an improved level of service to the Ophir Hill area as well as surrounding communities.

Recommendation 2.

The Board is seeking merging with the fire districts mentioned above. As of May 13, 2024, Ophir Hill Fire has started the process to be included in the existing merger taking place with the mentioned agencies.

Respectfully submitted.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robb Rothenberger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robb" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Rothenberger".

Robb Rothenberger

Fire Chief

Ophir Hill Fire Protection District