



FINAL REPORT SERVICE PLANNING COMMITTEE



INTRODUCTION

In early 2018 the Cities of Mountain Iron and Virginia submitted a joint application to the State Fire Marshal's Office for a grant to conduct a Fire Department's Shared Services Study. In March of 2018 the Cities received notice that they grant application was successful and the communities were awarded \$28,750 to conduct the shared services study. At the end of March, the Cities agreed to hire McGrath Consulting Group out of Wonder Lake, IL to conduct the study. In October of 2018 the 125 page study was delivered to Mountain Iron and Virginia. On November 26, 2018, the McGrath Consulting Group made a presentation regarding the study at the Mountain Iron Community Center with the final outcome of the study being a full consolidation of the Mountain Iron and Virginia Fire Departments.

PROCESS

On Wednesday April 17, 2019 a joint Mountain Iron Virginia meeting was held where members of the Fire Departments, City Staff and various board members including City Council members were invited to determine the next steps. The meeting was facilitated by Mountain Iron City Administrator Wainio, Virginia City Administrator See-Benes and John Ehret from the State Fire Marshal's Office. At the conclusion of the presentation, the consensus from the group was that they would like the process to move forward and tasked Administrator's Wainio and See-Benes to develop a plan of action. Also from this meeting a framework of a committee was established and would contain one City Councilor from each City, the two City Administrators, the two Fire Chiefs and a member of each Department.

The City Administrator's came to the conclusion that it would be best if the communities could bring in an outside facilitator to help further the cooperative nature of the process. Also during this period the respective City Councils appointed the members to the Shared Services Planning Committee. Virginia's City Council appointed Councilor Maija Biondich, City Administrator Britt See-Benes, Fire Chief Allen Lewis and the President of International Association of Firefighters Local 390 Frank Roark. Mountain Iron's City Council appointed Councilor Joe Prebeg, City Administrator Craig Wainio, Fire Chief Gerry



JOINT COLLABORATION MEETING

**Mountain Iron & Virginia
Meeting Objectives**

- To formulate the next steps as outlined in the Fire Departments Share Services Study jointly conducted by the two Cities.
- Set up a joint committee to implement the recommendations outlined in the study.
- Set ground rules for the joint committee to assist in accomplishing the goals.

John Ehret, from the State Fire Marshal's Office, will be here to discuss previous cooperative efforts.

Mountain Iron Community Center
8586 Enterprise Drive South
Mountain Iron MN 55768
Wednesday, April 17, 2019
at 2:00PM



Knapper and Assistant Fire Chief Mark Madden. After searching for a facilitator to assist us, the group settled on asking the State Fire Marshal's Office if John Ehret would be available for the role of facilitator. State Fire Marshal Bruce West graciously agreed.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

September 30, 2019 was the date the group agreed upon for their first meeting which was

held at the Mountain Iron Community Center. At this meeting some very important first steps were taken. First we all introduced ourselves, secondly we identified what we thought the role of

Problem/Gap Identification

Raw Data: Followed by grouping of topics

1. How to provide the effective service
2. Shortage in Labor Force
3. Response Times
4. Duplicating Equipment
5. Sustainability
6. Need for professional Management
7. Cost reduction/Public cost-taxes
8. Mrs. Smith/Improve Service
9. Public Perceptions
10. Wages/Benefits/Labor Contracts
11. Professional Security
12. Who is Decision Making
13. Fire Prevention/Code/PE Efforts

Outcomes

- | | | |
|------------|------------------|-----------|
| 2,4,5,7 | (Sustainability) | 22 points |
| 1,3,8,9,13 | (Service Gap) | 14 points |
| 10,11 () | | 7 points |
| 6,12 () | | 5 points |

Mt. Iron, Virginia: Service Planning

Ground Rules as agreed upon September 30, 2019:

1. I will respect other opinions.
2. I will look at others as equal, and treat others with equality.
3. I will treat others utilizing the "Golden Rule".
4. Everyone will be expected to "weigh in" on topics and I will provide input.
5. I will listen respectfully, and try to hear what is being said.
6. I will share information with all in the group, within data practices.
7. I will start and end on time
8. I agree and support one media/information point of contact.
9. I agree to be open minded to ideas, and concepts
10. I agree to honesty and integrity
11. I agree to meet regularly and complete assignments on time
12. I agree to confidentiality as a measure to respect and support the decision making process.
13. I agree to consensus as a measure to support collective decision making

Mr. Ehret and the State Fire Marshal's Office was, we then established the fact that we would reach a consensus on all items prior to moving ahead and most importantly we established a set of ground rules and expectations. These ground rules and expectations were reviewed at the beginning of every subsequent committee meeting.

On October 14th, the second meeting of the Committee was held at the Virginia City Hall where the ground rules and expectations were reviewed we also reviewed what team forming looked like and how the adoption curve of forming, storming, norming and performing would apply to the process. During the meeting the group participate in the nominal process of identifying problems with and gaps in

current services being provided. The number one outcome was sustainability of providing the services that the communities are used to and number two was closing gaps in current services. The group formed the consensus that we are moving ahead by focusing on these two priorities.

The November 4th meeting held in Mountain Iron has us again reviewing the ground rules and expectations and reviewing the needs and gaps results. During this meeting the committee brainstormed a list of all possible solutions to the issues identified at the previous meeting. After discussion, the committee eliminated some items as not solving the issues previously identified and combined closely related items in to a single category. Upon completion of this list the committee discussed to possibility of submitting an implementation grant application to the State Fire Marshal's Office to implement what the final recommendation of the committee was and pending City Council approval.

On December 2nd, the committee held its final meeting planning meeting, again at this meeting we began with the reading of the ground rules and expectations. From there, the committee members were each given three stickers, a red (3 points), a yellow (2 points) and a green (1 point). Members could place all their stickers on one, spread them out, whatever they wanted. The outcome of that vote is presented here and is the committee's finals recommendation.

Once the Service Planning Committee completed its work, it was in total alignment with the Shared Service Study performed in 2018, Full Merger.

Full Merger: 3, (4), 6, 8,10	27 Points
Partial Merger: (4), 12,13,14,15,16,18,19	16 Points
Separate Fire/EMS: 5	1 Point
City/Rural Protection: 18	
Alternate Staff: 20,21	4 points

NEXT STEPS

That brings to the next steps. First, the Service Planning Committee is recommending that the City Council's adopt a Resolution supporting the Committee's findings and authorizing the next step in the process, implementation. By adopting this Resolution, by no means makes

Mt. Iron/Virginia FD

Continuance from Nov 4, 2019 meeting, finalized December 2, 2019

Brainstorming, Proposed solutions 12/2/19

1. ~~Close the doors~~
2. ~~Contract service with Eveleth, Fayal, Gilbert after they merge.~~
3. Full Merger with Eveleth, Fayal, Gilbert
4. Staff Stations (with FD personnel)
5. Separate Fire/EMS
6. Fire District
7. ~~Do Nothing~~
8. Full Merger MIFD/VFD
9. ~~Referendum, Let public Decide~~
10. EMS Taxing District
11. ~~Contract Fire Protection, Disband one of the FDs~~
12. Share budget for equipment
13. Share Maintenance
14. Joint Training
15. Joint Officers
16. Joint Public Education, Fire Code, Investigation,
17. ~~Shared Officer~~
18. City/Rural Fire Protection in MI
19. EMS S2 in MI Collaborative Sharing
20. Alternative staffing (college, coop work experience)
21. Pool resources,/Examine Gap

it certain that a merger is to happen, there is a lot of hard work yet to be done and it will take years to complete, all the Council's are doing is affirming the work completed and authorizing the group to move toward their goals. Secondly, the Committee is recommending that the City Council's adopt a resolution authorizing the application for an implementation grant to assist with legal costs, standardized equipment, joint training, etc. Enclosed, please find a fact sheet concerning the grant.

Upon the blessings of the respective City Council's, the group is ready to move forward with the implementation phase. We would once again request the assistance of Mr. Ehret with the implementation of the Shared Services Study and the Service Planning Committee's recommendations.