



Mary Morris-Mayorga <mmayorga@kensingtonfire.org>

Moving Forward

Dmitry Semenov <dsemenov@ridgelineuni.com>

Wed, Dec 20, 2023 at 10:10 PM

To: Mary Morris-Mayorga <mmayorga@kensingtonfire.org>, David Aranda <DAranda@kppcsd.org>

Mary and David,

After listening to the discussion of the KFPD board tonight, I am very concerned and would like to have a conversation with both of you and preferably with the finance committees of your boards together.

In order for the fiscal study to be a successful project, both districts need to be interested in cooperating and working together – which was our assumption based on prior conversations and the language of the RFP. If there is no meeting of the minds that the study is needed and willingness to work together, there is really no reason to move forward with this.

The tone of some of the KFPD directors during the meeting makes me concerned that the districts are not seeing eye to eye – which I consider to be a pretty good indication that the project is likely to become a wasted effort and would not be completed to your satisfaction.

In terms of traveling to the January KFPD board meeting and doing a presentation, it makes sense to do so only if there is a commitment from both districts to the effort of getting the fiscal study done. It sounds to me that the KFPD board is not even convinced that the study is a worthwhile pursuit – and when that is the case, I am not sure that it is our role as a fiscal consultant to persuade them otherwise.

To avoid wasting time (this has been a pretty involved and costly RFP process already), I would like to request that the KFPD board members provide a written list of questions that they would like us to answer during the meeting two weeks prior to the meeting. Once we see the list of questions, we will make a decision on whether or not it makes sense for us to attend the meeting and to move forward with the project. While we are happy to answer legitimate questions about our work process, deliverables, etc. (which I believe are clearly laid out in our proposal), we are not going to try to change people's minds or be a punching bag for someone not interested in getting the project done.

Also, after observing tonight's discussion and getting a very strong feeling that the whole proposal process has been a waste of time and money, I am afraid that given our workload and the realities of running a business, we would have to treat the attendance of the January board meeting as an additional in-person meeting per the conditions stated in the proposal and there will be a charge of \$1,200, payable regardless of whether or not we are awarded the contract. I hope you can appreciate where I am coming from.

Please, let me know several time slots that work for your team to have a conversation.

Sincerely,



Dmitry Semenov | Principal



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A Few Thoughts

Dmitry Semenov <dsemenov@ridgelineuni.com>

Fri, Dec 22, 2023 at 11:42 AM

To: David Aranda <DAranda@kppcsd.org>, Mary Morris-Mayorga <mmayorga@kensingtonfire.org>

Mary and David,

Thank you to both of you for reaching out yesterday. I had great conversations with you and that sparked some thoughts that I wanted to share with you.

1. It appears to me that the current attitudes of two members of the fire district board make it problematic for the consolidation effort to move forward. Bringing two agencies together will be a monumental task even if everyone is rowing in the same direction. With strong internal opposition it will be frustrating and painful in the best case and pretty darn impossible (and one of the worst experiences of the lifelong careers for everyone involved) in the worst case scenario.
2. With that, the first step should be on the fire district side to work with its board and other key decisionmakers to make sure that the district can approach the process with an open mind and willingness to work together (both districts need to have that, but the police district so far seems to be ready to do that). Without that, anything we do would be just a pursuit of pain and wasted effort.
3. Once there is willingness to work together on both sides, the districts would need to come together and do the following:
 - a. Perform strategic assessment / planning on a stand-alone basis and honestly look at what strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities you face if you stay as separate agencies.
 - b. Once there is clarity of what your individual situations are, the districts can perform a joint assessment and planning session (or a series of sessions) to discuss what the consolidated agency looks like and lay out any concerns on the table. Similarly, an honest look at the consolidated strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities will need to be done.

At the end of this strategic planning effort, you will have a much better idea of whether or not you want to continue exploring the consolidation.

4. Only after that would it make sense to do the fiscal analysis. Having clarity on the individual and joint visions will make the fiscal analysis so much easier and useful. And the fiscal study will help illuminate any financial things to work through.

So, how can Ridgeline help you make this process a success?

1. With the current attitude of the two fire district board members, I don't think we can. As long as these board members have the attitude that they displayed in the last meeting, trying to do a fiscal study will be a waste of your money and of your and our time. Somehow the attitude of the fire district board needs to change, whether it is through the addition of another member, retirement of these two members, or an attitude adjustment of these two members. Until that happens, we are not prepared to commence the work, as we cannot guarantee that we can provide a good service for you.
2. Once there is willingness to work together on both sides, if you would like (and we would absolutely love to do it), we can help you go through the strategic assessment and planning process. We can facilitate the planning sessions and make sure that all key issues are brought to the surface and honestly discussed and evaluated. After the sessions, we can put together the roadmap for the next steps.
3. After that we will do the fiscal analysis and help you evaluate the financial realities of the individual and joint plans.
4. Finally, once the decisions are made on whether the districts will continue to exist as individual entities or move forward to consolidate, we can prepare the strategic plan (consolidated) or plans (individual) based on the prior work.

If this is something that is of interest, let's the three of us have a call after the holidays and discuss the logistics of the process. Mary mentioned that the new board member will be appointed on January 11 and maybe we can talk after at least that is known. Then Mary will need to get to work with her board.

That being said, I think it is safe to say that Mary can inform the board that we will not be presenting on January 17. Also, as I mentioned, I will be out of the country in February and the earliest that we can meet with the fire district board is in March (assuming that the process is moving forward per the discussion above).

Have a Merry Christmas and an amazing New Year!



Dmitry Semenov | Principal



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