



BOARD MEETING AGENDA SUBMITTAL

TO: GCSB Board of Directors

FROM: Peter Kampa, General Manager

DATE: July 10, 2023

SUBJECT: Agenda Item 1A: Discussion and Board Direction Regarding the Potential for District Involvement in the Operation of the Groveland Community Resilience Center

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

This item is intended for Board discussion and direction, and to receive community input on how the GCSB can best coordinate, assist and partner with the County in the operation of the Groveland Community Resilience Center to benefit the region's needs.

BACKGROUND:

This item is before the Board today at the request of the Board President and concerned public members of the Groveland Community. In 2018 Groveland Community Services District (GCSB) offered the County of Tuolumne 2.5 acres of property free of charge to facilitate construction of a portion of the Groveland Community Resilience Center (GCRC). The land was donated in hopes of creation of a mutually beneficial partnership in operation of the GCRC. This Center was built with grant funding through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development grant. The project cost approximately \$15,000,000 to construct and the intent of the GCRC is to "create a facility to foster social cohesion and community resiliency" for the greater Groveland area. The County OES committed to oversee the new facility during emergencies, and the County Recreation Department will oversee the center when emergencies are not happening. On November 9th, 2022, the County celebrated the Dedication of the Groveland Community Resilience Center, however due to a variety of issues beyond the control of the County, final construction and acceptance of the GCRC remains incomplete and the facility is currently not available for regular public use.

In January 2023 the Groveland area experienced heavy snowstorms which resulted in a county declared disaster. The storms also resulted in an emergency situation in the Groveland area with extended electrical power outages, little to no road access to many areas and freezing temperatures. The GCRC was inaccessible due to snow accumulation. GCSB worked with the county OES and encouraged the opening of the GCRC as a warming center and possible shelter due primarily to the expected long power outage. GCSB assisted with opening the facility by sending staff, shoveling snow from walkways and plowing snow from the parking lot. As the GCRC was not yet publicly open at that time, there was no formal communication plan in place by the county or GCSB to notify the public of the temporary shelter opening, however both entities pushed the message

out on their normal communication channels and there were a few visitors that enjoyed and needed the warm rooms, snacks, water and electronics charging capabilities.

The first significant heatwave occurred during the last week of June 2023, with multiple days of temperatures over 100 degrees and little nighttime cooling. On Friday June 28th parts of Pine Mountain Lake lost power for several hours due to a vehicle accident, with power restored Friday evening. On Saturday June 29th the township of Groveland, Pine Mountain Lake and the 120 Corridor woke up to no power due to what PG&E stated was a weather-related issue and no notification was given to affected customers. The power outage was nearly continuous from Saturday morning through Monday evening.

This outage happened during an Excessive Heat Warning as issued by the National Weather Service, and on the busiest weekend of the year for the Groveland area. The hotels, rental homes, camps and resorts were all fully occupied. The power outage caused many of Groveland and surrounding area community members and tourists considerable stress such as heat exhaustion, spoiled food and the inability to recharge communication devices or E-vehicles, or to operate critical medical equipment. Restaurants closed, hotels and rentals lost guests and the ability to serve those that remained. GCSD experienced stressed employees with many hours of overtime and thousands of dollars in fuel for backup generators.

Following a full day power outage which was expected to continue, high heat and population in the area, GCSD management on Sunday morning conferred with County OES to determine if they planned to open the GCRC as a cooling center/community resource center and was informed they were not opening. Therefore, GCSD management determined that a community emergency existed and that the opening of a cooling center/community resource center was needed as a public health and safety matter. Please note that GCSD is not the health official and is not qualified or authorized to make public health emergency determinations on behalf of the county. The District does have the ability to predict and recognize such emergency conditions and can provide public facilities for this type of emergency under its Park/Recreation, Community Center Operation and Fire/Emergency Services authorities. The District opened a cooling center from noon to 4PM on Sunday in its office Board room and staffed it with CERT members, District staff and board members. The GCSD cooling center reopened on Monday from 7:30 AM to 4:00PM when the power went off once again. GCSD management coordinated the opening of the center with County OES, who provided bottled water from PG&E.

GCSD acted to open the cooling center after confirming with the County that this particular emergency did not meet their criteria for a Public Health Emergency. District staff opened the Board room as a temporary cooling and charging station center out of care and concern for the community. The GCSD Board room has a small capacity and is accessed by traversing through portions of the administrative office, which can be a risk to District property and safety liability. In addition, the cost of staffing, supplies and power for the cooling center are paid by District taxpayers and ratepayers. As one of the purposes for which the GCRC was funded and constructed, planning is of critical

importance for opening this facility as a cooling and community resource center during emergencies such as experienced last week.

GCSD may be well poised to assist the county in managing or assisting in the operation of the GCRC in emergency situations such as this, or on a regular basis since the GCSD office is in close proximity to the GCRC and has qualified, experienced personnel. Regardless of any formal GCSD involvement in the GCRC, it would be most helpful to receive from the County information on how it intends to operate the facility, such as when it is anticipated to open, how emergency openings will be managed, use scheduling, charging of rental fees, staff assigned to the facility and any regular hours on site, as well as how those entities intending to use the facilities on a regular basis are integrated into the operation. GCSD intends to hold its Board of Directors meetings in the GCRC once it is open to the public.

ATTACHMENTS:

None