

# Chino Valley Independent Fire District

## STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** October 13, 2021

**TO:** SARAH RAMOS-EVINGER, PRESIDENT  
ALL MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

**FROM:** DAVE WILLIAMS, ACTING FIRE CHIEF

**SUBJECT:** OVERVIEW OF PLAN TO TRANSITION FIRE DISTRICT FROM AT-LARGE TO BY-DIVISION ELECTIONS AND ADOPTION OF BOUNDARY MAP

### **PURPOSE:**

Purpose is to provide the Board of Directors with an overview of the Fire District's plan to transition from at-large to by-division elections and adopt a boundary map pursuant to the California Voting Rights Act (CVRA) and associated statutes, and present a schedule for the process to complete this transition.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Chino Valley Fire District currently has an "at-large" electoral system where voters from the entire Fire District vote for all members of the Board of Directors. This is in contrast to a "by-division" electoral system where the jurisdiction is divided into smaller divisions and a candidate must reside within that division in order to be elected by voters residing within that division.

At a Regular Board meeting held on January 13, 2021, the Board of Directors adopted Resolution No. 2021-06 declaring its intention to transition from an at-large to a by-division electoral system to comply with the California Voting Rights Act (CVRA). The Fire Protection District Law provides that if a district's board is currently elected by divisions, the governing body must adjust the boundaries of the election divisions before November 1 of the year following the year in which the federal census is taken. Since the last federal census was taken in 2020, the boundaries would have been established by November 1, 2021, if the District's board were currently adopted by divisions. However, that provision of the Fire Protection District Law does not apply to the District, since the District's board is not currently adopted by divisions. But when staff brought the resolution of intention to the Board in January of 2021, it was staff's intention to attempt to meet that November 1, 2021 timeframe.

Since that time, the census data was delayed due to COVID-19 and it became evident that the November 1, 2021 deadline could not realistically be met for districts that the Fire Protection District Law pertains to. The Fire District has closely followed the census data availability projections and developing legislation regarding a modified due date for special districts. The census data finally became available in September and the Fire District can now move forward with the bi-division election adoption process. SB594 (Glazer), legislation extending the

completion due date of by-division electoral processes for special districts, was passed by both the Senate and the Assembly and presented to the Governor on September 9, 2021. The Governor signed the bill on September 27<sup>th</sup>, extending the compliance date to April 17, 2022.

A summary outlining specific steps and minimum requirements that the Fire District plans to undertake to achieve a successful transition are as follows:

- Engage a demographer to assist the Fire District in establishing divisions, in compliance with the CVRA.

*A contract was signed retaining the services of National Demographics Corporation (NDC) and the Fire District has participated in several planning meetings with NDC.*

- Conduct public outreach to explain the process of forming divisions and encourage public participation and input.

*Outreach will be conducted through social media, CVIFD website, press releases and explained at required public hearings.*

- Hold at least two public hearings over a period of no more than thirty (30) days, at which the public is invited to provide input regarding the composition of the divisions and to consider division boundaries.

*The two public hearings will be held before drawing any draft maps of the proposed division boundaries.*

- After the two-initial input-gathering public hearings, NDC will draw at least two draft maps; publish the draft maps on the Fire District website, and hold two additional public hearings over a period of no more than forty-five (45) days, at which the public and the Board will be able to review and provide input regarding the content of the draft maps.

- Hold a final public meeting for the Board of Directors to consider adopting the resolution establishing by-division elections, including the adoption of the division boundary map and the sequence of the division elections.

Below is a proposed timeline for meeting the above requirements:

October 18, 2021	Begin public outreach through CVIFD website, social media and press releases.
November 17, 2021 (Special Board Meeting)	1 <sup>st</sup> Public Hearing – Prior to drafting map
December 8, 2021 (Regular Board Meeting)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing – Prior to drafting maps
December 9, 2021 – January 6, 2022	NCD to draft at least two maps
January 12, 2022 (Regular Board Meeting)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Public Hearing – Review draft maps and discuss election sequence
February 9, 2022 (Regular Board Meeting)	4 <sup>th</sup> Public Hearing – Review final draft map and discuss election sequence

March 9, 2022  
(Regular Board Meeting)

Approve by-division election resolution and adopt final map.

NDC's role in support of the by-division elections process will be as follows:

- Assist the District with project planning and outreach.
- Build a demographic database of the 2020 Federal Census, American Community Survey, and California Statewide Database for the project.
- Add applicable GIS data that the Fire District wishes to include in the project.
- Process any map submissions from residents and provide an excel template for this purpose.
- Draw at least 2 draft map proposals and make applicable District-requested revisions to them.
- Provide web-friendly pdf maps and demographic details for all draft maps.
- Create an interactive map where Board Members, staff and residents can review (but not draw or edit) proposed draft maps in detail.
- Work with the County Registrar to implement the District's adopted division boundary map.

The Fire District will provide an information portal on the Fire District website dedicated to the project for access to Board Members, staff and residents.

Legal Counsel has reviewed the plan for transitioning the Fire District from at-large to by-division elections to ensure all legal requirements are met for a successful project and to meet the April 17, 2022 compliance date.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the Board of Directors receive and file the information provided to transition the Fire District from at-large to by-division elections and adopt division boundary map.