

AGENDA ITEM 5.A.

MEETING: November 4, 2024
TO: Trinity LAFCo Commissioners
FROM: Colette Santsche, Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Resolution to Extend the Remediation Period set by Resolution 24-03 for Post Mountain Public Utility District

SUMMARY

The Commission will consider adopting a resolution to extend the remediation period for Post Mountain Public Utility District to December 31, 2026. At the end of the extended remediation period, the Commission may either approve the dissolution of the District or rescind the Resolution of Intent to Initiate Dissolution (Resolution No. 2024-03) and take no further action.

BACKGROUND

Post Mountain PUD is an independent multi-purpose district authorized to provide fire protection and road maintenance services under the Public Utility District Act (Public Utilities Code §15501 et seq.).

In August 2023, Trinity LAFCo adopted a Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence (MSR/SOI) update identifying chronic service deficiencies, governance instability, and financial non-compliance. The Commission established a provisional sphere of influence and directed the District to complete specific corrective actions within 12 months, including audits, reporting, board compliance, volunteer recruitment, and training improvements. The following is a summary of findings presented in the 2023 MSR:

- **Fire services:** The District responds to a limited number of wildland and structure fires throughout the year, is unable to respond to medical calls, and has difficulty recruiting volunteers and keeping up with training requirements.
- **Road maintenance:** The District does not have an established source of funding to support road maintenance and generally relies on donations from the community and fire assessment funds, which is discouraged and potentially inappropriate use of funds. The District does not have the necessary equipment to conduct road maintenance and must contract for work when funding is available. As such, the road system is in a state of disrepair, does not meet current county standards, and impedes access for residents and emergency vehicles.
- **Electricity acquisition:** Electric service has not been historically provided by PMPUD and is considered a latent power. Currently, no electricity service is available in the Post Mountain area. While the area falls outside of the jurisdictional boundary and service area of Trinity Public Utilities District, it is located within Trinity PUD's SOI indicating Trinity PUD would be the appropriate service provider should electricity services be extended to the area.
- **Governance:** The District has had difficulty recruiting Board members and for a period of time from fall 2022 to summer 2023, there were only two active members which meant the District was unable to conduct business.
- **Financial standing:** As of the adoption of the MSR, the District was in non-compliance for financial reporting. Audits had not been conducted for several years, budgets had been provided to the county inconsistently, and state reporting was inconsistent. Based on available financial information, the District had been operating at a loss for five of the six years reviewed.

In October 2024, after limited progress was demonstrated, the Commission adopted Resolution 2024-03, a Resolution of Intent to Initiate Dissolution, pursuant to Government Code §56375.1. The action provided a 12-month remediation period to allow the District to address deficiencies prior to further consideration of dissolution.

DISCUSSION

Since the Commission's adoption of Resolution 2024-03, Post Mountain PUD has continued to demonstrate progress in governance, administration, and fire services operations, despite ongoing fiscal and staffing constraints.

Audit and Financial Management:

The District has made substantial progress catching up on its financial reporting obligations. A biennial audit for FY 2022-23 and FY 2023-24 was completed and submitted to the County Auditor-Controller, along with the approved FY 2025-26 budget. This represents a significant improvement in compliance with statutory financial reporting requirements and supports greater fiscal transparency and accountability.

Governance and Leadership:

Earlier in 2025, as documented in LAFCo's mid-year status report, the District experienced significant governance challenges involving two board members. Those individuals are no longer serving, and the District is actively filling the resulting vacancies. The Board now benefits from improved participation and more consistent meetings. Importantly, the District has also retained legal counsel, providing critical support for policy development, compliance, and procedural oversight.

Road Maintenance and Future Funding:

PMPUD remains responsible for about 27 miles of roads and lacks a dedicated revenue source for upkeep. The 2023 engineering study estimated a need for roughly \$173 per parcel annually to sustain basic maintenance activities.

To address structural deterioration, the District has partnered with Flowra and Cannabis for Conservation on the Post Mountain Sediment Reduction Project, a grant-funded effort to identify and repair major road-based sediment sources. Supported by the Watershed Research and Training Center, Trinity County RCD, and the Nor-Rel-Muk Tribe, this project—funded under the EPA 319(h) Nonpoint Source Program—focuses on capital-level road repairs such as culvert upgrades, drainage improvements, and erosion control.

By contrast, the proposed 2026 special tax measure would fund ongoing operations and preventive maintenance, including grading, snow removal, and emergency road clearing. The combination of grant-funded structural repair and a locally funded maintenance program is essential for achieving sustainable road service delivery.

Fire Services – Site Visit Findings:

In October 2025, retired Fire Chief Bill Gillespie (Humboldt Bay Fire and Crescent City Fire and Rescue) conducted an independent site visit to assess the status of the Post Mountain Volunteer Fire Department (Attachment A). The visit included a full review of facilities, apparatus, and volunteer operations, and conversations with Chief Astrid Dobo and Board President Blong Yang. Chief Gillespie reported measurable progress:

- **Fire Department Staffing:** The all-volunteer force currently includes eight certified firefighters with several new applicants. Regular monthly trainings are being conducted and recorded; one volunteer attends regional training with Hayfork FPD, improving coordination and training quality.
- **Facilities & Equipment:** The fire station and apparatus were found to be in serviceable condition. The primary Type II/III engine and 4,000-gallon tender are operational; a rescue vehicle and quick-attack engine are available. However, several units require repairs, and the solar system and generator backup at the station need maintenance to ensure reliable power.
- **Services:** The department responds to wildland and structure fires but does not currently provide medical aid response. Re-establishing Basic Life Support service through Nor-Cal EMS would improve coverage given long ambulance response times from Hayfork.
- **Community Engagement:** Outreach and volunteer participation are improving, particularly among Hmong residents, helping rebuild trust and local involvement.

Chief Gillespie's assessment concluded that the District is moving in a positive direction and recommended continued LAFCo support to allow PMPUD to complete its remediation and stabilization efforts. He emphasized the need for additional funding, expanded training, and coordination with the County and neighboring agencies to ensure sustainable service delivery.

Continued Viability Considerations

While the District's progress is commendable, its long-term viability depends on resolving two core issues:

1. Road Maintenance Funding: Passage of the 2026 special tax is essential to maintaining service viability. Should that measure fail, LAFCo may need to coordinate with Trinity County to explore divestiture of the road function or other reorganization options to ensure service continuity.
2. Emergency Medical Service Capacity: The majority of local emergency calls are medical in nature. PMPUD must either re-establish medical response and dispatch authorization through Nor-Cal EMS or pursue a contract for service or reorganization with a neighboring provider—such as Hayfork FPD—to ensure adequate emergency response.

Extending the remediation period through 2026 will provide time for the District to pursue these funding and service strategies and demonstrate measurable outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission adopt Resolution No. 2025-07 (Attachment B), extending the remediation period established by Resolution 2024-03 through December 31, 2026, to allow PMPUD to:

1. Conduct a successful special tax election to fund ongoing road maintenance;
2. Continue implementing operational and governance improvements identified in the 2025 site visit; and
3. Re-establish medical response capacity—either directly, through a contract for service, or by reorganization with a neighboring fire provider—to ensure reliable emergency service coverage.

Attachments:

- A) PMPUD Site Visit Summary
- B) Draft Resolution No. 2025-07

Post Mountain Public Utility District Site Visit Summary

From October 3rd, 2025, 10:00 AM

On Friday, October 3rd, 2025, I met with members of the Post Mountain Public Utility District and the Post Mountain Volunteer Fire Department at their station in Post Mountain. The goal of the site visit was to meet with personnel, view the current facilities, apparatus, and equipment, and to develop an understanding of the status of the fire department specifically as operated by the Post Mountain Public Utility District.

I met with staff at the Post Mountain Fire Hall, located at 731 White Oak Road in Post Mountain. Present were Board member Blong Yang, Fire Chief Astrid Dobo, and former Board member Peter Dobo. We had brief introductions, then talked about the board and department.

Board And Department

The Post Mountain Public Utility District is led by a five-member board. Until approximately six months ago, the Board was fully staffed with five members and meeting regularly, now on the 2nd Friday of the month at 10:00AM. This was up from the level noted in the 2023 Municipal Service Review (MSR). Earlier this year, one board member became confrontational to the Fire Chief during a board meeting where the Fire Chief was conveying important information to the board. This resulted in two board members walking out of the meeting and not returning to subsequent monthly meetings. After a period of time and missed meetings by the two, the remaining board took action to remove the two from their positions and advertised the two board vacancies to the local Post Mountain community. Per Board Chair Blong, the board had four interested candidates for the two positions during my site visit. The Board plans to take action to select and fill in the vacant board positions at their next meeting.

The fire department side of the district is an all-volunteer force. There are currently eight (8) certified volunteer firefighters that were active in the department, three (3) of which are new members. Additionally, there are two (2) additional prospective members who had not yet been voted in at the time of my visit. The department has been meeting to train at least once per month, with training records of attendance and training topics being retained at the station. Trainings focus heavily on wildland fire tactics and safety, equipment operation and familiarization. The Post Mountain fire member conducting most of their internal training has also been attending outside training with Hayfork Fire at their invitation. This can benefit Post Mountain in that it provides their primary training member who is

conducting trainings internally additional training, and new training ideas and approach to keep trainings engaging and valid to the membership.

The department responds primarily to wildland fires and a few structure fires annually within the Post Mountain district and community. The department also responds to vehicle fires within the Post Mountain area. The department is occasionally called out onto Highway 36 for fire calls, both west toward Forest Glen and east towards Wildwood, as this area has very little fire response coverage aside from the U.S. Forest Service when staffed. Total fire responses account for between six (6) and fifteen (15) calls per year, depending on fire activity. On September 2nd, 2025, a large wildfire occurred in the Post Mountain area. The fire ultimately burned more than 100 acres. Units from Post Mountain, Forest Service, CalFire, Hayfork, Hyampon, and other Trinity County fire departments responded to the blaze. Staff noted that the county had just upstaffed local fire engines to preposition staffed engines in the county due to increased fire danger in the county, which shortened the response time for some agencies. Over the next few days the fire was mitigated. This has been and largest fire in the area this year.

The department does not respond to medical calls. Per staff, and per the 2023 MSR, medical aid response was removed from the call types answered by Post Mountain in the past. Current medical response within the Post Mountain District is covered by Trinity County Life Support (TCLS), the ambulance provider for northern and central Trinity County. Primary response for TCLS comes from their base in Hayfork, and secondary response from Weaverville should Hayfork be committed elsewhere. There is ongoing discussion about trying to move back to medical aid response, which will require department members to complete an Emergency Medical Responder course (sometimes called “First Responder” or “Public Safety First Aid”), and re-establish medical response service standing with Nor-Cal EMS, the Local Emergency Service Agency with certification oversight for Trinity, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, and Sierra counties. Re-establishment of medical aid response would increase the service for the Post Mountain community, as long response times from Hayfork or Weaverville decrease the survivability profile of people requiring medical aid response during a critical medical emergency. Re-establishing medical service was also mentioned in the 2023 MSR. Per staff, this would likely add 15-20 response per year to the department.

In addition to the Board members and fire department members, there are two (2) volunteer road department members who assist with roadway repairs.

Post Mountain Fire Station

We toured the current station. The station is a commercial style metal building with a large roll up door on one end, and entry doors on the east side. The station appears to be approximately 40 feet wide and 60 feet long. The station sits on a property lot at the intersection of Trinity Pines Drive and White Oak Road, with the property at approximately 3,420 feet elevation above sea level. The property has two access roads leading into the property, with one going to the front of the station off of White Oak Road, and the other access road running from the intersection of Trinity Pines and White Oak uphill to the rear of the station, then along the east side of the building.



The station appeared to be in relatively good condition. The building is an “off grid” station and does not connect to outside electrical power. This is the same for the overall Post Mountain community, as the area is not served by PG&E or the Trinity County Public Utilities District. Ironically, 115Kv PG&E powerlines cross the Post Mountain area, but the local community was never connected to service in the past. The Post Mountain Board has recently been exploring bringing electricity to the area, but the cost appears substantial. The station also does not have dedicated telephone, cable or internet service. This limits the ability to do online incident reporting, training, and grant application submittal from the station; this must occur offsite.

The fire station is powered by a portable generator sitting just inside the apparatus bay door when lighting is needed in the building. Per staff, there is a solar system for the building, with a small array of panels on the roof. The solar system is currently out of service, as the system needs the storage batteries replaced. The station has a room that serves as an office and meeting area. The station is heated via propane wall heaters from tank located outside of the rear of the station. Adjacent to the office are a set of open personal protective equipment (PPE) storage lockers where members store structural turnouts and wildland PPE. There was a mezzanine storage area built above the office and over the rear portion of the apparatus bay.

Outside the station, there is a large metal tank of approximately 10,000-gallon capacity that is used to store water for filling fire apparatus. In the past this tank was reported to not be available for use, but at the time of my visit, staff reported that the tank was full. Staff also reported a secondary filling location at a department member’s home that can provide 50-90 gallons per minute to fill fire apparatus. There is a second, smaller plastic tank that serves the water needs of the station itself. This tank did contain water.

The station has good clearance from vegetation, which is very important for a building located in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone for State Responsibility Area (SRA) and surrounded by a Moderate Fire Severity Zone as rated by the US Forest Service for forest lands. The roadway and parking/service area surrounding the station is graded gravel. There is a small metal storage building separate from the station, with a Post Mountain Community Board standing in front of it.









Within the station were two fire district vehicles. The first was an engine that appeared to be either a type II or type III style conventional cab, two-wheel drive International Navistar chassis. This unit has been referred to as the “city” type engine in the prior 2023 Municipal Services Review (MSR). Staff said that the engine was purchased a number of years ago, and staff could not remember the unit responding to a fire in recent years. This is due to the batteries needing to be replaced. Additionally, this unit does not do well in the winter, traversing snowy and icy roads due to its two-wheel drive configuration, per staff.

The second vehicle was a Ford 4-wheel drive rescue or squad type vehicle, with a utility bed with compartments to haul equipment and tools. The vehicle is used occasionally. The vehicle appeared that it could be utilized as a medical aid response vehicle should the department recertify and begin responding to medical aid calls in the future.

Also on site the day of my visit was the department's primary fire engine, a 4-wheel drive Chevy 7500 of either Type II or Type III classification. Per staff, the engine runs and pumps very well. It is also very capable of traversing the community roads, even during periods of snow in the winter. The unit looked well equipped, with hose, nozzles, a chainsaw, and also stores an older set of extrication tools. I saw this unit run, as it returned to the station from a fuel run after I had arrived for the site visit.

A Ford F-350 4-wheel drive was parked on the east side of the station. Staff referred to this engine as the "Chiefs" vehicle. It appeared to be a Type VI quick attack type engine, with utility body, tank and pump.



The department's water tender was not at the station, and is routinely stored at a member's home, as it does not fit within the station. The water tender, with a 4,000 gallon tank was received from Hayfork a number of years ago. Staff said that the water tender runs well and is utilized when they have a response to a fire in the community.

Also at the station was an older dump truck with a snow removal blade on its front, and a pickup parked behind the station with a snow removal blade. I did not inquire as to the status of either of these vehicles but understand from staff that road maintenance and snow removal are also tasks of the District. Per staff, Trinity County does plow the county jurisdiction roads in the community as they can during times of heavy snow. Staff said that the Post Mountain community does receive a respectable amount of snow in the winter, as it drops into the basin area from the surrounding mountains.

The District is unique in that it is responsible for fire protection response, as well as road maintenance of the non-Trinity County and non-Forest Service roads within the District. Per staff, there are approximately 1,024 lots within the District, served by more than 50 roads stretching approximately 27 miles; these roads are the responsibility of the District to try to maintain. Because maintenance has been minimal due to limited funds, the roads can pose difficulties for fire response. This is compounded in the winter, when snow can further hinder and limit fire response. There have been many times in the past that the board had to prioritize funding for culvert repair, and funding shifted to support that obligation rather than to support the fire department.

Staffing Challenges

As previously noted, the department currently has approximately six active members, with three new members attending training. Response is further constrained by certified and licensed driver operators. The department only has a few drivers that possess a commercial drivers license to drive the fire engines and water tender. An alternative to a commercial Class A or B commercial drivers license requirement is detailed in California Vehicle Code section 12804.11 which allows a firefighter endorsement on a Class A, B, or C license. This endorsement comes through the combination of training and certification, and with a letter from the Fire Chief to the Department of Motor Vehicles. It applies and is available to both career and volunteer firefighters. Many local fire departments have shifted to the firefighter endorsement on a Class C license method rather than the full commercial class A or B license. The firefighter endorsement may require a person to take a DMV administered firefighter knowledge test for new drivers, but long-term existing drivers on a commercial drivers license can convert to a firefighter endorsement if they have no other

need for a commercial driver license. The firefighter endorsement also does not require a commercial driver physical every two years, but rather a standard physical every four years, and submission of a Health Questionnaire (DL 546). More information about the Firefighter Endorsement can be found at: <https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/driver-education-and-safety/educational-materials/fast-facts/firefighter-endorsement-training-requirements-ffdl-42/>

Recruitment and Retention was discussed during our visit. The department does ok with retention once a firefighter joins the department and completes training, but recruitment is tough in a small community. Challenges with bringing new members on include funding for turnouts and wildland PPE. Training is also a challenge, as most State Fire Training classes are geared toward a 40-hour training week, are often hosted in areas away from the District, and that is very hard for volunteers working all week to attend. In-house training of new members also takes time to get prospective new members up to speed to be able to respond. The added challenge to training new members is that their work can pull them away from the department and they miss training drills, thus extending the timeframe to bring new members on and having them available to respond.

PPE cost is significant to outfit new and existing members. The PPE that I saw at the station appeared to be in very good shape and was from a quality manufacturer. New members often receive hand me down PPE that was replaced for other members. This can present another challenge for departments, especially small departments with a lower incident frequency is that while the gear shows little wear, time is ticking from the day that PPE is placed in service. The National Fire Protection Association 1851 requires PPE to be replaced at ten (10) years of service life. This is a large undertaking for small departments, as 1-2 sets of PPE can often cost more than the department's entire operating budget. Some of the structural turnouts that I observed at Post Mountain were in very good condition, but past the 10-year replacement standard. To give perspective, that set of turnouts may have been to a dozen calls in its life showing little wear, but is technically timed out due to age. As a fire chief, I struggled with this in two different departments due to the cost of PPE. To maximize funding, for a number of years CalFire has administered the Volunteer Fire Capacity (VFC) Grant program, which is a federally funded grant that allows California to provide local, rural fire departments with minor firefighting, communications, training, and safety equipment for their volunteer firefighters. The program is a 50/50 match and can fund from a minimum of \$500 to a maximum of \$20,000. I have seen this program used successfully in other small departments to help increase purchasing dollars.

Added to the challenges mentioned above about recruiting new members as shared by staff was that it was hard to attract new members from the Hmong population which makes up a sizable population in Post Mountain, as there is a historic distrust of authority, as the Hmong people have been persecuted in the past. Adding to the challenge of distrust occurred a couple years ago in the Post Mountain community when a community member's dog was killed by law enforcement during a cannabis raid. In 2021, an incident in Mt. Shasta Vista (Siskiyou County) where a Hmong man was shot by law enforcement after he pulled a handgun while being evacuated from a wildland fire, and people in Post Mountain spoke to that event. Post Mountain staff said there have been times when a wildland fire has occurred in the community, and when the fire department arrives, they find numerous Hmong residents actively trying to fight the fire rather than notifying the fire department. It has been said that Blong Yang becoming a board member and a firefighter has helped to begin building trust with local residents.

Other Challenges

Staff noted other challenges to the department as well. One involved reimbursement for fire apparatus and firefighters responding to US Forest Service fires on Federal Responsibility Area (FRA) and Calfire SRA. Staff was under the impression that they needed a local contract with the Forest Service to be reimbursed for fire response. The California Fire Assistance Agreement (CFAA) is the agreement for local government fire and emergency assistance to the State of California (IE. CalOES and CalFire) and the federal fire agencies (USFS, BLM, NPS, etc). It spells out how local government agencies will be reimbursed by the state and federal agencies. The CFAA can be found here:

<https://gacc.nifc.gov/oscc/cwgc/cfaa.php#>

There are documents that must be completed, including timecards and/or shift tickets for the event. In some cases, there's an hour requirements for how long a local resource has to be on an incident before the reimbursement begins. I would suggest that department staff discuss the CFAA and requirements with USFS, CalFire, and CalOES to gain a better understanding of the process and the requirements for incident reimbursement. This can apply to local fires, as well as for strike team deployments.

Staff and the 2023 MSR revealed that Post Mountain has not participated in strike team deployments due to staffing. Strike teams assignments typically require a staff of three persons on the apparatus, and Post Mountain simply could not send that many people out. Some departments in other areas have begun to pool staff to send an engine out. This concept model has been used successfully in Southern Humboldt and in Del Norte to

provide staffing on an engine. Often, the department supplying the engine would supply the operator, and firefighter positions could be filled by qualified personnel from other locations. All must be qualified and covered by their respective agency Workers Compensation insurance. Staff might meet with neighboring departments and explore the idea of cross staffing apparatus with qualified personnel from more than one department.

Related to this, staff indicated during our site visit that they have considered selling the two-wheel drive engine that is stored at the fire station. Selling the unit would provide one-time funds that the department/district could use. Another approach may be to utilize the engine as a strike team, task force, or preposition engine. The engine would need to be in good operating condition, be outfitted to meet the standard for that level of engine, typically as a Type III, with a full hose and equipment complement of the required items. Used as a strike team engine, whether with a full Post Mountain crew or a blended agency crew, the board could receive the equipment use payment, plus an administrative fee for processing the necessary record keeping timecards for the incident or strike team. Many agencies receive much needed funding in this manner. Staff will need to be sure that all apparatus being deployed onto a strike team/task force assignment is in good operating condition and properly outfitted with the required tools and equipment. Additionally, all personnel must have their “red card” showing their required wildland certifications to operate on a strike team.

Chief Dobo mentioned during the site visit that she had been working on an overhead certification as a trainee, and that she had been sponsored through another agency out of the area. She might look into having her taskbook sponsored through Post Mountain PUD if that can be achieved, as the board could also receive the administrative fee for processing her incident assignments. The USFS or CalOES representative may be able to provide further information on this.

Service Deficiencies Needing Attention From the 2023 MSR:

The following steps need to be taken by the District to improve the overall standing of the District and improve the level of services provided:

1. Work with the Trinity County Auditor-Controller to conduct previously uncompleted audits for the District and implement a process to ensure minimum financial requirements under Government Code Section 26909 are completed in a timely manner.
2. Provide annual reports to the State Controller for publication.

3. Prepare for and seek voter approval for a special tax or property owner approval of a special assessment to fund road maintenance services in accordance with Proposition 218 procedures.

BG: Per staff at the site visit, the Board is exploring this currently and trying to determine an appropriate level of assessment that would cover needs and still be approved by the voters.

4. Conduct community outreach and attempt to fill vacancies on its Board of Directors.

BG: Per Board Chair Yang, the Board was filled out to five members since the 2023 MSR. As of October 3rd, 2025, two members had been removed due to lack of attendance, the Board had advertised they were seeking prospective board members and had received four applicants. Board planned to select two members at an upcoming meeting.

5. Conduct Board of Director meetings at least every other month and ensure that notices, agendas, and minutes are posted in accordance with the Brown Act.

BG: Per Board Chair Yang and Chief Dobo, Board meetings have been conducted monthly on the 2nd Friday at 10:00AM.

6. Ensure that all board members file Statements of Economic Interests (Form 700), receive mandated ethics training, and submit forms/certificates to the District to keep on file.

7. Conduct community outreach and attempt to obtain additional volunteer firefighters.

BG: Per Chief Dobo and Board Chair Yang, the department staffing is now at eight (8) fire personnel, with three new members going through new firefighter training this year, and two additional prospective firefighter candidates still needing to train and be voted in. This should be a continuous project, trying to attract new community members to get involved. The California State Firefighters Association has had Recruitment & Retention training and assistance in the past and may have information available.

8. Work cooperatively with neighboring fire services providers to assess the potential for volunteers to attend regular and ongoing training so that the District can effectively respond to calls for service in the area, including medical.

BG: At least one member of Post Mountain has been attending trainings with Hayfork Fire. This member has also been conducting trainings at Post Mountain. I would encourage Post Mountain staff to continue to seek out training opportunities

with other departments in the county. I would also encourage staff to attempt to find the required training to allow the department to become certified and respond to medical aid calls. This process will take time but provides great benefit to the community.

9. Establish formal mutual aid and auto-aid agreements with neighboring emergency service providers.

10. Obtain copies of minimum training certifications for all volunteer firefighters and records for regular training and keep them on file at the fire station.

BG: Training is occurring on a monthly basis, with records of training and member attendance being kept on file at the station.

11. Develop a program to ensure proper maintenance and repair of all District equipment as well as regular apparatus and equipment inspections, that includes tracking logs.

BG: This can be a simple check list of inventory and checkoff from operating all power tools on the apparatus, as well as the under hood belts, hoses, and fluid level check for the engine. These check sheets should be kept on file at the station. Also tracked should be mechanical deficiencies and repairs.

12. Conduct a review to determine the degree to which engines meet minimum ISO or CAL FIRE equipment and hose requirements, and identify deficiencies.

BG: If this hasn't happened it needs to occur, both as a guideline and if Post Mountain plans to try to participate in strike team type assignments. Additionally, identifying deficiencies and needed items helps the department to plan as grant and funding opportunities are present. While the National Wildfire Coordinating Group sets the standards for the apparatus related to tank and pump capacity, hose capacity, etc, CalFire should be able to provide an additional equipment needs list for the number of nozzles, hand tools, saws, etc. to properly outfit the engine for fire use. Additional benefit is that it is easier following an incident to know what might be missing if you know that the engine is properly outfitted at the start of the season. A good time to do this is prior to wildland season and can make a really good winter or springtime training drill.

Additional Recommendations

Station

The current fire station appears adequate for the apparatus and personnel serving the community. Not all apparatus can be stored inside, requiring the water tender to be stored at a member's home. The apparatus bay is tight for current apparatus but does serve the operation. Consideration for ongoing security should be given to all apparatus parked outside.

The district should work to replace the battery bank on the solar system at the station. This would allow the generator to become the backup power and allow water pumps and lights to operate as necessary.

Apparatus

The apparatus appears to be adequate for the mission of fire response within the community. Apparatus should be compared to inventory requirements from Calfire, CalOES and/or the Forest Service to determine what deficiencies and needs must be addressed to ensure that apparatus are carrying the correct equipment. Apparatus inventory can be done prior to fire season, and can make a great training drill for members, as it teaches equipment location and identification, and it makes sure that the apparatus is ready to answer the call. There are a few repairs needed to a couple of apparatus, such as the replacement of batteries on the two-wheel drive engine at the station. Any repairs, mechanical issues, inventory or needs should be tracked in folders for each vehicle. Apparatus and equipment should be tested monthly and that testing documented and filed at the station for future liability coverage.

Water Source Identification

The district/department should work to identify accessible water sources within the district. In some cases, this could be the location of water tanks on properties that land owners agree to the use during emergencies. This should also include obtaining the needed fittings to attach to those systems to deliver the water to the apparatus. Any locations where ponds exist or streams flow through the community could be advantageous to develop as emergency water sources.

Funding

The department and District need funding assistance. There is not enough funding coming in from property taxes and assessments to cover both the fire department and the road repair requirements of the District. Funds have been shifted away from fire department needs in the past to support road repairs. Board Chair Yang said that he has even begun to circulate voluntary requests for donations in the community to support road and culvert

repair. A 218 process to fund road maintenance would help to free up the funds that should be routed to the fire department, allowing repairs to happen as needed or required. This would apply also to equipment, PPE, and radio replacement, and support training opportunities.

The district should pursue grant opportunities for additional funding for equipment, PPE, radios, and even some repairs of equipment in certain situations. In addition to the CalFire administered Volunteer Fire Capacity Grant mentioned earlier, there is the Assistance to Firefighter Grants (AFG) through the federal government that can fund apparatus, PPE, SCBA's, station upgrades, etc. Post Mountain would be able to qualify for the AFG grant since staff said that they are now reporting incident information (a requirement for AFG funding consideration).

Other grant funding sources include:

- Coast Central Credit Union – Fund one time equipment grants for local agencies and non-profits. CCCU has funded fire service equipment items. These grants are advertised at least annually.
- Firehouse Subs – Funding up to \$40,000 for fire department related equipment and PPE. Accept 600 grants per quarter. <https://grants.firehousesubs.com/>
- The Gary Sinise Foundation sponsors grants to first responders, including small fire departments. <https://www.garysinisefoundation.org/programs/first-responder-support>
- The National Volunteer Fire Council – Provides periodic grant opportunities, ranging from bottled drinking water to equipment to PPE assistance. <https://www.nvfc.org/special-opportunities-for-volunteer-fire-ems-and-rescue-personnel/>
- California Fire Foundation – Post Mountain has already used one grant through the California Fire Foundation to remove hazard trees in the community. There may be other opportunities to partner, such as PPE, firefighting equipment, prevention, etc.

Closing Thoughts

Overall, I feel that the Post Mountain Public Utility District and the Post Mountain Volunteer Fire Department are continuing to move forward in the right direction on the recommendations and requirements as set forth within the 2023 MSR as adopted by the Trinity County LAFCo. In meeting with staff on October 3rd, I found a group who is very dedicated to their community, and trying to provide fire response coverage. It has been extremely challenging with limited funding and limited community participation in the past

on the board and department, but participation seems to be changing with the influx of perspective board member candidates and some new firefighters beginning to train this year. From what I observed, they are continuing to chip away at the deficiencies of the past; this can't be corrected overnight, especially with limited funding and personnel.

It was mentioned in the 2023 MSR that the Post Mountain Board may consider working with Hayfork Fire for them to take over fire and medical response. This may still be a consideration for the future, in the event that firefighter recruitment and retention does not continue to improve, or if Post Mountain ceases to respond. A merger, annexation, or consolidation would also need to be beneficial for Hayfork Fire as well and not be a drain on their services. I did not have an opportunity to speak with Hayfork Fire Department Chief Leroy Warshawer prior to completing this report to gather his thoughts on this topic.

My recommendation for consideration of Trinity County LAFCo would be to continue to work with Post Mountain Public Utility District as they continue to improve their fire department service and response. They continue to demonstrate that they are working forward addressing the concerns and items from the 2023 MSR.

For the Trinity LAFCo Board, my experience encompasses 35 years in the California Fire Service, with a variety of experience ranging from small volunteer departments, state fire service, a municipal career department, and a combination mostly volunteer department. I've held ranks from firefighter to fire chief, with 20 years "on the floor" and 15 years in upper management, including a consolidation of two departments, and the merger agreement between two departments.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Gillespie

Retired Fire Chief

RESOLUTION NO. 2027-07

**EXTENSION OF THE REMEDIATION PERIOD ESTABLISHED IN THE RESOLUTION OF
INTENT TO INITIATE THE DISSOLUTION
OF THE POST MOUNTAIN PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT (No. 2024-03)**

WHEREAS, the Trinity Local Agency Formation Commission (“Commission” or “LAFCo”) is responsible for regulating boundary changes affecting special districts pursuant to the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (“CKH Act”); and

WHEREAS, the Post Mountain Public Utility District (“PMPUD” or “District”) is a multipurpose independent special district, formed in 1983 as a Community Services District and later reorganized in 1988 pursuant to the Public Utility District Act (Public Utilities Code §15501-18055) to provide fire protection, road maintenance, and electricity acquisition services to the community of Post Mountain located 15 miles south of Hayfork off of Highway 3 in Trinity County; and

WHEREAS, on August 15, 2023, the Commission adopted a Municipal Service Review (MSR) and Sphere of Influence (SOI) Update for PMPUD that identified multiple service and governance needs and deficiencies; and

WHEREAS, as part of the 2023 MSR/SOI Update, the Commission did adopt a provisional SOI for the District and outlined several action items and/or areas of improvement for the District to pursue as stated in Resolution No. 2023-05, and the District was provided a one-year period to make improvements at which point the Commission would consider adopting a zero SOI and initiate proceedings for reorganization and/or dissolution of the District in accordance with Government Code 56375(2) or 56375.1; and

WHEREAS, on April 30, 2024, the Commission did receive a status update on District services and governance, where it was determined that the District had made progress on completing audits and was working with the Trinity County Auditor on regular financial reporting requirements. However, the District had not made sufficient progress in seeking approval for a special tax or assessment to fund road maintenance, and still had significant deficiencies related to the provision of fire services including limited volunteers, insufficient required training, lack of mutual or auto aid agreements with neighboring agencies, and inadequate equipment to be able to respond to calls in the Post Mountain area, including medical; and

WHEREAS, on October 15, 2024, the Commission did hold a public hearing and adopted Resolution No. 2024-03, a Resolution of Intent to Initiate Dissolution of PMPUD pursuant to Government Code Section 56375.1, based on documented deficiencies in the District’s service delivery capacity, financial reporting, and governance; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 2024-03 established a twelve-month remediation period during which the District was directed to address these deficiencies and demonstrate measurable progress toward sustainable service delivery; and

WHEREAS, during the 2024–2025 remediation period, PMPUD has made notable progress in restoring administrative and financial accountability, including:

- Completion of biennial audits for FY 2022-23 and FY 2023-24 and adoption of a FY 2025-26 budget, all submitted to the County Auditor-Controller;
- Retention of legal counsel to support compliance and policy development; and
- Improved governance, including regular meetings, active recruitment for board vacancies, and renewed community engagement; and;

WHEREAS, on October 3 2025, retired Fire Chief Bill Gillespie conducted an independent site visit to review PMPUD’s fire station, apparatus, and volunteer operations, confirming measurable progress including operational apparatus, expanded volunteer participation, and improved coordination with Hayfork Fire Protection District; and

WHEREAS, the District remains responsible for approximately 27 miles of roads and has continued to pursue funding strategies to ensure service sustainability, including:

- Partnership with Flowra and Cannabis for Conservation on the Post Mountain Sediment Reduction Project, funded under the EPA 319(h) Nonpoint Source Program, to conduct structural road and drainage repairs; and
- Preparation of a special tax measure planned for the November 2026 general election to fund ongoing road maintenance activities such as grading, snow removal, and emergency response; and

WHEREAS, despite progress, the District’s long-term viability depends on (1) securing sustainable funding for road maintenance and (2) re-establishing medical response capacity, either directly, through a contract for service, or via reorganization with a neighboring fire provider, to ensure reliable emergency service coverage; and

WHEREAS, LAFCo finds that additional time is necessary to allow PMPUD to implement these measures and demonstrate continued progress toward service stability and fiscal sustainability.

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED, DETERMINED AND ORDERED by the Trinity Local Agency Formation Commission as follows:

1. The foregoing recitals are true and correct.
2. The remediation period established by Resolution No. 2024-03, is hereby extended through December 31, 2026.
3. During this period, PMPUD shall continue to:
 - a. Prepare and conduct a successful special tax election for road maintenance;
 - b. Maintain compliance with audit and reporting requirements;

- c. Strengthen governance and administrative capacity;
 - d. Implement recommendations from the October 2025 site visit, as feasible; and
 - e. Pursue restoration of medical response service or a formal service arrangement with a neighboring provider.
4. PMPUD shall provide the Commission a mid-point report by July 31, 2026 on such remediation efforts by the District which report may thereafter be considered at a regularly scheduled Commission meeting.
5. At the conclusion of the extended remediation period, the Commission will consider at a noticed public hearing whether the District has remedied the identified deficiencies and whether the District shall be dissolved in accordance with Government Code Section 56375.1. If the Commission finds the District has adequately remedied the deficiencies, the Commission shall rescind the notice of intent to initiate dissolution and no further action is required.
6. The Executive Officer is hereby directed to take all further actions required by law and necessary to implement the intent of this resolution.

THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION was introduced at a special meeting of the Trinity LAFCo Commission on the 4th day of November, 2025, and adopted by the following roll call vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAINS:
ABSENT:

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Colette Santsche
Executive Officer

Jill Cox
Chair