



G R E A T E R S A L T L A K E

Municipal Services District

STAFF REPORT

Date: May 22, 2026

From: Brian Hartsell

RE: Status of Municipal Emergency Management Planning Services

Issue Summary

The MSD currently contracts with Unifired Fire Authority (UFA) for two Municipal Emergency Management Planners that provide emergency management planning support to the City and Town designated Emergency Managers (EMs). One full-time position is shared with Midvale City (16 hours for Midvale, 24 hours for MSD-member Cities and Towns) and a part-time position (provides 24 hours to MSD-member Cities and Towns). At the May 13, 2026, Board Meeting, the Board approved as part of the FY2027 Budget conversion of the part time position to a full-time 40-hour position. Brian Buckhout, who had been serving in the current full-time role, accepted another position within UFA. UFA is currently recruiting to fill that position, and it may or may not leave the part-time position vacant. At a recent board meeting Trustee Stringham asked that we examine whether it makes sense to convert the non-shared position from a UFA contracted position to an MSD position.

From a cost standpoint, the UFA position including benefits is about \$145,000 per year. MSD cost would be similar. If MSD hired the position, however, the \$8,454 annual administrative cost would be eliminated.

UFA is supportive of either approach—keeping the part-time position that is converting to full-time with UFA or converting it to an MSD position.

Advantages to Keeping the Position with UFA

- Certain professional development trainings are exclusive to UFA employees.
- UFA would potentially receive a larger pool of qualified applicants. SLCo Emergency Management (EM) is a higher-level agency for emergency management professionals looking for long-term career progression in this field.
- UFA does not embed other agencies' employees but creates regular networking and coordination opportunities, many of which are recurring. A UFA employee has daily direct access with SLCo EM personnel to further strengthen relationships that are critical during real world events.
- UFA employees have more immediate direct access to SLCo EM personnel and equipment resources.
- As a contracted position, we are more readily able to cost-share with SLCo EM or another city or town if we decide to reduce hours.



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Advantages to Converting the Position to the MSD

- Majority of trainings, such as FEMA, are available to all Emergency Management employees regardless of employer.
- MSD would still get a good candidate pool, but as a team of one, may be less appealing for a segment of EM professionals.
- MSD employee would be able to focus exclusively on MSD members without being pulled into other UFA matters.
- The contract with UFA has helped the MSD and its members lay the foundation that a focused MSD EM could build upon.
- MSD and its members would have more direct control over the position.
- Allows for hybrid (position #1 still with UFA and position #2 with MSD) without severing ties with UFA in case new arrangement doesn't work out, or to facilitate transition to both positions being with MSD in the future.

Recommendations

The existing UFA full-time position should remain contracted as we currently cost share the position with Midvale.

When the part-time position converts to full-time, and if the current employee remains in the position, I recommend keeping it as a contracted position to not disrupt the current employee's status.

Lastly, when the part-time position converts to full-time, and if a new employee fills the position, I recommend that the position remains contracted for the reasons stated in the memo, particularly a deeper candidate pool and proximity of the planners within the SLCo EM facility. These factors weigh heavily, although evaluation of converting the position to an MSD position should be considered again in the future for reasons stated.