



Memorandum

TO: Public Safety, Finance and
Strategic Support Committee

FROM: Darryl Von Raesfeld

**SUBJECT: FIRE DEPARTMENT
QUARTERLY REPORT**

DATE: March 3, 2008

Approved

Christine J. Shippey

Date

3-11-08

INTRODUCTION

The following Quarterly Report to the Public Safety, Finance and Strategic Support Committee is intended to provide an update on Fire Department activities. Items included in this report are of strategic importance to the Department and the City. The report provides a brief summary regarding the status and progress for the current calendar year.

Planning (e.g., Staffing, Resource Deployment)

Fire Prevention Business Plan

Following the Mayor's March 2005 Budget Message, the Department was directed to develop a Fire Prevention Business Plan. The goal of the Business Plan is to identify service level objectives for fire prevention services and identify steps to fully implement the recommendations of the 2003 City Auditor's Report titled, "An Audit of the San Jose Fire Department's Bureau of Fire Prevention." In the spring of 2006, the Fire Department identified the need for specialized consultant services to assist the Department in completing such a plan. Currently, the Fire Department is working with the successful bidder/consultant to finalize the contractor's scope of work that includes the submission of a report on fire prevention best practices and risk-based inspection schedule methodology for the business plan. The Fire Department's goal is to have a Business Plan ready for Council approval by the end of this calendar year.

Recruiting/Hiring

Hiring Activity

The Department will be accepting employment applications for Firefighter EMT and Firefighter Paramedic March 10 through March 12. Applicants who successfully complete the testing process will fill Academies in 2009 and possibly 2010. In preparing for this recruitment, the Department met with affinity groups and conducted a candidate forum to provide an overview of the hiring process. Approximately 250 interested individuals attended the candidate forum. On March 6, twenty-six recruits graduated from an academy which began in November 2007. With approximately 100 employees eligible to retire, the Fire Department planned to hold a Recruit

Academy this spring, however, the inability to precisely forecast the number of retirees resulted in a decision to postpone the academy and rely on overtime to fill vacancies should they occur. We will be working with the Budget Office to formalize the plan for a Recruit Academy as soon as possible after the retirement numbers are determined, most likely in late July or early August..

Technology

Radio System Infrastructure

The Fire Department's radio system continues to be improved. Within the next month mobile repeater systems will be installed in all trucks and USAR's, enhancing radio communications in large structures and high-rise buildings. The Department anticipates that within the next six to eight months the number of primary channel radio receiver sites will be tripled and a command channel transmitter base station will be added. These enhancements are being implemented to improve fire ground safety. Furthermore, the primary dispatch channel and one command channel will be upgraded to eliminate the potential for lost transmissions, resulting in more accurate and complete communications. By 2009, the current microwave system will be upgraded to improve Fire Dispatch-to-field unit communications. The following is an update on radio system projects:

1. In October 2007 portable radio improvements were completed
2. Installation of mobile repeater on Trucks and USARs were delayed, but are now expected to be completed by July 2008.
3. Improved receiver sites for primary channels are on track with an expected completion date of Spring 2008.

Mobile Data Computer Project

Mobile Data Computer (MDC) have now been installed on front-line apparatus with the exception of satellite units (e.g., Light Units, Brush Patrols, etc.). In-service training on the MDC was completed in October 2007. Mandatory use of the MDCs by all line personnel began November 1, 2007. Funding has been secured to finish the installation of MDC's in satellite units and when this installation is complete, as well as the addition of staff resources needed to support software programming and operational analysis to develop policies and procedures related to AVL deployment. .

Record Management System Project

The implementation of an integrated records management system (RMS) is approximately 50% complete. The project slowed while staff worked on securing a new project manager. Department staff are in the process of identifying business processes that may need to be changed as a result of the new RMS, developing response pick lists for both EMS and National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) reporting, and developing curriculum content for staff training. The new project manager is responsible for coordinating user reviews and modifications; development of computer-aided dispatch, bio-medical, and reporting software interface issues; and system testing and modification with its initial role-out. Ongoing system support necessary to ensure data integrity, export, and analysis are proposed for Fiscal Year 2008-2009.

Omega Protocol Update

Fire Communications continues to maintain its Accreditation as a Center of Excellence, which is a prerequisite for implementing the Omega™ version of the Medical Priority Dispatch System Protocol. The Omega protocol enables Emergency Medical Dispatchers (EMDs) in Fire Communications to identify 911 calls for service that do not require Department first responders (e.g., engine companies). While the County Local EMS Agency has a policy that would permit the use of the Omega protocol, clinical data integrity issues and the absence of analytical staff have prevented the Department from performing the studies necessary to forward Omega “determinant” recommendations to the Local EMS Agency for consideration and approval. The Department is currently in the process of implementing a records management system, that given approval of requested analytical staff resources, will enable it to eliminate the data integrity issues as well as perform the needed analysis to implement the Omega protocol.

Capital Projects

Public Safety Bond Update

The Fire Department portion of the Public Safety Bond Program is progressing well. Relocated Fire Station 25 (Alviso) opened October 14th, new Stations 35 (Cottle) and 34 (Las Plumas) opened in November 2007 and February 2008 respectively. Relocated Station 12 (Calero) and 17 (Blossom Hill) are scheduled to open in early fall of 2008. Rebuilt Station 2 (Alum Rock) is scheduled to go out for bid in the spring of 2008. Relocated Station 19 (Piedmont) is scheduled to go out for bid in April 2008. Relocated Station 24/36 is scheduled to go out for bid in the fall of 2008. Initial planning for Station 37 (Willow Glen) has begun. The Department, along with Public Works Real Estate, is in the process of identifying possible sites for relocated Station 21 (Mt. Pleasant).

Other /New Issues

Professional Standards Manual

One of the top ten priorities of the Department is the implementation of a Professional Standards Manual that updates and expands on the current Department Discipline Manual. The Professional Standards Manual will include more detailed language and explanation of the progressive disciplinary process used by the Department and City, including specific procedures for implementing and processing disciplinary actions in accordance with the Civil Service Rules, as well as a section on Performance Appraisals that will serve as a resource for supervisors on how to write an effective performance appraisal. Work on the project has been temporarily suspended, pending completion of a review by City Attorney’s Office to ensure compliance with the recently enacted (January 1st, 2008) Firefighter Bill of Rights (AB 220). The Professional Standards Manual is approximately 75% complete. The remaining work will focus on the Performance Appraisal section, clarification regarding the Citizen Complaint/Concern process, and formatting.

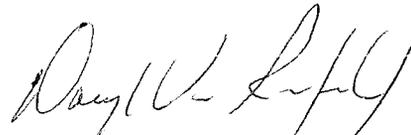
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Heart Safe City Designation

The Mayor in his March 2007 Budget Message directed the City Manager to “develop a plan to meet the criteria for San José to become a Heart Safe City and present it to the Public Safety Finance and Strategic Support Committee.” While the specific criteria for becoming a Heart Safe City are still being developed by the American Heart Association (AHA), these criteria will measure a City’s commitment to preventing death from Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) by evaluating the strength of various links within the “Chain of Survival.” To strengthen two critical links (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation [CPR] and automatic external defibrillation [AED] use), Fire Department staff are researching and identifying best practices and programs currently in place in other communities to increase citizen CPR training and AED deployment. One program is the nationally-recognized “San Diego Project Heartbeat.” Project Heartbeat has been successful in getting local governments and private organizations to purchase and deploy AEDs by increasing public awareness regarding SCA and improving the ease of purchase and compliance with state statues. The outcome of this approach has been the deployment of more than 3,000 AEDs and 45 lives saved since 2001. The Fire Department is in the process of scheduling a stakeholders’ meeting, as well as working with existing training centers and programs within County to identify preferred organizational and service options.



DARRYL VON RAESFELD
Fire Chief