



Memorandum

TO: Public Safety, Finance and
Strategic Support Committee

FROM: Darryl Von Raesfeld

**SUBJECT: FIRE DEPARTMENT
QUARTERLY REPORT**

DATE: November 15, 2007

Approved

Kay Winer

Date

11/15/07

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)

2000 Strategic Plan Update

Department staff are in the process of identifying and acquiring risk and operational data as part of the initial phases of the project. To ensure the analysis reflects current operations, a committee of content experts was formed and is meeting to identify project responsibilities and deliverables. Furthermore, to ensure the update is conducted in accordance with established Standards of Response Cover (SOC), a nationally recognized method for determining performance objectives and resource requirements, a consultant has been selected and a contract is in development. Expected project completion is Spring of 2008. The update process will review current performance objectives and their relevance in light of changes to the City's building inventory, planning objectives and contractual obligations. A review of current policies and procedures related to emergency operations will be undertaken to determine resource requirements to meet performance objectives. A more focused review of strategies and resource requirements for mitigating wildland urban interface fires and high-rise events will also be part of the update. Following completion of the update, the Fire Department will deliver a formal presentation of its findings and recommendations.

New Building and Fire Code Adoption Process

A schedule of activities and corresponding timelines has been developed to comply with the 2007 California Building Standard Codes prior to January 1, 2008. The report was presented to the Public Safety, Finance and Support Services Committee and the Community and Economic Development Committee. In accordance with this schedule, staff has completed its review of the new codes and identified recommended changes. Proposed amendments have been posted on the City's web site and presented to contractors, design professionals and developers during the

Construction and Developers Roundtable meetings held August 23 and 24, 2007. The City has conducted one free training session to introduce designers, contractors, project managers and project superintendents to the significant changes between the 2001 and the 2007 California Building Codes and scheduled a second free training opportunity or session. The training covers the significant changes impacting egress/exit, accessibility and usability, occupancy classifications, allowable area calculations, types of construction and fire-resistive construction.

Staff from the Building and Fire Departments coordinated timelines with the City Attorney's Office for review of the proposed amendments, drafting the enabling ordinance, and preparation of the memo to City Council for the reading of the ordinance. An informational memorandum on the Code Adopting Ordinance will be presented to Council for First and Second Readings on November 6 and November 20, 2007.

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 finalizing selection of a consultant to develop a report on fire prevention best practices and risk analysis modeling 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

In August 2007, 19 of the 25 Firefighter-Recruit Paramedics successfully completed the Academy and were promoted to line firefighters. With approximately 100 employees eligible for retirement in July 2008, the Department plans to conduct a Firefighter-Recruit EMT Academy in November 2007 and a Firefighter-Recruit Paramedic Academy in Spring 2008. The graduates of the November Academy will promote to line firefighters in March 2008. Selective certification for bilingual skills was utilized as part of the hiring process for the April and November academy. . The Department's hiring plan includes conducting a recruitment process to establish a new Fire Recruits candidate pool by fall 2008.

Technology

Radio System Infrastructure

The Fire Department's radio system continues to be improved. Within the next four months 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 months the number of radio infrastructure receiver sites will triple on primary channels and a command channel transmitter base station will be added, improving communication between Fire Dispatch and field units. 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. Portable radio improvements are scheduled for completion by October 2007
2. Installation of mobile repeater on Trucks and USARs are expected to be completed by December 2007.
3. Improved receiver sites for primary channels are expected to be installed by Spring 2008.
4. The feasibility of transitioning to a 700 MHz Trunked System is being studied by Motorola.

Mobile Data Computer Project

The Mobile Data Computer (MDC) Implementation Program is well underway. Mobile data computer installation and software updates have been completed on all front-line engines, trucks, USAR's and battalion chief vehicles. (There are a number of satellite and reserve apparatus that still need to have MDC's installed; the funding for these purchases and installations will be pursued at mid-year.) In-service training provided to line personnel will be completed by the end of October. Mandatory use of the MDCs by all line personnel will go into effect on November 1, 2007. Activation of a dispatch system centered on automatic vehicle location (AVL) is pending completion of MDC installation on remaining apparatus as well as development of software programming, operational policies and procedures based on AVL deployment.

Record Management System Project

The implementation of an integrated records management system (RMS) is approximately 25% complete. The project slowed while staff worked on securing a project manager, following the expiration of the current contractor's contract. A Department staff member has been identified and accepted the assignment of project manager to complete the RMS implementation. The Department staff member had experience in IT systems implementation prior to joining the Department. Department staff are in the process of identifying business processes that may be changed or impacted 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 will be 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.

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 are not emergencies and thus do not require Department first responders (e.g., engine companies). The Omega protocol was designed to support the use of an "alternate response" (i.e., referral to para-transit, nurse advice line, etc.). While the County Local EMS Agency has a policy that would permit the use of the Omega

protocol, the Department is not in a position to identify and validate which service requests should be classified as Omega. Data integrity issues 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 appropriate staff support, 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 34 (Las Plumas) and 35 (Cottle) will open in November 2007. Relocated Station 12 (Calero) and 17 (Blossom Hill) are scheduled to open in late spring or early summer of 2008. Rebuilt Station 2 (Alum Rock) is scheduled to go out for bid in January 2008. Relocated Station 19 (Piedmont) is scheduled to go out for bid in February 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).

BFO Training Center

Fire Training Center improvements include the addition of a modular shower trailer to accommodate additional staff at the training center. Additionally, an electronic gate has been installed to provide for safety and security at the worksite. Further additions to the training center will include a modular classroom to be installed within the next 30 to 45 days, which support company training when it occurs congruently with recruit academy training.

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. While the Department has used a different Performance Appraisal form and Key Elements than the rest of the City, the Bureau of Administrative Services is currently working through several Department committees to restructure its process to use the City's standard performance appraisal forms for all classifications within the Department. Other elements of the Professional Standards Manual project include a centralized process for accepting and processing Citizen Complaints/Concerns. Language in the Citizen Complaint/Concern process will define how complaints are received; along with step-by-step instructions for personnel should they receive a complaint. Currently, the Professional Standards Manual is approximately 75% complete with remaining work to be

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done on the Performance Appraisal section, clarification regarding the Citizen Complaint/Concern process, and formatting.

Arbitration Implementation

With the completion of the arbitration process and award, the following operational areas require policy and procedural changes:

Support Paramedics – The Department is currently working with OER and the Budget Office to identify the number of Support Paramedic positions that can be created and filled in light of current budget constraints and changes in the MOA. The Training Division has developed a training plan to reaccredit promoted Firefighter Paramedics who did not have the opportunity to fill a Support Paramedic position at the time of their promotion. The Department is ready to begin filling Support Paramedic positions once the number is determined. The appropriate policy changes are also being developed.

Special Operations - In compliance with the arbitration award, policies for the Hazardous Incident Team and the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) program will be completed and provided to the Local 230 representative for review. Implementation of these policies, per the arbitrator's direction, must be in place prior to disbursement of Special Operations pay. The Department is currently ahead of schedule as outlined in the award.



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