



Memorandum

TO: PUBIC SAFETY, FINANCE AND
STRATEGIC SUPPORT COMMITTEE

FROM: Darryl Von Raesfeld

SUBJECT: FIRE DEPARTMENT RESPONSE
TO COUNTY JAIL UPDATE

DATE: April 5, 2010

Approved

Date

4-6-10

RECOMMENDATION

Accept this status report from the Fire Department relating to operational issues identified within and external to the County Jail.

OUTCOME

This memorandum provides a status report regarding concerns raised relative to the safety of San Jose Fire Department personnel during emergency responses to the County Jail.

BACKGROUND

On April 2, 2008, the Rules & Open Government Committee directed to the Public Safety, Finance and Strategic Support Committee (PSFSSC) a memo authored by Councilmember Oliverio regarding the SJFD's EMS response to the County Jail. On April 17, 2008, City staff presented preliminary findings to the PSFSSC (a City Committee).

On October 16, 2008, City staff presented a report to the PSFSSC that responded to further questions raised by PSFSSC in April 2008, and outlined issues still needed to be integrated and considered as the City further coordinated with the County on issues of concern. The report outlined the key stakeholders the City would need to coordinate/collaborate with to bring about the development of any formal agreement, City Fire's response to the County Jail, and also a preliminary review of the formal agreements, policies, and procedures impacting this matter. In that report, it was also acknowledged the development of an MOU would depend on many factors and would take a significant amount of coordination, and at a staff level, preliminary and informal discussions were more feasible.

Following the October 2008 PSFSSC discussion, the City and County continued to meet at a staff level on improvement opportunities. By late January 2009, after significant progress on joint training between the City and County, the County asked for a formal list of remaining issues from the City. These issues were transmitted in writing to the County in March 2009. The

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County responded, in writing, to the City in April. After the City Manager and County Executive's review of the issues presented by SJFD and responses submitted by the County [via County Jail, Santa Clara Valley Health and Hospital- Children's Shelter and Custody Health Services (CSCHS, the County Department responsible for the provision of health care for detained children and incarcerated adults), SCVHHS-Emergency Medical Services, and County Communications], both parties agreed there was no need for a formal MOU or agreement. Additionally, there has been productive dialogue between front-line staff members at SJFD and County Jail on these issues.

Since then, informal discussions have taken place and the information noted in this memo highlights current progress.

ANALYSIS

The county jail remains a unique facility presenting challenges for responders. Recurring orientation and training is the most useful tool available for addressing safety concerns. County jail staff has demonstrated consistent willingness to work with SJFD on policy development and enforcement. Since this issue surfaced in April 2008, there have been no reported violations of policies or procedures pertaining to responses within the County Jail by either Department of Corrections (DOC) or SJFD personnel to Fire Administration. In January 2010, the Fire Department changed the primary response duties from Fire Station 7 to Fire Station 1. The change was a result of analysis of response time and unit availability. The responding fire companies and managing Battalion Chiefs continue to enjoy a cooperative work relationship with jail staff and have been given permission to conduct familiarization training as deemed necessary.

As noted in the August 20th, 2009 memo, to the PSFSS Committee, the framework for resolving concerns was organized into three categories. This report highlights key milestones and progress to date regarding:

1. City-County Partnership Opportunities;
2. Internal San Jose Fire Department Operational Issue Improvements; and,
3. Issues that need further coordination between the City and County.

1. CITY-COUNTY PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Issue #1: Firefighter Safety: Under this category are two main concerns related to:

- a) Entry into the County Jail by San Jose Fire, and**
- b) Radio Communication within the facility.**

a) Entry into the County Jail by San Jose Fire

To date the County has provided training, as well as extending an offer to provide additional training sessions, if needed. The training consisted of, but was not limited to, the "No Hostage Policy" and what Fire Personnel should do in a hostage situation. Trainings also include a general overview of jail operations, classification overview, facility tour, and description of medical training and equipment jail staff persons have to work with before paramedics arrive on the scene.

b) Radio Communication within the facility.

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To date, there has been no further testing of radio reception within the Jail facility.

Issue #2: Frequency of EMS Responses to County Jail

A second issue that was raised with the County involved the frequency of EMS responses to the County's Main Jail. The City responds on average 300 times per year to the County's Main Jail. In order to propose resource response changes to the Jail inmate population, the Department must collect and analyze patient care data to identify opportunities for response modification. To date, the Department has nearly completed making changes to input screens and export functions that will enable it to begin analyzing clinical data. The results of this analysis are expected to be used in evaluating opportunities for the non-response of City resources, in cases where the use of the Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS) has determined the patient's condition will not benefit from an assessment by or treatment of a paramedic. The Department expects to have quality improvement and data analysis on clinical care reports completed prior to the initiation of the next EMS contract in July of 2011.

Issue #3: Identification of a "Sally Port" and procedures to reduce time to patient access

To date, there have been no further discussions with DOC staff on this issue.

2. INTERNAL CITY DEPARTMENT OPERATIONAL ISSUE IMPROVEMENTS

Concurrent to the City's identification of areas of concern regarding the EMS response to the Jail, the City also conducted a separate review of areas for SJFD to affect improvement which include:

- Additional response time and resource reliability analysis to determine potential changes in which resource should respond to the facility;
Completed: In January 2010, the Fire Department changed the primary response duties from Fire Station 7 to Fire Station 1. The change was a result of analysis of response time and unit availability.
- Further development and refinement of operational policies related to response activities that address unstable operating environments;
In Process
- Reinforcement of the importance of documenting noteworthy occurrences by SJFD staff; and,
Completed: Personnel at responding stations have been briefed on the importance of documenting policy or procedure violations.
- Improved documenting of policy and procedural changes and amendments.
In process

3. NEXT STEPS/ISSUES THAT NEED FURTHER COORDINATION BETWEEN THE CITY AND COUNTY

The City and County look forward to continuing conversations that could improve communication, operational coordination, and efficiencies and ensure jail patients receive high-quality emergency services. Continued efforts to improve coordination and operational efficiencies through scheduled training and exercises, including:

- Review of emergency operational policies and procedures as it relates to issues, outside of EMS responses, such as the County Jail's security systems in the event of a fire or hazmat event.
In process

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- Review of resource response assignments as determined using the EMS-approved Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS); and
In process
- Opportunities for reducing response time to patient treatment and transport.
No progress to date

POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Not applicable.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST

- Criterion 1:** Requires Council action on the use of public funds equal to \$1 million or greater.
(Required: Website Posting)
- Criterion 2:** Adoption of a new or revised policy that may have implications for public health, safety, quality of life, or financial/economic vitality of the City. **(Required: E-mail and Website Posting)**
- Criterion 3:** Consideration of proposed changes to service delivery, programs, staffing that may have impacts to community services and have been identified by staff, Council or a Community group that requires special outreach. **(Required: E-mail, Website Posting, Community Meetings, Notice in appropriate newspapers)**

COORDINATION

This report has been developed by the San Jose Fire Department in coordination with City Manager's Office.

FISCAL/ POLICY ALIGNMENT

The outcome of this activity is anticipated to reduce operational costs for the Fire Department by reducing the number of apparatus responses.

CEQA

Not a project, File No. PP10-069 (a), informational memos

/s/
DARRYL VON RAESFELD
Fire Chief