



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: Auditor-Controller
Department No.: 061
For Agenda Of: May 3, 2016
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Theodore A. Fallati, CPA, Auditor-Controller, 568-2100
Director
Contact Info: Heather Fletcher, CPA, Audit Manager, 568-2456
SUBJECT: Auditor-Controller's Report on Sharing the Cost of Santa Barbara County's
Public Safety Dispatch Center

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

Receive and File the Auditor-Controller's report on Sharing the Cost of Santa Barbara County's Public Safety Dispatch Center (the Audit Report).

Summary Text:

The Audit Report is submitted pursuant to California Government Code 26883, which requires that the Auditor-Controller's audit reports be filed with the Board of Supervisors. The overall purpose of our audit was to determine whether the costs of operating the Santa Barbara County Public Safety Dispatch Center (Dispatch Center) for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2015 were shared among partner agencies based upon an equitable methodology. We concluded that with certain modifications, the methodology for sharing the costs among partner agencies is reasonable and equitable for the current operating model.

Background:

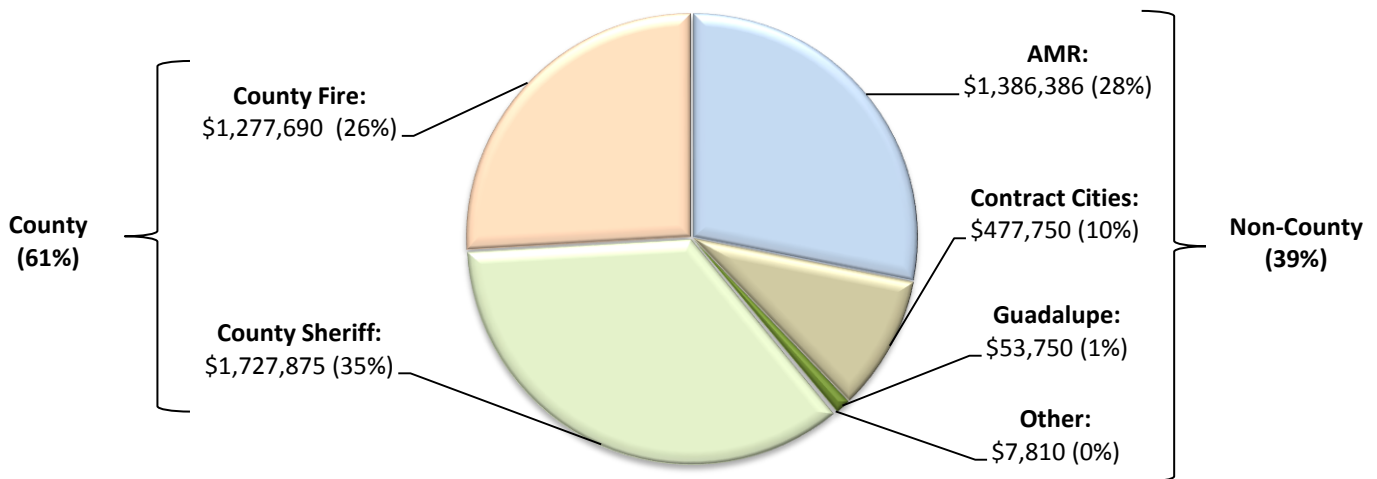
The Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department (Sheriff) operates the Dispatch Center. The Dispatch Center serves as the single answering point for the County's emergency phone system, and provides joint dispatching services for the following public safety disciplines:

- Law enforcement, which includes the Sheriff and its contracted cities of Goleta, Carpinteria, Buellton, and Solvang, as well as the City of Guadalupe Police Department;
- Fire, which includes the Santa Barbara County Fire Department (County Fire) and the City of Guadalupe Fire Department;

- Emergency Medical Services (EMS), which is an agency within the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department (Public Health) that contracts with American Medical Response (AMR) for countywide emergency medical transport services.

Emergency 911 calls are received by the Dispatch Center based on the location of the call or are transferred from another dispatch center, such as one operated by a city. The Dispatch Center generally uses four work stations (called “consoles”) that are equipped to answer calls and provide dispatch services. Two consoles are dedicated for law, one console is dedicated for fire, and one console is dedicated for EMS.

The Sheriff calculates the share of costs for each partner agency. County Fire, the City of Guadalupe, and the Sheriff’s contract cities make payments to the Sheriff based on these calculations. The payments received by the Sheriff from AMR are determined by the contract between Public Health and AMR. As shown in the following chart, of the \$4.9 million of costs for operating the Dispatch Center for fiscal year 2014-15, \$3 million (61%) was paid for with County funds while \$1.9 million (39%) was paid for with non-County funds:



Based on our audit, we recommend the following:

1. The County partner agencies should develop a memorandum of understanding to provide a framework for the provision of dispatch services by the Sheriff.
2. The County partner agencies should agree on a method for developing cost sharing factors that provides for an equitable sharing of costs.
3. The costs shared among partner agencies should be based on actual costs. Employees charging time to the Dispatch Center should do so based on actual time working on dispatch activities. The Sheriff should charge workers compensation premiums to the Dispatch center based on actual claims experience and payroll for Dispatch Center employees. All expenditures recorded for the Dispatch Center should be accounted for consistently and in the appropriate fiscal year.
4. The Sheriff should fill vacancies for dispatchers and determine if additional dispatcher positions are needed in order to staff the Dispatch Center with an appropriate number of employees that can provide a sufficient level of services to the public without using sworn law enforcement officers or regularly working overtime.

5. The Sheriff should determine whether the contract cities and other agencies that receive dispatch services from the Dispatch Center are paying their equitable share of the costs incurred by the County to provide these services. The Sheriff should also record all revenues received for dispatch services to the Dispatch Center program in the County's accounting system.
6. Public Health should include payments provisions in its next contract with an emergency medical transportation provider whereby the provider pays the Sheriff for dispatch services based on the actual EMS share of Dispatch Center costs.

Attachments:

Audit Report on Sharing the Cost of Santa Barbara County's Public Safety Dispatch Center

Authored by:

Heather Fletcher, Audit Manager

cc:

Bill Brown, Sheriff-Coroner

Eric Peterson, Fire Chief

Dr. Takashi Wada, Director of the Department of Public Health

Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer