

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
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Agenda Number:
Prepared on: 5/1/01
Department Name: Fire
Department No.: 031
Agenda Date: 5/22/01
Placement: Departmental
Estimate Time: 45 minutes
Continued Item: NO
If Yes, date from:

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: John M. Scherrei
Fire Chief

**STAFF
CONTACT:** x5507

SUBJECT: Critical Needs Assessment Plan

Recommendation:

That the Board of Supervisors: 1) Endorse the Critical Needs Assessment Plan (attached) 2) Enhance Goleta/Isla Vista service levels by funding the on-going costs of a post Captain position for the ladder truck 3) Per request of the Office of the County Administrator, direct the Fire Department to pursue fire and emergency medical service regional possibilities in the Santa Ynez Valley via discussions with the cities of Buellton and Solvang, as well as the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians.

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

The recommendations are primarily aligned with Goal No. 2: A Safe and Healthy Community in Which to Live, Work, and Visit and with Goal No. 3: A Strong, Professionally Managed County Organization.

Executive Summary and Discussion:

On June 16, 2000, your Board directed the Fire Department to develop a "Master Plan" document to be presented in conjunction with a budget expansion plan during the second quarter of the 2000-01 budget year. This document has become the basis of discussion regarding identified fiscal needs and future planning for the County Fire Department emergency operations. At the direction of the County Administrative Officer, the Fire Department has used appropriate elements of an assessment model developed by the *Commission of Fire Accreditation International (CFAI)*.

Background: Critical Needs Assessed

The department focused on completing one category of the self-assessment process to define risk within the county and to determine the extent of emergency coverage. Each fire station district was analyzed by description, by appraisal, and by plan. These factors collectively asked "Do a sufficient number of firefighters arrive at the scene of a single family dwelling in time to confine fire or administer emergency medical procedures?"

As part of the Fire self-assessment plan, the department looked at each station independently and prioritized them using a comprehensive rating process. This process looked at criteria such as firefighter to population ratio, the ability to have an effective response force on scene in less than ten minutes, call volume, assessed property value and pertinent mitigation issues. This list will be evaluated on an annual basis and changed as appropriate to keep it current. The complete priority list can be found in Appendix V of the Critical Needs Assessment Plan.

Two areas require staffing increases, the Goleta and Santa Ynez Valleys. The Fire Department recommends that the Board approve these service level increases.

	<u>One-Time Costs</u>	<u>On-Going Costs</u>
GOLETA		
Post Captain Position- Fire Station 11 (Storke Rd.) for Aerial Ladder Truck		\$355,000
Ladder Truck Purchase	\$635,725	
Tools and Equipment for Ladder Truck	\$60,000	
Training Related to Ladder Truck Operation	\$32,000	
Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus	\$4,500	
Goleta Sub-Totals	<u>\$732,225</u>	<u>\$355,000</u>
SANTA YNEZ VALLEY		
Post Firefighter Position-Fire Station 32 (Santa Ynez)		\$295,000
Post Firefighter/Paramedic Position-Fire Station 31 (Buellton)		\$311,000
Paramedic Equipment for Fire Station 31	\$8,500	
Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus	\$9,000	
Fire Station Modifications	\$5,000	
Santa Ynez Valley Sub-Totals	<u>\$22,500</u>	<u>\$606,000</u>
TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS	<u>\$754,725</u>	<u>\$961,000</u>

For this analysis, 1) dollars reflect 01-02 costs, including Local 2046 negotiated salary adjustments completed in March 2001 and 2) on-going service & supply costs have been excluded.

What the Board's Approval of Recommendations Will Accomplish:

Approval and adoption of these recommendations by the Board will not immediately solve all of the shortfalls identified in this document (*Critical Needs Assessment*, attached). The primary shortfall is that of not being able to make an interior fire attack with a three-person engine company. Approval will, however, minimize the problem in several areas that the department has identified as being most at risk.

GOLETA ANALYSIS

The purchase and staffing of a ladder truck and locating it near the University will address several of our identified needs. It provides us with the capability to gain access to the roof and upper floors of our existing high rise structures, a capability we do not have today. This capability will greatly enhance our ability to perform rescue of victims trapped on these floors. It also gives us the tool needed to provide roof access to high rise and large apartment buildings. This access will allow us to ventilate the fire building in a timely manner. The ability to remove the smoke and hot fire gases from a building dramatically affects the survivability of victims trapped inside. It will also provide us depth of staffing in an area that our risk assessment has identified as a high-risk zone. This increased concentration of staffing adjacent to UCSB will allow us to respond as an effective response force to fires in this area, while at the same time reducing the need to move equipment from other areas of the fire district to cover empty stations.

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY ANALYSIS

The Department has identified the unincorporated areas of the Santa Ynez Valley as the area most at risk by the limitations imposed on the Fire Department by OSHA and the 2-in/2-out rule. This is due not only to the increased time delay while waiting for the second arriving company, but also to the prevalence of high value properties at risk. Adding a post position at Stations 31 (Buellton) and 32 (Santa Ynez) will allow each of these engine companies to make an interior fire attack upon their arrival at the fire scene, eliminating the need to await the arrival of a second engine company as they do now. This will greatly increase the likelihood of attacking and extinguishing the fire prior to it entering the flashover phase, thus minimizing damage to the involved structure. The increased staffing provided will also make it possible to dispatch an effective response force to fires in the Santa Ynez Valley. This includes both structure fires and wildland fires that have the potential to spread into improved areas. By filling the post position at Station 31 with a Firefighter/Paramedic, the emergency medical services care provided to the Buellton area and the Highway 101 transportation corridor will also be greatly enhanced.

Before implementation of service level increases in the Santa Ynez Valley, the County Administrator's Office is requesting that discussions take place regarding regional opportunities for fire and emergency medical services in the Valley.

Mandates and Service Levels:

Federal and California Occupational Safety Health Administration requires compliance with the 2-in/2-out rule. The Critical Needs Assessment document provides a plan to address urgent needs in the County Fire Department and shows an effort to comport with the federal and state mandates regarding staffing of personnel at fires and helps the department meet national benchmarks put forth by the NFPA 1710 and CFAI.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Recommendation of the Critical Needs Assessment plan calls for an adjustment of the original budget expansion request submitted in June 2000 to reflect 9 FTE's rather than 12 and a total expansion of \$1.7 million rather than \$1.1 million. Results of financial analyses are included in Tables 1-3 that reflect the Department's latest five-year projections assuming various scenarios. All include the estimated cost impact of the newly negotiated MOU with the Firefighters Local 2046. These tables identify Fire Department financing sources and uses, the Fire District fund balance at the end of each fiscal year, the estimated total

General Fund contribution associated with each year and the Impound Reserve balance at the end of each year.

Table 1 identifies the financial status assuming that there are no service level increases implemented. Under this scenario, the General Fund contribution for fire operations increases from \$900,000 next fiscal year to \$2.4 million in FY 2002-03, due to cost impacts of the recently negotiated MOU. Table 2 assumes service level increases in the Goleta Valley only, including an aerial ladder truck purchased with Fire District funds and an additional post Captain position utilizing General Fund contribution. In this scenario the General Fund contribution increases from \$1.2 million next year to \$3.54 million in FY 2002-03. In June 2001, the County Administrator's Office will review the budget situation to determine if the General Fund could afford to provide up to one-half of the one-time cost of the ladder truck. This would increase the General Fund contribution needed in FY 2001-02 by about \$300,000, but would reduce the FY 2002-03 contribution by a similar amount. Table 3 reflects service level increases in both the Goleta and Santa Ynez Valleys, carrying forth the assumptions in Table 2 and adding 2 post Firefighter positions funded via General Fund contribution. Under this scenario, the General Fund contribution would be \$1.65 million next year and \$4.16 million in FY 2002-03.

These tables reflect minimal capital expenditures. In addition, it should be noted that the annual impounding of Fire District property taxes due to oil company assessment appeals has a significant impact on the financial status of the Fire Department. The tables include the assumption that \$1.049 million will be impounded annually through Fiscal Year 2002-03 with no contribution to the impound reserve or reduction in property taxes for Fiscal Years 2003-05. The cumulative balance in the impound reserve at the end of FY 02-03 will be \$5.169 million. Without this loss of revenue, the impact on the Department and the General Fund Contribution is significantly reduced.

Due to the potential significant General Fund impact, a chart is included that compares the estimated General Fund costs for each scenario identified in Tables 1-3.

Meeting the 4-person staffing requirement at all stations in the future will require additional costs to be further delineated as the self-assessment is completed. Total infrastructure for the Department will also be assessed in depth in the future.

Concurrence: County Administrator

Attachments:

Tables - 1, 2 and 3

Chart – Fire-General Fund Costs

Critical Needs Assessment Plan, Santa Barbara County Fire Department, March 2001