



**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: CEO
Department No.: 012
For Agenda Of: 11/13/18
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Tme: N/A
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer
 Director(s)
 Contact Info: Bernard Melekian, Assistant County Executive Officer
SUBJECT: **Public Safety Dispatch Separation**

County Counsel Concurrence

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Risk Management
As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Receive and file an update from staff on Public Safety Dispatch alternatives
- b) Direct staff to return to the Board with an update within 120 days
- c) Provide other direction as appropriate; and
- d) Determine this action is exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15378(b) (5), which are organizational or administrative activities of governments that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes to the environment.

Summary Text:

This Board Letter provides an update on the actions taken since the August 28, 2018 Board meeting. At that meeting, staff was directed to return within 90 days and update the Board on the feasibility of separating the current Public Safety Dispatch Center and assimilating the Sheriff's law dispatch into the Santa Maria City Dispatch center, or alternatively, co-locating a regional Fire/EMS dispatch center at the Santa Maria Dispatch facility.

In the last 60 days, staff has met with the Sheriff's Office, County Fire Department, and City of Santa Maria representatives and their technology consultants, and other Fire agencies. Given these discussions, staff has determined that a feasibility evaluation will require more time. This report provides a recap of the actions taken since that Board meeting, the status of the ongoing study and our anticipated next steps. It is anticipated that a more detailed presentation will be made within 120 days upon the completion of several lines of inquiry that must be pursued before the feasibility question can be appropriately answered.

In addition, it is anticipated that a more strategic Public Safety Radio Replacement plan will be brought before the Board shortly after the first of the year. The dispatch question is a subset of that larger project.

Background:

At the July 12, 2017 meeting, the Board received a report from DeltaWrx Management Consultants outlining alternatives for achieving borderless Fire/EMS response and the utilization of closest resource response. At that meeting, the Ventura Fire Communications Center was described as a desirable model for Santa Barbara to emulate, if possible.

Due to intervening disasters, the follow up meeting was not held until August 28, 2018. At that time, the Board directed that staff return with an analysis of the issues involved in separating the Fire/EMS dispatch operations from the existing Sheriff's communication system and determining the feasibility of assimilating either Fire or Sheriff into the City of Santa Maria's Call Center. In addition, the Board directed that, regardless of which operation relocated from the existing facility on the Calle Real campus, needed improvements should be made to that facility.

Since that meeting, CEO staff met with representatives of the Sheriff's Office, Fire Department and the City of Santa Maria. In addition, staff made site visits to the Ventura Fire and Ventura Sheriff Communication facilities. Cost estimates were submitted by both Sheriff and Fire describing the estimated staffing requirements of operating a stand-alone facility. Those estimates have not yet been verified and are not included in this report.

In addition, the Fire Department has contracted with two consultants, who are studying both the computer-aided dispatch (CAD) and radio aspects of the dispatch move project. The CAD consultant is determining which is the best CAD to use for Fire/EMS and if different from Santa Maria's CAD, how to best integrate the two systems if Fire/EMS dispatch move to Santa Maria. This consultant is also looking at how to consolidate the Fire and EMS dispatch functions to create greater efficiencies and cost savings than the current configuration offers.

The radio consultant is looking at the existing radio configuration and working with General Services and others to determine the issues and costs involved with moving the radio portion of Fire/EMS dispatch to Santa Maria. This consultant is also studying the issues and costs involved if Fire/EMS remain in the current center and law dispatch moves to Santa Maria.

Additionally, General Services and all of the public safety agencies have been working with Federal Engineering Consultants to develop a comprehensive Public Safety Radio Replacement plan for County public safety departments. Phase I of that study has been recently completed and a presentation to the Board of Supervisors is anticipated shortly after the first of the year.

Focus of Analysis

The separation of the two public safety disciplines presents a complex and potentially costly challenge. The following lines of inquiry have been the focus of staff's analysis:

1. From both operational and fiscal perspectives, which public safety discipline, Fire or Sheriff, should move from the existing campus? What are the technical requirements to facilitate such a move?
2. Does the City of Santa Maria's Call Center, located within the Police Department, represent an appropriate location to house the county's communications facility, regardless of which branch were to move there?
3. Which is the more appropriate model; fully assimilating into Santa Maria's existing operation or leasing space within the building, building a new call-center or a hybrid blend of these models?

Findings to Date

- The Ventura County Fire Communications is a state of the art facility and provides the regional response desired by the Board. Two points are worth noting. First, in Ventura County, Fire and Sheriff Dispatch centers have always been separated. Secondly, the cities and fire districts in Ventura County do not pay the county directly. Rather they provide an in-kind service in the form of their resources being dispatched outside of their jurisdictional boundaries. How the Santa Barbara County cities and fire districts would compensate our County Fire Department for, or participate in, a regional fire/EMS dispatch center is yet to be decided but will be evaluated.
- The City of Santa Maria's position has been evolving over the course of our discussions. Clarification is required as to whether 1) they have the capacity to assimilate either Sheriff or Fire dispatch operations into their existing operation, 2) whether they are interested in leasing space for a separate facility and 3) whether converting to Santa Maria's provider (Motorola) is a requirement for such movement. Staff has received conflicting information on these points and is seeking further clarification.
- All of the county fire chiefs have expressed strong support for the concept of regional (i.e. borderless) response of fire/EMS resources. All of them have indicated that the location of the call-center is of far less importance to them. None of the city council's or districts have taken a position on this question nor have they been asked to as of yet. Discussion with these elected boards and councils are pending further progress on this feasibility evaluation.
- Santa Barbara County Fire Department has indicated a willingness to locate a regional fire/EMS dispatch operations to the north county, but have expressed reluctance to assimilate with the existing Santa Maria operation because of the time and expense of converting their CAD function to Motorola. They have hired a consultant to determine the staffing and technology requirements of locating the dispatch operations to the Santa Maria call center facility or other north county facility should that not be feasible.
- The Sheriff's Office remains opposed to moving dispatch operations from the existing center as they feel that it is a critical part of their command and control infrastructure. In addition, there are significant technical issues involved in such a move. They also report that a number of improvements have been made, both technically and operationally since the July 2017 Board meeting. Regardless, a study of the staffing and technology requirements of assimilating the dispatch operations will be conducted once further clarification is obtained from the City of Santa Maria.

- County EMS has stated that their primary concern is the achievement of 100% uninterrupted Emergency Medical Dispatch.
- There are several technical issues that must be clarified/resolved before a definitive recommendation can be made. These include:
 - Will the purchase of new servers be a requirement in a new move and can the current Tri-Tech system be bridged to Santa Maria's Motorola system?
 - What is the most expeditious means to achieve network connectivity between the north and south county facilities?
 - How does the expansion of call-centers, in whatever form, fit into the Public Safety Radio Strategic plan?

Questions to be Resolved

- Regardless of which dispatching operations moves from the existing facility, will the Fire Department require a new CAD system? Can they transfer the current TriTech CAD license under the Sheriff's Office to Fire's own license? Would they eventually move to the Motorola CAD if Fire/EMS moves to Santa Maria? Staff has received conflicting information on this point and more analysis will be required.
- What location is preferable to house a redundant server system?
- What are the estimated costs involved in;
 1. Achieving network connectivity between the north and south county facilities,
 2. Construction/hardware costs of setting up a new facility and
 3. Any required increase in staffing levels
 4. Improvements required for the existing (south county) facility

Next Steps

- Review the Public Safety Radio Replacement Strategic plan
- Receive and review the report from the City of Santa Maria as to the anticipated costs of assimilation
- Receive and review the reports from the Fire Department consultants
- Verify the cost estimates received from Sheriff and Fire
- Obtain appropriate technical consultant assistance
- Return to the Board with a comprehensive report and recommendation

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Revised costs of separate dispatch facilities has not yet been determined and are continuing to be determined, as stated above.

Fiscal Analysis:

No

Attachments:

None

Authored by:

Bernard Melekian, Assistant County Executive Officer