



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: Fire
Department No.: 031
For Agenda Of: 11/16/21
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Time: 45 Minutes
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
Board of Directors, Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District

FROM: Department Mark A. Hartwig, Fire Chief / Fire Warden
Director: 805-681-5500

Contact Info: Rob Heckman, Deputy Fire Chief of Administration
805-681-5501

SUBJECT: Regional Fire Communications Facility (RFCF) Update

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Risk Management Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

- a) Acting as the Board of Directors for the Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District:
 - a. Approve, ratify and authorize the Fire Chief to execute Cooperative Dispatch Agreements (Attachment A) with partner fire agencies (Montecito Fire Protection District, Carpinteria-Summerland Fire Protection District, City of Santa Barbara and City of Santa Maria); and
 - b. Authorize the Fire Chief to enter into, on behalf of the Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District (Fire District), an MOU with the Local Emergency Medical Services Agency (LEMSA) that defines dispatch processes for ambulance services and Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) procedures; and
 - c. Provide other direction as appropriate; and
 - d. Determine this action is exempt from the 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.
- b) Acting as the Board of Supervisors:
 - a. Receive and file the redundant Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) conceptual plan (Attachment B) and direct staff to focus planning efforts on the development of a backup PSAP with the City of Santa Maria; and

- b. Designate the RFCF, effective when it commences operation, to be the point of dispatch for the contract ambulance provider as permitted in the County of Santa Barbara Emergency Ambulance Agreement Section 4- Paragraph 4.2, Dispatch Requirements;
- c. Require budget-neutral impact to the County's General Fund for RFCF operations; and
- d. Provide other direction as appropriate; and
- e. Determine these actions are exempt from the 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, and Section 15262 for feasibility and planning studies for possible future actions which the Board has not approved, adopted, or funded.

Summary Text:

On October 1, 2019, your Board directed staff to continue to develop planning efforts to expand the existing Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to accommodate a Regional Fire Communications Facility (RFCF); and authorized staff to enter into service level negotiations with regional partners who wish to participate in the RFCF. Additionally, your Board directed staff to examine a dispatch redundancy plan in northern Santa Barbara County.

The Montecito and Carpinteria/Summerland Fire Protection District Boards and the cities of Santa Barbara and Santa Maria have signed cooperative dispatch partnership agreements with the Fire District to participate in the RFCF with proportionate cost allocation, pending approval of the Board of Directors, acting as the Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District. The Fire District is requesting Board approval to authorize the Fire Chief to execute the agreements with partner fire agencies. When the RFCF is ready to go live, these agreements will be returned to the local agencies to amend the agreements by adding a commencement date. As structured, the agreements would be a five-year term from commencement, with provisions for termination and notice of termination.

In partnership with the City of Santa Maria and County General Services, the Fire District retained the consultant firm, RRM Design Group (RRM) to conduct evaluations and develop preliminary conceptual plans to construct a redundant secondary PSAP at the Santa Maria Police Department Headquarters.

The Fire District seeks approval to develop an agreement with the LEMSA that defines dispatch procedures for contract ambulance resources and approval of the Fire District's EMD system. This information will inform LEMSA's medical control of the EMS system, emergency medical dispatch (EMD), and associated contracts for services.

Additionally, the LEMSA's new contract for ambulance services is anticipated to predate the RFCF commencement of operations. The Fire District requests that your Board direct the RFCF to be the point of dispatch for the contract ambulance provider, effective when the RFCF commences operations.

The CEO's office engaged the consulting group KPMG to examine the current Sheriff's Office dispatch operation and the potential negative financial consequences of the Fire District and EMS leaving the current operation when the RFCF becomes operational. The draft report has been completed, and the CEO's Office, the Sheriff's Office, and the Fire District will work to resolve any funding gap to the Sheriff's dispatch operation.

Background:

In partnership with the Fire District and Office of Emergency Management (OEM), County General Services has initiated architecture and engineering design services for a new RFCF adjacent and linked to the current EOC. The services will include full design development with the Fire District and OEM, constructability reviews, and cost estimating to determine the project's funding requirements. The new RFCF will separate dispatch functions for the Fire District and Emergency Medical Services from the current Sheriff's Office dispatch center. Additionally, there will be an expansion and upgrade of the current EOC call center and Joint Information Center (JIC). The improvements will include a technological and physical connection to the existing EOC building and include shared services such as the lobby/entry, storage, offices, and utility infrastructure.

The Fire District proposes to consolidate fire and ambulance dispatch services, which will streamline the emergency medical dispatch process. Consolidation reduces dispatch workload, provides for common communications, requires common terminology, integrates dynamic deployment, and enhances unity of command, all of which are hallmarks of inter-operability and safe operations.

All of the fire agencies in the County acknowledge the merits of a regional center in the public interest to regionalize Fire/EMS dispatch procedures to include nearest resource dispatching, common communications, and dynamic regional deployment.

The Carpinteria-Summerland Fire Protection District, Montecito Fire Protection District, City of Santa Barbara Fire Department, and Santa Maria City Fire Department have fully committed to the regional concept by executing Cooperative Dispatch Agreements with the Fire District. These agreements provide for fair and equitable shared operational costs based on calls dispatched in each jurisdiction. On November 2, 2021, the Lompoc City Council approved the inclusion of the Lompoc City Fire Department to the RFCF and directed their staff to return to the Council with long-term funding plans. It is anticipated that an agreement will be in place within 30 days.

Following the October 2019 Board hearing, General Services, the Sheriff's Office, and the Fire District met with the City of Santa Maria Police Department, Fire Department, and City Manager to discuss a potential redundant dispatch project. Following a period of fact-finding and due diligence, the merits of a redundant secondary PSAP at the Santa Maria Police Headquarters was seen as a mutually beneficial endeavor. RRM was retained to develop a conceptual design plan. Staff recommends creating a plan to work with the City of Santa Maria in developing a formal agreement to establish Santa Maria Police Department Headquarters as the site for a redundant backup communications facility.

The LEMSA Medical Director has medical authority over the EMS system and EMD, which includes prioritized dispatch for medically related calls, pre-arrival first aid instructions, and protocols, per Health and Safety Code Division 2.5 Section 1798.

Under the new dispatch model, the Fire District will enter into an MOU with the LEMSA to address ambulance dispatch, reporting, performance measures, and approval of the District's EMD protocols.

While a new contract for ambulance services will likely predate the commencement of operations at the RFCF, the District requests that the Board designate the RFCF as the point of dispatch for the contract ambulance provider when it commences operations. This completes the consolidation of fire and emergency medical services into one dispatch center with commensurate operational and quality control advantages.

To ascertain the potential negative financial impacts to the General Fund with the separation of Fire and EMS from the current Sheriff's Office dispatch operation, the consulting group KPMG was engaged to review the current dispatch operation, workflow, call volumes, dispatch handling times by call type, etc. From this analysis, KPMG summarized opportunities for efficiency and further examined the reduction in workload, workflow, and call volume with the departure of Fire and EMS to the RFCF and recommends corresponding staffing models to optimize the Sheriff's dispatch operation. A draft of this analysis was recently completed. The Fire District will work with the CEO's office to address any negative financial impact to the General Fund related to the current Sheriff's dispatch operation.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: As outlined in the July 13, 2021 Board letter by General Services, the Fire District budgeted \$1.7M in FY 21-22 for the architecture and design of the RFCF. The estimated project cost for the RFCF is \$11M.

Fiscal Analysis:

<u>Funding Sources</u>	<u>Current FY Cost:</u>	<u>Annualized On-going Cost:</u>	<u>Total One-Time Project Cost</u>
Fire Protection District Fund 2280	\$ 1,704,700.00	\$ 4,900,000.00	\$ 11,000,000.00
State			
Federal			
Fees			
Other:			
Total	\$ 1,704,700.00	\$ 4,900,000.00	\$ 11,000,000.00

Narrative:

RFCF Operational Cost

The District is proposing that the participating agencies will share the total annual operating cost of the RFCF on a blended basis; variable costs will be allocated to each agency on a per-incident call basis while fixed costs will be evenly allocated to each agency. Variable costs include Salaries and Employee Benefits, certain Services and Supplies, certain Other Charges, and Depreciation Expense. Fixed costs include certain Services and Supplies as well as certain Other Charges. The estimated operating costs include capital replacement set aside to ensure that the District will have adequate funds available to meet the future capital (facilities and equipment) needs.

Annual operating costs of the RFCF are projected to be \$4.9 million. The capital replacement set aside is included in the annual operating costs.

Upon the CEO's request, Financial Reporting Division staff within the Auditor-Controller's Office performed a review of the projected operational budget for the RFCF. Based on that review, it was determined that the estimated operating costs and the associated cost allocation methodology to participating agencies was reasonable.

The Cost Allocation Table below illustrates what (estimated) full participation would look like with all agencies within the County of Santa Barbara. The estimates in this cost analysis are susceptible to change depending on the actual number of incident calls and actual cost in any given year.

Agency	Calls for Service	Annual Cost - Call for Service	Annual Cost - Fixed Expense	Total Cost Per Agency
Santa Barbara Co. FPD	15,682	\$ 1,116,098	\$ 20,286	\$ 1,136,384
City of Santa Barbara	10,341	\$ 735,976	\$ 20,286	\$ 756,261
City of Santa Maria	9,730	\$ 692,490	\$ 20,286	\$ 712,776
City of Lompoc	4,153	\$ 295,572	\$ 20,286	\$ 315,857
Carpinteria-Summerland FPD	2,072	\$ 147,466	\$ 20,286	\$ 167,751
Montecito FPD	1,309	\$ 93,162	\$ 20,286	\$ 113,448
City of Guadalupe	800	\$ 56,937	\$ 20,286	\$ 77,222
TOTALS	44,087	\$ 3,137,700	\$ 142,000	\$ 3,279,700

The total annual operating costs of \$4.9 million will be offset by \$3.3 million in agency revenues. The remaining operating cost of \$1.6 million will be attributed to ambulance (EMS) resource dispatching services. In FY 21/22, the Sheriff's Office received a total of \$1.6 million for ambulance dispatching services. If your Board approves the transfer of ambulance (EMS) dispatching to the RFCF, the District projects the cost for ambulance dispatch services to be approximately \$1.6 million. The actual cost apportionment will be identified in the MOU with the LEMSA once it has been established. Between now and the commencement of operations, other revenue opportunities will be sought or born by the participating agencies through revised agreements.

Capital and One-Time Infrastructure Costs

The District will be funding the one-time startup costs of approximately \$11 million, including the structure/building, technology infrastructure, and major furniture and fixtures. Participating agencies will be charged an annual cost allocation (weighted by calls for service) for their consumption/use of these assets. Per the signed agreements, if a participating agency leaves the RFCF, their contribution for the structure/building, technology infrastructure, and furniture and fixtures will not be refunded because they will only be charged for their asset consumption. This cost-share functions similar to depreciation expense and includes small ticket items such as headsets, chairs, and small appliances. This helps to create a smoothing of the annual cost-share and ensure that the District will be able to meet the facility needs in the future.

General Fund Impact/Budget Gap

The County has received a draft of the KPMG PSAP Staffing Report. The District is committed to partnering with the County Executive Office and the Sheriff's Office to identify solutions to mitigate the fiscal impact to the General Fund. The KPMG Report identified many varying staffing models, with three optimized staffing models that have an average fiscal impact of approximately \$1.5M. Further analysis is needed to determine the most efficient and cost-effective model. As determined by the CEO's Office, the General Fund Gap will be funded by the Fire District through RFCF revenues or other

District sources and efficiencies. This project has been required to have a neutral impact on the County's General Fund from inception.

Staffing Impacts: None.

Special Instructions:

Please return one copy of the minute order to Rob Heckman, Deputy Fire Chief.

Attachments:

- A. Cooperative Dispatch Agreements with Partner Agencies
- B. PSAP/Redundant Dispatch Center Conceptual Plan

Authored by:

Rob Heckman, Deputy Fire Chief of Administration

cc:

Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer
Mark A. Hartwig, Fire Chief / Fire Warden
Shawna Jorgenson, Chief Financial Officer
Nick Clay, EMSA Director, Public Health