

January 21, 2014, 5:00 p.m.

Council Chambers, 333 Civic Center Plaza

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1. Chairperson Rickman called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.
2. Roll Call found Directors Ahmad, Maciel, Thoming, and Chairperson Rickman present.
3. Items from the Audience - None.
4. Approval of Minutes – It was moved by Director Maciel and seconded by Director Thoming to adopt the regular meeting minutes of October 15, 2013. Voice vote found all in favor; passed and so ordered.
5. ACCEPT A REPORT ON THE SOUTH COUNTY FIRE AUTHORITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE PERFORMANCE FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF FISCAL YEAR 2013-2014 – Fire Division Chief Steve Hanlon provided the staff report. There were a total of 1,637 incidents in the South County Fire Authority (SCFA) during the second quarter of fiscal year 2013/2014. This is an increase of 54 incidents compared to the same quarter last fiscal year. After four straight years of a gradual decrease in call volume (between fiscal years 2007/2008 and 2010/2011), the SCFA has seen an increase over the past two fiscal years.

Emergency medical service calls account for 69% of all calls dispatched in the SCFA during the past quarter. Hazardous condition and service calls accounted for 5% each of the total. Twelve percent were fire alarms and 6% were fires.

During this past quarter, there were 15 structure fires in the SCFA. That was an increase of six structure fires compared to the same quarter last fiscal year. Thirteen occurred in the City of Tracy and two in the Tracy Rural Fire Protection District (TRFPD). There were no structure fires in the Mountain House Community Services District (MHCS) during the quarter.

The estimated dollar loss from structure fires in the City during the second quarter of fiscal year 2013/2014 was \$423,028 (property and content loss). The majority of that loss was attributed to two single family dwelling fires. Both of those fires had significant fire damage and both had a civilian injured as a result of each fire.

Structure fire dollar loss in the rural area during the second quarter of fiscal year 2013/2014 totaled \$77,078. A working bedroom fire at a single family residence accounted for the majority of that loss at \$71,078 (property and content loss). A fire in a produce warehouse had a loss of \$6,000. That fire was contained by the built-in fire sprinkler.

The Department's goal is to confine residential structure fires to the room of origin or less 90% of the time. For the first two quarters of 2013/2014 that goal was met 67% of the time in the City. There were no residential structure fires in the Rural or Mountain

House areas during the second quarter. However, that goal was met 100% of the time in both jurisdictions during the first quarter of this fiscal year.

The SCFA response time performance is broken down into four components, "Call Processing," "Turnout Time," "Travel Time," and the "Total Reflex Time." The Response Performance Report displays each of these components of time by percentage and percentile and compares them to both the desired benchmarks and to the acceptable baselines.

During the second quarter of fiscal year 2013/2014, the Fire Department responded to 42% of all emergency incidents inside of the City of Tracy within the total reflex performance objective of 6.5 minutes. The 90th percentile for all incidents in the City was 8 minutes and 59 seconds (8:59) meaning 90% of all incidents were responded to in 8:59 or less.

In the second quarter of fiscal year 2013/2014 the Fire Department responded to 58% of all emergency incidents in the TRFPD within the total reflex performance objective of 10 minutes. The 90th percentile for all incidents in the rural area was 13 minutes and 25 seconds (13:25); 90% of all incidents were responded to within 13:25 or less.

Response performance in the MHCSO was 24% for all emergency incidents within the total reflex performance objective of 6.5 minutes. The 90th percentile for all incidents was 8 minutes and 50 seconds (8:50).

Staff recommended the Board of Directors accept the South County Fire Authority Response Performance Report for the second quarter of fiscal year 2013/2014.

Director Maciel asked if the call type in the illustration on page one of the SCFA Response Performance Report was for mutual aid. Division Chief Hanlon responded yes.

Director Maciel stated the biggest percentage of the fire responses was for mutual aid. Division Chief Hanlon responded that units were dispatched to a lot of fires in the mutual aid area.

Director Maciel asked if mutual aid included units dispatched to forest fires. Division Chief Hanlon responded it included all mutual aid areas in the state of California.

There was no one from the audience wishing to address the Authority on the item.

Director Rickman stated he had responded to a big rig accident on Highway 33 and Durham Ferry, and commended those that also responded, stating they had done a good job. Division Chief Hanlon thanked Director Rickman.

Fire Chief Nero stated he would like to echo Director Rickman's thanks and would pass that recognition on to the staff that responded.

Director Thoming asked why the turnout times seem to be off target in the three jurisdictions. Director Thoming added the TRFPD turnout time for the 2nd quarter of the 90th percentile for all incidents is two minutes, and the goal is one minute. The two

minutes for all incidents has been consistent for all three jurisdictional areas. Director Thoming asked if staff was being too optimistic.

Fire Chief Nero responded a minute is optimistic, but that is the target. Fire Chief Nero stated time is being spent in training and monitoring to make sure that units get out as soon as that alarm is received at the fire station. Fire Chief Nero added there are impacts to the response times which are beyond the department's control and staff has placed a priority on those types of impacts.

Division Chief Hanlon stated there has been a lot of forethought put into building the two new fire stations so units can dispatch quickly.

Director Thoming asked if Division Chief Hanlon was referring to the time between when the call is dispatched and when they are responding. Division Chief Hanlon responded that was correct.

Director Rickman asked if there was anything the Fire Department needed help with in all aspects of the department.

Fire Chief Nero responded that the department has the equipment that is needed to respond appropriately to incidents. Fire Chief Nero stated staff requests what is needed to replace, replenish or add to inventory during the budget process. Fire Chief Nero stated the City has been very generous in making sure the Fire Department's needs are met.

It was moved by Director Maciel and seconded by Director Thoming to accept the South County Fire Authority Response Performance Report for the second quarter of fiscal year 2013/2014. Voice vote found all in favor; passed and so ordered.

6. TO ELECT A CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON OF THE SOUTH COUNTY FIRE AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE 2014 CALENDAR YEAR – Fire Chief Nero presented the staff report. Per the Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement of the South County Fire Authority, the governing board shall be administered by a Board of Directors consisting of four members. Two members shall be Tracy City Council members and two members shall be Tracy Rural Fire Protection District Board members.

The Board of Directors will elect annually a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson from its members. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall rotate from each member agency, and the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall not be appointed from the same member agency.

As the previous election of a Chairperson for the South County Fire Authority Board was conducted during the January 15, 2013, meeting, with the Chairperson being elected from the City of Tracy and the Vice-Chairperson being elected from Tracy Rural Fire Protection District, the Board must rotate the 2014 election and the Chairperson will be elected from the Tracy Rural Fire Protection District and the Vice-Chairperson will be elected from the City of Tracy.

In the event of the disqualification, or permanent inability to serve as the Chairperson during the year, another member from the same agency shall be appointed Chairperson to fulfill the one-year term.

The Chairperson shall sign all contracts on behalf of the Authority and shall perform other duties that may be imposed by the Board of Directors. The Vice-Chairperson shall act, sign contracts, and perform all of the Chairperson's duties in the temporary absence of chairperson.

Staff recommended that the Board of Directors of the South County Fire Authority, by motion, elect for calendar year 2014 a Chairperson from the Tracy Rural Fire Protection District and a Vice-Chairperson from the City of Tracy.

Director Maciel asked if Director Thoming was currently the Vice-Chairperson. Director Thoming responded yes.

Director Maciel asked if Director Thoming had served as Chairperson prior to serving as Vice-Chairperson. Director Thoming responded yes.

Director Maciel asked if the Vice-Chairperson moves into the Chairperson position. Director Thoming responded there has never been any special order.

There was no one from the audience wishing to address the Authority on the item.

Director Thoming volunteered to serve as Chairperson. It was moved by Director Ahmad to appoint Director Thoming as Chairperson. All in favor; passed and so ordered.

It was moved by Director Maciel and seconded by Director Thoming to appoint Director Rickman as Vice-Chairperson. All in favor; passed and so ordered.

7. APPROVAL OF LETTER TO THE JOINT RADIO USERS GROUP AND SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AGENCY REGARDING DISPATCHING PROTOCOL AND THE DELAY IN RESPONSE TIMES, AND AUTHORIZE THE CHAIRMAN TO SIGN THE LETTER – Fire Chief Nero presented staff report. The South County Fire Authority (SCFA) is a member of the San Joaquin Joint Radio Users Group (JRUG) that is dispatched by LifeCom, a division of American Medical Response. LifeCom dispatches all EMS calls and a majority of the fire calls in San Joaquin County.

All 911 calls originating in a given area are received by a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). For calls originating in the City of Tracy, the Tracy Police Department is the PSAP. The San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office is the PSAP for calls that originate in unincorporated San Joaquin County. Cell phone calls are generally answered at a CHP call center, who acts as the PSAP. Standards dictate that 911 calls will not be transferred between PSAP's more than once.

The San Joaquin County Emergency Medical Services Agency (SJEMSA) has determined, by policy that the authorized Emergency Medical Dispatching (EMD) center shall dispatch EMS resources to medical emergencies and manage the response in accordance with established response levels and modes. LifeCom is the authorized

EMD center in San Joaquin County. Fire calls do not fall under this requirement and SJEMSA does not regulate fire call dispatching.

Fire Chief Nero explained the EMD protocol stating when a 911 call is received the dispatcher will ask questions to gain information about the patient. Obtaining the information could take a few seconds or several minutes depending on the cooperation of the caller. The information is entered, the appropriate level of response is determined and then the units are dispatched.

When LifeCom receives a 911 call, a dispatcher enters information provided by the caller into a call assessment system. The call assessment system determines the nature of the complaint or event, the acuity of the issue and assigns a code for each call. The system assists the dispatcher in identifying the appropriate determinant code for each call.

Prior to February 2012, SJEMSA policy required LifeCom to complete the EMD process prior to dispatching EMS resources to calls. In February 2012, Fire Department staff and the Board of Directors of the JRUG met with the director of the SJEMSA to discuss call processing in the county. Due to the outcome of a 2009 lawsuit filed by the City of Stockton, there had been two call processing procedures utilized, which created inconsistencies and added steps to the dispatching process at LifeCom. This resulted in dispatch delays to all fire agencies outside of the Stockton city limits. At the February 2012, meeting it was requested that one process for the entire county be used in an effort to eliminate delays and streamline the dispatching process. The discussion resulted in a SJEMSA policy amendment that became effective November 29, 2012.

The amendment designated LifeCom to dispatch all ambulance and emergency medical resources (fire) after completion of case entry and prior to reaching an EMD determinant. Once the EMD determinant is reached, the dispatch center will notify all responding resources to upgrade, reduce code of response, or cancel the response. The amendment decreased the amount of time it takes to get fire resources in route to a medical emergency and call processing improved an average of 8% or 29 seconds, allowing fire units to arrive on scene faster.

In January 2013, the Stockton Fire Department requested SJEMSA reconsider dispatching fire units prior to reaching an EMD determinant. Stockton Fire felt the amended process was creating negative impacts on their resource deployment.

The request by Stockton Fire was also an action item at the February 6, 2013, San Joaquin County Fire Chief's Association meeting, resulting in the Fire Chief's Association voting to approve returning to previous dispatching protocol. Tracy Fire was the only member that voted against reverting back to previous call processing protocol.

The SJEMSA informed the JRUG on February 14, 2013, of the agency's intention to fully implement the prior procedure. Effective March 1, 2013, dispatching protocols reverted back to dispatching fire units after an EMD determinant was met. Due to this change, it resulted in a 12% (43 second) increase in call processing, delaying a response by fire units to EMS calls.

At the July 16, 2013, SCFA meeting, the increase in response times was discussed and the board was informed about the change in dispatching protocol by the SJEMSA agency.

The SCFA Board of Directors directed Fire Chief Nero to draft a letter to the SJEMSA and JRUG stating the SCFA's position regarding the change in dispatch protocol.

Staff recommended that the Board of Directors of the South County Fire Authority approve the letter to the Joint Radio Users Group and the San Joaquin County Emergency Medical Services Agency regarding dispatching protocol and the delay in response times, and authorize the Chairperson to sign the letter.

Director Ahmad asked if dispatch has the ability to revert to the prior procedure just for SCFA. Fire Chief Nero responded yes.

Director Maciel stated when they reverted to the prior procedure Tracy Fire's response times increased. Director Maciel asked if any other agencies experienced the same increase. Fire Chief Nero responded he has not seen statistics from other agencies.

Director Maciel stated he thought if more agencies saw an increase in their response times that they would want to revert back to the way it was.

Fire Chief Nero responded in this area there is a lot of differing opinions about what is the "right thing to do". When dealing with EMS and EMD, some agencies have a large call volume and a large number of calls for service that are not true emergencies, and often feel like a resource has been sent inappropriately. Many agencies feel more comfortable with going to a tried and true system where they make the call and their position is to send the right unit to the right call based on the information received. Tracy does not have a large volume of calls and most of our calls are "true calls" of an emergent nature. It is the City's position that getting there faster in a shorter amount of response time far out ways the number of times that units are canceled in route or downgraded in the response.

Robert Tanner, stated he noticed in the report that 911 calls by cell phone go to California Highway Patrol (CHP) and he had heard on the news that landlines seem to be going away as more people are using cell phones. Mr. Tanner asked if cell phones being answered by the CHP, is causing a delay and if so, is there a way that can it be fixed.

Fire Chief Nero responded he did not have an answer for the last part of Mr. Tanner's question. Fire Chief Nero stated as soon as the CHP determines the call location and type, the call is automatically sent to the appropriate dispatch center. In Tracy's area that would be to LifeCom. In other areas it would be at their respective dispatch centers. Fire Chief Nero added it is approximately a four second period of time to get that information and flip that switch.

Director Ahmad asked if LifeCom has dedicated dispatchers for Tracy Fire.

Fire Chief Nero responded not for Tracy Fire, but Lifecom has dispatchers that are dedicated to fire. LifeCom dispatches all fire agencies in San Joaquin county with the exception of Lodi, Stockton and Manteca.

It was moved by Director Maciel and seconded by Director Ahmad to approve the letter to the Joint Radio Users Group and the San Joaquin County Emergency Medical Services Agency regarding dispatching protocol and the delay in response times, and authorize the Chairperson to sign the letter. Voice vote found all in favor; passed and so ordered.

8. ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE - None

Director Rickman welcomed Director Osh Ahmad to the South County Fire Authority.

Director Ahmad introduced himself.

9. Adjournment – It was moved by Director Maciel and seconded by Chairperson Thoming to adjourn. Voice vote found all in favor; passed and so ordered. Time: 5:33 p.m.

The above are summary minutes. The above agenda was posted at Tracy City Hall on January 16, 2014.

Chairperson

Attest:

Secretary