



CAL FIRE
San Luis Obispo
County Fire Department

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Robert Lewin, Fire Chief

TO: Geoff O'Quest, County Administrative Analyst

FROM: Robert Lewin, Fire Chief

DATE: June 26, 2013

SUBJECT: Response to the Grand Jury Report "Consolidation of Public Safety Dispatch Systems"

This memo is in response to the FY 2012-13 Grand Jury report titled "Consolidation of Public Safety Dispatch System," released on May 28, 2013. The report includes six findings and three recommendations, of which CAL FIRE/County Fire is required to respond to Findings 4 and 6, and Recommendations 2 and 3. CAL FIRE's responses are discussed below.

Background - CAL FIRE/San Luis Obispo County Fire

Under a cooperative agreement CAL FIRE has served as the San Luis Obispo County Fire Department for over 83 years. In San Luis Obispo County, CAL FIRE provides contract fire protection services from 21 fire stations and five support facilities to the County of San Luis Obispo, the Avila Beach Community Services District, the City of Pismo Beach, the Los Osos Community Services District and the Cayucos Fire Protection District. This service is a key component of CAL FIRE's mission, as directed and authorized by the State Legislature and statutes, to provide contractual emergency services throughout California when requested by local agencies. CAL FIRE has cooperative agreements with over 145 local government agencies in 35 of the State's 58 counties, 25 cities, 31 fire districts and 34 other special districts.

CAL FIRE/San Luis Obispo County Fire provides dispatch services to a total of nine fire departments within San Luis Obispo County. These programs are mutually beneficial and provide for the level of service that each agency desires and can afford. CAL FIRE is a modern, full service fire protection and emergency management agency that provides all-risk emergency services. We are committed to providing Consolidated Fire Protection solutions that make the most effective use of limited emergency protection resources by efficiently sharing valuable personnel and equipment.

CAL FIRE/San Luis Obispo County Fire, Fire Protection Contracts in San Luis Obispo County

- County of San Luis Obispo
- City of Pismo Beach
- Los Osos Community Services District
- Avila Beach Community Services District
- Cayucos Fire Protection District

Fire Department Dispatch Contracts

- Cambria CSD Fire Department
- Cayucos Fire Protection District
- San Miguel CSD Fire Department
- Santa Margarita Fire Protection District
- Templeton CSD Fire Department

Response to Grand Jury Findings

The CAL FIRE – San Luis Obispo Unit is required by the Grand Jury to respond to Findings 4 and 6.

Finding 4 “Five Cities Fire Authority does not want CAL FIRE’s involvement with the use and allocation of the Five Cities Fire Authority equipment.”

CAL FIRE AGREES WITH THE FINDING 4

Comments: To date we have not been requested by the City of Arroyo Grande, the City of Grover Beach or the Five Cities Fire Authority to discuss CAL FIRE/County Fire as a dispatch option. It is CAL FIRE’s policy not to solicit contracts for service; we must be requested by the entity interested in the service before we may engage in a discussion. If CAL FIRE were to dispatch Five Cities Fire Authority we would dispatch the specific equipment the Authority directed us to. All dispatch contracts are customized to meet the requirements of the agency contracting us.

Finding 6 “The reluctance to consolidate dispatch by Five Cities Fire Authority and CAL FIRE has brought action to a stalemate in finding answers to the dispatch issue.”

CAL FIRE AGREES WITH THE FINDING 6

Comments: CAL FIRE is not reluctant to engage in finding answers to the dispatch issue. However it is CAL FIRE’s policy not to solicit contracts for service; we must be requested by the entity interested in the service before we may engage in a discussion. To date we have not been requested by the City of Arroyo Grande, the City of Grover

Beach or the Five Cities Fire Authority to discuss CAL FIRE/County Fire as a dispatch option. If they do, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss all options.

Response to Grand Jury Recommendations

The CAL FIRE/San Luis Obispo County Fire is required by the Grand Jury to respond to Recommendations 2 and 3.

Recommendation 2 “All city law enforcement, city managers, Sheriff, Five Cities Fire Authority and CAL FIRE should join in meeting with an independent facilitator to finalize consolidation of dispatch by contracting dispatch services with the Sheriff Department.”

CAL FIRE AGREES WITH RECOMMENDATION 2

Comments: We are prepared to enter discussions with or without an independent facilitator in order to better serve the public. While our agency is supportive of this, we do not have the authority to take the lead in convening such a meeting.

Recommendation 3 “Five Cities Fire Authority and CAL FIRE should work with an independent facilitator to develop a written contract defining fire services to be performed and the use of each department’s assets.”

CAL FIRE AGREES WITH RECOMMENDATION 3

Comments: CAL FIRE is willing to work with the Five Cities Fire Authority with or without an independent facilitator if requested by the Five Cities Fire Authority to do so. We are able to provide written contract templates used by other agencies that contract with us. In all cases the Five Cities Fire Authority would determine what services are to be performed and how the Authority’s assets are used.

Summary

CAL FIRE appreciates the Grand Jury’s efforts in identifying deficiencies in the dispatch system and the need for agencies including CAL FIRE/San Luis Obispo County Fire to make improvements. Like all agencies involved in emergency response, we are committed to providing the very best service possible to the residents and visitors throughout the County. We support the Grand Jury’s recommendations because they will improve emergency response and save reduce costs. CAL FIRE/San Luis Obispo County Fire is prepared to work with all of the agencies and entities in the County to make these improvements.