

HERMOSA BEACH

Future Fire Services Study Session



October 18, 2016

Overview

- PowerPoint Presentation by City staff
- PowerPoint Presentation by Los Angeles County Fire
- Citizen's Advisory Committee Statement
- Question & Answer

Background

- January 9th Study Session Issue Paper on Delivery of Fire Services with four options presented to the Council
- April 26th City Council Meeting the Council narrowed the options to either rebuild and provide services in-house, or contract with Los Angeles County for fire services
- July 5th the Citizen's Advisory Committee held its first meeting
- Community Engagement process began on August 24th and concluded on October 12th
- Los Angeles County Fire District delivered the Feasibility Study on September 7th

Community Feedback - Surveys

As an informal way to track the feedback surrounding the decisions for the future of fire services in the City of Hermosa Beach, we have utilized a simple post-event survey that all attendees of the Town Halls and Small Group presentations were asked to complete and leave behind after the meeting.

The feedback from these survey questions is :

80% surveyed are in favor for opting to contract our services with LA County Fire Department.

It should be noted that the survey responses received from this group are from members of the community who:

- Invested their time and efforts to attend the Town Halls or Group Meetings
- Have presented questions on the matter
- Were keen to learning more about both options that were presented for future fire services

Community Feedback - Postcards

In advertising for the City's second Town Hall meeting in September, the City also included a survey form within the mailer for recipients to anonymously submit their feedback regarding the decision of future fire services.

This question form was slightly different than the one presented at the Town Hall meetings as we asked a pre-qualifying question to determine where they received their information. The choices were:

- Town Hall
- News Article
- News Article & Other
- News Article & Facebook
- Facebook
- Other
- None Selected

Community Feedback - Postcards

These community postcard stated the following:

more than 50% in favor of rebuilding our fire department.

However, only 8% noted that they had received the information from the Town Hall meeting. The rest of the responses relied on third-party sources to determine their decisions for the future of fire services.

Community Feedback - Postcards, *cont'd.*

Other caveats to consider when reviewing the data from the postcard surveys:

- More than 175 responses that were in favor of rebuilding our fire department were submitted prior to the second Town Hall meeting we had advertised within the mailer, therefore it is unknown if they actually ended up attending any sort of informational meeting or changed their mind from the initial response
- 26% of the surveys noted they learned of the Fire Services issue through news articles. Staff created a media analysis of news coverage for insights to these responses
- While the cards were anonymous, some people took advantage of the honor system for responses and submitted multiple cards containing the same responses

Media Analysis

In order to prepare for the upcoming City Council study session, we reviewed all of the media coverage surrounding the topic of future fire services within the City.

Of the ten articles written by local press regarding the future of fire services over the past six months (April 2016 – September 2016), the following has occurred:

- 70% of the headlines contain potentially negative words (Examples: braces, scrap, debate, strikes, shut down, hefty price, domino effect)
- Only one outlet (Easy Reader) covered news of the HB Firefighters Association's decision to support contracting services with LA County

Media Analysis, *cont'd.*

THE BEACH REPORTER

Future fire department in Hermosa Beach has a hefty price tag

Alana Garrigues Jul 21, 2016 (0)



Hermosa Beach Fire Department file photo.

EasyReaderNews

Debate over future of Hermosa Beach fire department strikes a chord for residents

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THE BEACH REPORTER

Hermosa Beach outsourcing fire services could have domino effect in Manhattan Beach

EasyReaderNews

Response time a hot topic in Hermosa Beach fire debate

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Manhattan Beach braces itself for challenges if Hermosa Beach outsources fire services



Key Takeaways

- This topic is emotional for the community
- However, as the Town Hall surveys indicate, those who spent time to educate themselves overwhelmingly chose the County option
- The anonymous mail-in survey results represent a challenge for inclusion in our recommendations due to the lack of the control element.
 - Only 54 noted they received information from a Town Hall Meeting.
 - Over 100 noted they received information from other sources

Key Takeaways, *cont'd.*

- While we respect everyone's opinion and sharing their thoughts for the future of fire services, the mail-in responses simply lack insight.
- As previously stated, discussions regarding future fire services is a very emotional topic.
- In general, news articles covering fire department consolidations tend to focus on the emotional aspect of the community connection to firefighters
- If one were to place the decision-making process solely on media coverage, the entire topic of future fire services is of negative tone

Fire Services Decision Comparisons

We believe that by reviewing the challenges facing other fire departments and how they determined their decisions allows us to learn “best practices” for our decision on the future of fire services.

A brief situational overview and news articles detailing cities that have contracted with OCFA and LA County Fire are included for review:

- Santa Ana / Orange County Fire Authority
- La Habra / LA County Fire Department

Fire Services Decision Comparisons: Santa Ana

- In 2012, the City of Santa Ana faced a similar issue that Hermosa is currently addressing as Santa Ana's City Council publically discussed contracting services with the Orange County Fire Authority.

- The same issues we face today were presented to Santa Ana: it was an emotional topic that the City had to face. Media coverage emulates tone & emotions of the decisions facing City Council



SANTA ANA – If this city dismantles its 128-year-old Fire Department and contracts with the county's fire agency, the city could save more than \$10 million in the first year, according to an Orange County Fire Authority proposal.

Looking to close a projected \$30 million budget deficit, city officials are considering eliminating the department and contracting for firefighting services from the county's largest fire agency.

In a proposal sent to the city this week, the OCFA offered to save the city of Santa Ana \$10.6 million on firefighting costs in the first year while absorbing 192 sworn personnel and 12 non-sworn employees of the Santa Ana Fire Department. The cost savings would come partly from reducing the number of firefighters on duty in the city from a current minimum of 63 to 48.

The current minimum of 63 firefighters on duty is required under the contract between the city and the union representing the city's firefighters, but that contract would become moot if the firefighters become OCFA employees.

Fire Services Decision Comparison: La Habra

- In 2005, the City of La Habra began discussions with LA County to potentially contract out the city's fire services
- The relationship for the City has remained in good standing, as the City continues to contract services to LA County Fire Dept. more than 10 years past the initial contract

Los Angeles Times

L.A. County to Absorb La Habra's Fire Unit

Supervisors approve a 10-year, \$72-million contract to provide protection for the city.

February 09, 2005 | Dave McKibben | Times Staff Writer



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The Los Angeles County Fire Department will soon be providing protection in La Habra, thanks to a contract with the city that was approved Tuesday by L.A. County supervisors.

The transition will take about six months. All 34 positions in the La Habra Fire Department will be absorbed by L.A. County, providing the personnel meet medical and background checks.

The move by La Habra to reach across the county line for fire services is designed to increase service and save money.

"People in our community don't care what name is on the Fire Department trucks," La Habra City Councilman James Gomez said. "They want the service that's going to take care of them in case of emergency."

ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

NEWS

La Habra extends contract with L.A. County Fire

Oct. 23, 2014 | Updated 11:47 a.m.

La Habra will continue receiving its fire services courtesy of the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

FACEBOOK

TWITTER

EMAIL

The City Council voted Monday to extend the city's contract with the agency 10 more years. The contract will lock the city in for five years, and becomes year-to-year for the second half of the contract, like most of the cities the department provides fire services for.

Analysis Summary

- When cities face a decision regarding the future of their fire services, the community at large becomes very engaged about the topic and offering their opinions
- As noted with Santa Ana, the community was worried about the welfare of their firefighters
- For La Habra, the community gathered petitions for support of LA County Fire Services, which allowed Council to focus on the opportunity to negotiate contracts with the County
- It is of staff's opinion that we have provided multiple opportunities for City Council and our community members to learn the facts about the two options we have for the future fire services
- We understand the topic will remain an emotional one, but we believe that we have provided all the facts

Staffing and Service Level Analysis

Staff is providing the Council with a couple of options to consider. If the desire is to continue to provide in-house fire services.

Option 1 corrects the management shortages, while Option 2 corrects not only the management shortages but provides relief for the staffing crisis.

The Fire District's analysis is from the September 7th Feasibility Study that was provided to the City.

Hermosa Beach Provided In-House Fire Services, Option 1

Fire Chief	1
Battalion Chief	3
Captain/Paramedic	3
Engineer/Paramedic	3
Firefighter/Paramedic	9
Total Shift Personnel	18



Hermosa Beach Provided In-House Fire Services, Option 2

Fire Chief	1
Battalion Chief	3
Captain/Paramedic	3
Engineer/Paramedic	6
Firefighter/Paramedic	9
Total Shift Personnel	21



Los Angeles County Fire District

Chief Officers	Multiple
Captain	3
Engineer	3
Firefighter/Paramedic	9
Total Shift Personnel Assigned	15
Total Available to Hermosa	4000+



Ambulance Transport Options

1. City retains full operation of the ambulance program with civilian employees and City provided ambulances
2. City retains full operation of the ambulance program with private contractor provided staffing utilizing City provided ambulances
3. Hermosa and Manhattan work together on a consolidated ambulance transport program
4. City conducts an RFP for ambulance services and monitors performance through established performance measurements
5. The City allows the Fire District to utilize their existing contracts with the local private ambulance provider

Fiscal Implications

(Costs are in Millions)

	Current	Option 1	Option 2	Fire District
Operating Budget	\$5.722	\$6.319	\$6.713	\$4.914
Debt Servicing	\$1.1	\$1.1	\$1.1	\$0.8
Sub-Total	\$6.822	\$7.419	\$7.813	\$5.714
Possible Ongoing Costs				\$1.315
Total	\$6.822	\$7.419	\$7.813	\$7.029

On-Going Costs

(Costs are in Thousands)

PERS Liability	\$700
OPEB	110
Communications Equipment	30
Equipment Replacement	40
Insurance User Charges	<u>435</u>
Total	\$1.315M

* These costs are ongoing costs independent of In-House or Contracting

Next Steps

If the City Council determines that an independent contractor is necessary, validate the provided information/proposals between the October 18 Study Session and the December 13th Council meeting. It should be noted that LAFCO also requires a validation of the Fire District's proposal.

December 13 Council meeting Fire Services/Staffing Discussion and Decision. If the decision at that time is to pursue contracting out the Fire Department, then Council should direct staff to enter into negotiations with the Fire District.

If negotiations are successful the City would need to make an application to LAFCO to annex the City Fire Department to the Fire District (Appendix D of the Feasibility Study).

Also, as a PERS Annuitant my time with the City will run out sometime in January creating a need for expediency of this process.

Single Station Fire Departments Staffing Matrix

	San Marino	South Pasadena	Piedmont	Albany
Fire Chief	.33 (shared)	.33 (shared)	1	1
Deputy Chief	1	1		
Division Chief	.33 (shared)	.33 (shared)		
Captain	3	3	3	3
Lieutenant			3	3
Engineer	3	6	3	6
Fighter/Paramedic	<u>13</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>6</u>
Total	20.66	19.66	25	19
Calls for service	1,800	2,300	1,200	1,850

Hermosa Beach

	Current	Option 1	Option 2
Fire Chief	1	1	1
Battalion Chief		3	3
Captain/PM	3	3	3
Engineer/PM	5	3	6
Firefighter/PM	<u>7</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>
Total	16	19	22
Calls for Service	2,550	2,550	2,550



QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION