



October 25, 2016

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Jeff Carman, Fire Chief

RE: Fire Chief's Report

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- The Fire District had another very busy month stretching our personnel and resources to the maximum. There were 26 structure fires. Five of those fires were two alarm fires, one of which included a fire inside the County's Regional Medical Center requiring evacuation and movement of many patients in the facility. One of the 26 structure fires was a three-alarm fire involving apartments on all three floors and the attic of a three-story apartment building. This fire took 17 fire companies and over 60 firefighters to control it. **Nearly 70% of on-duty District resources and 63 personnel were committed for over three hours.** As always, our neighboring fire agencies supported our operations with station coverage, move-ups and emergency response coverage. Those assisting agencies included the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District, Moraga-Orinda Fire District, Benicia Fire Department, and Military Ocean Terminal-Concord Fire Department. Unfortunately, these fires resulted in several civilian injuries and a moderate injury to one of our firefighters.
  - The District also had 26 vegetation fires; 15 vehicle accidents requiring disentanglement of trapped victims; a confined space rescue from a storm drain; and two hazardous materials responses, one of which included a release of radioactive material.
  - Our fire investigators conducted 106 fire investigations and made three arson arrests.
  - Several of our personnel responded to the Loma Fire in Santa Clara County as part of a mutual aid request for incident managers. Our bulldozer was also utilized for several days on the Loma Fire.
  - Lastly, several of our companies, including our fire boat, responded to a request for assistance for a fast moving wildland and structure fire on Sherman Island with people trapped on the island. As can be seen in the attached video, our personnel and boat were instrumental in saving structures and controlling the spread of the fire.
  - The District continues to work with the City of Pinole and the Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District. We believe we have resolved the issues with the Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District and are scheduled to address their Board on October 26.

- The District officially submitted the plans for Fire Station 16 to the City's design review committee on September 30. We anticipate the review will be completed by early December. We also expect the CEQA review process to be finalized around the same time. After these two processes have been completed, construction drawings, plans, and specifications can be developed. Construction cost estimates have been calculated by a third party and are estimated at \$2.8 Million for the building and site work. Soft costs for design, architectural and engineering, permits, construction management, and contingencies are estimated to increase the cost to a total estimate of \$4.1 million.
- The Fire Station 70 funding agreement between the District and the City of San Pablo is almost complete following the City's review of and response to the draft in late September. County Counsel is reviewing the City's comments and has recommended changes to the agreement. After meeting with City engineering and planning staff in September, we have a design and site plan that adheres to the City's regulations and requirements. Based on the revised site plan, we are working on construction cost estimates.
- Academy #50 began on October 3 with 14 recruits. Unfortunately two of the recruits have resigned, and there are 12 remaining. Graduation is anticipated in early spring.
- The District participated in the Yellow Command disaster exercise in September. The drill was well planned and provided a numerous opportunities for improvement in collaboration and coordination throughout the county.
- The District recently filled the Battalion Chief position assigned to the Safety Program in September. This position was left vacant during the recession, and we are fortunate to be able to re-staff it. The Safety Chief is tasked with responding to emergency incidents to identify safety issues and to promote best practices. He will also participate in a number of safety related programs within the District and County, including looking for trends in firefighter accidents and injuries and developing means to prevent them.
- As we briefly discussed last month, the District has formed a recruitment team to ensure that our recruitment efforts reach all potential candidates, including women and members of other underrepresented groups within the community; that the public knows that we are an organization that values diversity; and that we will provide assistance and information to anyone interested in a career with Con Fire. I am very pleased with and applaud the efforts of the team. The members have used their resourcefulness to create a recruitment brand and are attending job fairs and other recruitment events around our state. Their efforts will insure that we have provided all potential candidates with every possible opportunity to pursue a career in the fire service with Con Fire.
- District staff met with staff at the Tesoro Refinery last month. The District is concerned that the refinery is not physically within the District boundary. A major emergency within that facility could cause significant off-site consequences. Since the District surrounds the facility, we would be responsible to mitigate those

consequences. We are also concerned that the refinery's fire brigade is not operating under the direction of a Fire Chief, and County Counsel is working on that issue. Discussions were cordial, and future meetings will be convened after additional information has been gathered.

- The new tractor-drawn aerial ladder trucks (TDA's) are in-service in the District at Station 1 in Walnut Creek, Station 84 in Antioch, and coming soon to Station 6 in Concord. The new trucks represent a change in culture for the District. Trucks, and their staffing of three firefighters, have a different job to do at fires and rescues. Their primary role is to ensure clear access to structures and other emergencies which includes removing doors, windows, security bars, gates, and other obstructions. They are also responsible for disentanglement of victims from automobile accidents and other rescue incidents. Most importantly, their role is to remove the superheated gases and smoke from buildings either through holes cut in the roof or through natural openings such as doors and windows. This operation improves the survivability of occupants who may be unable to rescue themselves, and makes for better working conditions and visibility for interior firefighting personnel. The new trucks have about twice the cubic feet of storage for tools and equipment than previous apparatus and because they have a steering axle in the back they can maneuver as well as a smaller engine. The new trucks only carry a small amount of water in the event they need an immediate application upon their arrival.
- The District has received the information needed from CCCERA to project our retirement rate increases in 2017-18, and the Board requested to receive this information as soon as we could provide it. The increase, estimated at \$2 million, was within the projected range, and we can now move forward with our plan to open an additional fire station. Information available at this time suggests projected revenue increases will accommodate the retirement rate increase. However, we will remain watchful for external factors which could alter our plans.
- On or about January 1, 2017, we will close Squad 1 in Walnut Creek. Those two personnel will be joined by a Captain, and we will reopen Fire Station 87 in Pittsburg. The crew will staff Engine 87 and eventually cross-staff HazMat 87 when that program goes live in 2017. The estimated cost to bring this plan to fruition is about \$800K annually.
- On or about January 2018, we hope to add an additional nine personnel and open the newly rebuilt Fire Station 16 in Lafayette. The total cost to deploy this company will be approximately \$3.5 million annually.
- As you may have seen recently, Moody's Investors Service downgraded the District's pension obligation bonds rating from A1 to A2. At the same time, they also removed the negative outlook on the pension obligation bonds citing that the District's sustained balanced financial operations and the expectation that continued growth of property tax receipts in the near-term will ensure stable financial operations. Our Chief of Administrative Services has been in contact with the Moody's analyst who produced the report and he has admitted to misinterpreting one of the audited financial reports. Consequently, the report understated the

District's available reserves. As a result Moody's may issue a correction statement, but they do not plan to modify the A2 rating because they feel the underlying reasons for the rating are still material.