



April 18, 2017

TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Jeff Carman, Fire Chief
RE: Fire Chief's Report

- Fire Station 16 plans continue to move forward. Construction drawings are currently being developed as we prepare our submission for building permits. Additionally, contractors are being prequalified in anticipation of going to bid in early summer.
- Fire Station 70 elevations and design plans are being developed in preparation for submission to the City of San Pablo after the CEQA process is completed (tentatively scheduled for July). The funding agreement continues to move forward, and District staff, City of San Pablo staff, and County Counsel are working together to finalize the agreement language.
- The Fire District just completed the first phase of a new firefighter recruitment examination. As the Board is aware, a recruitment committee was implemented last year, and the members are focused on District efforts to attract and maintain diversity within our ranks. Thus far, committee members have represented the Fire District at several job fairs and other venues. Although the committee is still in its infancy, we hope to see increased diversity in the applicant pool for Academy 51 which will begin in October 2017.
- The Contra Costa Regional Fire Communications Center has always been and continues to be a challenging and demanding environment. Last year, we processed just under 148,000 incidents of which 80% were EMS related. Despite the high volume, we are experiencing an overall reduction of 51 seconds in ambulance dispatch time. Our EMD quality has improved by 32% (from 58% to 90%). We continue to focus on our EMD quality improvement plan as we work toward securing certification from the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED). In July, we will begin dispatching both fire and EMS calls for El Cerrito and Kensington which will increase our incident volume by approximately 3,500 per year.
- Dispatcher Appreciation Week was April 9 through April 15. On April 19, the County will host a dispatcher appreciation luncheon. This is an opportunity for all public safety agencies to come together to recognize their dispatchers, often the unsung heroes, for their hard work. In the last month, one of our dispatchers, Janin

Campbell, guided an anxious father through delivering his baby in a car on the freeway. In fact, Janin has assisted in the delivery of four babies during her time as a dispatcher. This is but one example of the amazing efforts of our dispatchers. It is also one of the rare incidents that culminated as a happy occasion rather than a tragic event. (Audio tape)

- Three years ago, Fitch and Associates presented us with their report on the Fire District. While we addressed many of the issues they identified, the one recommendation from which we deviated was that of replacing two of our engine companies with three new squads. Based on the then current fire-related incident data, I requested and received your support to forgo this particular recommendation. Today, I wish to extend my thanks to you for your support and to reaffirm that we made the right decision.

As standard procedure in our extremely busy Fire District, our men and women respond to a high volume of incidents, many of them significant and complex. In the last month alone, the District responded to 23 working structure fires, several of which went to multiple alarms; six motor vehicle accidents which required disentanglement to remove the patients; several multi-casualty incidents, including a shooting incident with five victims; a car in the delta which required our rescue swimmers to be deployed; a complex and technical recovery effort to secure a man who had been electrocuted from the top of a 100+ foot crane.

In the midnight hours of the first of April, while working an incident on Highway 4 in Pittsburg, one of our new ladder trucks (acting as our blocking apparatus) was struck at a high rate of speed resulting in the death of the driver and minor injury to our firefighters who were on board at the time.

In the three years that I have been with the Fire District, our firefighters have fallen through burned out floors and had roofs and roof debris fall on them; our apparatus have been struck twice on the freeway in the last 12 months; and one of our firefighters fell from a two-story roof and, fortunately, landed on a second-story balcony. Several firefighters have medically retired due to on-the-job injuries which could not be repaired. Upon the retirement of our more experienced personnel, our risk for injury increases as we fill the vacancies with younger, inexperienced firefighters. While this is not an action item, it is important to maintain that awareness.

I want you to know that, at all times, I am concerned about the welfare of our firefighting personnel. As we approach the 10th anniversary of the day that Fire Captain Matt Burton and Fire Engineer Scott Desmond died while attempting a rescue during firefighting operations in West County, I think it is important to note that, statistically, we have been very fortunate to have such a low rate of major injury and death among our firefighters. As an organization, the Fire District strives to provide the safest working environment we can, but it is important to always keep in mind that it is still a dangerous job, and there are facets of the job which we simply cannot control.