



**Contra
Costa
County**

To: Contra Costa County Fire Protection District Board of Directors
 From: Jeff Carman, Chief, Contra Costa County Fire Protection District
 Date: August 18, 2015

Subject: Review of Service Delivery in Western Lafayette and Fire Station 46 Project

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. ACCEPT a report from the Fire Chief regarding options available to the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District for providing fire and emergency services to the western area of Lafayette, including the joint operation of a single fire station in cooperation with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District or the reopening Fire Station 16.
2. AUTHORIZE the Fire Chief to further explore the reopening of Fire Station 16 and report back to the Board of Directors on September 15, 2015.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Report only. No financial impact.

☒ APPROVE

☐ OTHER

☒ RECOMMENDATION OF CNTY

☐ RECOMMENDATION OF BOARD

ADMINISTRATOR

COMMITTEE

Action of Board On: **08/18/2015** ☒ APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED ☐ OTHER

Clerks Notes:

VOTE OF SUPERVISORS

AYE: John Gioia, Director
 Candace Andersen,
 Director
 Mary N. Piepho, Director
 Karen Mitchoff, Director

ABSENT: Federal D. Glover,
 Director

Contact: Jeff Carman,
 925-941-3500

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of an action taken and entered on the minutes of the Board of Supervisors on the date shown.

ATTESTED: August 18, 2015

David Twa, County Administrator and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By: June McHuen, Deputy

cc:

BACKGROUND:

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District Station 43 (FS43) and the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District Station 16 (FS16) are both located in the western Lafayette/Orinda area and are located approximately 1.5 miles from each other.

In 2011, FS16 was closed due to building and construction issues. Engine 16 was moved to Fire Station 15 in downtown Lafayette. Ultimately, due to the long and deep recession and the failure of the parcel tax measure in November 2012, Engine 16 was placed out of service and FS16 was closed. Because of the “closest resource agreement” between all County fire districts, FS43 began responding to many of the incidents occurring in FS16’s service area. As a result response times in the area increased by approximately 30 seconds. In addition, extended times were experienced to mobilize an effective work force, and coverage during major incidents was forced to come from farther distances, impacting coverage for Pleasant Hill, Concord, and Walnut Creek.

During this time, the fire chiefs from both districts discussed the possibility of jointly operating a single fire engine out of a new station, Fire Station 46 (FS46), that could be built on the districts' borders and provide service into both districts. The call volume for each response area (FS16 and FS43) was low enough to be handled by a single engine company and each agency would be responsible for half of the operating costs.

In 2013, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) purchased a parcel of land within the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District service area, very close to the District border, that could serve as the joint station location. Both governing boards gave their approval to commence discussions on the concept, but ConFire's Board clearly articulated that there would be no commitment to build the station until a contract was developed and approved.

For the last two years both fire districts have been working to develop an administrative contract that covers planning, construction, cost apportionment, and operations. The premise of the contract is that both agencies would pay 50% of the total costs, ConFire would not pay operational costs for five years, and both districts would be protected from liabilities and damages into the future. While this may seem like a simple contract, it has been very difficult to reach an agreement. A final draft is currently being reviewed by County Counsel after receiving recent changes proposed by MOFD.

As directed by the Board, a “fresh look” at the FS46 concept was completed. Many things have changed for both fire districts since 2012. Better data is available to base decisions on, finances have improved, and efficiencies have been implemented. As a result of these changes, there is an additional option to providing fire and emergency medical services in western Lafayette that must now be considered.

Reopening FS16 has become a viable option for the District for several reasons. First, the District was operating under the assumption that FS16 could not be reoccupied due to

structural issues. A recent survey by a building contractor indicates the structure could be rehabilitated for use as a fire station. This information suggests the station could be rebuilt in a 12-15 month time frame for less than \$1 million.

Additionally, now that the District has been awarded the ambulance transport contract, the squad program becomes less pivotal to operations. Personnel from the squads can be better utilized on a fire engine or ladder truck. By adding one position to the two personnel assigned to a squad, a full engine or ladder truck company can currently be deployed for a cost of approximately \$800,000 annually.

The FS46 and FS16 projects are both feasible but offer very different benefits.

The FS46 concept's primary benefit is financial. It saves each fire district approximately 50% of the annual operating costs of running a station. Beyond that, there are few advantages that can be identified. There are, however, some disadvantages to this option. First, it permanently reduces the number of available fire resources in the area by half. Based on the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps developed by the District and Cal Fire, the fire risk in the area served by FS16 is substantial and should not be minimized by the relatively low annual station call volume. The potential for significant fire loss in this area is very high. The area has been categorized as having similar potential to the Oakland hills with regard to fire loss. Second, each agency will experience some limitations in the operation of the single remaining resource. Third, based on the time it took to negotiate the administrative contract, one could project that the time it would take to reach an agreement on the more detailed operational contract might be lengthy. Lastly, there is a perception that public concern exists in the Moraga-Orinda Fire District that could potentially delay a joint station project. How much of a delay is unknown.

The FS16 option has operational advantages for both ConFire and MOFD. Fire and EMS response in the area will benefit from returning to pre-2013 resource levels. This is especially important in Lafayette and the surrounding areas, which are considered the single highest risk for property loss in the County. First-due response time and effective work force response times will be improved, and there is a positive ripple effect throughout both districts by the addition of this engine company. The engine will have no limitations on its use and can be fully utilized like any other resource in the District. From a financial perspective, reopening FS16 has less impact to our budget. Since the cost of staffing and operating the squads is already considered in the current and future budgets, operational costs for FS16 would currently represent an increase of approximately \$800,000 annually versus the projected \$1.5 million annual costs for half of the operational costs of FS46. In addition, the cost to renovate FS16 is approximately \$1 million versus the projected \$6 million cost of building a new FS46.

Under the currently proposed agreement with MOFD, the District would pay for the full construction costs of FS46, which is estimated at \$6 million. By avoiding this significant

capital investment in FS46, the District has the opportunity to spread its available capital funds into other areas where station relocations, remodels, or capital construction projects are needed to support multiple communities, create efficiencies and long-term cost savings, and strengthen our service delivery model.

CLERK'S ADDENDUM

Speakers: Bill Granados, CCC Fire Protection District Advisory Commission;

ATTACHMENTS

Lafayette Service Review