



Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury

2014-2015 Response Packet

Santa Cruz County Fire Protection Districts

Response Times, Mutual Aid, and Consolidation

Board of Directors, Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District

Due date: 90 Days (by September 24, 2015)

When finished, email the completed response packet as a file attachment to:

grandjury@co.santa-cruz.ca.us

Findings

Finding 1: The consolidation of Fire and Emergency Medical System dispatch services at the Santa Cruz Regional 911 center and mutual aid agreements between districts have created an efficient virtual single service district for those services in the entire county.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE - explain disputed portion below

DISAGREE - explain below

Response explanation (required for responses other than "Agree"):

"Partially agree" is not permitted, but the Board does partially agree with Finding No. 1. The consolidation of the Fire and Emergency Medical System dispatch services at the Santa Cruz Regional 911 center coupled with mutual aid/automatic aid agreement are major components that have created an efficient virtual single service fire district. However, as mentioned in the Report at Page 4, other factors such as continued cooperation amongst Santa Cruz Fire Chiefs via the formation of a Santa Cruz County Fire Chiefs Association and the County EMSIA have also contributed. In addition, there is a long history of California being the national leader in cooperative fire assistance agreements through guidance of FIRESCOPE and Cal OES are also additional components that have helped create a seamless single service delivery.

Board vote 5-0 Partially Disagree (Finding 1)

Finding 2: Shared services between fire districts have improved response times, training, and services across the county.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE - explain disputed portion below

DISAGREE - explain below

Response explanation (required for responses other than "Agree"):

While Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District agrees that shared service between the districts has improved services, we are not in agreement that this is "county wide". Aptos/La Selva will

continue to support increasing shared services where it is financially sound and increases service to our constituents and Santa Cruz County as a whole.

Board vote 5-0 Partially Disagree (Finding 2)

Finding 3: Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District and Central Fire Protection District did not take advantage of the opportunity to pursue consolidation when the Aptos Fire Chief retired in 2014.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE - explain disputed portion below

DISAGREE - explain below

Response explanation (required for responses other than "Agree"):

The opportunity to consolidate or not consolidate fire districts is not dependent on one fire chief retiring. As mentioned in the Report at Pages 6-7, consolidation is a complex issue that must weigh current service efficiencies against future service efficiencies, financial and contractual obligations, not to mention the political differences of opinion such as local control, subsidized services, etc.

Board vote 5-0 Disagree (Finding 3)

Finding 4: The differences in pay scales and benefits between Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District and Central Fire Protection District are issues that must be addressed prior to consolidation.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE - explain disputed portion below

DISAGREE - explain below

Response explanation (required for responses other than "Agree"):

As mentioned in the Report at Pages 6-7, consolidation is a complex issue that must weigh current service efficiencies against future service efficiencies, financial and contractual obligations, not to mention the political differences of opinion such as local control, subsidized services, etc.

Board vote 5-0 Agree (Finding 4)

Finding 5: Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District and Central Fire Protection District have a common problem resulting from excessive and unreasonable Public Records Act requests. These requests have negatively impacted the daily administration, budgets and operations of the districts.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE - explain disputed portion below

DISAGREE - explain below

Response explanation (required for responses other than "Agree"):

Board vote 5-0 Agree (Finding 5)

Finding 6: The lack of enforced policies and procedures regarding conflicts of interest and board member interactions in district operations, has interfered with the ability of the Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District and Central Fire Protection District to consider further shared services or consolidation.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE - explain disputed portion below

DISAGREE - explain below

Response explanation (required for responses other than "Agree"):

Prior to the issuance of the Grand Jury Report, Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District has adopted a Board Policy Manual that defines board member interactions and a code of conduct.

Board vote 5-0 Partially Disagree (Finding 6)

Finding 7: The joint Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District and Central Fire Protection District Cooperative Fire Prevention Program is successful and could benefit the county if made permanent.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE - explain disputed portion below

DISAGREE - explain below

Response explanation (required for responses other than "Agree"):

"Partially agree" is not permitted, but the Board does partially agree with Finding No. 7. The

CPP appears that it could be a benefit to both districts.

Board vote 5-0 Partially Disagree (Finding 7)

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District and Central Fire Protection District should work together to merge and form a Mid-County Fire Protection District.

HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED

HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE

- indicate timeframe below

REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS - explain scope and timeframe below (not to exceed six months)

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED - explain below

Response summary, timeframe or explanation:

The structure of the recommendation limits our answer to a timeframe of six months. We continue to be open to explore opportunities that are of mutual benefit to all fire districts which may or may not include consolidation.

Consolidation, in different forms, has been talked about in Santa Cruz County since the mid 1970's. Several Grand Jury reports and independent studies have addressed consolidation; however for a variety of reasons, consolidation has not occurred.

Consolidation is a complex issue that requires political will, labor support and sound financial and contractual solutions. Aptos/La Selva will continue to endeavor to find increased areas of shared services.

Board vote 5-0 Will not be implemented (Recommendation 1)

Recommendation 2: The governing bodies of Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District and Central Fire Protection District should adopt the three year plan for the Cooperative Fire Prevention Program.

HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED

HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE

- indicate timeframe below

REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS - explain scope and timeframe below (not to exceed six months)

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED - explain below

Response summary, timeframe or explanation:

Aptos/La Selva has approved a three year plan for the CPP MOU with the understanding that Central Fire District has until December 10, 2015, to approve the MOU.

Board vote 5-0 Requires further analysis (Recommendation 2)

Recommendation 3: Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District should create policies for receiving and responding to PRA requests.

HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED

HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE

- indicate timeframe below

REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS - explain scope and timeframe below (not to exceed six months)

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED - explain below

Response summary, timeframe or explanation:

Board vote 5-0 Has been implemented (Recommendation 3)