

MINUTES - MORRO BAY CITY COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING – AUGUST 11, 2014  
MORRO BAY COMMUNITY CENTER  
MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM – 6:00 P.M.

AGENDA NO: A-2

MEETING DATE: August 26, 2014

PRESENT:	Jamie Irons	Mayor
	Christine Johnson	Councilmember
	Nancy Johnson	Councilmember
	George Leage	Councilmember
	Noah Smukler	Councilmember
STAFF:	Edward Kreins	Interim City Manager
	Jamie Boucher	City Clerk
	Amy Christey	Police Chief
	Steve Knuckles	Fire Chief
	Susan Slayton	Administrative Services Director

ESTABLISH QUORUM AND CALL TO ORDER

SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA ITEM:

I DISCUSSION AND AUTHORIZATION TO CONTRACT WITH SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY FIRE AND SHERIFF DEPARTMENTS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY DISPATCH; (ADMINISTRATION)

Interim City Manager Kreins presented the staff report.

Police Chief Amy Christey provided the following: the move will enhance and improve public safety responses through regionalization and collaboration; regionally, contracting dispatch will provide better coordination for multiple jurisdictional responses during emergencies; collaboration will be improved through increased access to more information; the Sheriff's office has new technology allowing for better and quicker communication; in an effort to work towards the goal of the most effective transition, a process was conducted – information was collected and discussions with stakeholders were and will continue to be held.

Fire Chief Steve Knuckles provided a brief history of changes in fire dispatch since the 1930's. He stated the reason behind this move is to improve and enhance safety to emergency personnel. He then went on to describe the enhancements this move will provide for Fire, Harbor and the Coast Guard: the fire and harbor departments will have the same radio coverage for their mobile units in Morro Bay using County Fire's dispatch channel and repeater system; there will be a reduction of Code-3 medical aid responses in Morro Bay with the use of emergency medical dispatch (EMD); there will be a reduction in responses to care facilities for ambulance transportation as a result of EMD; there will improvement for fire, harbor and the coast guard in auto-aid and mutual-aid requests through the SLO Emergency Command Center; they have prepared for this transition by working with the harbor department as well as the coast guard to prepare a response matrix, updated mapping systems, identified a radio and paging policy, and they have created an after-hours phone list for call outs.

Sheriff Ian Parkinson stated that the idea of contracting is about partnerships and he feels they have incredible partnerships. They are working towards a consolidated plan that's more efficient and provides a better service. He stated that this isn't about money in or out; it's about doing the right thing and that is providing Morro Bay with better/more efficient service than they have now. He stated that providing the EMD service to the community is probably the most critical service they will be able to provide. Regarding employees, he is looking for attitude and service and stated they will do everything possible to get Morro Bay dispatchers employed.

Chief Robert Lewin stated that in the world of dispatching, you have to get it right 100% of the time and he feels with a cooperative agreement that can be achieved with Morro Bay. There are 4 methods used to notify the emergency responders of an incident; radio, rip and run which instantly puts out all the call data; and smart phones will be activated. This collaborative effort of being on the same frequency should provide a seamless, interoperable response. The new dispatch center being proposed for EMD and Dispatch is very important as it will allow all dispatch services to be provided out of the same high tech building. As soon as the contract is executed, his department is ready to perform and they are ready to make it succeed.

Under-Sheriff Tim Olivas reinforced that they have the state of the art in technology; having mobile data computers will be a huge asset; and allowing for more than one dispatcher on duty handling emergency calls will provide for a much more effective communication system.

The public comment period for the Special Meeting item was opened.

John Fennacy, President of Friends of Morro Bay Fire Department stated they support the Fire Department and this process. He stressed that the Emergency Medical Dispatching is the key component with this. With this process, the minute you roll, you are constantly updated on a patient's progress. He also stated that anytime you can reduce lights and sirens being activated, you reduce liability and increase public safety.

Sandy Tannler is curious why Council chose to have an Interim City Manager take on this task; she feels it would have been better to have someone with ties to the community do this. She felt the report was a bit inflated; updating technology is paid for by Fee 911 tax money and doesn't come out of the police budget. She doesn't know why it took so long for this information to get to the public. If the fire department wants to separate from the police department, that's great; she doesn't like losing the dispatchers from the police department, we have a unique town and our dispatchers are fantastic. She finished by saying you're kidding yourselves if you don't think you'll soon be losing your police department.

Ken Vesterfelt stated that when he first heard this concept, he felt that we would lose personal contact. He felt reassured when he spoke with a former Morro Bay dispatcher at the regional dispatch center who helped him out with something. He commended all of our dispatchers that have had to multi-task and dispatch our all the agencies themselves – they have done a wonderful job. He finished by asking the City to look at the possible cost savings of transferring fire to Cal Fire; when that regionalization concept was investigated back in 2008, that savings was approximately \$600,000. He was also concerned with how the volunteers would communicate with dispatch.

Randy Anderson Peirce asked if the City had explored the costs and problems if the City is dissatisfied with the system and chooses to return. Is there a ceiling on the contract; ie: increases after the 3 year period?

Bob Keller thinks it's time we centralize our dispatch system. It is cost wise, and more effective in every way. He supports the staff report and urges the Council to vote tonight.

The public comment period for this item was closed.

Councilmember Smukler stated this is an elegant way to improve our department and our community's emergency safety without creating a lot of additional costs or a major shakeup. He is glad to hear we can review the contract and that we'll be working hard on keeping the community updated. He will be voting in favor of this proposal.

Councilmember Leage appreciates the City Manager taking this on and feels he should be commended; it's a real good move. The turnover we've had and the stress they've been under had a lot to do with this.

Councilmember Christine Johnson stated that the goal is to keep the citizens safe, keep the visitors safe, keep us safe from the visitors and keep us safe from one another. How we reach that is a function of our resources. She wonders if we are currently serving the citizens to the best of our ability. It sounds like we are doing an above and beyond job but also feels that there is another option that needs to be considered when looking at keeping people safe. One thing we need to look at is the City's ability to utilize EMD; we are unable to do that here and our citizens will be benefitting from this service. She is in favor of this option but not without anxiety and some pain and suffering for our current staff. She hopes we will make it a priority to maintain their employment either with the City or another agency in as seamless and as stress-free as possible.

Mayor Irons wanted to recognize and thank staff that has worked through this, especially the dispatchers and safety officers. With Mr. Krein's experience, it's the Council's duty to examine this and he thanked him for bringing this forward as well as for involving staff. He feels this is the right decision to move forward with. He appreciated the collaboration that took place.

**MOTION:** Mayor Irons moved to approve the contract with San Luis Obispo County Fire and Sheriff's Department for Public Safety Dispatch with the caveat of it going to the Board of Supervisors and come back to Council for approval. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Leage and carried unanimously, 5-0.

Ayes: Irons, C. Johnson, N. Johnson, Leage, Smukler

No's: None

#### ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:14p.m.

Recorded by:

Jamie Boucher  
City Clerk