

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

GENETHIA HUDLEY-HAYES
PRESIDENT

CASIMIRO U. TOLENTINO
VICE PRESIDENT

DIANA M. BONTÁ
ANDREW FRIEDMAN
JILL FURILLO

BLANCA GOMEZ-REVELLES
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT II

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA



ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA
MAYOR

FIRE DEPARTMENT

DOUGLAS L. BARRY
FIRE CHIEF

200 NORTH MAIN STREET
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012

(213) 978-3800
FAX: (213) 978-3815

<http://www.lafd.org>

April 23, 2009

Honorable Bernard C. Parks
Chair, Budget and Finance Committee
c/o Lauraine Braithwaite, Legislative Assistant
Office of the City Clerk

Dear Councilmember Parks:

The Mayor's Proposed Budget for fiscal year 2009-10 was received and has been reviewed. The City is facing a harsh fiscal reality and the reduction of 40 million dollars to the Fire Department's budget will present many operational challenges.

1. Shared Responsibility and Sacrifice – Blue Book Item No. 8 – Reduction of Salaries General (\$2,640,400) and Sworn (\$37,176,100) by 10 percent. The Department has 3,588 sworn authorities of which 3,246 are platoon duty positions, which staff all fire stations and the dispatch center, and 342 are special duty positions (including 152 Inspectors). A 10 percent reduction will have considerable impact on the communities we serve.

Operationally, this is the equivalent of 20 emergency resources, including ambulances; fire trucks and fire engines that will need to be closed every day for the entire year. There will need to be one fewer ambulance and/or fire engine or truck at over 20 fire stations in 20 different neighborhoods throughout the City. This will equate to longer response times to both medical emergencies and fires. The response times to these emergencies would be up to 3 minutes longer in each of these 20 neighborhoods.

The Department has 444 civilian authorities to provide administrative and technical support. This includes our dispatch system, maintenance of our fleet, revenue and accounting support, grants administration, and claims reimbursements among many other duties that are necessary to support the department's operations. The Department already had a very high vacancy rate. Currently the Department has a vacancy rate of 16% (69 vacancies out of a total 444 authorities). This causes the Department to rely on the use of overtime in critical support functions. The Department must use a substantial amount (60% of this account's budget) of overtime to cover vacancies in the positions that provide fleet maintenance and

approximately 25% of overtime use is for revenue generating overtime, i.e. Ambulance Billing and CUPA.

2. Revenue Increase (Revenue Outlook) – The Proposed Budget includes an increase of both current and new revenues, which increases our proposed revenue by \$8.2 million to \$135 million. In order to effectively implement and realize the benefits of revenue, the Department needs to have the staffing to implement and manage this new revenue stream. Based on the Department's best estimates, we have projected revenues of \$126.8 million. Our estimation takes into account economic factors and staffing concerns, especially the impact of vacancies and the workload, required to analyze and prepare the necessary reports and infrastructure to set up new fees. While the Department will do its best to meet the revenue target, we will face many challenges in achieving the expected revenue increase. We will report through the Monthly Financial Status Reports our progress and issues.
3. Professional Standards Division (PSD) – The Department has made measurable progress on the Controller's audit recommendations. In order to implement many of the necessary enhancements to PSD, the funding for the Human Relations Advocate (HRA) and the additional sworn positions is necessary in our continued efforts to meet and adhere to the Controller's Audit Recommendations.
4. Staffing for the new dispatch center - The Department has requested additional ITA systems positions as a direct need for support of our proposed Dispatch Center Project. To date, we are still understaffed and can not appropriately provide the dedicated technical support necessary to achieve our projected goals. These positions were critical in the detail design, development, transition and implementation of the new Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) System, as well as maintaining the current 911 dispatch system. The objective of restoring ITA staffing levels as the minimum acceptable standard is a critical component in developing the Dispatch Center Project. The impact of losing these "Mission-Critical" positions will cause significant delays in achieving our Goal to implement a new Dispatch Center Project.
5. MICLA Reduction - The Department's MICLA funding to maintain the fleet replacement on cycle was reduced by \$6.7 million, from \$25.1 to \$18.4 million. The Supply and Maintenance Division provides logistical support to the Department including apparatus repair for 1,177 light and heavy apparatus. Reducing the replacement cycle by 30% for one year will increase repair costs by \$236K (\$92K for parts and \$144K for labor).

Reducing MICLA funding for our fleet replacement program will increase the number of apparatus that are out of service. The Department uses older reserve apparatus to take the place of front line apparatus sent in for repair. We currently have 43 older reserve engines that are used to take the place of front-line apparatus sent in for repair. On average, 62% of the 43 reserve engines are being used, leaving just 20 reserves for breakdown or to add additional resources during major events such as brush fires. The out of service rates for rescue ambulances and aerial ladder

Honorable Bernard C. Parks

April 23, 2009

Page three


trucks is worse. Typically, 65% of reserve ambulances are used and 75% of reserve aerial ladder trucks. Frequently, all reserve apparatus are used to cover for broken frontline apparatus, leaving nothing available in reserve. Without sufficient reserve apparatus the Department's recall system, which uses on duty staff positions and off duty members to staff apparatus in times of large scale disasters, will be less effective due to the lack of apparatus availability.

The Field Equipment Expense Account 3090 has been under funded for the past five years. The projected deficit of \$1.2 million is due to the need to purchase auto parts to keep all apparatus/vehicles in service and is based on estimated usage. Maintaining older vehicles will add to this deficit. The average deficit in the Field Equipment Account is \$1.2 million over the past three (3) years.

The negative effects on costs and operational efficiency that will be experienced by not adhering to the Department's fleet replacement program are magnified when coupled with the Maintenance Division's staffing shortages. The Department will be forced to rely more upon overtime to ensure that apparatus are ready to respond.

I can discuss these items further to ensure that the Fire Department can continue to provide the highest level of service and safety to the public and address the Department's ongoing and critical infrastructure needs.

Respectfully submitted,



DOUGLAS L. BARRY
Fire Chief

cc: Ben Ceja,
Raymond Ciranna, Interim City Administrative Officer
Fire Commission