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November 8, 2013

Honorable Members of the City Council
Office of the City Clerk
200 North Spring Street – Room 360
Los Angeles, CA 90012

LAFD RESPONSE TO COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY (C.F. 13-0545-S2)

On July 2, 2013, the City Council approved a Motion (Cedillo-Buscaino-Englander) instructing the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) to report on the findings of the Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury Final Report recommending that: (a) the LAFD's funding be reinstated to 2008 levels; (b) the firefighters at the Dispatch Center be replaced with civilians; and (c) the Department's computer systems be overhauled.

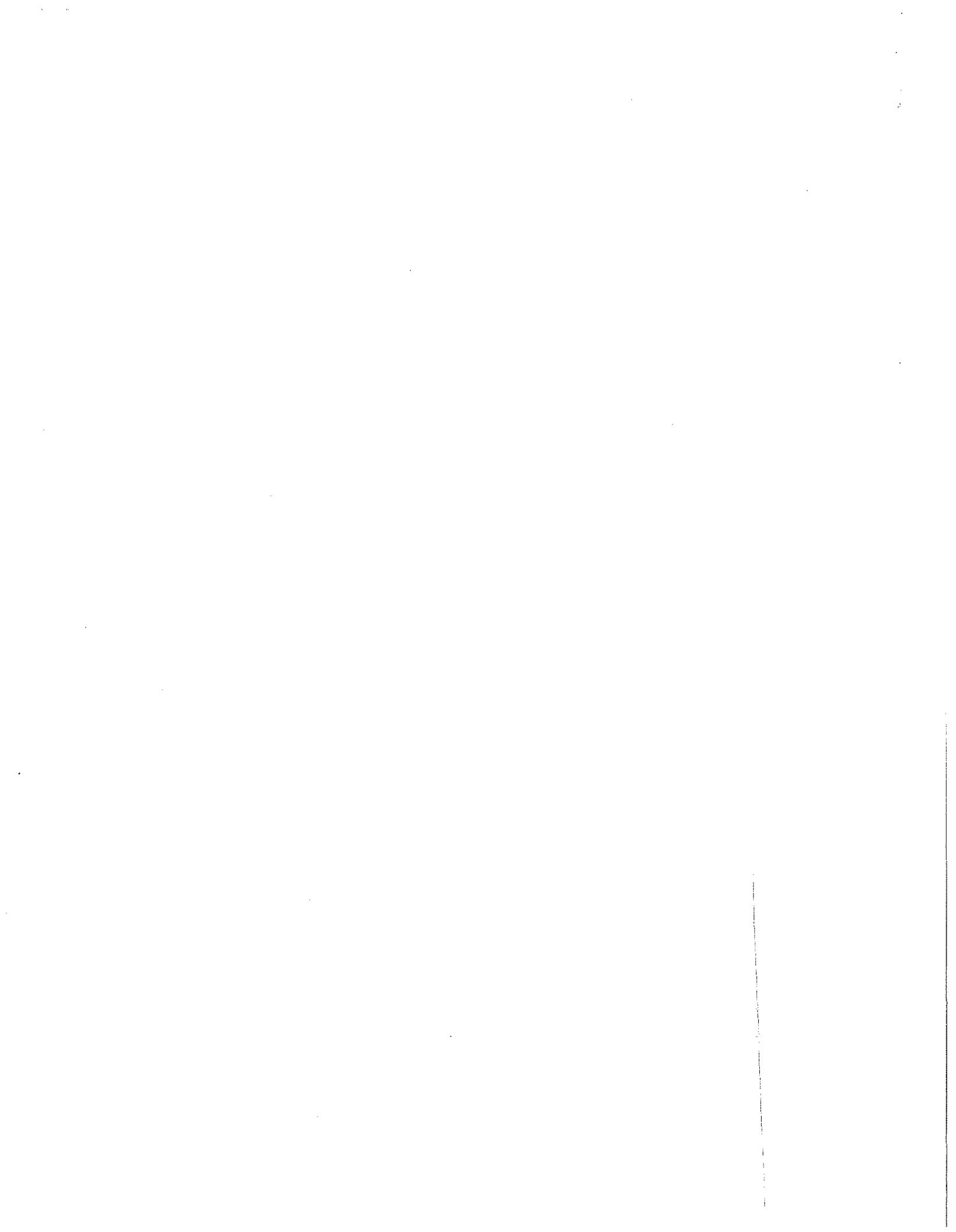
Please find attached a report on this matter considered by the Board of Fire Commissioners on September 17, 2013.

Sincerely,



**JAMES G. FEATHERSTONE
Interim Fire Chief**

Attachment



September 17, 2013

LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT



BRIAN L. CUMMINGS
FIRE CHIEF

September 9, 2013

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM: Brian L. Cummings, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO THE CIVIL GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS
REGARDING THE LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT RESPONSE
TIME LAG

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
FILE NO. 13-114

FINAL ACTION: Approved Approved w/Corrections Withdrawn
 Denied Received & Filed Other

SUMMARY

The Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) has reviewed the Civil Grand Jury documents regarding the LAFD Response Time Lag. The findings address each specific Grand Jury recommendation along with the LAFD's response.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Board:

1. Receive and file.

FINDINGS

Per the LAFD's Review of the Civil Grand Jury documents regarding the LAFD Response Time Lag, the following are the Grand Jury recommendations along with the LAFD's response:

Recommendation #1: The City of Los Angeles should reinstate the funding to the LAFD that was cut in 2008.

Response: This recommendation has not been implemented. The City of Los Angeles continues to face budget deficits for years to come. Pending improved budgetary times, the LAFD would like to grow the staffing of the LAFD, both sworn and civilian, to the level necessary to provide for the current and anticipated public safety needs of the City. Utilizing accurate, timely data, our resource footprint will more closely match the type and frequency of calls for service in each district.

Together, our purpose, aims and goals should shape a new business model for the LAFD and the Strategic Plan for 2013-18.

In fiscal year 2008-2009, the LAFD's budget was \$561 million. The daily field staffing was 1071. There were 101 Engine companies, 49 Light Forces, 89 Paramedic ambulances and 41 Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulances deployed each day. Field resources were supervised and administered by three Division Command Teams, 16 Battalion Command Teams and 16 Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Captains. In fiscal year 2009-2010, the LAFD's budget was reduced to \$505 million. To meet \$39 million of the budget reduction, the LAFD instituted the Modified Coverage Plan (MCP). This rotating deployment plan closed ten Engine companies, five Light Forces, one Battalion Command Team, three EMS Captains and nine BLS ambulances daily. The 87 members from these closed companies were used each day to fill vacant positions created by compensated time off (CTO). The LAFD's daily staff was reduced to 984, an overall decrease of 8%. It was a reduction of 10% of the on duty Engines and Light Forces, 6.2% of the on duty Battalion Command Teams, 18.7% of the on duty EMS Captains and 22% of the on duty BLS ambulances.

In fiscal year 2010-2011 the LAFD's budget was reduced to \$495 million. The LAFD made several structural changes to reduce costs. These included converting two of the Hazardous Materials Squads from fully staffed to flex-staffing, reduction of 27 EMS Captain positions (9 per platoon) and the reduction of 28 sworn administrative positions.

In August of 2010, the MCP was expanded to include a Division Command Team, 33% of the on duty Division Commanders and a second Battalion Command Team, 12.5% of the on duty Battalion Commanders.

January of 2011, in response to a projected budget shortfall, the LAFD expanded MCP to 14 Engine companies and eight Light Forces. The LAFD's daily staffing was reduced to 933, a decrease of 13.5% from full deployment. The expanded MCP allowed the LAFD to close its budget deficit by deploying 22 less fire companies and six less ambulances per day. This plan used the 122 personnel daily from the closed resources and moved them around to various work locations to offset CTO.

In fiscal year 2011-2012, to meet the budget deficit, the LAFD closed seven Light Forces, eleven Engines, one Division office, two Battalion offices, and ten Staff Assistant positions daily for a total of 318 sworn positions. The closure of resources created a pool of 106 personnel daily that were used to fill vacancies and offset overtime costs.

In fiscal year 2012-2013, the LAFD received funding in our budget to restore one Engine company (12 positions) and 9 administrative EMS Captain positions.

Recommendation #2: LAFD should incorporate civilians as call handlers.

Response: This recommendation has not been implemented. The CAO's office and the LAFD are currently negotiating transitioning the Firefighters and Captains from a 24-hour shift to a 40-hour workweek. Currently these employees work a 56-hour work week and are compensated with overtime after 40 hours of work per week. Former Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa along with City Administrative Officer Miguel Santana and the Chairs of both the City Council's Budget and Finance Committee and Public Safety Committee met on numerous occasions to discuss this issue. The United Firefighters of Los Angeles City (UFLAC) has been successful thus far lobbying elected officials to delay this implementation; hence the recommendation has not yet been implemented.

In the current fiscal year, the LAFD was funded for the following:

1. \$238,404 for four months funding for 12 Fire Service Representatives.
2. \$200,000 for variable staffed overtime for the training of the new civilian call-takers.
3. \$306,500 for the Fire Priority Dispatch System-Fire Protocol software and medical dispatch card sets.

The 12 Fire Service Representatives will augment the current sworn staffing at our dispatch center. To transition from sworn firefighters to civilian call handlers would require negotiating with the United Firefighters of Los Angeles, the labor organization representing the sworn firefighters currently working at our dispatch center.

Currently there are 78 Firefighter Resource Controller/Call-takers with a minimum of four years experience, nine Floor Captains and three Platoon Battalion Chiefs assigned to Metropolitan Fire Communications (MFC). These personnel are divided into three platoons working 24-hour shifts. Each 24-hour shift has 26 Firefighter Resource Controller/Call-takers, 3 captains, and one Battalion Chief on duty. All Firefighters and Captains are trained as Resource Controller/Call-takers, have field experience and are certified as Emergency Medical Technicians. The number of Resource Controller/Call-takers and Captains scheduled on the "dispatch floor" varies based upon the historical workload for that time of the day.

Recommendation #3: LAFD should use a customizable Emergency Medical Dispatch Protocol to allow for call handler flexibility in responding to 9-1-1 calls.

Response: The recommendation requires further analysis by the LAFD. The LAFD is researching the cost, staff, and time necessary to transition to a customized Emergency Medical Dispatch Protocols.

Currently the LAFD uses Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS). On January 18, 2001, MFC transitioned from a previous version of the MDPS to the National Academy of Emergency Medical Dispatch (NAED) MPDS Version 11. It is the world's most widely used 9-1-1-type Pre-Arrival Instructions and Dispatch Life Support protocol system. MPDS is translated into 9 different international languages.

The Academy has established several International Standards Committees, which are responsible for translating, evaluating, approving and adopting changes approved by the Council of Standards. MPDS Version 11 contained nearly 300 "Determinant Descriptors," which were designed to categorizing prioritize emergency situations based upon caller interrogation and the presence or likelihood of priority symptoms and threat to life. All dispatch members are routinely evaluated, graded and reviewed on their Emergency Medical Dispatch skills using the MPDS. More recently, the LAFD has upgraded to MPDS Version 12.2.

The NAED/MPDS dispatch system that is currently used by the LAFD is a proven and sound dispatch system that is widely used in many other cities. However, it does not afford our department the autonomy and flexibility needed in such a large and complex system as ours. The citizens we serve and our members providing emergency care in the field deserve a simple, fast, and efficient dispatch system that is catered to the unique needs of our City and one that is responsive to our needs and the changes in our EMS and local healthcare system.

Recommendation #4: LAFD must update the technical equipment in its vehicles and dispatch center as outlined in the November 2012 report from the task force on Information and Data Analysis (IDA).

Response: The LAFD has taken a number of steps towards meeting the recommendations as outlined from the IDA Task Force, they are the following:

1. The Fire Station Alerting System (FSAS) is a system that controls the fire station dispatch audio, signal lights, and other fire station alerting hardware and software. The LAFD has issued a Request for Proposals for a replacement system which will reduce response turnout time by pre-alerting units that a dispatch is about to occur within a station's geographic area of responsibility. The LAFD has received responses from prospective vendors and is currently in the review process.
2. The Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system is the core of the LAFD's day-to-day field operations. The CAD system is the principal application used by the LAFD to manage fire and EMS incidents from the initial time an incident is reported to the conclusion of the incident. To date, the LAFD has identified the requisite functionality and is finalizing the Request for Proposals. More than \$12 million dollars has been appropriated for the development of the new CAD
3. Implement Automatic Vehicle Locator for all fire department apparatus; this includes software, hardware and training. To date, AVL hardware has been installed on 300 apparatus. AVL software installation commenced in June 2013, and full system implementation for all associated programs is projected to be completed by September 2014.
4. FIRESTATLA is a data driven performance and accountability system which will enable the LAFD to use leading-edge technology and innovative management techniques to identify gaps and enhance department performance.

This fully redundant web-based system will monitor the LAFD CAD data in near real-time to provide summary and detailed information for performance and operational based measures. The tools are designed to assist the department with identifying operational inefficiencies in near real time, allowing the LAFD team to take action now.

5. LAFD Data Analysis Unit will be created to oversee the creation, analysis, dissemination and inspection of the Fire Department's key data sources including but not limited to: Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD), Fire Prevention, Training, Logistics, Risk Management, and other data sources. The staffing will consist of Senior Fire Statistical Analyst and a Fire Stat Manager.

Board Report prepared by David Yamahata, Chief Deputy, Emergency Operations.

