



Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers?

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Issue

Are multiple independent police dispatch centers in San Mateo County necessary or cost effective?

Summary

The population of the cities of San Mateo County is 720,000. This population is served by 15 fire departments and/or districts, including the County's, and 16 police departments including the Sheriff.¹ There is one dispatch center that deploys emergency information for fire and medical emergencies. Thirteen separate dispatch centers deploy emergency information for police.

Dispatch centers are those that respond to 9-1-1 calls for fire, medical and police. This Grand Jury report focuses on the redundancy of police dispatch centers in our County.

The Grand Jury advocates for continued consolidation of police dispatch services. Consolidation is good fiscal policy. All the cities that have consolidated—and the taxpayers in those cities—have benefitted fiscally from consolidation. Cities that have consolidated with other cities spend on average \$11.59 less per 9-1-1 call. Furthermore, dispatch consolidation enhances safety because it provides dispatch depth for handling large emergencies, justifies having a dedicated dispatch team not distracted by tangential responsibilities, and provides better training programs for the intense dispatcher job. Cities that have consolidated this service with other cities report no drop-off in the quality of service.

During the last 12 years, efforts to consolidate dispatch have been successful. The number of police dispatch centers has been reduced from 22 to 13. To continue and to accelerate the process, the elected leaders of the cities of San Mateo County should drive the effort to consolidate dispatch services and should not be distracted by perceived problems and pressures to resist change. Also smaller cities should contract with larger cities or the County Public Safety Communications Center to manage police dispatch during off-peak hours such that no city has less than two dispatchers on duty at any one time.

Background

Public safety dispatchers work in dispatch centers and are responsible for dispatching fire and medical crews and/or law enforcement officers to emergencies that occur within their

¹ Excludes the police district of Broadmoor.

jurisdictions. Dispatch centers receive and document incoming calls, transmit messages to appropriate personnel, and maintain logs of the daily activities with the help of computer aided dispatch systems (CADs). They operate 24 hours per day, 365 days per year.

What happens when you call 9-1-1 from a landline in San Mateo County? All 9-1-1 calls in San Mateo County are transmitted to dispatch centers. If you are calling 9-1-1 from a landline in one of the cities in Figure 1, your call will be received directly by dispatchers at the San Mateo County Public Safety Communications Center (PSC). The information you provide will be entered into a CAD that police dispatchers and dispatchers for fire and medical emergency at the PSC can instantly see. If you are calling from a landline in one of the cities in Figure 2, a dispatcher in a local police department will answer your call. If the call involves medical emergency or fire, that call will be forwarded to the PSC and entered into the CAD system there. The dispatcher answering the call will see the address from which a landline call is made.

What happens when you call 9-1-1 from a cell phone in San Mateo County?

If you are calling from a cell phone, the CAD will determine the area from which you are calling, but not your specific location, so more information will be required from you. Also, if there are no cell towers to triangulate your call, your call will be automatically routed to the California Highway Patrol, and several minutes may pass until you are connected to the nearest dispatch center. Forty to 60 percent of calls are from cell phones.

Fire and Medical dispatch

There are 15 different fire departments or districts in San Mateo County. Whether your call goes to the PSC directly as in Figure 1, or the call is forwarded from a police station per Figure 2, all 9-1-1 calls for fire and emergency medical services in the County are dispatched through a single operation, the PSC.

When you connect with the PSC for fire or emergency medical, the PSC will dispatch an Advanced Life Support provider from the closest fire station and the closest ambulance to the scene regardless of what city or district those emergency vehicles are in. If you live in an urban area, emergency personnel from your fire department should arrive within 6 minutes and an ambulance (or transport vehicle, as ambulances are sometimes called) should arrive within 13 minutes of your call—unless the ambulance call is specifically cancelled. Of non-police calls, about 4 percent are for fire and over 60 percent are for medical help. Others are for lock-outs and other non-emergency requests.

Police Dispatch

There are 16 Police Departments, including the San Mateo County Sheriff, in San Mateo County. Thirteen of those departments (including the Sheriff) maintain their own police dispatch. Two departments contract with other cities and one department contracts with the County for police dispatch. Five cities in the County do not have their own police departments; they contract with the Sheriff's Office for all police services including dispatch. This report focuses on police dispatch and the potential for consolidating police dispatch services.

Figure 1

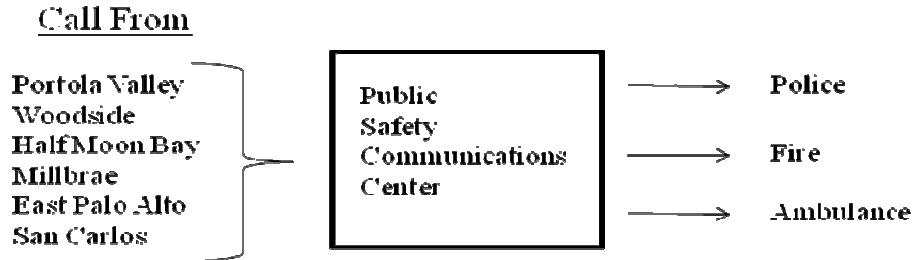
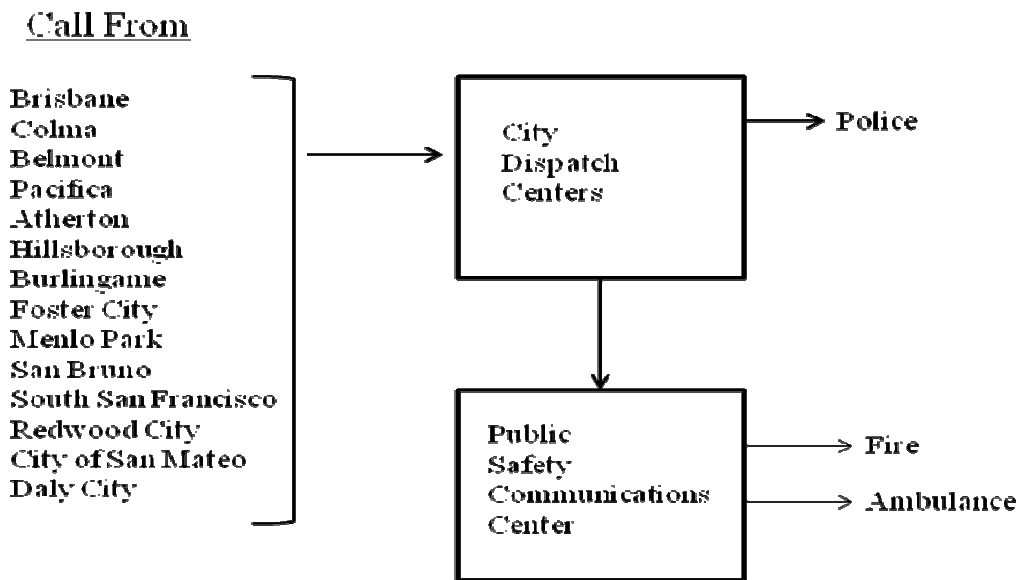


Figure 2



Issues Pertaining to the Consolidation of Police Dispatch

Table 1 below shows how the 20 cities in San Mateo County, arranged by population, provide dispatch services. It is designed to show which cities contract out services, which cities manage their own and the comparative costs. With respect to call volume, note that some cities define call volume as the total number of calls received, while others define call volume as the number of calls to which dispatchers respond. With respect to the number of dispatchers, some cities may employ per diem dispatchers not included here and, in many cities, dispatchers have duties in addition to dispatch.

Table 1

SAN MATEO COUNTY CITIES THAT CONTRACT FOR POLICE DISPATCH

Agency	Contracts With	Population 2010	Call Volume	# Dispatchers	Annual Cost (\$)	Cost per Call (\$)
Brisbane	City of San Mateo	4,282	7,778		140,000	18
Town of Portola Valley	County*	4,353	2,454		40,820	17
Town of Woodside	County*	5,287	5,289		81,906	15
Half Moon Bay	County*	11,324	13,525		203,341	15
Millbrae	County*	21,532	21,000		233,832	11
East Palo Alto	County	28,155	32,000		799,081	25
San Carlos	County*	28,406	28,480**		461,000	17
Pacifica	SSF	37,234	28,196		600,000	21

*Also contracts for police services with County Sheriff

Average \$18.45

** 1year call volume before going to County

SAN MATEO COUNTY CITIES THAT PROVIDE OWN POLICE DISPATCH

Town of Atherton		7,500	6865	9*	\$328,392	48
Hillsborough		10,825	12,101	4	616,000	51
Belmont		25,835	27,525	5	729,936	27
Burlingame		28,806	30,864	6	891,491	29
Foster City		30,567	32,241	6	911,000	28
Menlo Park		32,026	44,161	8	1,583,192	39
San Bruno		41,114	28,959	6	831,714	29
South San Francisco		63,632	62,613	13	2,041,922	32
Redwood City		76,814	79,930	11	2,163,799	27
City of San Mateo		97,207	68,767	13	1,881,747	27
Daly City		101,823	72,632	16	2,041,305	28

Average \$30.04

* Atherton employs 9 part-time dispatchers.

Note: Some call volumes were extrapolated from less than 12 months data. Pacifica has been with SSF since 10/3/11.

Colma is not listed above because it contracts only its nighttime coverage to SSF and because its high cost per call is anomalous. Data for Colma is 1,792 population, 7,162 calls per year, 5 dispatchers, annual cost of \$897,700 and average cost per call of \$125.

1. Cost Effectiveness

The data from Table 1 demonstrate that it is less expensive to consolidate services with another agency than to run a standalone dispatch operation. The average cost per call for cities that contract out dispatch services is \$18.45 while the average cost for cities that operate their own dispatch is \$30.04. Not shown in Table 1 is that cities such as San Mateo, Redwood City, Menlo Park and South San Francisco can reduce their costs by bringing in one or more partners. As one city manager told the Grand Jury: expect a 15% to 20% in cost savings just from sharing overhead.

2. Dispatch Depth

Some small cities, per Table 1 above, have just a few dispatchers and may have only one dispatcher on duty at any given time.

For example, when the gas line in San Bruno exploded on September 9, 2010, at about 6:11 pm, there was only one dispatcher on duty in the San Bruno Police Department to handle a huge volume of 9-1-1 calls. The dispatcher was soon joined by one person from the Records Department, but they were overwhelmed by the number of calls. About 26 minutes later, personnel from the PSC and others arrived in San Bruno and set up Emergency Dispatch at the scene.

To prevent the one-dispatcher scenario, Colma has contracted with South San Francisco for night dispatch service. South San Francisco has a minimum of two dispatchers on duty at all times. The PSC has a minimum of 9 dispatchers at all times. All those interviewed believe that maintaining depth in dispatch centers is desirable.

Related to dispatch depth, some smaller cities lack critical mass to employ dispatchers or dispatch supervisors who are fully dedicated to the dispatch role. In these cases they are asked to assume additional responsibilities. Some of those interviewed by the Grand Jury expressed strong feelings that a dispatcher's job is intense and should not be combined with other-distracting responsibilities.

3. Levels of Service

Each city establishes its own level of service for police. For instance, some police departments respond to non-injury auto accidents while others do not. Concern is sometimes raised that the consolidated police dispatch center cannot handle these differences between jurisdictions effectively. In interviews the Grand Jury learned that these differences are typically accommodated without problem.

4. Technology Infrastructure

Every police dispatch center depends upon a complex assortment of hardware and software including CAD systems, records management systems and either digital or analog radio communications systems. From interviews the Grand Jury found that CAD systems used by the PSC and city police dispatch centers generally are not interoperable. Various system vendors and technologies have been utilized across the County. There are also new and emerging federal standards for public safety communications systems and, in some cases, federal grants are available for local government agencies to upgrade to newer systems.

Given the diversity of CAD, records management and communications systems used in law enforcement agencies across the County, systems migration represents an important factor to be evaluated whenever consolidation of dispatch centers is being considered. From interviews, the Grand Jury learned that technology consolidation can be and has been managed effectively in the several cases of police dispatch consolidation already completed in the County.

5. Some Police Dispatch Consolidation Experiences

Within San Mateo County three cities have contracted with other cities to provide dispatch services (not including the contracting of over-night dispatch by Colma to South San Francisco).

San Carlos – Menlo Park. In 2006, San Carlos contracted with Menlo Park for dispatch services. A 2008 report by the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury investigated the impact of the consolidation.² The report noted that the one-time cost to the San Carlos Police Department for CAD and records management system consolidation was \$186,000. But the report also said that consolidation saved San Carlos approximately \$244,000 per year in reduced staffing costs, such that even in the first year savings were achieved. The report said that call response times for both cities remained at the same three to five minutes level that they were prior to the consolidation. The report concluded that the dispatch center consolidation "...has allowed both communities to have access to a state-of-the-art communications system that greatly enhances the ability of the police dispatchers to serve a much larger geographical area and still maintain the former high level of service. In the process, the consolidation has been financially beneficial to both SCPD and MPPD." It should be noted that San Carlos contracted with the County Sheriff's office for all law enforcement services including dispatch in late 2010.

Pacifica – South San Francisco. In 2011, as part of overall city budget cuts of \$1.5 million, the Pacifica Police Department was asked to reduce department expenses by \$630,000 per year. The Pacifica City Council approved the Police Department's recommendation to contract its police dispatch services to South San Francisco, saving Pacifica approximately \$300,000 per year. As was the case with San Carlos and Menlo Park, equipment modifications were required, and Pacifica received a \$300,000 federal grant to install a new and compatible records management system. Pacifica expected to save \$280,000 to \$300,000 in its first year of outsourcing dispatch services, although there were cost overruns in the transition. An official from Pacifica told that Grand Jury that the first six months with South San Francisco police dispatch has been excellent with the transition being almost seamless with no observable impact on response times.

Brisbane – San Mateo. In 2003, the City of Brisbane ended its contract for police dispatch with the PSC and contracted instead with the City of San Mateo, in order to take advantage of expanded services including a modernized records management system that the merger would provide. New software was required for the change. There was no fiscal impact cited for this change.³ The current annual cost to Brisbane is \$140,000.

² http://www.sanmateocourt.org/documents/grand_jury/2007/police_com_services.pdf

³ <http://mail.smrn.com/pipermail/brsnet/2003-August/000348.html> Staff reports. See VIII, item A.

In interviews the Grand Jury heard that South San Francisco, the City of San Mateo, Menlo Park, Redwood City, and the PSC all have the capacity to extend their dispatch services to additional cities.

6. The County Dispatch Option

As was noted above, the dispatch relationship between Menlo Park and San Carlos ended when San Carlos contracted with the San Mateo County Sheriff for police services. All cities that contract with the Sheriff for police also use the PSC for dispatch, per Table 1 above. Six cities contract with the PSC through the Sheriff, and one city, East Palo Alto, has its own police department but contracts with the PSC for dispatch.

The PSC employs 10 police dispatchers and 15 fire dispatchers. Eight of its dispatchers are cross-trained to execute all dispatch duties. There are at least nine dispatchers and one supervisor on duty at all times. While the fire / medical dispatch function in the PSC has a back-up agreement with the City of Redwood City, the police dispatch function has no back-up agreement with another facility.

The PSC with the Sheriff's Office has operated a records management system called Tiburon since 1999. While it was state-of-the-art at the time, technology has evolved to the point where it is now lacking important capabilities that other local dispatch operations have. The Sheriff's Office is now in the process of transitioning to a newer records management system called RIMS, which is also used by many police dispatch operations in the County, including Daly City, South San Francisco, Foster City, Menlo Park, Pacifica, Half Moon Bay, San Carlos, Belmont, Atherton, East Palo Alto and Redwood City. The conversion, expected to be complete by the end of 2012, will enhance interoperability with other cities using the RIMS system and make it easier for more cities to contract with the Sheriff for police and dispatch services in the future.

Most individuals from the cities interviewed by the Grand Jury said it would not be viable for the PSC to become the sole provider of police dispatch services in the County because:

- The PSC does not currently have the physical capacity at its present location to absorb all County police dispatch.
- There should be at least one other dispatch center in the County, in a geographically disparate area, to manage risk.

7. Police vs. Fire Dispatch

The PSC is the dispatch center for the County-wide "mutual aid" system. This means that in an emergency, whether it is for fire or police or both, public safety officials are directed to respond regardless of geographical boundaries. It is a seamless response system which is admired by all those interviewed by the Grand Jury.

Fire and emergency dispatch and police dispatch operate over different networks, due in part to historical factors. However, there are real differences in response requirements. Fire and emergency response situations tend to be what are called "static" or focused on one location. When a dispatcher deals with a medical emergency he or she works from a computer driven

protocol in which the problem is ascertained and advice to deal with it is given to the caller while help is on the way.

Police response situations are by contrast often “dynamic” or in motion, requiring more two-way communication between dispatchers and police officers in the field and potentially more cooperation in the field. Much of the call volume is “police initiated” rather than citizen initiated, informing the dispatcher, for example, that the police officer is involved with a traffic violation.

The Sheriff’s geographical jurisdiction is countywide, and so is the coverage for its primary and secondary channels. A County-wide Mutual Aid Channel (called the Green Channel) is common to all police agencies in the County and all dispatch centers. It allows for communications coordination for incidents requiring mutual aid or communication between agencies where the scope of communication is larger than the one provided by agency primary channel, and supports the adage that “crime knows no boundaries.” Car chases would be a common Green Channel use. The footprint for the Green Channel is San Francisco to south of Mountain View. The County also operates a Homeland Security funded service called “cop link” linking San Mateo and its cities to other counties in our geographical region.

8. Other Attempts Made To Consolidate Police Dispatch Services

The City Managers in the County have been considering and promoting the sharing of police dispatch and other services for 12 years and under the pressure of shrinking revenues have been making incremental progress. However, in interviews the Grand Jury was told that there is continual reluctance from some City Councils to institute change, in part due to reluctance to give up local autonomy.

Investigation

To research this report, the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury surveyed the Cities and police departments of the County and interviewed:

- Representatives from the County Communications Public Safety Center
- A City Manager representing the Association of City Managers
- Two Fire Chiefs
- Three Police Chiefs and other police personnel
- A Sheriff’s Office representative.

Findings

The Grand Jury finds that:

1. In San Mateo County there are 15 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch. The Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch.
2. There are 16 Police Departments in the County, including the San Mateo County Sheriff.

3. The number of police dispatch centers in the County has been reduced from 22 to 13 over the last 12 years.
4. For those cities operating their own dispatch centers the average cost per call is \$30.04. For those cities contracting out dispatch the average cost per call is \$18.45. Some of the cost difference is due to the fact that dispatchers in many cities perform additional duties while cities that contract out are just paying for dispatch services.
5. Pacifica and San Carlos each realized large cost savings when they contracted with other cities for police dispatch. These savings, taken together with the low cost per call noted above for cities contracting out dispatch, demonstrate that consolidation of police dispatch represents a significant cost reduction opportunity for cities with a standalone police dispatch function.
6. Some municipal police dispatch centers have only one dispatcher on duty at certain times. Some have a minimum of two.
7. Larger police dispatch centers have dedicated dispatch teams, not distracted by tangential responsibilities, and tend to provide better training programs for the intense dispatch job.
8. The PSC has a minimum of nine dispatchers on duty at all times.
9. There is no back-up for the law enforcement dispatch portion of the PSC, even though the PSC itself is a back-up center for other police dispatch centers in the County.
10. No single dispatch site is currently available that can handle all police dispatch. Several dispatch centers, including South San Francisco, the City of San Mateo, Redwood City, Menlo Park and the PSC, have facilities with the capacity to expand to provide police dispatch services to additional jurisdictions.
11. The County Sheriff owns, and the PSC operates, the “Green Channel” (a proprietary radio communications channel) which enables interoperability across all law enforcement departments and through which mutual aid from emergency-response agencies is achieved.
12. All those interviewed believe that dispatch consolidation is beneficial, and most of those interviewed believe the County should have more than one dispatch center.
13. Factors that hinder consolidation include the perceived need for local dispatchers, the fact that some dispatchers also have other responsibilities, the incompatibility of equipment, and differences in the levels of service offered by various police departments. Grand Jury interviews revealed that cities that have completed consolidation of police dispatch have found these issues to be manageable.
14. Elected officials in some cities have been reluctant to consolidate police dispatch.

15. All cities that have outsourced police dispatch services, either to other cities or to the County, pay considerably less for dispatch services without degradation of service.

Conclusions

The Grand Jury concludes that:

1. The consolidation of dispatch departments is fiscally prudent, and fiscally beneficial to all parties involved.
2. The operation of dedicated dispatch centers in smaller jurisdictions is not cost effective and presents the challenges of providing adequate coverage during non-peak hours and sufficient coverage if a major emergency occurs.
3. Dispatchers operate under intense pressure when responding to 9-1-1 calls. They should be well-trained and free from competing responsibilities during their work shifts.
4. Dispatch consolidation enhances safety because it provides dispatch depth for handling large emergencies, justifies having a dedicated dispatch team not distracted by tangential responsibilities, and enables better training programs.
5. Several dispatch centers can easily accommodate more dispatch consoles and represent excellent alternatives for other cities considering contracting for police dispatch services.
6. A back-up arrangement with another facility for the law enforcement dispatch function in the Public Safety Communications Center should be developed.
7. Most of the objections to consolidation are not significant obstacles in practice. These include the perceived need for proximity, the different levels of service police departments provide, and differences of equipment in a quickly changing technological environment.
8. Interoperability with other regions of the state and nation can, and in the future will, improve response to natural and man-made disasters and facilitate the consolidation of public safety dispatch functions regionally.
9. The Grand Jury believes that in the long term the County would be well-served by consolidating law enforcement dispatch to two to three regional centers within the County.
10. City Councils should take a leadership role in driving consolidation of police dispatch centers.

Recommendations

The Grand Jury recommends to the City Councils of the Cities of San Mateo County that:

1. “Off-peak hour” programs be implemented in which smaller cities contract with larger dispatch centers to take over dispatch during off-peak hours such that no city has fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time.
2. The City Council members take a leadership role on behalf of their constituents to drive consolidation of police dispatch across the County.

The Grand Jury recommends to the County Board of Supervisors that it:

1. Directs the County Office of Public Safety Communications to develop an arrangement with another facility for back-up of its law enforcement dispatch functions.

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*Revised
N/A
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[Signature]*

Town of Atherton

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October 19, 2012

Honorable Gerald J. Buchwald
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 8th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: The 2011-2012 San Mateo County Grand Jury report, "Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers?"

Dear Honorable Buchwald:

The Atherton City Council wishes to thank the 2011-2012 San Mateo County Grand Jury for their research and analysis into the question of whether or not there needs to be 13 separate police dispatch centers in San Mateo County or fewer consolidated dispatcher centers?

The outsourcing or consolidation of the Atherton Police Department's communications center with another public safety jurisdiction is not a new concept, and one that police staff has given careful consideration and analysis to in the past.

The City Council is troubled by the fact that no one from the Grand Jury actually spoke to our Police Chief or a member of his staff on this matter. The City Council and our Police Chief have concerns and questions with some of the Grand Jury's findings, assumptions and conclusions. This response was approved by the Atherton City Council on October 17, 2012.

Findings

1. In San Mateo County there are 15 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch services. The Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch.

Response: The Town partially disagrees with this finding. There are 18 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch.

The Town agrees that the Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch.

2. There are 16 Police Departments in the County, including the San-Mateo County Sheriff.

Response: The Town disagrees with this finding. There are 16 municipal agencies, 1 special district, and the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office for a total of 17 law enforcement agencies. The Bart Police also have a presence in San Mateo County.

The San Mateo County Sheriff's Office provides contract police services for the Cities of San Carlos, Millbrae, and Half Moon Bay, and the Towns of Woodside, Portola Valley, and the unincorporated area of Eichler Highlands.

3. The number of police dispatch centers in the County has been reduced from 22 to 13 over the last 12 years.

Response: The Town disagrees with this finding. We believe there were 16 law enforcement dispatch centers 12 years ago and now there are 13.

4. For the cities operating their own dispatch centers the average cost per call is \$30.04. For those cities contracting out dispatch the average cost per call is \$18.45. Some of the cost difference is due to the fact that dispatchers in many cities perform additional duties while cities that contract out are just paying for dispatch services.

Response: The Town disagrees in part with this finding and has serious questions concerning the cost methodology used in the Grand Jury's analysis.

The Grand Jury compared the cost of providing police dispatching services against the cost of centers that provide police dispatching as only one facet of their many communication duties. When this is taken into account for the Town of Atherton, the cost percentage difference is less. For example, if the Town of Atherton was to outsource for dispatch services, there would still be a need for an Office Specialist to answer the phones, perform records duties, and work the front counter.

We also believe there are inconsistencies in the Grand Jury's data collection and comparison methodology with respects to employee costs, operational costs, and call volume.

The Town acknowledges that there may in fact be some cost savings, but believe that such savings are overstated in the Grand Jury's report with respects to the Town of Atherton.

5. Pacifica and San Carlos each realized large cost savings when they contracted with other cities for police dispatch. These savings, taken together with the low costs per call noted above for the cities contracting dispatch services, demonstrate that consolidation of police dispatch centers represents a significant cost reduction opportunity for cities with standalone police dispatch functions.

Response: The Town does not know the financial savings to Pacifica and San Carlos as a result of contracting out their police dispatch services. However, the cost savings achieved from consolidating dispatch centers may vary greatly. There are often unforeseen and unanticipated costs involved with these types of mergers.

For example, South San Francisco provides dispatch services to the Pacifica Police Department. The two agencies mutually agreed that they will contribute jointly to fund changes in technology. With technology outpacing itself every two years, this could represent significant cost increases.

6. Some municipal police dispatch centers have only one dispatcher on duty at certain times. Some have a minimum of two.

Response: The Town agrees with this finding.

7. Larger police dispatch centers have dedicated dispatch teams, not distracted by tangential responsibilities, and tend to provide better training programs for the intense dispatch job.

Response: The Town partially disagrees with this finding. All communications dispatchers in San Mateo County are trained to the standards prescribed by California's Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) guidelines. All of Atherton's dispatchers have attended a POST certified dispatcher academy and receive regular training updates. Many of our per diem dispatchers work on-call for other police dispatch centers. The Grand Jury's assumption that our dispatchers are "distracted" by other tangential responsibilities is merely speculation and not based on factual information or research.

8. The PSC has a minimum of nine dispatchers on duty at all times.

Response: The Town does not have sufficient information to agree or disagree with this statement.

9. There is no back-up for the law enforcement dispatch portion of the PSC, even though the PSC itself is a back-up center for other police dispatch centers in the County.

Response: The Town does not have sufficient information to agree or disagree with this statement. The Atherton Police Department has multiple communications redundancy with the Menlo Park Police Department and the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office.

10. No single dispatch site is currently available that can handle all police dispatch. Several dispatch centers, including South San Francisco, the City of San Mateo, Redwood City, Menlo Park and the PSC have facilities with the capacity to expand to provide police dispatch services to additional jurisdictions.

Response: The Town does not have sufficient information to agree or disagree with this statement.

11. The County Sheriff owns, and the PSC operates, the "Green Channel" (a proprietary radio communications channel) which enables interoperability across all law enforcement departments and through which mutual aid from emergency-response agencies is achieved.

Response: The Town partially disagrees with this finding. San Mateo County Sheriff's Office holds the license for the "green" channel. However, the "green" channel is considered a mutual aid asset. The channel is funded by all law enforcement agencies in San Mateo County through a Joint Powers Agreement with the Office of Emergency Services.

12. All those interviewed believe that dispatch consolidation is beneficial, and most of those interviewed believe the County should have more than one dispatch center.

Response: The Town does not have sufficient information to agree or disagree with this statement.

13. Factors that hinder consolidation include the perceived need for local dispatchers, the fact that some dispatchers also have other responsibilities, the incompatibility of equipment, and differences in the level of service offered by various police departments. Grand Jury interviews revealed that cities that have completed consolidation of police dispatch have found these issues to be manageable.

Response: The Town conceptually agrees with this finding. Although the impacts of dispatch center consolidation may be manageable, they may vary greatly from one city to another.

14. Elected officials in some cities have been reluctant to consolidate police dispatch.

Response: The Town has no reason to disagree with this finding.

15. All Cities that have outsourced police dispatch services, either to other cities or to the County, pay considerably less for dispatch services without degradation of service.

Response: The Town has no reason to disagree with this finding.

Recommendations:

1. "Off-peak hour" programs be implemented in which smaller cities contract with larger dispatch centers to take over dispatch during off-peak hours such that no city has fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time."

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented because the Atherton Police Department's call volume does not warrant having two dispatchers on duty at any given time. Additionally, if the police department contracted with another communications center to provide dedicated dispatch services, they would still require staff to complete a variety of records management tasks, residential alarm monitoring, and a host of clerical and receptionist duties and responsibilities.

2. The City Council members take a leadership role on behalf of their constituents to drive consolidation of police dispatch across the County.

Response: Discussions related to consolidation are policy decisions left to City Council members of each agency.

On behalf of the Atherton City Council, I appreciate the efforts that the Grand Jury has put into investigating this very important issue. Although we may agree with many of the Grand Jury's findings, the City Council does not believe that it is in the best interest of our residents to outsource a critical function of our Police Department to another law enforcement agency at this time.

Very Truly Yours,


George Rodericks
City Manager



September 25, 2012

San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Response to Grand Jury Report regarding Police Dispatch Centers

Dear San Mateo County Grand Jury:

We are in receipt of the Grand Jury's report entitled, "*Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers?*" Pursuant to your request for response, the Belmont City Council held a public meeting on September 25, 2012 and approved this response. The City of Belmont responds to the Grand Jury's findings and recommendation as follows:

Findings:

- 1) **"In San Mateo County there are 15 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch. The Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch"**

The City of Belmont holds insufficient data to affirm or deny this finding.

- 2) **"There are 16 Police Departments in the County, including the San Mateo County Sheriff."**

The City of Belmont holds insufficient data to affirm or deny this finding.

- 3) **"The number of police dispatch centers in the County has been reduced from 22 to 13 over the last 12 years."**

The City of Belmont holds insufficient data to affirm or deny this finding.

4) "For the cities operating their own dispatch centers the average cost per call is \$30.04. For those cities contracting out dispatch the average cost per call is \$18.45. Some of the cost difference is due to the fact that dispatchers in many cities perform additional duties while cities that contract out are just paying for dispatch services."

The City of Belmont holds insufficient data to affirm or deny this finding.

5) "Pacifica and San Carlos each realized large cost savings when they contracted with other cities for police dispatch. These savings, taken together with the low costs per call noted above for the cities contracting out dispatch, demonstrate that consolidation of police dispatch represents a significant cost reduction opportunity for cities with a standalone police dispatch function."

The City of Belmont holds insufficient data to affirm or deny this finding.

6) "Some municipal police dispatch centers have only one dispatcher on duty at certain times. Some have a minimum of two."

The City of Belmont agrees with this finding.

7) "Larger police dispatch centers have dedicated dispatch teams, not distracted by tangential responsibilities, and tend to provide better training programs for the intense dispatch job."

The City of Belmont disagrees with this finding. The Belmont Police Department provides extensive one-on-one and hands-on training. Although not one of the larger dispatch centers, our dispatchers regularly meet or exceed the training standards set by the State of California Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) guidelines.

We also believe that the "tangential responsibilities" managed by our dispatchers makes for better educated and experienced dispatchers who are capable of providing better service to our citizens on a higher variety of calls for service.

8) "The PSC has a minimum of nine dispatchers on duty at all times."

The City of Belmont holds insufficient data to affirm or deny this finding.

9) "There is no back-up for the law enforcement dispatch portion of the PSC, even though the PSC itself is a back-up center for other police dispatch centers in the County."

The City of Belmont holds insufficient data to affirm or deny this finding.

10) "No single dispatch site is currently available that can handle all police dispatch. Several dispatch centers, including South San Francisco, the City of San Mateo, Redwood City, Menlo Park and the PSC have facilities with the capacity to expand to provide police dispatch services to additional jurisdictions."

The City of Belmont holds insufficient data to affirm or deny this finding.

11) "The County Sheriff owns, and the PSC operates, the "Green Channel" (a proprietary radio communications channel) which enables interoperability across all law enforcement departments and through which mutual aid from emergency-response agencies is achieved."

The City of Belmont partially disagrees with this finding. San Mateo County Sheriff's Office holds the license for the "green" channel. However, the "green" channel is considered a mutual aid asset. The channel is funded by all law enforcement agencies in San Mateo County through a Joint Powers agreement with the Office of Emergency Services, not the Sheriff's Office.

12) "All those interviewed believe that dispatch consolidation is beneficial, and most of those interviewed believe the County should have more than one dispatch center."

The City of Belmont holds insufficient data to affirm or deny this finding.

13) "Factors that hinder consolidation include the perceived need for local dispatchers, the fact that some dispatchers also have other responsibilities, the incompatibility of equipment, and differences in the level of service offered by various police departments. Grand Jury interviews revealed that cities that have completed consolidation of police dispatch have found these issues to be manageable."

The City of Belmont holds insufficient data to affirm or deny this finding.

14) "Elected officials in some cities have been reluctant to consolidate police dispatch."

The City of Belmont holds insufficient data to affirm or deny this finding.

Conclusions:

1) "The consolidation of dispatch departments is fiscally prudent, and fiscally beneficial to all parties involved."

The City of Belmont holds insufficient data to affirm or deny this conclusion. It assumes variables and details that can only be considered under specific circumstances when considering potential partnerships.

2) "The operation of dedicated dispatch centers in smaller jurisdictions is not cost effective and presents the challenges of providing adequate coverage during non-peak hours and sufficient coverage if a major emergency occurs."

The City of Belmont disagrees with this conclusion. Our dispatch center provides coverage that we consider both adequate and cost effective at all hours.

3) "Dispatchers operate under the tense pressure when responding to 9-1-1 calls. They should be well-trained and free from competing responsibilities during their work shifts"

The City of Belmont disagrees with this conclusion. Although our well-trained dispatchers do work under tense pressure, their "tangential (competing) responsibilities" add to their breadth of knowledge and improves their response capabilities.

4) "Dispatch consolidation enhances safety because it provides dispatch depth for handling large emergencies, justifies having a dedicated dispatch team not distracted by tangential responsibilities, and enables better training programs."

The City of Belmont holds insufficient data to affirm or deny this conclusion.

5) "Several dispatch centers can easily accommodate more dispatch consoles and represent excellent alternatives for other cities considering contracting for police dispatch services."

The City of Belmont holds insufficient data to affirm or deny this conclusion.

6) "A back-up arrangement with another facility for the law enforcement dispatch function in the Public Safety Communications Center should be developed."

The City of Belmont agrees with this conclusion.

7) "Most of the objections to consolidation are not significant obstacles in practice. These include perceived need for proximity, the different levels of service police departments provide, and differences of equipment in a quickly changing technological environment."

The City of Belmont holds insufficient data to affirm or deny this conclusion.

8) "Interoperability with other regions of the state and nation can, and in the future will, improve response to natural and man-made disasters and facilitate the consolidation of public safety dispatch functions regionally"

The City of Belmont holds insufficient data to affirm or deny this conclusion.

9) "The Grand Jury believes that in the long term the County would be well-served by consolidating law enforcement dispatch to two or three regional centers within the County."

The City of Belmont holds insufficient data to affirm or deny this conclusion.

10) "City Councils should take a leadership role in driving consolidation of police dispatch centers."

The City of Belmont believes that each City Council holds the responsibility to consider such projects.

Recommendations:

The Grand Jury recommends to the City Councils on the Cities of San Mateo County that:

1) "Off-Peak hour programs be implemented in which smaller cities contract with larger dispatch centers to take over dispatch during off-peak hours such that no city has fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time."

The City of Belmont will continue to consider such programs as technology evolves.

- 2) ***“The City Council members take a leadership role on behalf of the constituents to drive consolidation of police dispatch across the County.”***

The City of Belmont believes that each City Council holds the responsibility to consider such projects.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel J. DeSmidt". The signature is stylized with a large initial "D" and "J".

Daniel J. DeSmidt
Chief of Police

County Manager's Office

RECEIVED

SEP 18 2012

DEPT. 10

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

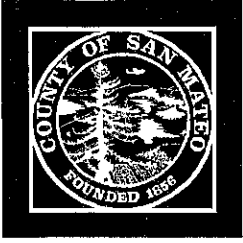
COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER • REDWOOD CITY • CALIFORNIA 94063-1662
WEB PAGE ADDRESS: <http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us>

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

DAVE PINE
CAROLE GROOM
DON HORSLEY
ROSE JACOBS GIBSON
ADRIENNE TISSIER

John L. Maltbie
COUNTY MANAGER/
CLERK OF THE BOARD

(650) 363-4123
FAX: (650) 363-1916



*Renewed
+ N. St. J. 9/25/12*

September 13, 2012

Hon. Gerald J. Buchwald
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

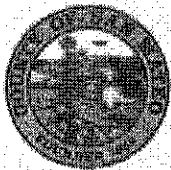
Re: Does San Mateo Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers?

Dear Hon. Gerald J. Buchwald,

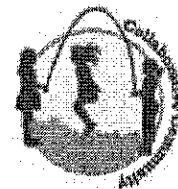
The responses to the Grand Jury Reports titled: Does San Mateo Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers, was approved by the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors at their regular meeting on September 11, 2012. Attached please find the Board Memo that includes the formal response.

Sincerely,

Shanna Collins
County Manager's Office



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence
County Manager's Office



APPROVED BY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

SEP 11 2012

BY [Signature] CLERK OF BOARD DEPUTY

DATE: August 22, 2012

BOARD MEETING DATE: September 11, 2012

SPECIAL NOTICE/HEARING: None

VOTE REQUIRED: Majority

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors

FROM: John L. Maltbie, County Manager

SUBJECT: 2011-12 Grand Jury Response

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the Board of Supervisor's response to the 2011-12 Grand Jury report titled:
Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers?

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION:

On May 23, 2012, the Grand Jury filed a report titled: Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers? The Board of Supervisors is required to submit comments on the findings and recommendations pertaining to the matters under control of the County of San Mateo within ninety days. The County's response to the report is due to the Hon. Gerald J. Buchwald no later than October 15, 2012.

Acceptance of this report contributes to the Shared Vision 2025 outcome of a Collaborative Community by ensuring that all Grand Jury findings and recommendations are thoroughly reviewed by the appropriate County departments and that, when appropriate, process improvements are made to improve the quality and efficiency of services provided to the public and other agencies.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost associated with accepting this report.

Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers?

Findings:

Grand Jury Finding Number 1. In San Mateo County there are 15 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch. The Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch.

Response. Partially agree. There are 17 fire agencies in San Mateo County. The Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street houses the County's back-up communications facility primarily dedicated to fire and ambulance dispatch. In addition to fire and ambulance dispatch, it is also capable of providing contingency law enforcement dispatch and communications services.

Grand Jury Finding Number 2. There are 16 Police Departments in the County, including the San Mateo County Sheriff.

Response. Agree.

Grand Jury Finding Number 3. The number of police dispatch centers in the County has been reduced from 22 to 13 over the last 12 years.

Response. Disagree. There are a total of 21 special district/towns/cities in the County. To the County's knowledge, the cities of Half Moon Bay, East Palo Alto and Broadmoor have always outsourced their police communications service. For over 30 years, the towns of Woodside and Portola Valley have contracted with the Sheriff's Office for law enforcement services and communications services have been provided by the County dispatch center. Out of the 16 remaining cities, Millbrae, San Carlos, Colma, Brisbane and Pacifica have outsourced communications services within the last 12 years. This leaves 11* municipal dispatch centers and one County Dispatch Center. (*Colma receives part-time service from South San Francisco and has been deducted from the 16 centers).

Grand Jury Finding Number 4. For those cities operating their own dispatch centers the average cost per call is \$30.04. For those cities contracting out dispatch the average cost per call is \$16.45. Some of the cost difference is due to the fact that dispatchers in many cities perform additional duties while cities that contract out are just paying for dispatch services.

Response. Partially agree. While the County agrees that economies of scale are achieved by consolidation, determining the cost per call for each agency in the County is complex. Many agencies include other functions in their call center budgets and the cost of those services would still need to be covered if dispatch was outsourced. Thus, until a detailed study of all the costs currently included in each

communications center budget is done, true comparisons of contract versus in-house costs will not be completely accurate.

Grand Jury Finding Number 5. Pacifica and San Carlos each realized large cost savings when they contracted with other cities for police dispatch. These savings, taken together with the low cost per call noted above for cities contracting out dispatch, demonstrate that consolidation of police dispatch represents a significant cost reduction opportunity for cities with a standalone police dispatch function.

Response. Agree. Significant cost savings are achieved by consolidation. In reviewing recent consolidations in which the County has been involved, we can confirm there have been direct savings, increased efficiencies, and in most cases enhanced levels of service. In-direct savings can also be achieved when a contract agency re-organizes after outsourcing dispatch.

Grand Jury Finding Number 6. Some municipal police dispatch centers have only one dispatcher on duty at certain times. Some have a minimum of two.

Response. Agree.

Grand Jury Finding Number 7. Larger police dispatch centers have dedicated dispatch teams, not distracted by tangential responsibilities, and tend to provide better training programs for the intense dispatch job.

Response. Agree. Research has shown that repetition of core competencies produces expertise. Large centers field large volumes of activity, which keeps staff repeatedly engaged in core duties. Smaller agencies tend to have lower call volume and often less demand. In larger agencies, training programs tend to be more structured and conducted in academy-type group settings compared to training in smaller agencies that is often on-the-job.

Grand Jury Finding Number 8. The PSC has a minimum of nine dispatchers on duty at all times.

Response. Agree. The County staffs four 24 hour/seven day a week law enforcement dispatch consoles, three 24 hour/seven day a week fire dispatch consoles, one 24 hour/seven day a week emergency medical services dispatch console and has one shift supervisor at all times. In addition, the center staffs both law enforcement and Emergency Medical Dispatch call takers 20 hours a day and break relief for each shift.

Grand Jury Finding Number 9. There is no back-up for the law enforcement dispatch portion of the PSC, even though the PSC itself is a back-up center for other police dispatch centers in the County.

Response. Partially Agree. The County agrees that the County Dispatch Center is the designated 911 systems default for eight other dispatch agencies in the County. The County Dispatch Center can also assume radio communication for all municipal agencies that the County doesn't already serve. However, in situations where a back-up center is needed, there is currently no dispatch center in the County that has the capability to answer another center's seven-digit emergency or business telephone lines.

The County disagrees that there is no back-up law enforcement dispatch portion of the PSC. The County maintains a Fire/EMS back-up center in Redwood City. This Center is equipped with both conventional and digital trunked radio systems which can assume radio communications for any law enforcement agency in the county using the mutual aid channels. This back-up center is fully automated with a digital telephone system and computer-aided-dispatch system.

Grand Jury Finding Number 10. No single dispatch site is currently available that can handle all police dispatch. Several dispatch centers, including South San Francisco, the City of San Mateo, Redwood City, Menlo Park and the PSC, have facilities with the capacity to expand to provide police dispatch services to additional jurisdictions.

Response. Agree. The County agrees that currently, there is no single facility that can house all the law dispatchers in the county. But, the County is planning to relocate our dispatch center and is planning to include sufficient space in our new facility to accommodate a countywide staff.

Grand Jury Finding Number 11. The County Sheriff owns, and the PSC operates, the "Green Channel" (a proprietary radio communications channel) which enables interoperability across all law enforcement departments and through which mutual aid from emergency-response agencies is achieved.

Response. Agree

Grand Jury Finding Number 12. All those interviewed believe that dispatch consolidation is beneficial, and most of those interviewed believe the County should have more than one dispatch center.

Response. Agree. While we agree that dispatch consolidation is beneficial, we cannot comment on statements made by those interviewed by the Grand Jury.

Grand Jury Finding Number 13. Factors that hinder consolidation include the perceived need for local dispatchers, the fact that some dispatchers also have other responsibilities, the incompatibility of equipment, and differences in the levels of service offered by various police departments. Grand Jury interviews revealed that

cities that have completed consolidation of police dispatch have found these issues to be manageable.

Response. Agree. The County agrees that there are many factors that have hindered consolidation. While we cannot comment on what the Grand Jury interviews revealed, we can confirm that all jurisdictions that receive dispatch service from the County have not had problems with the issues noted above.

Grand Jury Finding Number 14. Elected officials in some cities have been reluctant to consolidate police dispatch.

Response. Agree

Grand Jury Finding Number 15. All cities that have outsourced police dispatch services, either to other cities or to the County, pay considerably less for dispatch services without degradation of service.

Response. Partially Agree. The County cannot comment on those who have outsourced to other cities. The County can confirm that those agencies that have outsourced dispatch to the County have saved money.

Recommendations:

The Grand Jury recommends to the County Board of Supervisors that it:

1. Directs the County Office of Public Safety Communications to develop an arrangement with another facility for back-up of its law enforcement dispatch functions.

Response. Agree. This recommendation will be incorporated into the current planning efforts for relocating the County dispatch center.



CITY OF BRISBANE

50 Park Place
Brisbane, California 94005-1310
(415) 508-2100
Fax (415) 467-4989

October 1, 2012

Honorable Gerald J. Buchwald
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 8th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Honorable Judge Buchwald:

Please accept this letter as the City of Brisbane's formal response to the July 17, 2012 letter from the San Mateo County Superior Court of California regarding the 2011-2012 Grand Jury Report, "Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Dispatch Centers?"

The City of Brisbane has reviewed the Grand Jury's report. The City Council at its October 1, 2012 meeting approved the responses listed below to the findings and recommendations pertaining to the City of Brisbane.

Findings

1. In San Mateo County there are 15 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch. The Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch.

Response: The City of Brisbane partially disagrees with this finding. There are 18 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch.

The 18 agencies are Belmont Fire, The City of Brisbane Fire*, Colma Fire Protection District, Cal Fire/San Mateo County Fire, Central County Fire (Burlingame and Hillsborough), Daly City Fire*, Foster City Fire**, Cal Fire (Half Moon Bay), Menlo Park Fire Protection District (Atherton, East Palo Alto and Menlo Park), Millbrae Fire, Pacifica Fire*, Coast side Fire Protection District, Redwood City Fire***, San Bruno Fire, San Carlos Fire, San Mateo Fire**, South San Francisco Fire, and Woodside Fire Protection District. *Agencies are part of North County Fire Joint Powers Agreement. **Agencies share management. ***Redwood City Fire provides administrative oversight.

The City of Brisbane agrees that the Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch.

2. There are 16 Police Departments in the County, including the San Mateo County Sheriff.

Response: The City of Brisbane disagrees with this finding.

There are 15 Municipal agencies, 1 special district and the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office for a total of 17 law enforcement agencies.

The 15 municipal agencies are Daly City, Brisbane, Colma, Pacifica, South San Francisco, San Bruno, Burlingame, Hillsborough, San Mateo, Belmont, Foster City, Redwood City, Menlo Park, East Palo Alto and Atherton. Broadmoor is a special district and the Sheriff's Office. The San Mateo County Sheriff's Office provides contract police services for the Cities of San Carlos, Millbrae and Half Moon Bay.

3. The number of police dispatch centers in the County has been reduced from 22 to 13 over the last 12 years.

Response: The City of Brisbane disagrees with this finding.

We believe there were 16 dispatch centers in San Mateo County 12 years ago and now there are 13.

Daly City, Colma, South San Francisco, San Bruno, Burlingame, Hillsborough, San Mateo, Foster City, Belmont, Redwood City, Menlo Park, Atherton and San Mateo County operate dispatch centers. Public Safety Communications provides dispatch for the Sheriff's Office, contract police dispatch for East Palo Alto, Broadmoor, Half Moon Bay, San Carlos, Millbrae, Woodside and Portola Valley. San Mateo Police Department provides contract police dispatch for Brisbane. South San Francisco Police Department provides police dispatch services for Pacifica and night/weekend service for Colma.

4. For the cities operating their own dispatch centers the average cost per call is \$30.04. For those cities contracting out dispatch the average cost per call is \$18.45. Some of the cost difference is due to the fact that dispatchers in many cities perform additional duties while cities that contract out are just paying for dispatch services.

Response: The City of Brisbane agrees with this finding.

5. Pacifica and San Carlos each realized large cost savings when they contracted with other cities for police dispatch. These savings, taken together with the low costs per call noted above for the cities contracting out and dispatch, demonstrate that consolidation of police dispatch represents a significant cost reduction opportunity for cities with a standalone police dispatch function.

Response: The City of Brisbane partially disagrees with this finding.

We believe the cost savings within contracting and/or consolidating dispatch centers varies greatly. There are often unforeseen and unanticipated costs involved with these types of mergers. We believe that the potential for savings from agency to agency varies greatly by the size of the agency and the nature of the organization must also be considered.

6. Some municipal police dispatch centers have only one dispatcher on duty at certain times. Some have a minimum of two.

Response: The City of Brisbane agrees with this finding.

7. Larger police dispatch centers have dedicated dispatch teams, not distracted by tangential responsibilities, and tend to provide better training programs for the intense dispatch job.

Response: The City of Brisbane agrees with this finding.

8. The PSC has a minimum of nine dispatchers on duty at all times.

Response: The City of Brisbane disagrees with this finding.

San Mateo County Public Safety Communications staffs a minimum of 4 police dispatchers and 4 Fire/EMS dispatchers and 1 supervisor .

9. There is no back-up for the law enforcement dispatch portion of the PSC, even though the PSC itself is a back-up center for other police dispatch centers in the County.

Response: The City of Brisbane agrees with this finding.

10. No single dispatch site is currently available that can handle all police dispatch. Several dispatch centers, including South San Francisco, the City of San Mateo, Redwood City, Menlo Park and the PSC have facilities with the capacity to expand to provide police dispatch services to additional jurisdictions.

Response: The City of Brisbane agrees with this finding.

11. The County Sheriff owns, and the PSC operates, the “Green Channel” (a proprietary radio communications channel) which enables interoperability across all law enforcement departments and through which mutual aid from emergency-response agencies is achieved.

Response: The City of Brisbane partially disagrees with this finding.

The San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office holds the license for the “green” channel. The “green” channel is considered a mutual aid asset. The channel is funded by all law enforcement agencies in San Mateo County through a Joint Powers agreement with the Office of Emergency Services.

12. All those interviewed believe that dispatch consolidation is beneficial, and most of those interviewed believe the County should have more than one dispatch center.

Response: The City of Brisbane agrees with this finding.

13. Factors that hinder consolidation include the perceived need for local dispatchers, the fact that some dispatchers also have other responsibilities, the incompatibility of equipment, and differences in the level of service offered by various police departments. Grand Jury interviews revealed that cities that have completed consolidation of police dispatch have found these issues to be manageable.

Response: The City of Brisbane agrees with this finding.

14. Elected officials in some cities have been reluctant to consolidate police dispatch.

Response: The City of Brisbane agrees with this finding.

15. All Cities that have outsourced police dispatch services, either to other cities or to the County, pay considerably less for dispatch services without degradation of service.

Response: The City of Brisbane agrees with this finding.

Recommendations:

The Grand Jury recommends to the City Councils of the Cities of San Mateo County that:

1. "Off-peak hour" programs be implemented in which smaller cities contract with larger dispatch centers to take over dispatch during off-peak hours such that no city has fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time."

This recommendation has already been implemented. The City of Brisbane has contracted out our police dispatch services 24/7 to the City of San Mateo since 2004.

2. The City Council members take a leadership role on behalf of their constituents to drive consolidation of police dispatch across the County.

This recommendation has been implemented. The City of Brisbane City Council members recognize the benefit, cost savings, and reasonableness of consolidated and/or contracting out police dispatch, as evidenced by our city's successful contracting of police dispatch services to the City of San Mateo.

On behalf of The City of Brisbane, I would like to thank the members of the San Mateo Grand Jury for their efforts.

Sincerely,



Cliff Lentz, Mayor
City of Brisbane

cc: San Mateo Grand Jury
City Clerk

RECEIVED

AUG 27 2012

DEPT. 10

*Reviewed
+ ntd
8/27/12*

MPB



The City of Burlingame

501 PRIMROSE ROAD, BURLINGAME, CA 94010-3997
www.burlingame.org

JERRY DEAL, MAYOR
ANN KEIGHRAN, VICE MAYOR
MICHAEL BROWNRIGG, COUNCILMEMBER
CATHY BAYLOCK, COUNCILMEMBER
TERRY NAGEL, COUNCILMEMBER

TEL: (650) 558-7203
FAX: (650) 342-8386
EMAIL: council@burlingame.org

August 20, 2012

The Honorable Gerald J. Buchwald
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 8th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Grand Jury Report: "Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers"

Dear Judge Buchwald:

The Burlingame City Council received the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury report titled "Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers" in late July. The report contained several "findings" and "recommendations."

The City Council was requested to submit comments in regards to the findings and recommendations within 90 days and no later than October 15, 2012.

For the "findings," Council was to indicate one of the following:

1. Council agrees with the finding.
2. Council disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed, and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefore.

Additionally, for the Grand Jury "recommendations," Council was requested to report one of the following actions:

1. The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.

2. The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a time frame for implementation.
3. The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a time frame for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This time frame shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury report.
4. The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable, with an explanation therefore.

The Burlingame City Council, at its meeting on Monday, August 20, 2012 approved the responses to the findings and recommendations.

On behalf of the City of Burlingame, I would like to thank the Grand Jury for their work on this report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry Deal". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J" and "D".

Jerry Deal
Mayor

FINDINGS:

1. In San Mateo County there are 15 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch. The Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch.

RESPONSE:

The City of Burlingame partially disagrees with this response.

There are 18 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch. The 18 agencies are Belmont Fire, Brisbane Fire*, Colma Fire, Cal Fire/San Mateo County Fire, Central County Fire (Burlingame/Hillsborough), Daly City Fire*, Foster City Fire**, Cal Fire (Half Moon Bay) Menlo Park Fire (Atherton/East Palo Alto/ Menlo Park), Millbrae Fire*, Pacifica Fire, Point Montara Fire Authority, Redwood City Fire***, San Bruno Fire*, San Carlos Fire, San Mateo Fire**, South San Francisco Fire, and Woodside Fire.

*Agencies are part of North County Fire Joint Powers Agreement. **Agencies share management. ***Redwood City provides Administrative oversight.

The City of Burlingame does agree that the Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch.

2. There are 16 Police Departments in the County, including the San Mateo County Sheriff.

RESPONSE:

The City of Burlingame disagrees with this response: There are 15 municipal agencies, 1 special district and the Sheriff's Office for total of 17 law enforcement agencies.

The 16 municipal agencies are Daly City, Brisbane, Colma, Pacifica, South San Francisco, San Bruno, Burlingame, Hillsborough, San Mateo, Belmont, Foster City, Redwood City, Menlo Park, East Palo Alto and Atherton. Broadmoor is a special district and the Sheriff's Office.

The Sheriff's Office provides contract police services for the Cities of San Carlos, Millbrae and Half Moon Bay.

3. The number of police dispatch centers in the County has been reduced from 22 to 13 over the last 12 years.

RESPONSE:

The City of Burlingame disagrees with this finding. The number of police dispatch centers in San Mateo County has been reduced from 21 to 13.

Daly City, Colma, South San Francisco, San Bruno, Burlingame, Hillsborough, San Mateo, Foster City, Belmont, Redwood City, Menlo Park, Atherton and San Mateo County operate police dispatch centers.

Public Safety Communications provides dispatch services for the Sheriff's Office, contract police dispatch services for East Palo Alto, Broadmoor, Half Moon Bay, San Carlos, Millbrae, Woodside

and Portola Valley. San Mateo P.D. provides contract police dispatch for Brisbane. South San Francisco provides contract police dispatch services for Pacifica and night/weekend service for Colma.

4. For those cities operating their own dispatch centers the average cost per call is \$30.04. For those cities contracting out dispatch the average cost per call is \$18.45. Some of the cost difference is due to the fact that dispatchers in many cities perform additional duties while cities that contract out are just paying for dispatch services.

RESPONSE:

The City of Burlingame disagrees with this finding. Public Safety Communications' costs were calculated using only 62% of their annual budget divided by their total calls for service. In the case of Cities who provide their own communications center, the costs were calculated using the Cities' entire budget divided by their total calls for service. If they were to utilize 100% of Public Safety Communications' budget like they did with the Cities' budgets, the cost per call for Public Safety Communications' would actually be \$30.52 (\$8,897,248 (their entire annual budget) divided by 291,462 (their total calls for service)).

5. Pacifica and San Carlos each realized large cost savings when they contracted with other cities for police dispatch. These savings, taken together with the low cost per call noted above for cities contracting out dispatch, demonstrate that consolidation of police dispatch represents a significant cost reduction opportunity for cities with a standalone police dispatch function.

The City of Burlingame partially disagrees with this finding. There is a financial impact for capital outlay associated with consolidation, ie: records management systems, hardware, software and engineers to facilitate consolidation. These costs once amortized over five years can result in savings.

6. Some municipal police dispatch centers have only one dispatcher on duty at certain times. Some have a minimum of two.

RESPONSE:

The City of Burlingame agrees with this finding.

7. Larger police dispatch centers have dedicated dispatch teams, not distracted by tangential responsibilities, and tend to provide better training programs for the intense dispatch job.

The City of Burlingame partially disagrees with this finding. Like many of the cities in San Mateo County the Burlingame Police Department meets or exceeds California Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) standards. We also utilize the POST Learning Portal for WEB based training along with training on policies daily through Lexipol LLC, on our Policy Manual. By leveraging our resources the tangential responsibilities assigned to dispatchers are completed during slow times.

8. The PSC has a minimum of nine dispatchers on duty at all times.

RESPONSE:

The City of Burlingame partially disagrees with this finding. San Mateo County Public Safety Communications staffs a minimum of 4 police dispatchers, 4 Fire/EMS dispatchers and 1 supervisor.

9. There is no back-up for the law enforcement dispatch portion of the PSC, even though the PSC itself is a back-up center for other police dispatch centers in the County.

RESPONSE:

The City of Burlingame agrees with this finding.

10. No single dispatch site is currently available that can handle all police dispatch. Several dispatch centers, including South San Francisco, the City of San Mateo, Redwood City, Menlo Park and the PSC, have facilities with the capacity to expand to provide police dispatch services to additional jurisdictions.

RESPONSE:

The City of Burlingame agrees with this finding.

11. The County Sheriff owns, and the PSC operates, the "Green Channel" (a proprietary radio communications channel) which enables interoperability across all law enforcement departments and through which mutual aid from emergency-response agencies is achieved.

RESPONSE:

The City of Burlingame partially disagrees with this finding. The license holder of the "green" channel is the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office. The "green" channel is considered a mutual aid asset. This asset is "owned" by all the cities in San Mateo County through the Office of Emergency Services Joint Powers Agreement. Maintenance and replacement costs are funded by City and County contributions to the Office of Emergency Services.

12. All those interviewed believe that dispatch consolidation is beneficial, and most of those interviewed believe the County should have more than one dispatch center.

RESPONSE:

The City of Burlingame agrees with this finding.

13. Factors that hinder consolidation include the perceived need for local dispatchers, the fact that some dispatchers also have other responsibilities, the incompatibility of equipment, and differences in the levels of service offered by various police departments. Grand Jury interviews revealed that cities that have completed consolidation of police dispatch have found these issues to be manageable.

RESPONSE:

The City of Burlingame agrees with this finding.

14. Elected officials in some cities have been reluctant to consolidate police dispatch.

RESPONSE:

The City of Burlingame agrees with this finding.

15. All cities that have outsourced police dispatch services, either to other cities or to the County, pay considerably less for dispatch services without degradation of service.

RESPONSE:

The City of Burlingame agrees with this finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Grand Jury recommends to the City Councils of the Cities of San Mateo County that:

1. "Off-peak hour" programs be implemented in which smaller cities contract with larger dispatch centers to take over dispatch during off-peak hours such that no city has fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time.

RESPONSE:

The recommendation requires further analysis. The City of Burlingame is currently in the process of upgrading our 911 system. Part of this upgrade is to evaluate the opportunity to enhance our ability to address "Off Peak Hours" program. We have interviewed vendors with our potential partners and are starting to draft a Request for Proposal. The Request for Proposal will have a requirement that the system be capable of adding additional agencies in the future to the "Off Peak Hours" program at a reasonable cost. The anticipated completion date of the first phase is October 15, 2012.

2. The City Council members take a leadership role on behalf of their constituents to drive consolidation of police dispatch across the County.

RESPONSE:

The City of Burlingame has been a leader in consolidation and shared services. After thorough research and careful consideration the City Council members have and will continue to take a leadership role to drive consolidation of police dispatch across the county. Our current and past efforts in this area include:

- 2 past studies into a shared police communications center with the City of Millbrae;
- A recent comprehensive study into shared police, communications, and/or records with the City of San Mateo;

The results of those studies concluded that there were no substantial cost savings.

The Burlingame Police Department currently is in discussions with several San Mateo County Cities to explore shared and virtual dispatching options.



Office of the Mayor

RECEIVED
NOV 14 2012
DEPT. 10

reviewed + noted bys 11/15/12

October 29, 2012

Honorable Gerald J. Buchwald
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 8th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

Re: East Palo Alto City Council Response to Grand Jury Police Dispatch Centers Report

Dear Judge Buchwald:

The City of East Palo Alto has fully reviewed the Grand Jury's Report on the number of Police Department Dispatch Centers in San Mateo County. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the Grand Jury were discussed. The City Council's response to the report is contained herein. This matter was considered during our October 2, 2012 City Council meeting.

The Grand Jury Findings are:

1. In San Mateo County there are 15 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center (PSC) for dispatch. The Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for the fire dispatch.
2. There are 16 Police Departments in the County, including the San Mateo County Sheriff.
3. The number of police dispatch centers in the County has been reduced from 22 to 13 over the last 12 years.
4. For those cities operating their own dispatch centers, the average cost per call is \$30.04. For those cities with dispatch service contracts in place, the average cost per call is \$18.45. Some of the cost difference is due to the fact that dispatchers in many cities perform additional duties, while cities with contracts in place pay exclusively for the dispatch service.
5. Pacifica and San Carlos each realized large cost savings when they contracted with other cities for police dispatch. These savings, taken together with the low cost per call noted above for cities contacting out dispatch, demonstrate that consolidation of police dispatch represents a significant cost reduction opportunity for cities with a standalone police dispatch function.

6. Some municipal police dispatch centers have only one dispatcher on duty at certain times. Some have a minimum of two.
7. Larger police dispatch centers have dedicated dispatch teams, not distracted by tangential responsibilities, and tend to provide better training programs for the intense dispatch job.
8. The PSC has a minimum of nine dispatchers on duty at all times.
9. There is no back-up for the law enforcement dispatch portion of the PSC, even though the PSC itself is a back-up center for other police dispatch centers in the County.
10. Presently, no single dispatch site exists that can manage all police dispatch. Several dispatch centers, including South San Francisco, the City of San Mateo, Redwood City, Menlo City and the PSC, have facilities with expansion capabilities to provide police dispatch services to additional jurisdictions.
11. The County Sheriff owns, and the PSC operates, the "Green Channel" (a proprietary radio communications channel) which enables interoperability across all law enforcement departments and through which mutual aid from emergency-response agencies is achieved.
12. All those interviewed believe that dispatch consolidation is beneficial, and most of those interviewed believe the County should have more than one dispatch center.
13. Factors that hinder consolidation include the perceived need for local dispatchers, the fact that some dispatchers also have other responsibilities, the incompatibility of equipment, and differences in the levels of service offered by various police departments. Grand Jury interviews revealed cities that have completed consolidation of police dispatch have found these issues to be manageable.
14. Elected officials in some cities have been reluctant to consolidate police dispatch.
15. All cities that have outsourced police dispatch services, either to other cities or to the County, pay considerably less for dispatch services without degradation of services.

The City of East Palo Alto staff has not conducted independent research of the areas addressed by the Grand Jury and therefore cannot comment on their conclusions. Please however note that our average costs per call of \$25, through the use of County Dispatch, are well above the average of the cities contracting with the County, which cost \$18.45. Findings 14 and 15 are not applicable to the City of East Palo Alto as we are currently contracting dispatch services with the County.

Finally, the City of East Palo Alto does not dispute and agrees with the two Grand Jury recommendations (as noted below) presented to the Councils of all cities in San Mateo County.

1. "Off peak hour" programs be implemented in which smaller cities contract with larger dispatch centers to take over dispatch during off-peak hours such that no city has fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time.
2. The City Council members take a leadership role on behalf of their constituents to drive consolidation of police dispatch across the County.

Very truly yours,



Laura Martinez

Mayor



RECEIVED

OCT 15 2012

DEPT. 10

*Renewed
until 10/19/12
mgs*

TOWN OF COLMA

1198 El Camino Real • Colma, California • 94014-3212
Tel 650-997-8300 • Fax 650-997-8308

October 11, 2012

City Council

Raquel Gonzalez
Mayor

Joanne F. del Rosario
Vice Mayor

Joseph Silva
Council Member

Diana Colvin
Council Member

Council Member
Helen Fisicaro

City Treasurer

Laura Walsh

City Officials

Laura Allen
City Manager

Jon Read
Chief of Police

Roger Peters
City Attorney

Cyrus Kianpour
Acting City Engineer

Brad Donohue
Acting Public
Works Director

Michael Laughlin, AICP
Acting City Planner

Brian Dossey
Director of Recreation
Services

Lori Burns
Human Resources Manager

The Honorable Gerald J. Buchwald
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 8th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

**Re: Grand Jury Report: "Does San Mateo County Need 13
Separate Police Dispatch Centers"**

Dear Judge Buchwald:

The Colma City Council received the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury report titled "Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers" in late July. The report contained several "findings" and "recommendations."

The Town was requested to submit comments in regards to the findings and recommendations within 90 days and no later than October 15, 2012.

For the "findings," the Town was to indicate one of the following:

1. Council agrees with the finding.
2. Council disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed, and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefore.

Additionally, for the Grand Jury "recommendations," the Town was requested to report one of the following actions:

1. The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.
2. The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a time frame for implementation.
3. The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a time frame for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This time frame shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury report.

4. The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a time frame for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This time frame shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury report.
5. The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable, with an explanation therefore.

The following response to the Grand Jury Report was approved by the Colma City Council, at its meeting on Wednesday, October 10, 2012.

FINDINGS:

In response to the "findings," the Town agrees with all, but one, of the findings outlined in the Grand Jury Report. The Town disagrees partially with finding #7 which states, "Larger police dispatch centers have dedicated dispatch teams, not distracted by tangential responsibilities, and tend to provide better training programs for the intense dispatch job." It must be noted that although Colma is the smallest jurisdiction in San Mateo County and our dispatchers have tangential responsibilities, all Colma dispatch personnel are highly trained and meet all POST training requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Grand Jury recommends to the City Councils of the Cities of San Mateo that:

1. "Off-peak hour" programs be implemented in which smaller cities contract with larger dispatch centers to takeover dispatch during off-peak hours such that no city has fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time.

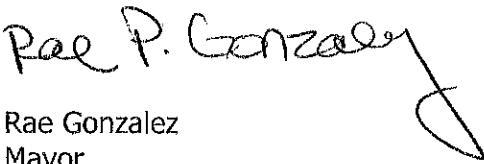
Action Taken: This recommendation has already been implemented. The Town of Colma currently contracts with South San Francisco for dispatch services during off-peak hours.

2. The City Council members take a leadership role on behalf of their constituents to drive consolidation of police dispatch across the County.

Action Taken: This recommendation has already been partially implemented. Leadership by the Colma City Council has been demonstrated by the current contract with South San Francisco for dispatch services. The Town of Colma City Council has made sound financial decision in order to maintain professional police and dispatch service level for our residents and business, and we will continue to do so until our financial situation requires us to revisit the issue.

On behalf of the Town of Colma, I would like to thank the Grand Jury for their work on this report.

Sincerely,


Rae Gonzalez
Mayor



CITY OF DALY CITY

333-90TH STREET

DALY CITY, CA 94015-1895

PHONE: (650) 991-8000

September 10, 2012

Honorable Beth Labson Freeman
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
San Mateo County Hall of Justice
400 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

Re: Response to 2011-2012 San Mateo County Grand Jury Report: 'Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers'

Dear Judge Freeman,

On Behalf of the City Council of Daly City I am submitting this response to the 2011-2012 San Mateo Grand Jury Report titled: 'Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers.' This response that follows was presented to and approved by the Mayor and City Council at its regular meeting on September 10, 2012.

Findings

- 1. In San Mateo County there are 15 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch. The Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch.**

Response: The City neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding.

- 2. There are 16 Police Departments in the County, including the San Mateo County Sheriff.**

Response: The City agrees with this finding.

- 3. The number of police dispatch centers in the County has been reduced from 22 to 13 over the last 12 years.**

Response: The City neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding.

- 4. For those cities operating their own dispatch centers the average cost per call is \$30.04. For those cities contracting out dispatch the average cost per call is \$18.45. Some of the cost difference is due to the fact that dispatchers in many cities perform additional duties while cities that contract out are just paying for dispatch services.**

Response: The City neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding.

- 5. Pacifica and San Carlos each realized large cost savings when they contracted with other cities for police dispatch. These savings, taken together with the low cost per call noted above for cities contracting out dispatch, demonstrate that consolidation of police dispatch represents a significant cost reduction opportunity for cities with standalone police dispatch function.**

Response: The City neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding.

- 6. Some municipal police dispatch centers have only one dispatcher on duty at certain times. Some have a minimum of two.**

Response: The City agrees with this finding.

- 7. Larger police dispatch centers have dedicated dispatch teams, not distracted by tangential responsibilities, and tend to provide better training programs for the intense dispatch job.**

Response: The City partially disagrees with this finding. All Public Safety Dispatchers are trained per Peace Officer Standards and Training guidelines, and receive additional professional training every two years per those guidelines.

- 8. The PSC has a minimum of nine dispatchers on duty at all times.**

Response: The City neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding as it concerns the San Mateo County Public Safety Communications Center.

- 9. There is no back-up for the law enforcement dispatch portion of the PSC, even though the PSC itself is a back-up center for other police dispatch centers in the County.**

Response: The City agrees with this finding.

- 10. No single dispatch site is currently available that can handle all police dispatch. Several dispatch centers, including South San Francisco, the City of San Mateo, Redwood City, Menlo Park and the PSC, have facilities with the capacity to expand to provide police dispatch services to additional jurisdictions.**

Response: The City partially agrees with this finding. The City agrees no single dispatch site is currently available that can handle all police dispatch. The Daly City Police Department has the capacity to expand and provide police dispatch services to additional jurisdictions.

- 11. The County Sheriff owns, and the PSC operates, the “Green Channel” (a proprietary radio communications channel) which enables interoperability across all law enforcement departments and through which mutual aid from emergency-response agencies is achieved.**

Response: The City neither agrees nor disagrees with ownership of the green channel. The City agrees the green channel enables interoperability among law enforcement agencies in San Mateo County.

- 12. All those interviewed believe that dispatch consolidation is beneficial, and most of those interviewed believe the County should have more than one dispatch center.**

Response: The City neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding.

- 13. Factors that hinder consolidation include the perceived need for local dispatchers, the fact that some dispatchers also have other responsibilities, the incompatibility of equipment, and differences in the levels of service offered by various police departments. Grand Jury interviews revealed that cities that have completed consolidation of police dispatch have found these issues manageable.**

Response: The City neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding.

- 14. Elected officials in some cities have been reluctant to consolidate police dispatch.**

Response: The City neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding. The City Council of Daly City has directed the City Manager to work with other San Mateo County Managers on a feasibility study regarding consolidation of police dispatch services.

- 15. All cities that have outsourced police dispatch services, either to other cities or the County, pay considerably less for dispatch services without degradation of service.**

Response: The City neither agrees nor disagrees with this finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Grand Jury recommends to the City Councils of the Cities of San Mateo County that:

- 1. "Off-peak hour" programs be implemented in which smaller cities contract with larger dispatch centers to take over dispatch during off-peak hours such that no city has fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time.**

Response: The City has implemented this recommendation in the past, and it continues today. Policy states we have no fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time.

- 2. The City Council members take a leadership role on behalf of their constituents to drive consolidation of police dispatch across the County.**

Response: The City has implemented this recommendation. The City Council of Daly City has directed the City Manager to work with other San Mateo County Managers on a feasibility study regarding consolidation of police dispatch services.

The Grand Jury recommends to the County Board of Supervisors that it:

- 1. Directs the County Office of Public Safety Communications to develop an arrangement with another facility for back-up of its law enforcement dispatch functions.**

Response: *This recommendation is directed to the County Board of Supervisors.*

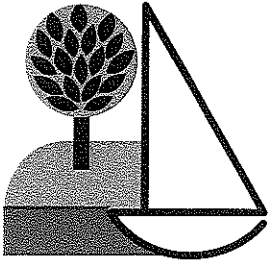
Should you need any additional information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at (650) 991-8127.

Sincerely,



Patricia E. Martel
City Manager

PEM/ap



City of Foster City

ESTERO MUNICIPAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

POLICE DEPARTMENT
1030 E. HILLSDALE BLVD.
FOSTER CITY, CA 94404
(650) 286-3300 • FAX (650) 349-0790

September 24, 2012

Honorable Gerald J. Buchwald
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 8th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re. Response to Grand Jury report titled "Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers?"

Dear Judge Buchwald:

We are in receipt of the Grand Jury's final report entitled, "*Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers?*". Pursuant to your July 17, 2012 directive to respond, the Foster City City Council held a public meeting on September 24, 2012 and approved this letter of response. The majority of the listed "Findings" are based solely on research reportedly conducted by the Grand Jury. Therefore, since Foster City is not in a position to either verify or refute those findings, we will agree with them based solely on the Grand Jury's stated research. The City of Foster City's responses to the Grand Jury's "Findings" and "Recommendations" are as follows:

Findings

1. *In San Mateo County there are 15 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch. The Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch.*

Agree based solely on stated Grand Jury research

2. *There are 16 Police Departments in the County, including the San Mateo County Sheriff.*

Agree based solely on stated Grand Jury research

3. *The number of police dispatch centers has been reduced from 22 to 13 over the last 12 years.*

Agree based solely on stated Grand Jury research

4. *For those cities operating their own dispatch centers the average cost per call is \$30.04. For those cities contracting out dispatch the average cost per call is \$18.45. Some of the cost difference is due to the fact that dispatchers in many cities perform additional duties while cities that contract out are just paying for dispatch services.*

Disagree partially. There are concerns expressed by the San Mateo County Communications Managers Association that disparate formulas were utilized to calculate the average cost per call for agencies with independent dispatch centers versus those that have contracted for those services. Foster City's calculation is comprehensive, including all costs for employee services, supervision, equipment maintenance, contractual services and equipment replacement. There is a concern that such a comprehensive formula was not utilized for contracting agencies.

5. *Pacifica and San Carlos each realized large cost savings when they contracted with other cities for police dispatch. These savings, taken together with the low cost per call noted above for cities contracting out dispatch, demonstrate that consolidation of police dispatch represents a significant cost reduction opportunity for cities with a standalone police dispatch function.*

Agree based solely on stated Grand Jury research

6. *Some municipal police dispatch centers have only one dispatcher on duty at certain times. Some have a minimum of two.*

Agree

7. *Larger police dispatch centers have dedicated dispatch teams, not distracted by tangential responsibilities, and tend to provide better training programs for the intense dispatch job.*

Disagree partially. Based on Grand Jury research, we agree that larger police dispatch centers have dedicated dispatch teams. However, the Foster City Police Department, as a mid-size agency, does as well. We wholly disagree with the implication that improved training opportunities exist only with large agencies. We in fact have a Lead Dispatcher position. That person dedicates significant portions of her time to the training and the professional development of our dispatch staff. We also send our dispatch staff to appropriate outside training as well. As a result, Foster City dispatchers are highly skilled and extremely capable of handling the wide array of routine and emergency situations they face.

8. *The PSC has a minimum of nine dispatchers on duty at all times.*

Disagree based on research conducted by the San Mateo County Communications Managers Association. Public Safety Communications has a minimum of eight dispatchers on at all times, of which four are law enforcement dispatchers, legally qualified to access most Department of Justice databases. The four Fire and EMS dispatchers are not legally qualified to access those law enforcement DOJ databases.

9. *There is no back-up for the law enforcement dispatch portion of the PSC, even though the PSC itself is a back-up center for other police dispatch centers in the County.*

Agree based solely on stated Grand Jury research

10. *No single dispatch site is currently available that can handle all police dispatch. Several dispatch centers, including South San Francisco, the City of San Mateo, Redwood City, Menlo Park and the PSC, have facilities with the capacity to expand to provide police dispatch services to additional jurisdictions.*

Agree based solely on stated Grand Jury research

11. *The County Sheriff owns, and the PSC operates, the "Green Channel" (a proprietary radio communications channel) which enables interoperability across all law enforcement departments and through which mutual aid from emergency-response agencies is achieved*

Agree based on stated Grand Jury research

12. *All those interviewed believe that dispatch consolidation is beneficial, and most of those interviewed believe the County should have more than one dispatch center.*

Agree based solely on stated Grand Jury research regarding the opinions shared by the limited group of individuals interviewed. Regarding the stated opinions; the term "beneficial" is not sufficiently qualified. Foster City does not agree with the blanket statement that consolidation of dispatch improves operational efficiencies or capabilities for all police agencies or their dispatch centers.

13. *Factors that hinder consolidation include the perceived need for local dispatchers, the fact that some dispatchers also have other responsibilities, the incompatibility of equipment, and differences in the levels of service offered by various police departments. Grand Jury interviews revealed that cities that have completed consolidation of police dispatch have found these issues to be manageable.*

Agree based solely on stated Grand Jury research

14. *Elected officials in some cities have been reluctant to consolidate police dispatch.*

Agree based solely on stated Grand Jury research

15. *All cities that have outsourced police dispatch services, either to other cities or to the County, pay considerably less for dispatch services without degradation of service.*

Agree based solely on stated Grand Jury research

Recommendations

1. *Off-peak hour programs be implemented in which smaller cities contract with larger dispatch centers to take over dispatch during off-peak hours such that no city has fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time.*

Will not be implemented. Our minimum dispatch staffing has remained at one dispatcher during early morning hours starting at 2:00 am, seven days per week, since the establishment of our independent dispatch center in 1985. On the rare occasion that potential activity on the street (e.g. New Year's Eve celebrations) or in-progress activity on the street requires that a second dispatcher be scheduled or held over beyond 2:00 am, then we do so.

Foster City has also established a mutual aid relationship with the Belmont Police Department wherein, if under any circumstances our respective on-duty dispatcher(s) require assistance answering incoming 911 calls during an emergency incident, then with the flip of a switch in either of our centers, assistance can be provided to each other by our on-duty dispatcher(s).

2. *The City Council members take a leadership role on behalf of their constituents to drive consolidation of police dispatch across the County*

Will not be implemented. The Foster City City Council remains acutely sensitive to the financial challenges being faced by our city and others around the state and nation. In response, we have made major reductions in our City's operating budgets, including those of our Police and Fire Departments. To that end, in addition to eliminating two Police dispatcher positions in the current fiscal year budget, we are in the final stages of consolidating the administrative divisions of the Foster City and San Mateo Fire Departments.

At the same time we are very concerned about maintaining as high a quality of service to our community as possible. We are also concerned about the diminishing or loss of financial and operational autonomy that may result from the consolidation of dispatch services. There can be no question that those municipal

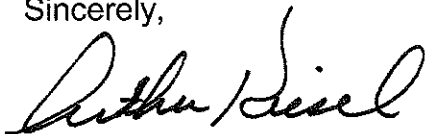
agencies that have wholly or partially consolidated law enforcement services, including those of dispatch, have not done so to somehow enhance operational efficiency or training opportunities. Rather they have been forced to do so either because of their untenable financial circumstances or because the virtual absence of any significant dispatch activity during certain hours and/or days of the week render such services unnecessary.

In conclusion, I and the other members of the Foster City City Council appreciate the efforts that the Grand Jury put into investigating this issue and drafting this report, and we find that the basic issues examined: the cost of providing public safety communications, the caliber of public safety communication and the cost comparisons are critical questions that bear further examination beyond this report.

This on-going review, refinement and reassessment of all public safety services in addition to dispatch services, including consolidation and resource allocation are clearly valuable and necessary processes that will continue to be conducted by our Police Department staff at the direction of our City Manager and City Council.

On behalf of the City of Foster City, I would like to thank the members of the San Mateo Grand Jury for their efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Art Kiesel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "K".

Art Kiesel
Mayor, City of Foster City

MINUTE ORDER

No. 1288

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
FOSTER CITY, CALIFORNIA

Date: September 25, 2012

Attention: City Council
James C. Hardy, City Manager
Craig Courtin, Police Chief
Honorable Gerald J. Buchwald, Judge of the Superior Court

City Council/EMID Board of Directors Meeting Date: September 24, 2012

Subject: Response Letter to the Grand Jury Report Regarding Consolidation of Police Dispatch Services in San Mateo County

Motion by Councilmember Bronitsky, seconded by Vice Mayor Frisella, and carried unanimously, 5-0-0, IT WAS ORDERED approving the response letter to the Honorable Gerald J. Buchwald, Judge of the Superior Court, regarding the consolidation of police dispatch services in San Mateo County.



CITY CLERK/DISTRICT SECRETARY

Resolution No. C- 51 -12

**A RESOLUTION APPROVING A LETTER OF RESPONSE TO THE GRAND JURY REPORT
“DOES SAN MATEO COUNTY NEED 13 SEPARATE POLICE
DISPATCH CENTERS?”**

WHEREAS, The San Mateo County Grand Jury issued a Report “Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers?”; and

WHEREAS, the Report includes findings, conclusions and recommendations pertaining to police dispatch centers; and

WHEREAS, the City Council is required to approve the response to the Grand Jury findings and recommendations at a public meeting.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The City Council of the City of Half Moon Bay hereby approves the City’s letter of response to the Grand Jury’s Report contained in Exhibit A and attached hereto.

* * * * *

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the forgoing Resolution was duly passed and adopted on the 2nd day of October 2012 by the City Council of Half Moon Bay by the following vote:

AYES, Councilmembers: Fraser, Kowalczyk, Muller, Patridge & Mayor Alifano

NOES, Councilmembers:


ABSENT, Councilmembers:

ABSTAIN, Councilmembers:

ATTEST:



Siobhan Smith, City Clerk



Allan Alifano, Mayor

EXHIBIT - A



October 3, 2012

Honorable Joseph E. Bergeron
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Subject: Half Moon Bay Responses to Grand Jury Findings and Recommendations "Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers?"

Dear Judge Bergeron:

At its regular meeting on October 2, 2012, the City Council of the City of Half Moon Bay reviewed and approved responses to the Grand Jury report entitled "Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers?" as summarized below.

RESPONSES TO FINDINGS

1. *In San Mateo County there are 15 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch. The Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch.*

Response:

The City of Half Moon Bay does not have independent information upon which to either agree or disagree with the finding, which does not pertain directly to Half Moon Bay.

2. *There are 16 Police Departments in the County, including the San Mateo County Sheriff.*

Response:

The City of Half Moon Bay does not have independent information upon which to either agree or disagree with the finding, which does not pertain directly to Half Moon Bay.

3. *The number of police dispatch centers in the County has been reduced from 22 to 13 over the last 12 years.*

Response:

The City of Half Moon Bay does not have independent information upon which to either agree or disagree with the finding, which does not pertain directly to Half Moon Bay.

4. *For those cities operating their own dispatch centers, the average cost per call is \$30.04. For those cities contracting out dispatch, the average cost per call is \$18.45. Some of the cost difference is due to the fact that dispatchers in many cities perform additional duties while cities that contract out are just paying for dispatch services.*

Response:

The City of Half Moon Bay does not have independent information upon which to either agree or disagree with the finding, which does not pertain directly to Half Moon Bay.

5. *Pacifica and San Carlos each realized large cost savings when they contracted with other cities for police dispatch. These savings, taken together with the low cost per call noted above for cities contracting out dispatch, demonstrate that consolidation of police dispatch represents a significant cost reduction opportunity for cities with a standalone police dispatch function.*

Response:

The City of Half Moon Bay does not have independent information upon which to either agree or disagree with the finding, which does not pertain directly to Half Moon Bay.

6. *Some municipal police dispatch centers have only one dispatcher on duty at certain times. Some have a minimum of two.*

Response:

The City of Half Moon Bay does not have independent information upon which to either agree or disagree with the finding, which does not pertain directly to Half Moon Bay.

7. *Larger police dispatch centers have dedicated dispatch teams, not distracted by tangential responsibilities, and tend to provide better training programs for the intense dispatch job.*

Response:

The City of Half Moon Bay does not have independent information upon which to either agree or disagree with the finding, which does not pertain directly to Half Moon Bay.

8. *The PSC has a minimum of nine dispatchers on duty at all times.*

Response:

The City of Half Moon Bay does not have independent information upon which to either agree or disagree with the finding, which does not pertain directly to Half Moon Bay.

9. *There is no back-up for the law enforcement dispatch portion of the PSC even though the PSC itself is a back-up center for other police dispatch centers in the County.*

Response:

The City of Half Moon Bay does not have independent information upon which to either agree or disagree with the finding, which does not pertain directly to Half Moon Bay.

10. *No single dispatch site is currently available that can handle all police dispatch. Several dispatch centers, including South San Francisco, the City of San Mateo, Redwood City, Menlo Park and the PSC, have facilities with the capacity to expand to provide police dispatch services to additional jurisdictions.*

Response:

The City of Half Moon Bay does not have independent information upon which to either agree or disagree with the finding, which does not pertain directly to Half Moon Bay.

11. *The County Sheriff owns, and the PSC operates, the "Green Channel" (a proprietary radio communications channel) which enables interoperability across all law enforcement departments and through which mutual aid from emergency response agencies is achieved.*

Response:

The City of Half Moon Bay does not have independent information upon which to either agree or disagree with the finding, which does not pertain directly to Half Moon Bay.

12. *All those interviewed believe that dispatch consolidation is beneficial, and most of those interviewed believed the County should have more than one dispatch center.*

Response:

The City of Half Moon Bay does not have independent information upon which to either agree or disagree with the finding, which does not pertain directly to Half Moon Bay.

13. *Factors that hinder consolidation include the perceived need for local dispatchers, the fact that some dispatchers also have other responsibilities, the incompatibility of equipment, and differences in the levels of service offered by various police departments. Grand Jury interviews revealed that cities that have completed consolidation of police dispatch have found these issues to be manageable.*

Response:

The City of Half Moon Bay agrees that the above-mentioned factors may hinder the decision to consolidate in a specific circumstance. The City of Half Moon Bay does not have independent information upon which to either agree or disagree with findings that merely summarize the results of Grand Jury interviews with persons or entities other than Half Moon Bay employees or officials.

14. *Elected officials in some cities have been reluctant to consolidate police dispatch.*

Response:

The City of Half Moon Bay does not have independent information upon which to either agree or disagree with findings that merely summarize the results of Grand Jury interviews with persons or entities other than Half Moon Bay employees or officials.

15. *All cities that have outsourced police dispatch services, either to other cities or to the County, pay considerably less for dispatch services without degradation of service.*

Response:

The City of Half Moon Bay does not have independent information upon which to either agree or disagree with the finding, which does not pertain directly to Half Moon Bay. The City notes that the

statement that **all** cities that have outsourced police dispatch services pay considerably less without degradation of service is rather broad and may or may not be the case in individual cities. We believe that the decision to consolidate should be made based upon the benefits/challenges in a specific City's circumstances.

RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *"Off-peak hour" programs be implemented in which smaller cities contract with larger dispatch centers to take over dispatch during off-peak hours such that no city has fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time.*

Response:

The City of Half Moon Bay believes that each agency should explore options for consolidated/shared services for dispatch staffing based upon their agency's individual needs and challenges.

2. *The City Council members take a leadership role on behalf of their constituents to drive consolidation of police dispatch across the County.*

Response:

The City of Half Moon Bay currently contracts with the County of San Mateo for this function. The City has been a leader in consolidation and shared services and is willing to share insights and experiences with other agencies interested in pursuing consolidation of police dispatch services in San Mateo County.

A copy of the resolution approving this response to the Grand Jury is attached.

Sincerely,

Laura Snideman, City Manager
City of Half Moon Bay

PDF to: grandjury@sanmateocourt.org



TOWN OF HILLSBOROUGH

1600 FLORIBUNDA AVENUE

HILLSBOROUGH

CALIFORNIA

94010-6418

September 24, 2012

Honorable Gerald J. Buchwald
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 8th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Honorable Judge Buchwald:

Please accept this letter as the Town of Hillsborough's formal response to the July 17, 2012 letter from the San Mateo County Superior Court of California regarding the 2011-2012 Grand Jury Report, "Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Dispatch Centers?" The Town has reviewed the Grand Jury's report. The City Council at its September 10, 2012 meeting approved the responses listed below to the findings and recommendations pertaining to the Town of Hillsborough.

The Hillsborough City Council appreciates the efforts that the Grand Jury put into investigating this issue and drafting this report, and we find that the basic issues examined - the cost of providing public safety communications, the caliber of public safety communication, and the comparison based on cost - are critical questions that bear further examination beyond this report.

Findings

1. In San Mateo County there are 15 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch. The Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch.

Response: The Town partially disagrees with this finding. There are 18 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch. The 18 agencies are Belmont Fire, Brisbane Fire*, Colma Fire Protection District, Cal Fire/San Mateo County Fire, Central County Fire (Burlingame and Hillsborough), Daly City Fire*, Foster City Fire**, Cal Fire (Half Moon Bay), Menlo Park Fire Protection District (Atherton, East Palo Alto and Menlo Park), Millbrae Fire*, Pacifica Fire, Coastside Fire Protection District, Redwood City Fire***, San Bruno Fire*, San Carlos Fire, San Mateo Fire**, South San Francisco Fire, and Woodside Fire Protection District.

Agencies are part of North County Fire Joint Powers Agreement. **Agencies share management. *Redwood City Fire provides administrative oversight.*

The Town agrees that the Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch.

2. There are 16 Police Departments in the County, including the San Mateo County Sheriff.

Response: The Town disagrees with this finding. There are 15 municipal agencies (Daly City, Brisbane, Colma, Pacifica, South San Francisco, San Bruno, Burlingame, Hillsborough, San Mateo, Belmont, Foster City, Redwood City, Menlo Park, East Palo Alto and Atherton), one special district (Broadmoor) and the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office for a total of 17 law enforcement agencies. The San Mateo County Sheriff's Office provides contract police services for the Cities of San Carlos, Millbrae and Half Moon Bay.

3. The number of police dispatch centers in the County has been reduced from 22 to 13 over the last 12 years.

Response: The Town disagrees with this finding. We believe there were 16 law enforcement dispatch centers 12 years ago and now there are 13.

4. For the cities operating their own dispatch centers the average cost per call is \$30.04. For those cities contracting out dispatch the average cost per call is \$18.45. Some of the cost difference is due to the fact that dispatchers in many cities perform additional duties while cities that contract out are just paying for dispatch services.

Response: The Town disagrees with this finding. In the above finding, the Grand Jury compared the cost of providing only police dispatching against the cost of centers that provide police dispatching as one facet of their many communication duties. When this is taken into account and quantified for the Town of Hillsborough, the cost for the percentage associated with dedicated dispatch is roughly equal to the costs other agencies pay for contracting only those services. It is estimated that Hillsborough dispatchers spend 35% of their time on duties other than dedicated dispatch. The costs and calls for service compared were similarly incongruous. Some centers reported operational costs in addition to salaries and benefits, while some reported salaries and benefits only. A similar lack of consistency was found related to calibrating call volume. Our initial call volume did not include some calls that other dispatch centers counted. An example of this is vehicle stops; our initial call volume provided did not count these as calls for service as these are officer initiated rather than citizen initiated. If we use the cost of salary and benefits to derive a cost per call, and add in the additional calls that were not originally factored, our cost per call falls to \$32.73. The Grand Jury reported \$51.00 per call.

5. Pacifica and San Carlos each realized large cost savings when they contracted with other cities for police dispatch. These savings, taken together with the low costs per call noted above for the cities contracting out and dispatch, demonstrate that consolidation of police dispatch represents a significant cost reduction opportunity for cities with a standalone police dispatch function.

Response: The Town partially disagrees with this finding. We believe the cost savings within contracting and/or consolidating dispatch centers varies greatly. There are often unforeseen and unanticipated costs involved with these types of mergers. Technology related costs can only be estimated and will often go beyond budget. More often than not, personnel overtime costs to staff the additional positions needed within the dispatch center providing service is very common and was not included. This will offset any "savings" involved until the dispatch center has been able to complete a recruitment process, ensure a complete background and ultimately hire and train additional dispatchers. In the example

of South San Francisco providing dispatch services to the Pacifica Police Department, the two agencies have mutually agreed that they will continue to contribute jointly to a technology related fund for future technology needs. Finally, the task of retaining qualified dispatchers to keep overtime costs down is often underestimated. The national average of employee turnover within communications centers is 18 percent. The larger the communications center, the higher the turnover rate will be.

6. Some municipal police dispatch centers have only one dispatcher on duty at certain times. Some have a minimum of two.

Response: The Town agrees with this finding.

7. Larger police dispatch centers have dedicated dispatch teams, not distracted by tangential responsibilities, and tend to provide better training programs for the intense dispatch job.

Response: The Town partially disagrees with this finding. All communications dispatchers within the San Mateo County agencies are trained to the standard and expectation of the California Police Officer Standards and Training (POST) guidelines. The municipal dispatch centers provide extensive one-on-one and hands-on training for all components within the dispatch centers. Once a dispatcher meets the initial training requirement for the job, they are provided a minimum of 24-hours of continued professional training every two years. The Town's communications officers do have other responsibilities that are valuable and necessary to the operations of the Police Department.

8. The PSC has a minimum of nine dispatchers on duty at all times.

Response: The Town disagrees with this finding. Public Safety Communications has a minimum of eight dispatchers on at all times. Public Safety Communications has four law enforcement dispatchers and four Fire and EMS dispatchers. The four law enforcement dispatchers are fully trained and qualified California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS) users with access to most Department of Justice databases. The four fire and/or EMS dispatchers are trained and specialized in Fire and EMS procedures. They do not have access to the CLETS databases and do not have the ability to query into the CLETS database systems. Additionally, when a Fire and/or EMS dispatcher answers an incoming law enforcement phone call from a Fire or EMS position, an abbreviated call processing procedure is used.

9. There is no back-up for the law enforcement dispatch portion of the PSC, even though the PSC itself is a back-up center for other police dispatch centers in the County.

Response: This finding cannot be confirmed by the Town of Hillsborough.

10. No single dispatch site is currently available that can handle all police dispatch. Several dispatch centers, including South San Francisco, the City of San Mateo, Redwood City, Menlo Park and the PSC have facilities with the capacity to expand to provide police dispatch services to additional jurisdictions.

Response: This finding cannot be confirmed by the Town of Hillsborough.

11. The County Sheriff owns, and the PSC operates, the "Green Channel" (a proprietary radio communications channel) which enables interoperability across all law enforcement

departments and through which mutual aid from emergency-response agencies is achieved.

Response: The Town partially disagrees with this finding. San Mateo County Sheriff's Office holds the license for the "Green Channel". However, the "Green Channel" is considered a mutual aid asset. The channel is funded by all law enforcement agencies in San Mateo County through a Joint Powers agreement with the Office of Emergency Services.

12. All those interviewed believe that dispatch consolidation is beneficial, and most of those interviewed believe the County should have more than one dispatch center.

Response: This finding cannot be confirmed by the Town of Hillsborough.

13. Factors that hinder consolidation include the perceived need for local dispatchers, the fact that some dispatchers also have other responsibilities, the incompatibility of equipment, and differences in the level of service offered by various police departments. Grand Jury interviews revealed that cities that have completed consolidation of police dispatch have found these issues to be manageable.

Response: The Town agrees with this finding.

14. Elected officials in some cities have been reluctant to consolidate police dispatch.

Response: This finding cannot be confirmed by the Town of Hillsborough.

15. All Cities that have outsourced police dispatch services, either to other cities or to the County, pay considerably less for dispatch services without degradation of service.

Response: This finding cannot be confirmed by the Town of Hillsborough.

Recommendations

1. "Off-peak hour" programs be implemented in which smaller cities contract with larger dispatch centers to take over dispatch during off-peak hours such that no city has fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time."

This recommendation will not be implemented for the following reasons. The Town of Hillsborough Police Department's call volume for dedicated dispatch does not support having two dispatchers on duty at any time. To staff at this level would require additional costs in excess of \$500,000. If we were to contract with another communications center to provide dedicated dispatch services, we would be required to maintain staff at our existing communications center to complete the remaining duties, such as answering business lines, dispatching public works, and assisting citizens who come to the lobby. The cost to comply by either method would be prohibitively expensive and the need to do so has not been demonstrated.

2. The City Council members take a leadership role on behalf of their constituents to drive consolidation of police dispatch across the County.

While we are open to further analysis, this recommendation will not be implemented at this time for the following reasons: In order to analyze consolidation properly, fully loaded costs must be compared against fully loaded costs. The existing service levels that are in place must be examined and either a valid plan must be demonstrated for their continuation or an agreement made for their elimination. If it is determined that costs can be reduced while maintaining or improving service levels through consolidation, then that is a laudable goal that the City Council would support. There are inherent complexities that make such analysis difficult. Unfortunately, the findings of the Grand Jury are neither total nor complete. For example, even with two or three regional centers, unless we look at linking our systems to the larger geographic area, we still have an unconnected system in San Mateo County where we are unable to leverage our resources and communicate on a regional or statewide basis. The original report neglected to view or examine the regional area beyond San Mateo County. Additionally, having local fiscal control allows for local autonomy, budgetary planning and forecasting. With other County managed facilities, there is a lack of local oversight or control when costs rise or when the service levels are not acceptable.

This continual review, refinement and recalibration of all public safety services including dispatch services, plus consolidation and resource allocation are clearly valuable and necessary processes that will continue.

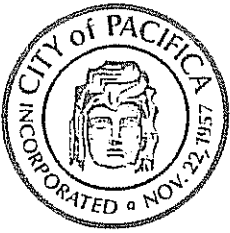
On behalf of the Town of Hillsborough, I would like to thank the members of the San Mateo Grand Jury for their efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Thomas M. Kasten", with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Thomas M. Kasten
Mayor

cc: San Mateo County Grand Jury
City Clerk



Scenic Pacifica

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CITY OF PACIFICA

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MAYOR
Peter DeJarnatt

MAYOR PRO TEM
Len Stone

COUNCIL
Sue Digre
Mary Ann Nihart
Ginny Jaquith

September 10, 2012

Honorable Gerald J. Buchwald
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 8th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Honorable Judge Buchwald,

The City of Pacifica is in receipt of the 2011-2012 San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury questionnaire regarding the consolidation of communication centers in San Mateo County. Staff has read and reviewed the 2011-2012 San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury report "Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers?". Our responses to the findings and recommendations presented are outlined below.

The City Council at its September 24, 2012 meeting approved the responses listed below to the findings and recommendations as they relate to the City of Pacifica.

If you have any questions regarding our response, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Respectfully,

Pete DeJarnatt
Mayor

“Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers?”

Findings

- 1. In San Mateo County there are 15 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch. The Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch.**

We partially disagree with this finding. Based on information from the San Mateo County Communications Manager’s Association, there are 18 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch.

The agencies include Belmont Fire, Brisbane Fire, Colma Fire Protection District, Cal Fire/San Mateo County Fire, Central County Fire (Burlingame and Hillsborough), Daly City Fire, Foster City Fire, Cal Fire (Half Moon Bay), Menlo Park Fire Protection District (Atherton, East Palo Alto and Menlo Park), Millbrae Fire, Pacifica Fire, Coastside Fire Protection District, Redwood City Fire, San Bruno Fire, San Carlos Fire, San Mateo Fire, South San Francisco Fire, and Woodside Fire Protection District.

We agree that the Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch.

- 2. There are 16 Police Departments in the County, including the San Mateo County Sheriff.**

We disagree with this finding. There are 15 municipal agencies, which include Brisbane, South San Francisco, Daly City, Colma, Pacifica, San Bruno, Burlingame, San Mateo, Belmont, Foster City, Hillsborough, Redwood City, Menlo Park, East Palo Alto and Atherton. Broadmoor is a special district and the Sheriff’s Office.

- 3. The number of police dispatch centers in the County has been reduced from 22 to 13 over the last 12 years.**

We disagree with this finding. Based on information from the San Mateo County Communications Manager’s Association, there were 16 law enforcement dispatch centers twelve years ago, and now there are 13.

- 4. For those cities operating their own dispatch centers the average cost per call is \$30.04. For those cities contracting out dispatch the average cost**

per call is \$18.45. Some of the cost difference is due to the fact that dispatchers in many cities perform additional duties while cities that contract out are just paying for dispatch services.

The City of Pacifica does not agree, nor disagree with the findings. The City of Pacifica has not done a study that would allow us to confirm these costs. There are several job duties that vary within communication centers from agency to agency. These duties may include things such as, warrant processing, records management, the answering of telephones and public counter service. Cost studies would need to evaluate the various tasks handled by the individual communications personnel for the individual agencies, so that like comparisons are made.

“Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers?”

- 5. Pacifica and San Carlos each realized large cost savings when they contracted with other cities for police dispatch. These savings, taken together with the low cost per call noted above for cities contracting out dispatch, demonstrate that consolidation of police dispatch represents a significant cost reduction opportunity for cities with a standalone police dispatch function.**

The City of Pacifica does not agree, nor disagree with the findings. While there may be opportunities for savings, each agency would need to do a cost and service level study to identify if there would be savings for their specific agency.

When doing a consolidation or outsourcing of communication services individual agencies need to look at how their individual budgets are construed and what costs are incorporated in those budgets. The Pacifica Police Department identified that not all communication costs were eliminated merely by outsourcing the communication services. The Pacifica Police Department communications projected budget for FY 2012/13 is \$825,972. Compared to the FY 2010/11 budget of \$1,185,181 prior to outsourcing, this results in an annual savings of \$359,209. Of the FY 2012/13 budget amount of \$825,972, \$626,850 are the South San Francisco Police Department contractual costs for providing communication services.

- 6. Some municipal police dispatch centers have only one dispatcher on duty at certain times. Some have a minimum of two.**

We agree with this finding.

- 7. Larger police dispatch centers have dedicated dispatch teams, not distracted by tangential responsibilities, and tend to provide better training programs for the intense dispatch job.**

The City of Pacifica does not agree with this finding. The City of Pacifica, without completing a study, does not know, specifically, how larger agencies are staffed. The City does not agree with the statement that larger police dispatch centers tend to provide better training programs for the intense dispatch job. There is a standardized 3-week dispatch academy that most dispatchers attend. In addition to this, dispatchers then complete intensive in-house training programs. After the initial training, dispatchers complete annual on-going training. The City of Pacifica is unaware of any studies that have been completed that support larger police dispatch centers providing better training programs compared to smaller agencies.

8. The PSC has a minimum of nine dispatchers on duty at all times.

We disagree with this finding. Based on information from the San Mateo County Communications Manager's Association, Public Safety Communications has a minimum of eight dispatchers on duty at all times. Four of these dispatchers are law enforcement and four dispatchers are for Fire and EMS.

9. There is no back-up for the law enforcement dispatch portion of the PSC, even though the PSC itself is a back-up center for other police dispatch centers in the County.

“Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers?”

We agree with this finding based on information from the San Mateo County Communications Manager's Association.

10. No single dispatch site is currently available that can handle all police dispatch. Several dispatch centers, including South San Francisco, the City of San Mateo, Redwood City, Menlo Park and the PSC, have facilities with the capacity to expand to provide police dispatch services to additional jurisdictions.

We agree with this finding based on information from the San Mateo County Communications Manager's Association.

11. The County Sheriff owns, and the PSC operates, the “Green Channel” (a proprietary radio communications channel) which enables interoperability across all law enforcement departments and through which mutual aid from emergency-response agencies is achieved.

The City of Pacifica partially disagrees with this finding based on information from the San Mateo County Communication Manager's Association. It is our understanding that the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office holds the license for the “green” channel. The “green” channel is considered a mutual aid asset. The channel is funded by all law enforcement agencies in San Mateo

County through a Joint Powers Agreement with the Office of Emergency Services.

- 12. All those interviewed believe that dispatch consolidation is beneficial, and most of those interviewed believe the County should have more than one dispatch center.**

The City of Pacifica agrees with this finding, however, each individual agency needs to conduct their own analysis to determine whether consolidation is appropriate for their respective organization.

- 13. Factors that hinder consolidation include the perceived need for local dispatchers, the fact that some dispatchers also have other responsibilities, the incompatibility of equipment, and differences in the levels of service offered by various police departments. Grand Jury interviews revealed that cities that have completed consolidation of police dispatch have found these issues to be manageable.**

The City of Pacifica would agree with this finding, however, would recommend that any agency considering consolidation do its own study to identify how these issues would be addressed. In many agencies, dispatchers have many other duties in addition to dispatching. Who would handle these duties if the dispatching services were consolidated? Would the agency incur additional costs as a result of this? When consolidating with another agency, in all likelihood, there would be one-time upfront costs associated with the consolidation. In addition to this, there could be equipment compatibility issues, which result in additional costs. While all of these issues are manageable, many of them come with one-time and/or on-going costs associated with them.

- 14. Elected officials in some cities have been reluctant to consolidate police dispatch.**

The City of Pacifica agrees with this finding.

“Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers?”

- 15. All cities that have outsourced police dispatch services, either to other cities or to the County, pay considerably less for dispatch services without degradation of service.**

The City of Pacifica agrees with this finding based on its experience with the outsourcing of communication services to the South San Francisco Police Department.

Recommendations

- 1. “Off-peak hour” programs be implemented in which smaller cities contract with larger dispatch centers to take over dispatch during off-peak hours such that no city has fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time.**

While the Pacifica Police Department by definition is a “medium” sized city, it has already implemented this recommendation by fully outsourcing its communications services to the South San Francisco Police Department.

The City of Pacifica would not agree that every “small” city should contract with a larger dispatch center during off-peak hours such that no city has fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time. While there are definitely benefits to this type of staffing, each individual agency would need to conduct an analysis to determine whether this would be cost efficient. As previously mentioned, each agencies dispatch center may have other duties for which the dispatchers are responsible in addition to their dispatching duties. Who would assume these duties in the event of a consolidation and would this add additional costs to the agency?

- 2. The City Council members take a leadership role on behalf of their constituents to drive consolidation of police dispatch across the County.**

The City of Pacifica agrees with this recommendation when agencies are looking at consolidation. Having the support of the City Council in this type of project will allow the project to progress more smoothly. This would be beneficial once an agency has identified an interest to consolidate.

Again, agencies need to first identify the need and/or interest to consolidate. Each agency needs to conduct an individual study to evaluate the benefits for their specific agency and circumstances. Consolidation may not necessarily be cost efficient for all agencies.

KIRSTEN KEITH
MAYOR

PETER OHTAKI
MAYOR PRO TEM

ANDREW COHEN
COUNCIL MEMBER

RICHARD CLINE
COUNCIL MEMBER

KELLY FERGUSSON
COUNCIL MEMBER



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September 27, 2012

The Honorable Gerald J. Buchwald
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 8th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Grand Jury Report – “Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate
Police Dispatch Centers?”

Dear Judge Buchwald:

The Menlo Park City Council received the above referenced San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury Report in July 2012. The report identifies certain findings and recommendations, and requests that the City Council respond in writing to those findings and recommendations no later than October 15, 2012.

Regarding the “findings” of the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury, Council was requested to respond with one of the following:

1. Council agrees with the finding.
2. Council disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed, and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefore.

Regarding the “recommendations” of the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury, Council was requested to report one of the following actions:

1. The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.
2. The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a time frame for implementation.

3. The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a time frame for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This time frame shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury report.
4. The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable, with an explanation therefore.

The City of Menlo Park responds to the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury's report as follows:

Finding

1. In San Mateo County there are 15 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch. The Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch.

Response

The City of Menlo Park partially disagrees with this response. There are actually 18 different fire departments or districts, all of which use Public Safety Communications for dispatch. The 18 agencies are: Belmont Fire, Brisbane Fire*, Colma Fire Protection District, Cal Fire/San Mateo County Fire, Central County Fire (Burlingame and Hillsborough), Daly City Fire*, Foster City Fire**, Cal Fire (Half Moon Bay), Menlo Park Fire Protection District (Atherton, East Palo Alto and Menlo Park), Millbrae Fire*, Pacifica Fire, Coastside Fire Protection District, Redwood City Fire***, San Bruno Fire*, San Carlos Fire, San Mateo Fire**, South San Francisco Fire, and Woodside Fire Protection District.

*Agencies are part of North County Fire Joint Powers Agreement. **Agencies share management. ***Redwood City Fire provides administrative oversight.

The City of Menlo Park agrees that the Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch.

Finding

2. There are 16 Police Departments in the County, including the San Mateo County Sheriff.

Response

The City of Menlo Park disagrees with this response: There are 15 municipal agencies, one (1) special district and the Sheriff's Office for total of 17 law enforcement agencies.

The 16 municipal agencies are: Daly City, Brisbane, Colma, Pacifica, South San Francisco, San Bruno, Burlingame, Hillsborough, San Mateo, Belmont, Foster City, Redwood City, Menlo Park, East Palo Alto and Atherton. Broadmoor (a special district) and the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office which also provide contract police services for the Cities of San Carlos, Millbrae and Half Moon Bay.

Finding

3. The number of police dispatch centers in the County has been reduced from 22 to 13 over the last 12 years.

Response

The City of Menlo Park disagrees with this finding. The number of police dispatch centers in San Mateo County has been reduced from 16 to 13 in the past 12 years.

The cities/towns of Daly City, Colma, South San Francisco, San Bruno, Burlingame, Hillsborough, San Mateo, Foster City, Belmont, Redwood City, Menlo Park, Atherton and San Mateo County operate police dispatch centers.

Public Safety Communications provides dispatch services for the Sheriff's Office, contract police dispatch services for East Palo Alto, Broadmoor, Half Moon Bay, San Carlos, Millbrae, Woodside and Portola Valley. San Mateo P.D. provides contract police dispatch for Brisbane. South San Francisco provides contract police dispatch services for Pacifica and night/weekend service for Colma.

The only dispatch centers to be contracted out in the past 12 years are Millbrae in 2005, San Carlos in 2006 and Pacifica in 2011.

Finding

4. For those cities operating their own dispatch centers the average cost per call is \$30.04. For those cities contracting out dispatch the average cost per call is \$18.45. Some of the cost difference is due to the fact that dispatchers in many cities perform additional duties while cities that contract out are just paying for dispatch services.

Response

The City of Menlo Park partially disagrees with this finding. Any attempt at comparing the cost per call would be complex when analyzing data received from 13 different dispatch centers. Duties and responsibilities vary among dispatch centers making it particularly difficult to present accurate comparative data.

For example, the Menlo Park Records Bureau is open to the public during regular business hours. At all other times, including weekends and holidays, members of the community can directly access our dispatchers in the front lobby of the police department. Dispatchers issue overnight parking permits, process and collect payment for vehicle releases, answer the department's business telephones, assist the public with reporting crimes and respond to a myriad of other routine community needs. As with other dispatch centers, these ancillary duties are included in their budgets and would need to be removed in order to provide an accurate comparison. Additionally, if dispatch services were contracted out, the cost for these ancillary services would remain.

Regardless, the City of Menlo Park believes that consolidating dispatch centers can be a cost effective approach.

Finding

5. Pacifica and San Carlos each realized large cost savings when they contracted with other cities for police dispatch. These savings, taken together with the low cost per call noted above for cities contracting out dispatch, demonstrate that consolidation of police dispatch represents a significant cost reduction opportunity for cities with a standalone police dispatch function.

Response

The City of Menlo Park agrees that the consolidation of dispatch centers has the potential for cost savings.

Finding

6. Some municipal police dispatch centers have only one dispatcher on duty at certain times. Some have a minimum of two.

Response

The City of Menlo Park agrees with this finding

Finding

7. Larger police dispatch centers have dedicated dispatch teams, not distracted by tangential responsibilities, and tend to provide better training programs for the intense dispatch job.

Response

The City of Menlo Park partially disagrees with this finding. The Menlo Park Police Department meets or exceeds California Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) standards. Menlo Park also uses the POST Learning Portal for WEB based training along with training on policies through Lexipol LLC and our Policy Manual.

The Menlo Park Police Department has sufficient dispatch staff on-duty at all times to handle critical incidents. This also provides the flexibility to have dispatchers handle some clerical tasks during periods of low activity thus maximizing employee productivity.

Finding

8. The PSC has a minimum of nine dispatchers on duty at all times.

Response

The City of Menlo Park agrees with this finding. There are four (4) law enforcement consoles, three (3) Fire consoles, one (1) Emergency Medical Services console and one supervisor on duty at all times.

Finding

9. There is no back-up for the law enforcement dispatch portion of the PSC, even though the PSC itself is a back-up center for other police dispatch centers in the County.

Response

The City of Menlo Park agrees with this finding.

Finding

10. No single dispatch site is currently available that can handle all police dispatch. Several dispatch centers, including South San Francisco, the City of San Mateo, Redwood City, Menlo Park and the PSC, have facilities with the capacity to expand to provide police dispatch services to additional jurisdictions.

Response

The City of Menlo Park agrees with this finding.

Finding

11. The County Sheriff owns, and the PSC operates, the "Green Channel" (a proprietary radio communications channel) which enables interoperability across all law enforcement departments and through which mutual aid from emergency-response agencies is achieved.

Response

The City of Menlo Park partially disagrees with this finding. The license holder of the "green" channel is the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office. The "green" channel is considered a mutual aid asset. This asset is "owned" by all the cities in San Mateo County through the Office of Emergency Services Joint Powers Agreement. Maintenance and replacement costs are funded by City and County contributions to the Office of Emergency Services.

Finding

12. All those interviewed believe that dispatch consolidation is beneficial, and most of those interviewed believe the County should have more than one dispatch center.

Response

The City of Menlo Park agrees in concept with the finding but cannot comment directly on interviews conducted by the Grand Jury.

Finding

13. Factors that hinder consolidation include the perceived need for local dispatchers, the fact that some dispatchers also have other responsibilities, the incompatibility of equipment, and differences in the levels of service offered by various police departments. Grand Jury interviews revealed that cities that have completed consolidation of police dispatch have found these issues to be manageable.

Response

The City of Menlo Park agrees with this finding.

Finding

14. Elected officials in some cities have been reluctant to consolidate police dispatch.

Response

The City of Menlo Park agrees with this finding.

Finding

15. All cities that have outsourced police dispatch services, either to other cities or to the County, pay considerably less for dispatch services without degradation of service.

Response

The City of Menlo Park agrees with this finding. However, most if not all cities that have outsourced dispatch services or contracted with San Mateo County Public Safety Communications have been smaller agencies. Larger agencies may not realize similar cost savings and actually end up paying more for similar levels of service. More study is required in this area.

Recommendations

The Grand Jury recommends to the City Councils of the Cities of San Mateo County that:

1. "Off-peak hour" programs be implemented in which smaller cities contract with larger dispatch centers to take over dispatch during off-peak hours such that no city has fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time.

Response

The recommendation has been partially implemented. The City of Menlo Park is in the process of upgrading its 911 system with work to begin prior to 2013. This upgrade will provide opportunities to enhance "Off Peak Hours" programs with other agencies.

2. The City Council members take a leadership role on behalf of their constituents to drive consolidation of police dispatch across the County.**Response**

The recommendation has been historically implemented. The City of Menlo Park has been a leader in consolidation. For nearly five years, the Menlo Park Police Department provided contract dispatch services for the City of San Carlos demonstrating an openness and willingness to pursue opportunities for shared services.

The contract between the City of Menlo Park and the City of San Carlos ended in late 2011 following the disbanding of the San Carlos Police Department which now contracts with the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office for law enforcement services and Public Safety Communications. The Menlo Park City Council will continue to take a leadership role to drive consolidation and/or shared dispatch services.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Keith
Mayor
City of Menlo Park



City of Millbrae
621 Magnolia Avenue, Millbrae, CA 94030

GINA PAPAN
Mayor

NADIA V. HOLOBER
Vice Mayor

WAYNE J. LEE
Councilman

MARGE COLAPIETRO
Councilwoman

ROBERT G. GOTTSCHALK
Councilman

January 17, 2013

Honorable Gerald J. Buchwald
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 8th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Honorable Judge Buchwald:

Please accept this letter as the City of Millbrae's formal response to the July 17, 2012 letter from the San Mateo County Superior Court of California regarding the 2011-2012 Grand Jury report "Does San Mateo County Need 13 Dispatch Centers?"

The City Council, at its January 22, 2013 meeting reviewed the Grand Jury's report and approved this letter of response as it pertains to the City of Millbrae.

The City of Millbrae is in agreement with the issues identified and as such contracted its Dispatch services with the County of San Mateo since November 2005 and its Police services since March 2012.

We appreciate the opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury's report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gina Papan" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gina Papan
Mayor

cc: San Mateo Grand Jury
City Clerk

RECEIVED

SEP 20 2012

DEPT. 10

TOWN of PORTOLA VALLEY

Town Hall: 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, CA 94028 Tel: (650) 851-1700 Fax: (650) 851-4677

*renewal
+ nptl
MJB 9/25/12*

September 12, 2012

The Honorable Gerald J. Buchwald
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 8th floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

**RE: Response to 2011-12 Grand Jury Report
Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers?**

Dear Judge Buchwald:

The Town Council for the Town of Portola Valley ("Town") has reviewed the recommendations in the above-referenced Grand Jury Report that affect the Town and approved the following responses at its public meeting on September 12, 2012:

Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers?

Recommendation No. 1

"Off-peak hour" programs be implemented in which smaller cities contract with larger dispatch centers to take over dispatch during off-peak hours such that no city has fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time.

Response No. 1

The Town contracts with the San Mateo County Sheriff's Department for law enforcement services, including dispatch services. Therefore, the Town is not in a position to implement this recommendation. The Town will cooperate with the Sheriff's Department, as necessary, to implement this recommendation.

Recommendation No. 2

The City Council members take a leadership role on behalf of their constituents to drive consolidation of police dispatch across the County.

Response No. 2

The Town contracts with the San Mateo County Sheriff's Department for law enforcement services, including dispatch services. Therefore, the Town is not in a position to implement this recommendation. The Town will cooperate with the Sheriff's Department, as necessary, to implement this recommendation.

Honorable Gerald J. Buchwald
Page 2

The Town thanks the Grand Jury for its investigation into this complex issue and for bringing this matter to our attention in an informative and thorough manner. Please let me know if you require additional information.

Sincerely,



Maryann Molise Derwin
Mayor

cc: Town Council
Town Manager
Town Attorney

Mayor Alicia C. Aguirre
Vice Mayor Jeffrey Gee
Council Members
Ian Bain
Rosanne S. Foust
Jeff Ira
Barbara Pierce
John D. Seybert



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September 25, 2012

Honorable Gerald J. Buchwald
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

Dear Judge Buchwald,

On July 17, 2012, the Redwood City Council received the San Mateo County Grand Jury report entitled "Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers?". The report contained fifteen "findings," ten "conclusions" and three "recommendations" (only two of the three recommendations pertained to the City). The City was required to submit comments to the Court no later than October 15, 2012.

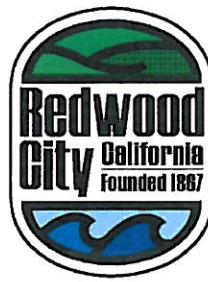
For all "findings," Council was to indicate one of the following:

1. Council agrees with the finding.
2. Council disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the response that is disputed, and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefore.

Additionally, for the two applicable "recommendations," Council was requested to report one of the following actions:

1. The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary of the implemented action.
2. The recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a time frame for implementation.
3. The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a time frame for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This time frame shall not exceed six months from the date of the publication of the Grand Jury report.
4. The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable, with an explanation therefore.

The City Council has authorized me to present the City's response to the Court. The Redwood City Council at its meeting of September 24, 2012 approved the responses to the findings and recommendations.



FINDINGS

Finding #1

In San Mateo County there are 15 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch. The Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch.

Response

The City agrees with the finding.

Finding #2

There are 16 police departments in the County, including the San Mateo County Sheriff

Response

The City agrees with the finding.

Finding #3

The number of police dispatch centers in the County has been reduced from 22 to 13 over the past 12 years.

Response

The City is unable to agree or disagree with the finding based on the information provided.

Finding #4

For those cities operating their own dispatch centers the average cost per call is \$30.04. For those cities contracting out dispatch the average cost per call is \$18.45. Some of the cost difference is due to the fact that dispatchers in many cities perform additional duties while cities that contract out are just paying for dispatch services.

Response

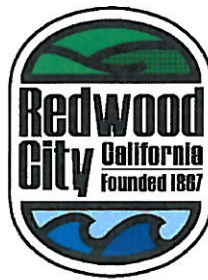
The City agrees partially with the finding. It is unclear if the study included the cost of supervisory personnel.

Finding #5

Pacifica and San Carlos each realized large cost savings when they contracted with other cities for police dispatch. These savings, taken together with the low cost per call noted above for cities contracting out dispatch, demonstrate that consolidation of police dispatch represents a significant cost reduction opportunity for cities with a standalone dispatch function.

Response

The City agrees with the finding.



Finding #6

Some municipal police dispatch centers have only one dispatcher on duty at certain times. Some have a minimum of two.

Response

The City agrees with the finding.

Finding #7

Larger police dispatch centers have dedicated dispatch teams, not distracted by tangential responsibilities, and tend to provide better training programs for the intense dispatch job.

Response

The City agrees partially with the finding. The study does not define the tangential responsibilities (e.g. are they related to providing information to the officers or deputies on the radio). Also, the State of California guides the level of training a dispatcher is to receive. Training above and beyond the POST requirement depends on the agency. A larger dispatch center may or may not offer more training than a smaller center.

Finding #8

The PSC has a minimum of nine dispatchers on duty at all times.

Response

The City disagrees with the finding. PSC has a minimum of eight dispatchers on duty and one supervisor who may or may not be present in the center.

Finding #9

There is no back-up for the law enforcement dispatch portion of the PSC, even though the PSC itself is a back-up center for other police dispatch centers in the County.

Response

The City agrees with the finding.

Finding #10

No single dispatch site is currently available that can handle all police dispatch. Several dispatch centers, including South San Francisco, the City of San Mateo, Redwood City, Menlo Park and the PSC, have facilities with the capacity to expand to provide police dispatch services to additional jurisdictions.

Response

The City agrees with the finding.

Mayor Alicia C. Aguirre
Vice Mayor Jeffrey Gee
Council Members
Ian Bain
Rosanne S. Foust
Jeff Ira
Barbara Pierce
John D. Seybert



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Finding #11

The County Sheriff owns, and the PSC operates, the “Green Channel” (a proprietary radio communications channel) which enables interoperability across all law enforcement departments and through which mutual aid from emergency-response agencies is achieved.

Response

The City agrees with the finding.

Finding #12

All those interviewed believe that dispatch consolidation is beneficial, and most of those interviewed believe the County should have more than one dispatch center.

Response

The City agrees with the finding.

Finding #13

Factors that hinder consolidation include the perceived need for local dispatchers, the fact that some dispatchers also have other responsibilities, the incompatibility of equipment, and differences in the levels of service offered by various police departments. Grand Jury interviews revealed that cities that have completed consolidation of police dispatch have found these issues to be manageable.

Response

The City agrees with the finding.

Finding #14

Elected officials in some cities have been reluctant to consolidate police dispatch.

Response

The City agrees with the finding.

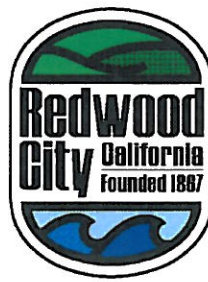
Finding #15

All cities that have outsourced police dispatch services, either to other cities or to the County, pay considerably less for dispatch services without degradation of service.

Response

The City agrees with the finding.

Mayor Alicia C. Aguirre
Vice Mayor Jeffrey Gee
Council Members
Ian Bain
Rosanne S. Foust
Jeff Ira
Barbara Pierce
John D. Seybert



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RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1

“Off-peak hour” programs be implemented in which smaller cities contract with larger dispatch centers to take over dispatch during off-peak hours such that no city has fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time.

Response

The recommendation has not been implemented; however the Redwood City Police Department is exploring consolidating with other agencies to provide dispatch services that would satisfy the recommendation. There is no concrete timeline; however the goal of the department is to have an agreement in place by mid-2013.

Recommendation #2

The City Council members take a leadership role on behalf of their constituents to drive consolidation of police dispatch across the County.

Response

This recommendation has not been implemented; however the City Council of Redwood City, through the City Manager, will be exploring within the next year the feasibility of the consolidation of police dispatch centers across the County.

On behalf of the Redwood City Council, I would like to thank the Grand Jury for their interest and work on this report. If there is additional information I can provide, please do not hesitate to contact me or my representatives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Alicia C. Aguirre'.

Alicia C. Aguirre, Mayor
City of Redwood City

C: Robert B. Bell, City Manager
JR Gamez, Chief of Police



September 11, 2012

Hon. Gerald J. Buchwald
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 8th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Dear Judge Buchwald:

We are in receipt of the Grand Jury's final report entitled, "Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers?" The City Council was requested to submit comments in regards to the findings and recommendations within 90 days and no later than October 15, 2012.

For the "findings," Council was to indicate one of the following:

1. Council agrees with the finding.
2. Council disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed, and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefore.

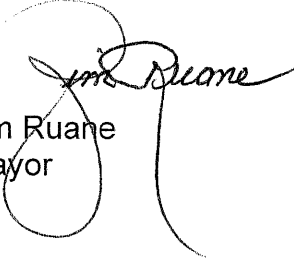
Additionally, for the Grand Jury "recommendations," Council was requested to report one of the following actions:

1. The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.
2. The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a time frame for implementation.
3. The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a time frame for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This time frame shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury report.
4. The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable, with an explanation therefore.

The San Bruno City Council held a public meeting on September 11, 2012, and approved the attached responses to the findings and recommendations.

On behalf of the San Bruno City Council, I would like to thank the Grand Jury for their work on this report.

Sincerely,



Jim Ruane
Mayor

FINDINGS

1. ***In San Mateo County there are 15 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch. The Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch.***

Response: This finding was directed to San Mateo County Public Safety Communications.

2. ***There are 16 Police Departments in the County, including the San Mateo County Sheriff.***

Response: The City of San Bruno partially disagrees with this finding. There are 17 municipal law enforcement agencies in San Mateo County including the Sheriff's Department. The California Highway Patrol, BART Police, and the Airport Bureau of the San Francisco Police Department also provide law enforcement services in San Mateo County.

3. ***The number of police dispatch centers in the County has been reduced from 22 to 13 over the last 12 years.***

Response: The City of San Bruno partially agrees with this finding. While we are not familiar with the exact number of centers in existence 12 years ago, the cities of Daly City, Colma, South San Francisco, San Mateo, Burlingame, Hillsborough, San Mateo, Foster City, Belmont, Redwood City, Menlo Park, Atherton, San Mateo County, and San Bruno operate police dispatch centers.

The City of San Bruno is aware of recent police communication consolidations and outsourcing. South San Francisco provides partial service for the Town of Colma and complete dispatch services for the City of Pacifica. San Mateo provides service to Brisbane, and Public Safety Communications serves the Sheriff's office and the cities of East Palo Alto, Half Moon Bay, Millbrae, and San Carlos.

4. ***For those cities operating their own dispatch centers the average cost per call is \$30.04. For those cities contracting out dispatch the average cost per call is \$18.45. Some of the cost difference is due to the fact that dispatchers in many cities perform additional duties while cities that contract out are just paying for dispatch services.***

Response: The City of San Bruno partially disagrees with this finding. There were no criteria provided to San Bruno when determining what costs were associated with the dispatch function. Without providing specific guidelines, each agency provided a definition that may be different than other respondents.

Agencies also differ in what they classify as a call for service. In the absence of providing criteria for all to follow, a true comparative cost is difficult to attain.

Police dispatchers for the City of San Bruno do perform other tasks. These additional duties are performed when the activity level allows. Additional duties are not assigned when our dispatchers are handling a 9-1-1 or any other emergency call. Having dispatchers complete clerical duties during times when there are no emergency calls or radio traffic is an efficient use of resources.

5. ***Pacifica and San Carlos each realized large cost savings when they contracted with other cities for police dispatch. These savings, taken together with the low cost per call noted above for cities contracting out dispatch, demonstrate that consolidation of police dispatch represents a significant cost reduction opportunity for cities with a standalone police dispatch function.***

Response: The City of San Bruno partially agrees with this finding. While we do not know the actual savings of the referenced consolidations, there are several factors that will affect what amount of savings could be recognized. These factors include call volume, number of staff required, number of radio frequencies maintained, and capital outlay associated with consolidation; i.e., records management systems, hardware, software, and engineers to facilitate implementation and compatibility. In some cases the savings can be significant, while in other examples a marginal savings is only recognized when compatible equipment costs are amortized over several years.

6. ***Some municipal police dispatch centers have only one dispatcher on duty at certain times. Some have a minimum of two.***

Response: The City of San Bruno agrees with this finding. The San Bruno Police Department maintains two dispatchers during peak times of operation, primarily between 9:00 PM to 2:00 AM, and one dispatcher for the remaining times.

7. ***Larger police dispatch centers have dedicated dispatch teams, not distracted by tangential responsibilities, and tend to provide better training programs for the intense dispatch job.***

Response: The City of San Bruno partially disagrees with the finding. Larger dispatch centers do have dedicated dispatch teams. Dispatchers employed by the San Bruno Police Department meet or exceed standards established by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST). Public Safety Dispatchers in San Bruno are also required to successfully complete Continued Professional Training (CPT) requirements as mandated by POST.

Tangential responsibilities are assigned to dispatchers for completion during times when the activity is low and not when actively servicing an emergency call. We do not believe this is a distraction; rather it is an efficient use of resources while maintaining public safety services for the community.

8. *The PSC has a minimum of nine dispatchers on duty at all times.*

Response: The City of San Bruno partially disagrees with this finding. Staff understands that the nine dispatchers consist of a supervisor, four dispatchers that serve the Sheriff's Department plus four contract cities, and four dispatchers for fire and EMS services. To include the supervisor and four dispatchers that service fire and EMS in the total of nine is somewhat misleading.

9. *There is no back-up for the law enforcement dispatch portion of the PSC, even though the PSC itself is a back-up center for other police dispatch centers in the County.*

Response: The City of San Bruno agrees with this finding.

10. *No single dispatch site is currently available that can handle all police dispatch. Several dispatch centers, including South San Francisco, the City of San Mateo, Redwood City, Menlo Park, and the PSC, have facilities with the capacity to expand to provide police dispatch services to additional jurisdictions.*

Response: The City of San Bruno agrees with this finding.

11. *The County Sheriff owns, and the PSC operates, the "Green Channel" (a proprietary radio communications channel), which enables interoperability across all law enforcement departments and through which mutual aid from emergency-response agencies is achieved.*

Response: The City of San Bruno partially disagrees with this finding. The San Mateo County Sheriff's Office holds the FCC license to that frequency; however, the "Green Channel" is a mutual aid asset of San Mateo County. This asset is "owned" by all the cities in San Mateo County by authority of the Office of Emergency Services Joint Powers Agreement. Maintenance and replacement

costs are funded by city and County contributions to the Office of Emergency Services.

12. ***All those interviewed believe that dispatch consolidation is beneficial and most of those interviewed believe the County should have more than one dispatch center.***

Response: The City of San Bruno agrees with this finding.

13. ***Factors that hinder consolidation include the perceived need for local dispatchers, the fact that some dispatchers also have other responsibilities, the incompatibility of equipment, and differences in the levels of service offered by various police departments. Grand jury interviews revealed that cities that have completed consolidation of police dispatch have found these issues to be manageable.***

Response: The City of San Bruno partially agrees with the finding. There can be significant costs associated with purchasing compatible equipment. These costs could be amortized over several years to minimize the impact they may have on consolidation.

14. ***Elected officials in some cities have been reluctant to consolidate police dispatch.***

Response: While we cannot speak for others, the City of San Bruno has always been a proponent and a leader when it comes to exploring consolidation opportunities.

15. ***All cities that have outsourced police dispatch services, either to other cities or to the County, pay considerably less for dispatch services without degradation of service.***

Response: The finding is directed to those agencies that outsourced police dispatch services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2012 San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Cities of San Mateo County:

1. ***“Off-peak” hour programs be implemented in which smaller cities contract with larger dispatch centers to take over dispatch during off-peak hours such that no city has fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time.***

Response: The recommendation requires further research and analysis. The City of San Bruno is currently evaluating available opportunities in order to partner with other dispatch centers for such a program. It is anticipated that the review will conclude within six months to determine if any consolidation opportunities are prudent and practical without diminishing the service to the community.

2. *The City Council members take a leadership role on behalf of their constituents to drive consolidation of police dispatch across the County.*

Response: The recommendation has been implemented. The San Bruno City Council has been a leader in taking advantage of viable consolidation opportunities. This is evident by our partnership with the City of Millbrae and Central County Fire, and our recent exploration of sharing police services with the City of Millbrae. The City Council of San Bruno will continue to encourage City staff to conduct thorough research and analysis when exploring consolidation opportunities including Police dispatch.

CITY OF SAN CARLOS

CITY COUNCIL

MATT GROCCOTT, MAYOR
BOB GRASSILLI, VICE MAYOR
KAREN CLAPPER
RON COLLINS
MARK OLBERT



CITY COUNCIL
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WEB: www.cityofsancarlos.org

September 27, 2012

Honorable Gerald J. Buchwald
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 8th floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Civil Grand Jury Report – Does San Mateo County Need 13 Police Dispatch Centers?

Dear Judge Buchwald,

I am writing to you on behalf of the San Carlos City Council. This will serve as the City of San Carlos' formal response to the letter from the Superior Court communicating comments made by the Civil Grand Jury titled "Does San Mateo County Need 13 Police Dispatch Centers?" The City Council has reviewed this letter at a public meeting of the Council and has authorized that it be sent.

In the report from the Civil Grand Jury, a number of Findings and Recommendations are made. Here is the City of San Carlos response to the Civil Grand Jury report on this matter:

Findings

1. In San Mateo County there are 15 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch. The Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch.

Response: We partially agree with the finding.

There are 17 fire agencies in San Mateo County. The Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street houses the County's back-up communications facility primarily dedicated to fire and ambulance dispatch. In addition to fire and ambulance dispatch, it is also capable of providing contingency law enforcement dispatch and communications services.

2. There are 16 Police Departments in the County, including the San Mateo County Sheriff.
Response: We agree with the finding.

3. The number of police dispatch centers in the County has been reduced from 22 to 13 over the last 12 years.

Response: We disagree with the finding.

There are 12 dispatch centers in the County today (11 cities and the County).

The cities of Half Moon Bay and East Palo Alto along with the Broadmoor Police Department have always contracted for police communications services. For over 30 years, the towns of Woodside and Portola Valley have contracted with the County.

Of the 16 remaining cities, 5 cities (San Carlos, Millbrae, Colma, Brisbane and Pacifica) have outsourced communications services within the last 12 years. This leaves 11* municipal dispatch centers and one County Dispatch Center. (*Colma receives part-time service from South San Francisco and has been deducted from the 16 centers present 12 years ago).

4. For those cities operating their own dispatch centers the average cost per call is \$30.04. For those cities contracting out dispatch the average cost per call is \$18.45. Some of the cost difference is due to the fact that dispatchers in many cities perform additional duties while cities that contract out are just paying for dispatch services.

Response: We partially agree with the finding.

We agree that the Grand Jury's survey of dispatch centers in the County shows that cities and police agencies that contract for police dispatch service pay significantly less for these services than the agencies with in-house dispatch services. That is also true in San Carlos where the City spends an estimated \$400,000 per year less for police dispatch services today than we would be paying with an in-house dispatch center.

It is also important to note that each City and police agency with in-house police dispatch services has differing levels of employees and costs. So the actual amount of savings, if any, will vary from agency to agency. Research that has been done by the San Mateo County City/County Managers Association Shared Services Committee on Police Dispatch and studies by individual cities has shown this to be the case among police agencies in San Mateo County that now perform police dispatch in-house.

5. Pacifica and San Carlos each realized large cost savings when they contracted with other cities for police dispatch. These savings, taken together with the low cost per call noted above for cities contracting out dispatch, demonstrate that consolidation of police dispatch represents a significant cost reduction opportunity for cities with a standalone police dispatch function.

Response: We agree with the finding.

San Carlos has been able to receive the same level and quality of service from contract police dispatch services as from the former in-house dispatch center.

This has proven to be the case both when San Carlos contracted with the City of Menlo Park for these services and more recently with the San Mateo County Communications Center.

6. Some municipal police dispatch centers have only one dispatcher on duty at certain times. Some have a minimum of two.

Response: We agree with the finding.

7. Larger police dispatch centers have dedicated dispatch teams, not distracted by tangential responsibilities, and tend to provide better training programs for the intense dispatch job.

Response: We partially agree with the finding.

This may be the case in some agencies. However, the former in-house police dispatch center in San Carlos was also staffed by dedicated police dispatchers that were not responsible for other functions.

8. The PSC has a minimum of nine dispatchers on duty at all times.

Response: We agree with the finding.

9. There is no back-up for the law enforcement dispatch portion of the PSC, even though the PSC itself is a back-up center for other police dispatch centers in the County.

Response: We partially agree with the finding.

The County Dispatch Center is the designated 911 systems default for eight other dispatch agencies in the County. The County Dispatch Center can also assume radio communication for all municipal agencies that the County doesn't already serve. However, in situations where a back-up center is needed, there is currently no dispatch center in the County that has the capability to answer another center's seven-digit emergency or business telephone lines.

The County maintains a Fire/EMS back-up center in Redwood City. This Center is equipped with both conventional and digital trunked radio systems which can assume radio communications for any law enforcement agency in the county using the mutual aid channels. This back-up center is fully automated with a digital telephone system and computer-aided-dispatch system.

10. No single dispatch site is currently available that can handle all police dispatch. Several dispatch centers, including South San Francisco, the City of San Mateo, Redwood City, Menlo Park and the PSC, have facilities with the capacity to expand to provide police dispatch services to additional jurisdictions.

Response: We agree with the finding.

Today there is no single facility that can house all the law dispatchers in the county. However, the County is planning to relocate the County Communications Dispatch Center and is planning to include sufficient space in that new facility to accommodate a countywide staff if needed in the future.

11. The County Sheriff owns, and the PSC operates, the "Green Channel" (a proprietary radio communications channel) which enables interoperability across all law enforcement departments and through which mutual aid from emergency-response agencies is achieved.

Response: We agree with the finding.

12. All those interviewed believe that dispatch consolidation is beneficial, and most of those interviewed believe the County should have more than one dispatch center.

Response: We agree with the finding.

13. Factors that hinder consolidation include the perceived need for local dispatchers, the fact that some dispatchers also have other responsibilities, the incompatibility of equipment, and differences in the levels of service offered by various police departments. Grand Jury interviews revealed that cities that have completed consolidation of police dispatch have found these issues to be manageable.

Response: We agree with the finding.

14. Elected officials in some cities have been reluctant to consolidate police dispatch.

Response: We agree with the finding.

Comments in local newspapers, such as the Daily Journal, indicate that this is the case. (See attached article dated July 18, 2012).

15. All cities that have outsourced police dispatch services, either to other cities or to the County, pay considerably less for dispatch services without degradation of service.

Response: We agree with the finding.

As noted earlier, the City of San Carlos now pays considerably less (\$400,000 per year) for these services as when they were provided in-house. In both the case of contract police dispatch services from the City of Menlo Park and County Communications, there was no loss in the level or quality of these services to San Carlos.

Recommendations

1. "Off-peak hour" programs be implemented in which smaller cities contract with larger dispatch centers to take over dispatch during off-peak hours such that no city has fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time.

Response: We partially agree with the finding.

We believe that each police agency should determine the staffing or contract services needed to achieve the level and quality of police dispatch services that their community requires. Whether this is one, two or more dispatchers on duty at any time or whether it would be better to contract with a larger dispatch center or another police agency are questions that are worth exploring by each agency.

2. City Council members should take a leadership role on behalf of their constituents to drive consolidation of police dispatch across the County.

Response: We partially agree with the finding.

Members of the San Carlos City Council and the City's Executive Management Team have shared the experiences and successes that San Carlos has seen with Contract Police Dispatch and other aspects of the City's Shared Services program. We plan to continue that in the future.

As for whether Police Dispatch should be consolidated across the County, as was done with Fire Dispatch (after an intermediate dispatch consolidation of several Fire Departments known as "Fire Net 6" that included San Carlos), we believe that this is a decision that should be considered on a city by city basis by the City Council or governing body of each police agency.

Sincerely Yours,



Matt Grocott
Mayor

cc: City Council
City Manager
Assistant City Manager
Police Captain, San Carlos Police Bureau
City Attorney

Attachment- "Grand Jury Report: Police Dispatch Needs Consolidation" by Bill Silverfarb, San Mateo Daily Journal, July 18, 2012

Grand Jury Report: Police Dispatch Needs Consolidation

July 18, 2012, 05:00 AM

By Bill Silverfarb, Daily Journal staff

Small cities in San Mateo County that operate their own police dispatch services should consider consolidating with larger cities or the county to save taxpayer money, according to a report released by the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury yesterday.

The report calls on local elected officials to drive the movement toward consolidation but some officials in the smaller cities the grand jury points to say police dispatch services are fine just the way they are.

The San Mateo Police Department's dispatch center, meanwhile, is a state-of-the-art facility and police officials there are seeking to expand its role as a regional dispatch services provider, according to a statement from the department.

Although San Mateo Deputy Mayor David Lim called the grand jury report "a good idea to support," he said consolidation should not be done just for cost savings.

"For me, it is not as simple as money," Lim said.

His concern is making sure that first responders get to their calls in a timely manner.

San Mateo's dispatch center can take on more capacity, Lim said.

Cities that have already consolidated the service spend on average \$11.59 less per 911 call, according to the grand jury report.

Since 2000, the number of police dispatch centers has been reduced from 22 to 13 and the grand jury report said elected officials "should not be distracted by perceived problems and pressures to resist change."

Consolidation is "good fiscal policy," according to the report.

Cities that either contract with the San Mateo County Public Safety Communications Center or another larger city pay \$18.45 on average per 911 call, according to the report.

Cities that operate their own dispatch service pay \$30.04 on average per 911 call, according to the report.

The city of Millbrae, which now contracts with the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office for police services and the county's communications center for dispatch, pays the least per 911 call at \$11, according to the report.

On the flip side, the average cost per 911 call in Hillsborough, which has its own dispatch center and four dispatchers, is \$51, according to the report.

The report states that the cities of San Mateo, Redwood City, Menlo Park and South San Francisco can reduce their costs by bringing in one or more partners. The savings could reach up to 20 percent in overhead alone, according to the report.

Last year, the city of Pacifica started contracting with South San Francisco for police dispatch services and is expected to save nearly \$300,000 annually, according to the report. Pacifica's average per 911 call is now \$21.

In 2003, the city of Brisbane started contracting police dispatch with the city of San Mateo. Brisbane's cost per 911 call is \$18.

Belmont's average cost per 911 call is \$27, according to the report.

Officials in that city, however, are happy with having police dispatch locally controlled.

"It may be something to consider in the future but I'm very happy with the top quality of our local dispatch services," Belmont Mayor Dave Warden wrote the Daily Journal in an email.

Councilwoman Coralin Feierbach said consolidating the service could hurt the close-knit relationship local police dispatchers have with the community.

"Dispatchers don't know other cities," she wrote the Daily Journal in an email. "I don't agree with the grand jury — we do fine on our own."

The grand jury recommends that smaller cities contract with larger dispatch centers to take over dispatch during off-peak hours so that no city has fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time.

It also recommends that local elected officials "take a leadership role on behalf of their constituents to drive consolidation of police dispatch across San Mateo County."

Currently, the county's Public Safety Communications Center does not have the physical capacity at its present location to absorb all county police dispatch, according to the report.

The Sheriff's Office is currently transitioning to a new records-management system, expected to be completed by the end of this year, that should make it easier for more cities to contract with it for police and dispatch services in the future, according to the report.

The county is currently planning to build a new facility at the Circle Star office building property in San Carlos that will include additional capacity for fire, law and ambulance dispatch.

Fire and medical dispatch for the county's 15 different fire departments is handled all at the county's communications center.

Bill Silverfarb can be reached by email: silverfarb@smdailyjournal.com or by phone: (650) 344-5200 ext. 106.

http://www.smdailyjournal.com/article_preview.php?id=1751367



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October 15, 2012

Honorable Joseph E. Bergeron
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: *Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers?*

Dear Civil Grand Jury,

The City of San Mateo would like to thank the Civil Grand Jury for investigating this interesting and timely issue. We would like to respond to your findings and recommendations as follows:

FINDINGS

- 1) **“In San Mateo County, there are 15 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch. The Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch.”**

The City of San Mateo partially agrees with this finding.

There are 18 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch.

The 18 agencies are Belmont Fire, Brisbane Fire*, Colma Fire Protection District, Cal Fire/San Mateo County Fire, Central County Fire (Burlingame and Hillsborough), Daly City Fire*, Foster City Fire**, Cal Fire (Half Moon Bay), Menlo Park Fire Protection District (Atherton, East Palo Alto, and Menlo Park), Millbrae Fire*, Pacifica Fire, Coastside Fire Protection District, Redwood City Fire***, San Bruno Fire*, San Carlos Fire, San Mateo Fire**, South San Francisco Fire, and Woodside Fire Protection District.

**Agencies are part of North County Fire Joint Powers Agreement.*

***Agencies share management.*

****Redwood City Fire provides administrative oversight.*

The second part of the finding is correct, and we agree that the Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch.

2) "There are 16 police departments in the County, including the San Mateo County Sheriff."

San Mateo disagrees with this finding. There are 15 Municipal agencies, 1 special district, and the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office for a total of 17 law enforcement agencies.

The 15 municipal agencies consist of Daly City, Brisbane, Colma, Pacifica, South San Francisco, San Bruno, Burlingame, Hillsborough, San Mateo, Belmont, Foster City, Redwood City, Menlo Park, East Palo Alto, and Atherton. Broadmoor is a special district, bringing the number to 16, and the Sheriff's Office makes 17.

The San Mateo County Sheriff's Office currently provides contract police services for the Cities of Half Moon Bay, San Carlos, and Millbrae and the City of San Mateo currently provides dispatch services for the City of Brisbane.

3) "The number of police dispatch centers in the County has been reduced from 22 to 13 over the last 12 years."

The City of San Mateo disagrees with this finding. The number of police dispatch centers in San Mateo County has been reduced from 21 to 13 in the past 12 years.

Atherton, Belmont, Burlingame, Colma, Daly City, Foster City, Hillsborough, Menlo Park, Redwood City, San Bruno, South San Francisco, San Mateo, and San Mateo County Office of Public Safety Communications operate police dispatch centers.

The Office of Public Safety Communications provides dispatch services based on contractual agreements to the following cities: East Palo Alto, Broadmoor, Half Moon Bay, Woodside, Portola Valley, and Millbrae. The San Mateo County Sheriff's Office is also provided dispatch services via the Office of Public Safety Communications. We, the City of San Mateo, provide contract dispatch services to the City of Brisbane, while South San Francisco provides contract dispatch services to Pacifica and night/weekend services to the City of Colma.

4) "For the cities operating their own dispatch centers, the average cost per call is \$30.04. For those cities contracting out dispatch, the average cost per call is \$18.45. Some of the cost difference is due to the fact that dispatchers in many cities perform additional duties, while cities that contract out are just paying for dispatch services."

The City of San Mateo disagrees with this finding. The formulas used to calculate the above numbers were not consistent. 100% of the communications budget should have been used and divided by the total amount of calls for service. If this formula was utilized, it appears there would have been little difference in the cost per call. There were differences in the ways that supervision, management, and support services were allocated to dispatch services which did not provide a true comparison between dispatch centers.

- 5) **“Pacifica and San Carlos each realized large cost savings when they contracted with other cities for police dispatch. These savings, taken together with the low costs per call noted above for the cities contracting out dispatch, demonstrate that consolidation of police dispatch represents a significant cost reduction opportunity for cities with a standalone police dispatch function.”**

San Mateo partially disagrees with this finding. The cost savings in contracting dispatch services can vary greatly. There are often unforeseen and unanticipated costs involved with these types of mergers. For example some cities use dispatchers for other duties that could impact the bottom line on a consolidation. Though clearly, in theory, consolidation could have a positive impact on budgets if there is existing capacity in a center to absorb the calls of another city. A true part of the savings/expense ratio must include these collateral factors, such as work left behind, services not provided, capacity on each channel to absorb the other agency's call load, etc.

- 6) **“Some municipal police dispatch centers have only one dispatcher on duty at certain times. Some have a minimum of two.”**

San Mateo agrees with this finding.

- 7) **“Larger police dispatch centers have dedicated dispatch teams, not distracted by tangential responsibilities, and tend to provide better training programs for the intense dispatch job.”**

The City of San Mateo partially disagrees with this finding. We are not certain what data was utilized to come to this finding. It is our belief that all communications dispatchers within the San Mateo County agencies are trained to the standard and expectation of the Police Officer Standards and Training (POST) guidelines. Larger-scale agencies may have a higher variety and volume of calls that can lead to more training opportunities, but we are unaware of a tool to measure this assumption.

- 8) **“The PSC has a minimum of nine dispatchers on duty at all times.”**

The City of San Mateo partially disagrees with this finding. Public Safety Communications has a minimum of eight dispatchers on duty at all times. Public Safety Communications has four law enforcement dispatchers and four Fire and EMS dispatchers.

- 9) **“There is no back-up for the law enforcement dispatch portion of the PSC, even though the PSC itself is a back-up center for other police dispatch centers in the County.”**

The City of San Mateo agrees with this finding.

- 10) “No single dispatch site is currently available that can handle all police dispatch. Several dispatch centers, including South San Francisco, the City of San Mateo, Redwood City, Menlo Park, and the PSC have facilities with the capacity to expand to provide police dispatch services to additional jurisdictions.”**

We agree with this finding.

- 11) “The County Sheriff owns, and the PSC operates, the “Green Channel” (a proprietary radio communications channel), which enables interoperability across all law enforcement departments and through which mutual aid from emergency-response agencies is achieved.”**

The City of San Mateo partially disagrees with this finding. San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office holds the license for the “green” channel; however, the “green” channel is considered a mutual aid asset. The channel is funded by all law enforcement agencies in San Mateo County through a Joint Powers agreement with the Office of Emergency Services.

- 12) “All those interviewed believe that dispatch consolidation is beneficial, and most of those interviewed believe the County should have more than one dispatch center.”**

The City of San Mateo partially agrees with this finding. We strongly believe there are benefits to consolidation, but a detailed review of the financial and operational benefits should be conducted to ensure that all hidden costs, workload and service issues, and technological challenges are fully vetted.

- 13) “Factors that hinder consolidation include the perceived need for local dispatchers, the fact that some dispatchers also have other responsibilities, the incompatibility of equipment, and differences in the level of service offered by various police departments. Grand Jury interviews revealed that cities that have completed consolidation of police dispatch have found these issues to be manageable.”**

The City of San Mateo agrees with this finding.

- 14) “Elected officials in some cities have been reluctant to consolidate police dispatch.”**

We agree with this finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Grand Jury recommends to the City Councils of the Cities of San Mateo County that:

- 1. "Off-peak-hour" programs be implemented in which smaller cities contract with larger dispatch centers to take over dispatch during off-peak hours such that no city has fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time.**

This recommendation warrants further exploration. The City of San Mateo has explored this with some of our police partners, and we are always open to opportunities that make operational and fiscal sense. As it stands now, we are fully capable of backing up neighboring agencies, and they are capable of backing us up in the event of system failure. In fact each municipal dispatch center has a corresponding back up facility and protocols and practices enacted to deal with emergency outages at any dispatch facility. From time to time these events have occurred for the City of San Mateo, and the evacuation procedure to an allied agency back-up center has proven seamless.

- 2. The City Council members take a leadership role on behalf of their constituents to drive consolidation of police dispatch across the County.**

The City of San Mateo has a track record in evaluating and exploring opportunities for consolidation and shared services. Some time ago we provided dispatch services for Foster City and Hillsborough. We currently are a provider of dispatch services for the City of Brisbane and have explored other dispatch consolidation options with our partners in law enforcement. The San Mateo City Council has been a leader in the area of police and fire consolidation efforts and continues to make fiscally and operationally prudent decisions in the area of public safety consolidation efforts. Our efforts have included dispatch consolidation feasibility studies with multiple partners over these past 10 years, including full and partial police consolidation studies. For a variety of reasons, these consolidation efforts have not come to fruition, but the City Council is poised to take advantage of consolidation efforts that meet the organizational and community needs.

We would again like to thank the Civil Grand Jury for their thoughtful evaluation of this topic.

Sincerely,



Brandt Grotte
Mayor



CITY COUNCIL 2012

RICHARD A. GARBARINO, MAYOR
PEDRO GONZALEZ, VICE MAYOR
MARK ADDIEGO, COUNCILMEMBER
KARYL MATSUMOTO, COUNCILMEMBER
KEVIN MULLIN, COUNCILMEMBER

BARRY M. NAGEL, CITY MANAGER

August 23, 2012

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Honorable Gerald J. Buchwald
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 8th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

RE: Response to the 2011-2012 Grand Jury Report on "Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers?" in San Mateo County

Dear Judge Buchwald:

We are in receipt of the Grand Jury's final report titled, "***Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers?***" Pursuant to your July 17, 2012 request for response; the South San Francisco City Council held a public meeting on August 22, 2012 and approved this response. The City of South San Francisco responds to the Grand Jury's findings, conclusions and recommendations as follows:

Findings:

1. In San Mateo County there are 15 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch. The Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch:

Respondent (City of South San Francisco) agrees with the finding.

2. There are 16 Police Departments in the County, including the San Mateo County Sheriff.

Respondent disagrees with the finding.

We count 17 police departments within the County, including the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office.

1. ***Daly City Police Department***
2. ***Broadmoor Police Department***
3. ***Brisbane Police Department***
4. ***Colma Police Department***
5. ***Pacifica Police Department***
6. ***South San Francisco Police Department***
7. ***San Bruno Police Department***
8. ***Burlingame Police Department***
9. ***Hillsborough Police Department***

9. *Hillsborough Police Department*
10. *San Mateo Police Department*
11. *Foster City Police Department*
12. *Belmont Police Department*
13. *Redwood City Police Department*
14. *Atherton Police Department*
15. *Menlo Park Police Department*
16. *East Palo Alto Police Department*
17. *San Mateo County Sheriff's Office*

3. The number of police dispatch centers in the County has been reduced from 22 to 13 over the last 12 years.

Respondent disagrees with the finding.

We believe there were 16 law enforcement dispatch centers 12 years ago and now there are 13. (San Francisco International Airport is not counted.)

<i>PSAP Agency</i>	<i>12 Years Ago</i>	<i>Now</i>
<i>Daly City</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Pacifica</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Brisbane</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>South San Francisco</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Broadmoor</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Colma</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>San Bruno</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Millbrae</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Burlingame</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Hillsborough</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>San Mateo</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Foster City</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Belmont</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>San Carlos</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Redwood City</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Atherton</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Menlo Park</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>San Mateo County PSC</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>

4. For those cities operating their own dispatch centers the average cost per call is \$30.04. For those cities contracting out dispatch the average cost per call is \$18.45. Some of the cost difference is due to the fact that dispatchers in many cities perform additional duties while cities that contract out are just paying for dispatch services.

Respondent disagrees wholly with this finding.

The County's published budget shows that its budgeted cost to operate the Public Safety Communications Center during the 2011-12 fiscal year was \$9,651,774.

The San Mateo County Public Safety Communications workload and performance indicators report for 2011 states that 273,007 incidents were processed. Using the calculations referenced in the Grand Jury Report, we can infer the cost per incident is \$35.34.

The Grand Jury report states that South of San Francisco's cost to dispatch an incident is \$32.00.

If we accept the amount of \$32.00 as the cost to dispatch an incident, then our City would pay an additional \$3.00 per incident to the County for similar service. In addition, the City of SSF would incur additional expense to backfill at least two clerical positions that would be required to handle administrative work currently handled by police dispatchers.

5. Pacifica and San Carlos each realized large cost savings when they contracted with other cities for police dispatch. These savings, taken together with the low cost per call noted above for cities contracting out dispatch, demonstrate that consolidation of police dispatch represents a significant cost reduction opportunity for cities with a standalone police dispatch function.

Respondent partially disagrees with this finding.

Calculating cost savings is very complicated because the expense of managing police information is usually coupled closely with dispatch operations. This cost must first be separated from dispatch operations expense before meaningful savings calculations can be made. Outsourcing dispatch operations will generally not significantly reduce information management costs. The potential savings from agency to agency does not linearly scale. The size of the agency and the nature of the organization must also be considered.

6. Some municipal police dispatch centers have only one dispatcher on duty at certain times. Some have a minimum of two.

Respondent agrees with this finding.

7. Large police dispatch centers have dedicated dispatch teams, not distracted by tangential responsibilities, and tend to provide better training programs for the intense dispatch job.

Respondent partially disagrees with this finding.

The City of South San Francisco generally agrees with this statement and recognizes the critical need to have sufficient dispatch staff on-duty at all times to handle critical incidents. This level of staffing also provides the flexibility to have emergency dispatchers handle some clerical tasks during periods of low activity. This practice is a prudent and efficient strategy for maximizing employee productivity.

Training programs vary from agency to agency. The quality of training provided is not dependant on the size of the agency, but rather the ability of the trainers to provide training that is relevant and consistent with industry standards and requirements.

8. The PSC has a minimum of nine dispatchers on duty at all times.

Respondent agrees with this finding.

9. There is no back-up for the law enforcement dispatch portion of the PSC, even though the PSC itself is a back-up center for other police dispatch centers in the County.

Respondent agrees with this finding.

10. No single dispatch site is currently available that can handle all police dispatch. Several dispatch centers, including South San Francisco, The City of San Mateo, Redwood City, Menlo Park, and PSC have facilities with the capacity to expand to provide police dispatch services to additional jurisdictions.

Respondent agrees with this finding. Respondent is of the opinion there should be no fewer than three police dispatch centers in the County, and each dispatch center should have a disaster recovery plan that includes a relocation site.

11. The County Sheriff owns, and the PSC operates, the "Green Channel" (a proprietary radio communications channel) which enables interoperability across all law enforcement departments and through which mutual aid from emergency-response agencies is achieved.

Respondent wholly disagrees with this finding.

The Emergency Services JPA owns the shared law enforcement mutual aid radio system, including the "Green Channel." The cities and the County jointly own and fund this resource. Four wide-area radio channels are accessible by all city police departments and the Sheriff's Office. The law enforcement mutual aid radio system allows all agencies to seamlessly communicate by radio.

12. All those interviewed believe that dispatch consolidation is beneficial, and most of those interviewed believe the County should have more than one dispatch center.

Respondent agrees with this finding.

13. Factors that hinder consolidation include the perceived need for local dispatchers, the fact that some dispatchers also have other responsibilities, the incompatibility of equipment, and differences in the levels of service offered by various police departments. Grand Jury interviews revealed that cities that have completed consolidation of police dispatch have found these issues to be manageable.

Respondent agrees with this finding.

14. Elected officials in some cities have been reluctant to consolidate police dispatch.

Respondent agrees with this finding.

15. All cities that have outsourced police dispatch services, either to other cities or to the County, pay considerably less for dispatch services without a degradation of service.

Respondent partially disagrees with this finding.

In order to accurately measure cost savings and service levels, it is important to factor in the size of the agency being consolidated. Thus far, dispatch centers in San Mateo County that have consolidated have stemmed from small to medium sized police departments, whose dispatch centers prior to consolidation had only one dispatcher on duty during most times. Larger agencies may not realize a cost savings and may end up paying more for a lesser level of service if they were to consolidate.

Recommendations:

1. "Off-peak hour" programs be implemented in which smaller cities contract with larger dispatch centers to take over dispatch during off-peak hours such that no city has fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time.

This recommendation has been implemented. South San Francisco has been dispatching for the City of Colma during "off-peak hours" since the late 1960s.

2. The City Council members take a leadership role on behalf of their constituents to drive consolidation of police dispatch across the County.

This recommendation has been implemented. The South San Francisco City Council members recognize the benefit, cost savings, and reasonableness of consolidated police dispatch, as evidenced by the successful consolidation of South San Francisco and Pacifica dispatch centers. The City of South San Francisco is committed to continued efforts of acquiring additional customer agencies.

These responses were reviewed and approved by the governing board of the City of South San Francisco at a public meeting on Wednesday, August 22, 2012.

Sincerely,



Richard A. Garbarino, Mayor
City of South San Francisco



The Town of
Woodside

September 26, 2012

The Honorable Gerald J. Buchwald
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 8th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

**RE: 2011-12 GRAND JURY REPORT - DOES SAN MATEO COUNTY NEED 13
SEPARATE POLICE DISPATCH CENTERS?**

Dear Judge Buchwald:

The Town Council of the Town of Woodside wishes to thank the 2011-12 Grand Jury for its service. The Town Council has reviewed the report entitled *Does San Mateo County Need 13 Separate Police Dispatch Centers?* and reviewed the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Grand Jury at its public meeting of September 25, 2012, and approved the following responses:

FINDINGS

1. In San Mateo County there are 15 different fire departments or districts, all of which use the Public Safety Communications Center for dispatch. The Redwood City Fire Station on Marshall Street is the back-up facility for fire dispatch.
2. There are 16 Police Departments in the County, including the San Mateo County Sheriff.
3. The number of police dispatch centers in the County has been reduced from 22 to 13 over the last 12 years.
4. For those cities operating their own dispatch centers the average cost per call is \$30.04. For those cities contracting out dispatch the average cost per call is \$18.45. Some of the cost difference is due to the fact that dispatchers in many cities perform additional duties while cities that contract out are just paying for dispatch services.
6. Some municipal police dispatch centers have only one dispatcher on duty at certain times. Some have a minimum of two.
8. The PSC has a minimum of nine dispatchers on duty at all times.
15. All cities that have outsourced police dispatch services, either to other cities or to the County, pay considerably less for dispatch services without degradation of service.

Response for Findings 1, 2, 3,4,6,8, and 15: Based on the information included in the Grand Jury Report, the Town agrees with these findings.

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5. Pacifica and San Carlos each realized large cost savings when they contracted with other cities for police dispatch. These savings, taken together with the low cost per call noted above for cities contracting out dispatch, demonstrate that consolidation of police dispatch represents a significant cost reduction opportunity for cities with a standalone police dispatch function.
7. Larger police dispatch centers have dedicated dispatch teams, not distracted by tangential responsibilities, and tend to provide better training programs for the intense dispatch job.
9. There is no back-up for the law enforcement dispatch portion of the PSC, even though the PSC itself is a back-up center for other police dispatch centers in the County.
10. No single dispatch site is currently available that can handle all police dispatch. Several dispatch centers, including South San Francisco, the City of San Mateo, Redwood City, Menlo Park and the PSC, have facilities with the capacity to expand to provide police dispatch services to additional jurisdictions.
11. The County Sheriff owns, and the PSC operates, the "Green Channel" (a proprietary radio communications channel) which enables interoperability across all law enforcement departments and through which mutual aid from emergency-response agencies is achieved.
12. All those interviewed believed that dispatch consolidation is beneficial, and most of those interviewed believe the County should have more than one dispatch center.
13. Factors that hinder consolidation include the perceived need for local dispatchers, the fact that some dispatchers also have other responsibilities, the incompatibility of equipment, and differences in the levels of service offered by various police departments. Grand Jury interviews revealed that cities that have completed consolidation of police dispatch have found these issues to be manageable.
14. Elected officials in some cities have been reluctant to consolidate police dispatch.

Response for Findings 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14: The Town does not possess information or have knowledge which would allow it to agree or disagree with these findings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Grand Jury recommends to the City Councils in San Mateo County that:

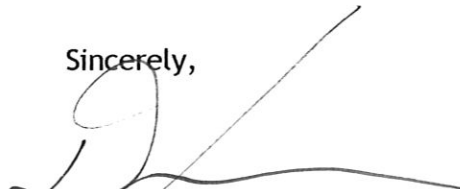
1. "Off-peak hour" programs be implemented in which smaller cities contract with larger dispatch centers to take over dispatch during off-peak hours such that no city has fewer than two dispatchers on duty at any one time.
2. The City Council members take a leadership role on behalf of their constituents to drive consolidation of police dispatch across the County.

Response for Recommendations 1 and 2: The Town of Woodside contracts with the San Mateo County Sheriff for police services, including dispatch services. Therefore, the Town has effectively implemented the Grand Jury's recommendations.

On behalf of the Town Council, I would like to extend our thanks for the opportunity to review and respond to the work of the 2011-12 Grand Jury.

Please do not hesitate to call Kevin Bryant, at (650) 851-6790, should you require any further information.

Sincerely,



Dave Tanner
Mayor