

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

950



FROM: FIRE

SUBMITTAL DATE:
January 26, 2005

SUBJECT: County Fire Chief's Preliminary Comments to the Audit Report of Riverside County Fire Department

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors receive and file the preliminary comments by the Fire Chief to the Audit Report of Riverside County Fire Department.

BACKGROUND: The County Fire Department has completed a preliminary review of the "Management Audit of the Riverside County Fire Department," dated January 7, 2004. The auditors spent considerable time collecting information and interviewing staff. The audit identified a number of recommendations that the Fire Department will review in detail and work with the Executive Office to develop implementation strategies. The Fire Department offers the following comments from our preliminary review:

1. **The audit report estimates the "net annual cost difference in excess of \$12.5 million a year" if the County was to terminate its agreement with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF).**

This cost represents only the County's cost. When the potential costs to the contract cities are included, the overall costs for County and cities could exceed over \$17 million annually. In reviewing the audit report, it appears the estimates are conservative and may underestimate overtime, employee benefits, and union contract costs.

(Continued on Page 2)

Craig E. Anthony

Craig E. Anthony, County Fire Chief

Departmental Concurrence

FINANCIAL DATA	Current F.Y. Total Cost:	\$	In Current Year Budget:	N/A
	Current F.Y. Net County Cost:	\$	Budget Adjustment:	N/A
	Annual Net County Cost:	\$	For Fiscal Year:	2005

SOURCE OF FUNDS:	Positions To Be Deleted Per A-30	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Requires 4/5 Vote	<input type="checkbox"/>

C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION:
APPROVE

County Executive Office Signature *[Signature]*

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

On motion of Supervisor Tavaglione, seconded by Supervisor Wilson and duly carried, IT WAS ORDERED that the above matter is received and filed as recommended.

Ayes: Tavaglione, Stone, Wilson and Ashley
Nays: None
Absent: Buster
Date: February 1, 2005
xc: Fire, E.O.

Nancy Romero
Clerk of the Board
By: *[Signature]*
Deputy

Prev. Agn. Ref.: _____ **District:** ALL **Agenda Number:** _____

Dept't Recomm.: Consent Policy
Per Exec. Ofc.: Consent Policy

3.3

2. The audit report provides an excellent overview of the benefits of the integrated fire protection system.

This integrated system allows the closest emergency resource to be dispatched – state, county, or city – regardless of political boundary. The state benefits greatly by this integrated system by limiting wildfire losses and saving State taxpayers millions of dollars in wildland fire suppression costs.

3. The audit report identifies a number of staffing recommendations. Two of these staffing recommendations are critical.

- The first is the addition of a licensed Fire Protection Engineer (County employee) to the Fire Protection Planning and Engineering staff. The licensed Fire Protection Engineer will provide needed expertise to process building and development permits.
- The second critical need is additional training fire captains for paid and volunteer firefighters.

4. The audit report recognizes the importance of developing a new method to allocate costs to city contracts.

The existing allocation method was developed in 1986 and no longer allocates costs equitably between the cities, and the cities and County. The Fire Department has hosted a working group of city managers to develop recommendations to the cities and County to update the cost allocation methodology.

5. The audit report (and to some extent County, city, and State employees) labor under the assumption that CDF is the County Fire Department, or in the least, in control of the policy direction of the Fire Department.

The County Fire Department exists within the family of County departments that is staffed by county and state employees. All Fire Department policy is a function of direction from the Board of Supervisors and City Councils. The CDF contract provides benefits and constraints due to the collective bargaining agreements with several State unions. These benefits and constraints occur also with County unions. The County Fire Chief is appointed by the Board of Supervisors, serving in "at will" capacity, without the benefit of appeal or separation packages. The Board of Supervisors has amended a duty statement (attached) that clearly establishes the reporting relationship to the County. In an effort to reinforce that this is a County Fire Department, the Deputy Director of Administration (County employee) now serves on the executive management team and reports directly to the County Fire Chief. This position serves both County and State employees. The CDF Deputy Chief of Administration position has been removed from the department. The Deputy Director of Administration is in the process of assuming responsibilities for the management of all administrative activities for the County and State functions. Also the new Deputy Director of OES (County employee) has been added to the executive management team, reporting to the Fire Chief. This position had been staffed by a CDF chief officer. The Fire Department will continue reinforce that this is a County department and is accountable to the Board of Supervisors and CEO.

The Fire Department will continue the review of the audit report and work with the Executive Office and Board of Supervisors to review recommendations and determine the most feasible alternatives to address issues identified.

Exhibit A

RIVERSIDE COUNTY FIRE CHIEF-CDF UNIT CHIEF
CONTRACT AMENDMENT

Under the terms of the Cooperative Services Agreement for Fire Protection between the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the County of Riverside, as provided in section 6.A, the County hereby requests to amend section 7.C. to include the following:

The STATE will, to the extent practical, coordinate the appointment of the Unit Chief and consult with LOCAL AGENCY (County) on final selection for the position.

Upon appointment as the County Fire Chief/Fire Warden, the Unit Chief:

- 1) Is a single position class and serves at the direction of, and receives overall policy guidance from, the County Executive Officer. The position has the special responsibility for providing leadership and management direction in the selection, training, utilization, and evaluation of Fire Department personnel; directs major department programs which include fire prevention, public education, fire inspection, arson investigation, fire suppression and fire control; disaster preparedness emergency services; administers and interprets work rules, policies and procedures. The position will make every effort to be responsive to the County Board of Supervisors.
- 2) Under general direction, assists the County Executive Officer by performing and coordinating responsible administrative work in such fields as fire administration, including organization staffing, financing, equipment management and maintenance, communications and records; modern fire prevention and firefighting methods in structural, agricultural and grass fires; and laws, rules, and regulations relating to the control and prevention of fires.
- 3) Is responsible for the administration and control of the County Fire Department in order to provide fire prevention, fire suppression, rescue services and disaster preparedness emergency services to the residents of Riverside County and maintain fire insurance ratings.
- 4) Exercises responsibility for preparation and development of the departmental budget; the maintenance, repair, improvement and replacement of equipment, fire stations, and other facilities; the inventory and requisitioning of materials, supplies, and equipment; the continuing development and utilization of a fire communications system; and the preparation of records and reports.

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CONTRACT AMENDMENT

- 5) Makes presentations to the Board of Supervisors; advises Board of Supervisors annually on status of insurance ratings; attends public functions; promotes fire safety and prevention; maintains relations with other jurisdictions; directs and controls coordination with community volunteer fire organizations in order to integrate volunteer efforts with those of full-time paid personnel.
- 6) Implements all policies of the Board of Supervisors pertaining to fire companies and support functions which receive financial funding from Riverside County and are not in conflict with the contract or the chief's employment with the State of California.
- 7) Is responsible for assuring adequate training programs are instituted on a regular basis for all Companies who participate in the fire program.
- 8) Establishes and maintains a comprehensive communication system between all companies and a central dispatch command center.
- 9) Advises on the adequacy of housing of all firefighting equipment, and makes recommendations for additional fire stations to meet the appropriate service level needs.
- 10) Develops proposed Riverside County Fire Protection budget and approves or disapproves expenditures from the County Fire Protection budget as adopted by the Board of Supervisors of the County. Such approval or disapproval shall be consistent with the contract and the chief's employment with the State of California.
- 11) Directs and coordinates the efforts of all fire companies on initial and major emergency operations in the areas protected.
- 12) Develops and submits for approval to the County Board of Supervisors a long-range, Fire Protection Master Plan. Such plan shall include a "basic equipment complement" to be used by each company, which will ultimately provide the County with the most cost-effective means of fire protection.
- 13) Reviews and recommends to the County Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors all fire defense system proposals pursuant to County ordinances, resolutions, regulations and policies.
- 14) Conducts inspections of the fire company equipment and facilities, as necessary, files at least one annual written inspection report on each fire

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company with the County Board of Supervisors, on or before April 1 of each year.

- 15) Recommends and presents to the Board of Supervisors budgets, official correspondence and operational problems of the fire companies. The Fire Chief will forward all preliminary budgets through the County administration for Board approval.
- 16) Negotiates Mutual Aid Agreements, not in conflict with State Mutual Aid Agreements, for fire protection between County and Counties which lie contiguous to County. No Mutual Aid Agreement negotiated hereunder shall become effective without prior approval by the County Board of Supervisors.
- 17) Negotiates fire protection contractual agreements with incorporated cities wishing to or already participating in the Riverside County Regional Integrated Fire Protection System.
- 18) Is responsible for the County's disaster preparedness program.