

Ross Valley Fire Department Board of Directors
STAFF REPORT

For the meeting of October 12, 2022

To: Ross Valley Fire Board

From: Jason Weber, Fire Chief

Subject: Receive report on termination of dispatch agreement with the Marin County Sheriff's Office and review options to move forward

RECOMMENDATION

Receive report on termination of dispatch agreement with the Marin County Sheriff's Office and review options to move forward. Direct staff as necessary related to next steps.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

Most Marin Fire agencies contract with the Marin County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) for fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) dispatch. In September 2022, MCSO notified fire agencies of its intention to end the current agreement effective June 2023(see attached correspondence). Per the MOU, MCSO is only obligated to provide 180 days' notice. Detailed discussions with MCSO regarding the timeline and logistics involved in separating law from fire and EMS dispatch are ongoing. At our most recent meeting the Sheriff has indicated his willingness to extend the deadline of June 2023, if progress and benchmarks are being met.

In FY 20-21, MCSO performed a true-up of its dispatch labor and technology costs. As a result, the cost of dispatch services to Fire agencies increased by about 33%¹.

Fire agencies were already investigating other dispatch models including a regional arrangement with REDCOM, Sonoma County's Fire and EMS dispatch JPA. MCFD and REDCOM jointly funded a feasibility study, performed by Federal Engineering, to assess the conditions under which Marin agencies could join the REDCOM JPA and take advantage of economies of scale such as shared administrative positions and technology.

One important aspect of a possible collaboration with REDCOM relates to its exclusive contract with American Medical Response (AMR) for ambulance services in Sonoma County, which includes the subsidized provision of dispatch services. In June 2021, AMR informed the working group that should Marin agencies join REDCOM and given that AMR does not have exclusive ambulance

¹ Calculated using the FY 20-21 Fire agencies total cost allocation of \$1,717,223 + 5% admin fee, compared with the same FY 21-22 costs of \$2,251,268 + 5% admin fee.

service in Marin, dispatch costs charged to Marin would reflect increased costs for overhead and profit margin². Given these revised budget projections, and due to legislative and physical space challenges as well increased costs, the working group decides to temporarily set-aside the idea of a regional center until Marin agencies had established a sustainable dispatch model in Marin County.

Nevertheless, the Federal Engineering study provides useful information regarding the needs of a stand-alone Marin Fire & EMS dispatch, including a staffing and call volume analysis, which were used to derive the cost estimates below³.

Service Levels:

A Fire and EMS dispatch center, regardless of the governance model, would provide the following service-level enhancements, above and beyond what is currently provided by MCSO:

1. *Closest resource concept:* An independent Fire & EMS dispatch would allow geo-tracking of vehicles so that the closest unit is sent to an incident, for faster response. Due to security and software configuration issues, fire and EMS calls are not currently dispatched using closest resource concept.
2. *Potential use of Emergency Fire Dispatch Protocol (EFD) similar to nationally adopted pre-arrival emergency medical dispatch programs* this program provides consistent call taking and pre-arrival instructions for fire and rescue related incidents.
3. *Command and Control:* MCSO does not employ fire personnel, and instead calls staff as needed in the event of a fire or complex incident. With increased wildfire risk and accelerated rates of spread across the State, Command and Control would ensure faster and more appropriate response levels. Command and Control responsibilities would be added by Marin County Fire Department.
4. *Technology and analytics:* The current computer-aid dispatch (CAD) does not provide the following necessary features (this list is not exhaustive):
 - a. Integration with CALFIRE and Sonoma County's CADs, reducing reflex times for resources between Counties and the region, including air resources.
 - b. IROC (Interagency Resource Ordering Capability) – a federal system used nationwide for resource ordering during large-scale events such as wildfires, earthquakes, floods or other major disaster.
 - c. Roll-out of already purchased First Watch software for EMS and Fire incident reporting.
 - d. Support of Mobile Device Computing (MDC) and associated software integration such as Tablet Command.
5. *Public Information:* A Fire & EMS dispatch center would allow for better integration of early alert functions in collaboration with OES, and the ability to utilize multiple platforms to ensure timely distribution of information to the public.

² Under SB 438, Marin agencies are collectively or independently prohibited from contracting with a private ambulance provider. REDCOM predates SB 438 and is therefore exempt.

³ See Federal Engineering Feasibility study starting on p. 55

Governance:

There are two governance options currently being considered. Regardless of the selected model, SB 438 (2019) would prevent the (sub)contracting of emergency call processing with a private-sector organization.

- a) A new Joint Powers Authority to independently manage Fire and EMS dispatch. For comparison, Sonoma created REDCOM, a Fire and EMS dispatch JPA in 2002. Many other Fire and EMS dispatch JPAs exist across the State and the nation. Governance options will need to be developed in partnership with all member agencies. Under this option, employees would be offered a Defined Contribution Plan.
- b) MCFD provides fire and EMS dispatch services to the other Marin Fire agencies under a contract for services. All employees are County employees.

Cost Estimates: *The figures presented here are preliminary only*

The cost estimates below rely on several assumptions:

- All Marin Fire agencies decide to join the new Fire and EMS dispatch
- Costs are spread using CAD activity (this is the methodology currently used by MCSO)
- The existing CAD license is reconfigured to allow for a split configuration between Fire and law.
- The Fire & EMS dispatch is co-located to the south of the existing dispatch room at 1600 Los Gamos.
- 8 dispatch stations (3 of which would serve as overflow / training)⁴
- Several staffing models were considered⁵. A conservative option for budgeting purposes is 12 dispatchers and 4 Supervisors, which would provide the following 24X7 coverage:

	Supervisors	Dispatchers	Summer (8am – 8pm)	Command & Control captains	Management (office hours)
Day 7am – 2pm	1 FTE	3 FTE	2 clerks	1 FTE	1 Director, 1 Technical Manager
Day 2pm – 7pm	1 FTE	Mon – Thu: 4 FTE Fri – Sun: 5 FTE	2 clerks	1 FTE	1 Director, 1 Technical Manager
Eve 7pm – 10pm	1 FTE	Mon – Thu: 3 FTE Fri – Sun: 4 FTE		1 FTE	
Night 10pm – 7am	1 FTE	2 FTE		1 FTE	

1. On-going annual cost:

⁴ See Federal Engineering Feasibility Study p. 58

⁵ See Federal Engineering Feasibility study p. 59 & 60.

a) New JPA:

This option assumes all employees, with the exception of Command-and-Control staff which are Marin County employees, are offered a Defined Contribution Plan. The numbers below assume a 23% benefit package.

Table 1: JPA estimated on-going (annual) cost by agency (for FY 22-23)

Agencies:	CAD %	FY 22-23 MCSO costs	Fire & EMS dispatch	Difference	% change
Central Marin FD	9.93%	\$254,713	\$341,802	\$87,089	34%
Kentfield FD	3.76%	\$96,248	\$129,502	\$33,254	35%
Mill Valley FD	5.87%	\$151,570	\$202,002	\$50,432	33%
Novato FD	22.24%	\$576,572	\$765,206	\$188,634	33%
Ross Valley FD	8.61%	\$225,338	\$296,294	\$70,956	31%
San Rafael FD	33.87%	\$857,735	\$1,165,466	\$307,731	36%
Southern Marin FD	11.30%	\$289,322	\$388,922	\$99,600	34%
Tiburon FD	4.40%	\$115,160	\$151,554	\$36,394	32%
Total:	100%		\$3,440,750		
MCFD*		\$615,045	\$1,071,250	\$456,205	74%
Grand Total JPA:			\$4,512,000		

*MCFD would cover Command & Control and Fire season upstaffing. Current on-going costs of \$615,045 include on-going Woodacre dispatch costs and fee-for -service currently paid to MCSO.

b) MCFD contract for services:

Under this governance option, all employees are County employees.

Table 3: MCFD contract estimated on-going (annual) cost by agency (for FY 22-23)

Agencies:	24M CAD activity	CAD %	FY 22-23 MCSO costs	County	Difference	% change
Central Marin FD	6572	9.93%	\$254,713	\$368,127	\$113,414	45%
Kentfield FD	2490	3.76%	\$96,248	\$139,476	\$43,228	45%
Mill Valley FD	3884	5.87%	\$151,570	\$217,560	\$65,990	44%
Novato FD	14713	22.24%	\$576,572	\$824,141	\$247,569	43%
Ross Valley FD	5697	8.61%	\$225,338	\$319,114	\$93,776	42%
San Rafael FD	22409	33.87%	\$857,735	\$1,255,228	\$397,493	46%
Southern Marin FD	7478	11.30%	\$289,322	\$418,876	\$129,554	45%
Tiburon FD	2914	4.40%	\$115,160	\$163,226	\$48,066	42%
Total:	66157	100%		\$3,705,750		
Marin County Fire	n/a	n/a	\$615,045	\$1,071,250	\$456,205	74%
Grand Total MCFD fee-for-service:				\$4,777,000		

*MCFD would cover Command & Control and Fire season upstaffing. Current on-going costs of \$615,045 include on-going Woodacre dispatch costs and fee-for-service currently paid to MCSO.

2. Estimated one-time costs:

One-time implementation costs assume the new Fire & EMS dispatch center is co-located with MCSO at Los Gamos. Stand-alone one-time costs are much higher. 6-9 months of staff training time and implementation of new CAD configuration are also included here.

Table 2: Estimated one-time cost by agency

Agencies:	24M CAD activity	CAD %	One-time costs
Central Marin FD	6572	9.93%	\$149,009
Kentfield FD	2490	3.76%	\$56,457
Mill Valley FD	3884	5.87%	\$88,063
Novato FD	14713	22.24%	\$333,593
Ross Valley FD	5697	8.61%	\$129,170
San Rafael FD	22409	33.87%	\$508,087
Southern Marin FD	7478	11.30%	\$169,551
Tiburon FD	2914	4.40%	\$66,070
MCFD			\$1,500,000
Total:	66157	100%	\$3,000,000

SUMMARY:

In order to meet timelines associated with the Sheriffs notice, agencies will need to provide their intention to move forward with one of the two options presented above by December 1, 2022. Currently most agencies have signaled that they would prefer a contract for services (option b). We will return to your Board in November with information on other agencies decisions, any developments and/or more information.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The receipt of this Staff Report does not have any associated fiscal impact. Both options for dispatch services are more expensive than the current option. Current cost estimates increase the annual cost for option A – a JPA by 31% or \$70,956. The cost increase for Option B contract for services is 42% or \$93,776. Both options have a one-time cost of \$129,170. These increases are broken down by JPA member agencies below:

Option A - JPA		
Agency	Annual Cost increase	\$70,956
Ross	\$16,582.42	
San Anselmo	\$28,758.47	
Sleepy Hollow	\$9,082.37	
Fairfax	\$16,532.75	

Option B - Contract for Services		
Agency	Annual Cost increase	\$93,776
Ross	\$21,915.45	
San Anselmo	\$38,007.41	
Sleepy Hollow	\$12,003.33	
Fairfax	\$21,849.81	

Attachments:

Letter from Marin County Sheriff dated 9/30/22



MARIN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

1600 Los Gamos Drive, Suite 200, San Rafael, CA 94903

JAMIE SCARDINA
Sheriff - Coroner

September 20, 2022

VIA E-MAIL AND CERTIFIED MAIL

Fire Chief Bill Tyler
Novato Fire District
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bt Tyler@novatofire.org

Fire Chief Chris Tubbs
Southern Marin Fire District
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Fire Chief Rubin Martin
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Corte Madera, California 94925
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Fire Chief Jason Weber
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33 Castle Rock Ave.
Woodacre, California 94973
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Fire Chief Richard Pearce
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Tiburon, California 94920
rpearce@tiburonfire.org

Fire Chief Mark Pomi
Kentfield Fire Protection District
1004 Sir Francis Drake Blvd
Kentfield, California 94904
mpomi@kentfieldfire.org

Deputy Chief of Operations and Training
Chief Tom Welch
Southern Marin Fire Prevention District
28 Liberty Ship Way, Ste. 2800
Sausalito, California 94965
twelch@cityofmillvalley.org

Fire Chief Darin White
San Rafael Fire Department
1600 Los Gamos Drive, Suite 345
San Rafael, California 94903
Darin.White@cityofsanrafael.org

AREA CODE 415

24-HOUR NUMBER
479-2311

FAX
473-4126

ADMINISTRATION
473-7250

CIVIL
473-7282

COMMUNICATIONS
SERVICES
473-7243

CORONER
473-6043

COURTS
473-7393

EMERGENCY
SERVICES
473-6584

INVESTIGATIONS
473-7265

JAIL
473-6655

MAJOR CRIMES
TASK FORCE
884-4878

PATROL
473-7233

RECORDS
473-7284

WARRANTS
473-7297

Re: Notice of Termination of Fire Dispatch Services

"In Partnership with our Communities"

www.marinsheriff.org

Dear Chiefs,

While the Sheriff's Office is committed to its relationships with county and local fire agencies, the provision of dispatching services is no longer feasible. Accordingly, by way of this correspondence, the Sheriff's Office is providing notice that it intends to terminate its respective agreements with each of you for provision of such services.

The specific agreements be terminated, each of which were executed between the County of Marin and your respective agencies, are as follows:

1. Professional Services Agreement regarding the delivery of mobile data computer maintenance services [date signed: 2021]; and
2. Professional Services Agreement regarding the provision of fire communications services [date signed: 2020 and 2021].

The effective date of termination is JUNE 30, 2023. On that date, the Sheriff's Office will immediately cease rendering the services required by the above agreements.

Under Section IV of the agreement on mobile data and computer maintenance services, and Section IX of the communication services agreement, the minimum notice to terminate is 180 days. The additional notice provided by this letter should allow ample time to secure an alternative provider for such vital services. As I mentioned in our August 22, 2022, meeting, I look forward to a partnership allowing your agencies to achieve a dispatch center managed and operated by fire agencies.

If you would like to discuss this matter or have questions regarding the foregoing, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,



Sheriff Jamie Scardina

Marin County Sheriff's Office