



CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: November 4, 2010

To: Honorable Mayor & City Council

From: Mahdi Aluzri, Assistant City Manager
Mark Embrey, Deputy Fire Chief

Subject: Presentation of the Organizational & Management Analysis and the Strategic Plan produced for the Beverly Hills Fire Department by management consultants, Citygate Associates

Attachments:

1. Executive Summary of the Plan
2. (By separate transmission for Council packet inclusion): Complete three volume report, including: 1) Main Report; 2) Statistical Appendix; and 3) Strategic Plan

INTRODUCTION

On January 12, 2010, Citygate Associates was hired to conduct a comprehensive organizational and management audit of the Fire Department. Additionally, they were asked to guide the development of a strategic plan for the department, developing and training a group of fire department personnel in "Applied Strategic Planning". This audit is part of the City's continuing effort to evaluate all of its departments' services and service delivery in terms of customer service, best practices, efficiency and fiscal responsibility. The report from Citygate provides an overview of the evaluation processes utilized as well as recommendations for implementation to improve core services, increase safety for the public and fire department personnel, and increase efficiency.

DISCUSSION

The Fire Department and its five divisions: Fire Administration, Fire Prevention, Emergency Response Services, Emergency Medical Services, and Fire Community Programs had not previously been analyzed or evaluated for efficiency and effectiveness of its management, organization, and deployment. Citygate Associates, an independent management consultant was chosen to evaluate the department's entire operation and to provide a comprehensive analysis and recommendations for implementation.

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On November 10, 2009, staff sent a Request for Proposals (RFP) to thirteen qualified firms and by December 4, 2009, received proposals from six firms in response to the RFP: 1) Matrix Consulting Group, 2) Arroyo Associates Inc., 3) Emergency Services Consulting International (ESCI), 4) CityGate Associates LLC, 5) Thomas Consulting and 6) TriData Division of System Planning Corporation. Matrix, CityGate, TriData and Emergency Services Consulting International (ESCI) were interviewed by a panel consisting of representatives from the Department and the City Manager's Office on January 12, 2010. CityGate was chosen as the most qualified and suitable candidate for this effort, and a scope of services and fee were negotiated and incorporated in the agreement that the City Council approved.

Stakeholders, including: City Council, City Management, other City Department Directors, Fire personnel and management were interviewed. Fire Department manuals (operational, training, personnel, etc.), policies, mutual-aid agreements, vehicle and equipment purchasing and maintenance were all reviewed and evaluated, as were administrative functions.

In order to evaluate the department's emergency response thoroughly, Citygate gathered raw data from Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) records and National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) reports and performed comprehensive statistical analysis. Critical tasks in emergency response were analyzed. They conducted a deployment review of the Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) delivery system and did strategic business modeling.

The two primary areas, and sub-categories, that were investigated and evaluated by Citygate are as follows:

1) Standards of Response Cover (Station/Staffing) Analysis:

- General Fire Deployment Background Information
- Beverly Hills Community Expectations of the Fire Department?
- Beverly Hills Fire Risk Assessment
- Staffing – What Must Be Done/Timeframes to Achieve the Stated Outcome Expectation?
- Current Station Location Configurations
- Mapping Measures Evaluation
- Current Workload Statistics Summary

2) Fire Department Review of Headquarters Program Functions:

- Management Team Organization and Duties
- Training and Safety Administration
- Administrative Support Organization and Positions
- Fire Prevention – Fire Investigation – Wildland Fuel Management Programs
- Field Operations Systems

The Fire Department's operations, training, fire prevention and administrative functions were evaluated against national standards and industry best practices. In most areas, the department was found to be operating at a very high level, at or near industry best practices but not benchmarked specifically against national fire service standards such as the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) standards, as few of the NFPA standards have been specifically referenced or formally adopted by the department.

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The report presented by Citygate will elaborate on the methodology and the breadth and depth of their study, as well as summarize their findings and recommendations. The attached executive summary contains the two primary challenges facing the Fire Department in accomplishing its mission as well as key findings and recommendations related to those challenges. It also contains a phasing plan for implementation based on near to longer term priorities.

FISCAL IMPACT

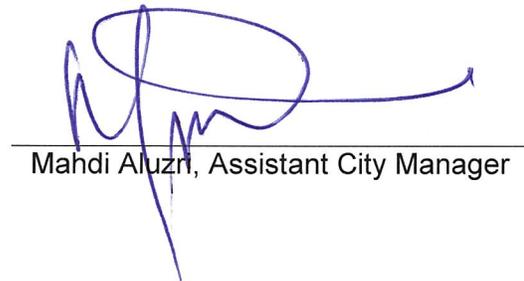
Citygate has provided, within the executive summary a phased implementation plan along with projected costs over the implementation period. Staff will include these fiscal impacts in future budget processes.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Council receive the presentation from staff and file the report.



Tim Scranton, Fire Chief



Mahdi Aluzri, Assistant City Manager

ATTACHMENT 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Beverly Hills retained Citygate Associates, LLC to conduct a general organizational and management analysis of the City of Beverly Hills Fire Department along with strategic planning assistance to jointly develop with the staff an updated Strategic Plan. Included in the work is an assessment of current emergency response and headquarters services provided by the Department. The analysis identifies gaps—if any—in operations and resources, and where appropriate, develops recommendations to maximize current Fire Department operations and resources. In addition, the analysis was to identify “best practices” that may be appropriate for application in Beverly Hills.

It needs to be stated at the front of this study that Citygate Associates team members who spent time in Beverly Hills found the fire staff at all levels very cooperative, professional and technically competent. They are committed to their City, agency, and mission. Given the struggle to keep up while coping with an ever-tightening economy, there is pride and ongoing effort to deliver the best customer service with the currently available resources. Fires are being attended to and medical calls are being answered with excellent patient care.

The recommendations in this study need to be taken in the context of a “best practices tune-up” for a good agency, not a set of fixes for an agency that is behind the times. We find even with the suggested improvements needed over time that, at present, the City of Beverly Hills Fire Department is an excellent suburban fire department.

This comprehensive study is presented in several sections including: this Executive Summary summarizing the most important findings and recommendations; the fire station/crew deployment analysis supported by maps and response statistics; the assessment of non-deployment headquarters functions and the fiscal costs associated with the proposed recommendations. The final section integrates all of the findings and recommendations presented throughout the report and concludes with suggested priorities.

To gain an understanding of Beverly Hills and its fire service needs the Citygate team:

- ◆ Reviewed agency documents and conducted stakeholder listening interviews within and outside of the Department.
- ◆ Used an incident response time analysis program called *NFIRS 5 Alive*TM to review the statistics of prior incident performance. The results were plotted not only on graphs and charts but “live” using 3D tools over Google Earth images.
- ◆ Assessed stakeholder perceptions and expectations of Fire Services – by issuing SWOT questionnaires to employees (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats) plus a survey instrument to Departmental stakeholders to listen to what the perceptions of the Department are and how it is or is not meeting needs.

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- ◆ Facilitated multiple Strategic Planning and research sessions. The Fire Chief selected a working group for this effort that was a representative cross section of the Department.
 - ◆ For the headquarters systems review, Citygate used the Commission on Fire Accreditation International self-assessment criteria and National Fire Protection Association Standard 1201, *Standard for Providing Emergency Services to the Public* as performance indicators and other NFPA standards as the basis for evaluating non-response related services, such as fire prevention, training and administration.

The Beverly Hills Fire Department is a well-run, smoothly functioning fire department. Beverly Hills, along with its neighbors, enjoys the luxury of a solid and well-organized automatic aid system. The Beverly Hills Fire Department has an internal culture with a sense of values and principles best described as self-motivated and first class.

There has been an almost complete turnover of chief officers in recent years, the headquarters staff has been reorganized several times as Fire Chiefs and economic times changed, and new firefighters have instilled a new energy into the Department making this an ideal opportunity to assess where it is and where it is going in the future.

This does not mean there are not issues to be addressed. However, the community can take pride in and feel confident about its fire department.

POLICY CHOICES FRAMEWORK

As a starting point, Beverly Hills leadership needs to remember that there are no mandatory federal or state regulations directing the level of fire service staffing, response times and outcomes. Thus, communities have the level of fire services that they *can afford*, which is not always what they would desire. However, the body of regulations on the fire service provides that *if fire services are provided at all, they must be done so with the safety of the firefighters and citizens in mind* (see regulatory discussion on page 18).

OVERALL CITYGATE PERSPECTIVE ON THE STATE OF BEVERLY HILLS' FIRE SERVICES

In brief, Citygate finds that the challenge of providing fire services in Beverly Hills is similar to that found in many California cities. That is, providing an adequate level of fire services within the context of limited fiscal resources, competing needs, growing populations and the uncertainty that surrounds the exact timing and location of future development.

The City has recognized the value of fire prevention and the need to prevent or limit the severity of fires, given the type of housing stock, commercial buildings, younger and elderly residents

and the threat of wildland fires on the City's edges. To meet these challenges, the City has adopted safety codes more strenuous than those mandated by state minimums. Examples include the automatic fire sprinkler ordinance and wildland fuel management programs.

The City of Beverly Hills has adequate fire station coverage, partially because of its automatic aid relationship with its neighboring fire departments. Citygate's deployment study findings do **not** recommend that Beverly Hills requires additional fire stations, or additional on-duty firefighter staffing *in the near term*, but does, to a small extent, need enhanced staffing in headquarters programs. This study does recommend ways the Department can re-deploy existing emergency staffing for better service in the short-term at existing costs, while adopting long-term policies that can guide future decisions on deployment as the economy improves.

Citygate evaluated all aspects of the Fire Department during the preparation of this deployment and fire headquarters systems audit, and several long-term challenges for the City emerged. To address each of these challenges, Citygate makes key findings and, where appropriate, specific action item recommendations that deserve specific and particular consideration. Starting in Section 5 on page 95, all the findings and recommendations are presented together, in order. Overall, there are 21 key findings and 17 specific action item recommendations.

It is important that the reader of this study understands that while there are issues to be planned for and improved upon in the Department, there is not a problematic, "won't do it, can't do it" culture to be overcome. The employees of the Department are eager for a plan that gives direction and *triages the existing resources* to do an even better job for the citizens of Beverly Hills within the current economic constraints.

MAIN CHALLENGES

One can summarize the fire service challenges that face the City in two themes: *(1) reconfiguration of the existing deployment system to improve paramedic rescue ambulance coverage for simultaneous incidents; and (2) the modest need to increase headquarters program staffing to support essential programs such as training.*

Challenge 1: Field Operations Deployment (Fire Stations and Staffing)

Fire department deployment, simply stated, is about the *speed* and *weight* of the attack. Speed calls for first-due, all risk intervention units (engines, ladder trucks and specialty companies) strategically located across a department. These units are tasked with controlling everyday, average emergencies without the incident escalating to second alarm or greater size, which then unnecessarily depletes the department's resources as multiple requests for service occur. Weight is about multiple-unit response for significant emergencies like a "room and contents structure fire," a multiple-patient incident, a vehicle accident with extrication required, or a complex rescue or wildland fire incident. In these situations, departments must assemble enough

firefighters in a reasonable period in order to control the emergency safely without it escalating to greater alarms.

In Section 2 of this study, Standards of Response Cover (Station Deployment and Staffing) Analysis, Citygate's analysis of prior response statistics and use of geographic mapping tools reveals that the City has *a modest staffing issue to rectify with existing staffing*. Additional emergency staffing needs are further out into the future and dependent on emergency call for service volume growth and the fiscal capacity of the City to be able to offer the highest level of service at all times.

While no one city (even a metropolitan one) can stand by itself and handle everything and any possibility without help, a desirable goal is to field enough of a response force to handle a community's day-to-day typical responses for primary single-unit response needs equitably to all neighborhoods, as well as be able to provide an effective initial response force (first alarm) to moderately serious building fires. Events larger than these will require assistance from mutual aid resources.

Thus, Citygate's **key** (not all) findings and recommendations are summarized below. For reference purposes, the findings and recommendation numbers refer to the sequential numbers in the main body of the report. Note that not all findings and recommendations that appear in the full report are listed in this Executive Summary, only those that are the *most significant*.

- Finding #1:** The City does not have a complete and current best practices designed fire deployment measure adopted by the City Council that includes a beginning time measure starting from the point of dispatch receiving the 911 phone call, and a goal statement tied to risks and outcome expectations. The deployment measure should have a second measurement statement to define multiple-unit response coverage for serious emergencies. Making these deployment goal changes will meet the best practice recommendations of the Center for Public Safety Excellence (formerly the Commission on Fire Accreditation International).
- Finding #2:** The City has adopted best practices building and fire safety codes to lessen building and wildland fire risks, along with structural code requirements to improve earthquake safety. Considered as a total package, the City is one of, if not the most progressive communities for fire safety regulations that Citygate has observed.
- Finding #3:** The City's current daily firefighter and command chief unit staffing at 25 provides the City the "weight" of response to handle one serious event or two modest events without being immediately dependent on mutual aid. This level of response capacity is very appropriate to the potential and unique risks found in Beverly Hills, which from only a measure of population or type of actual

emergencies is not comparable to a similarly sized suburban city in terms of risks to protect.

Finding #4: The City is substantially developed enough in terms of population density and building development to desire an urban level of first-due fire unit coverage, which is 4 minutes of travel time for the best possible outcomes.

Finding #6: Given the difficult to serve terrain and the coverage at the 4th minute of travel in the high call volume areas, the current locations and quantity of three fire stations is the most cost effective model.

Finding #7: To increase coverage at the 4th minute of travel in the hills would require a 4th fire station. Given the modest number of calls for service in these lighter population and call for service density residential neighborhoods, Citygate does not find that adding another station would be cost effective. Even if another station were added at the base of the hills, the upper areas would never receive 4-minute travel coverage 90 percent of the time from either Station #2 or a new station.

Finding #8: With a Citywide fire/EMS incident first-due unit performance of 6:20 (minutes/seconds) at 89.5 percent, the overall current station and automatic aid system is delivering a first unit **better than** a Citygate and national recommended best practice goal point of 7 minutes, 90 percent of the time.

Recommendation #1: Deploy a 3rd Paramedic Ambulance: Transfer a paramedic firefighter from the Ladder Truck at Station #1 to Engine #2, thus making Engine #2 a full Advanced Life Support (ALS) unit with two paramedics per LA County EMS Agency requirements. The firefighter from Engine #2 will be transferred to the Ladder Truck. For ambulance calls in Engine #2's District or for a 3rd ambulance request citywide, dispatch BLS Rescue Ambulance #3 from Station #1 using Engine #5's 2-person crew and also send Engine #2 with its paramedics.

With these moves, Engine #2 will have two paramedics per day and can cross-staff the ambulance when a 3rd paramedic ambulance is needed, *within existing staffing and costs.*

Recommendation #3: Adopt Revised Deployment Measures: The City should adopt revised performance measures to direct fire crew planning and to monitor the operation of the Department. The measures should take into account a realistic company turnout time of 2 minutes and be designed to deliver outcomes that will save patients medically

salvageable upon arrival and to keep small but serious fires from becoming greater alarm fires. Citygate recommends these measures be:

- 3.1 Distribution of Fire Stations: To treat medical patients and control small fires, the first-due unit should arrive within 7 minutes, 90 percent of the time from the receipt of the 911 call. This equates to 1-minute dispatch time, 2 minutes company turnout time and 4 minutes drive time in the most populated areas.
- 3.2 Multiple-Unit Effective Response Force for Serious Emergencies: To confine fires near the room of origin, to stop wildland fires to under 3 acres when noticed promptly and to treat up to 5 medical patients at once, a multiple-unit response of at least 19 personnel should arrive within 11 minutes from the time of 911 call receipt, 90 percent of the time. This equates to 1-minute dispatch time, 2 minutes company turnout time and 8 minutes drive time spacing for multiple units in the most populated areas.

Challenge 2: Headquarters Program Functions

A fire department Beverly Hills' size needs to have a management team that is the proper size and adequately trained and supported. There are increasing regulations to be considered in operating fire services, and the proper hiring, training and supervision of line employees requires an equally serious commitment to leadership and general management functions.

The organization chart shows an organization that does not currently meet the needs of a department the size of Beverly Hills. Due to the fiscal pressures on the City, there has been an appropriate and greater emphasis on staffing fire companies to provide emergency response. This resulted in reductions in the headquarters team needed to coordinate and lead the organization. These reductions are not sustainable for very much longer. The recommendations in this study acknowledge economic constraints by re-structuring current staffing to meet critical needs in administration for a finite period of time. Other recommendations are for temporary staffing funds to support high value programs already underway.

Citygate understands the City's fiscal situation and only finds the headquarters functions *critically* insufficient in Training and Office Support Positions. However, the following findings and recommendations provide a road map from which to request additional resources as the City finds the ability to provide them. When all the following recommendations are implemented, the Department's headquarters staff will be the appropriate size for Beverly Hills.

Finding #13: The Department lacks a Safety and Training Officer and centralized focus on training and safety. Since the Department had a robust training program up until a little over a year ago, the personnel probably retain enough residual knowledge, skills and abilities to continue for a while into the future. However, at some point the same knowledge, skills and abilities will begin to degrade and emergency service performance will degrade with it. Without a designated Safety and Training Officer, the training/safety programs will not be able to succeed or meet best practice recommendations, or essential requirements on the fire service by CAL OSHA.

Finding #14: While a Fire Department Performance Audit is not set-up to do a detailed desk and workload audit of office support needs, in Citygate's experience, we have found the office support capacity out of sync with what we have seen in other fire departments of Beverly Hills' size. Moreover, the current business processes are not even fully automated or tied to City systems.

Even a modest increase in support staff hours will significantly increase headquarters staff output and citizen responsiveness. Most likely, an increase of .5 FTE for administration support is needed as soon as funding allows.

Finding #15: The Fire Department is not staffed to adequately use, maintain or implement office and emergency service electronic data systems. What little gets done will slow or completely stall the timely implementation of fire inspection permit revenue systems and the transition to a new dispatch system.

Finding #16: Budget reductions have reduced public education programs almost to the point of extinction. This cannot continue for very much longer and have Beverly Hills capable of sharing the burden of self-help and having a fire safe community.

Recommendation #5: Training Officer: On an interim basis, assign the Training Officer (up to 2 years, given the fiscal climate) *management* function to one of the shift battalion chiefs. Then, assign the Engine #5 Captain during the workday to provide coordination, some delivery and verification reporting of training to each duty platoon. The battalion chief's duties would be to lead the program, determine departmental training needs, set overall schedules with the captains and attend regional training officer meetings.

Each platoon's Training Officer (E5 Captain) will ensure that each shift is as fully engaged in training as possible and fulfills the integrated Department-wide plan. This includes providing shift leadership to ensure that training and drills are scheduled, completed

and recorded, and that assistance with the training is provided as much as his or her skills permit. Currently, the E5 Captain is assigned to coordinate daily shift scheduling. This would be transferred to the duty Battalion Chief's Aid/Scene Safety Officer.

5.1 While using E5 Captains is an interim solution, a permanent training officer solution is needed as soon as possible to provide coordination and leadership across all three shifts. By FY12/13, fund a 40-hour battalion chief (or similar position) as the Training Officer for the training program to meet the regulatory and safety needs of the Department. The Training Officer position could also be a rotation assignment every 3 years to/from another position for career development. The second Deputy Chief position will *not be restored*.

Recommendation #7: Office Support Positions: The City should undertake an analysis of the administrative support needs of the Fire Prevention, Fire Administration and Fire Operations support functions as soon as possible. This should include adding back minimum support hours to technology and fire prevention permits.

There should be initial support immediately to two critical needs – entering fire inspection records into the existing database and for the replacement Fire Department dispatch/records systems project. One way to do this at a modest expense would be to hire temporary clerical help to fast track the inspection records project, say 8-16 hours per week, and to fund on overtime 8 hours per week for an experienced Fire Captain to work on supporting internal technology projects.

Recommendation #8: Technology Plan: The Fire Department needs a technology plan to:

Automate end-to-end the inspection, permitting and revenue programs to City systems;

Be sure the next generation dispatch and fire records systems meet the need for and provide management information and metrics with which to manage the Department's programs;

Maintain and keep technology replacement programs current for radios and field service technologies.

Appropriately staff the agency's needs.

Recommendation #9: Technology Position: As funding permits, create a civilian position – *Technology Officer*. This position is to plan, direct and provide Quality Assurance for all computer systems, e-records, fire radios, and station alerting systems. The Technology Officer will coordinate regional technologies on radios and mutual aid. Class/comp for the position is equivalent to 2nd tier IT support staff.

9.1 Immediately fund on overtime at a Fire Captain rate, 8 hours per week for technology support and new dispatch system work.

Recommendation #10: Public Education: The City, as funds permit, needs to redesign and fund the delivery of fire prevention education. This program does not have to be done by Fire Department sworn officer position. The public education programs deserve emphasis as a key Fire Department service to the community, to include the requisite staffing hours and media material resources for public outreach.

FIRE PLAN PHASING AND COSTS

Some of the recommendations in this planning effort requiring minimal additional resources can be implemented in parallel. Others will take several fiscal years, both in time and funding. Given these two realities, Citygate recommends the following short- and long-term priorities:

Priority One

- ◆ Absorb the policy recommendations of this fire services study and adopt revised Fire Department performance measures to drive the deployment of firefighting and emergency medical resources.
- ◆ Re-configure as recommended the staffing to provide a 3rd paramedic rescue ambulance, by combining as needed, Engine #2 and #5's crews. Implementation requires a paramedic transferred from the Ladder Truck to Engine #2.
- ◆ Provide temporary staffing support funds to the fire prevention inspection records and billing start-up project and to fire technology support, especially the replacement dispatch system project.

Priority Two

- ◆ Restore a 1.0 Training Officer position at the level of Battalion Chief (or an equivalent position).
- ◆ Increase office support staff (clerical) by a minimum of .5 positions.

Priority Three

- ◆ Restore the technology support the Department had prior to the headquarters staffing cutbacks.
- ◆ Restore a Public Education position with a 1.0 non-sworn position.
- ◆ Begin a capital design, funding and construction project for a modest fire training facility inside the city limits.

The following costs are estimated in current dollars to show the order of magnitude of what is ahead for City fire services in the near- to mid-term.

If the City decides to begin adding staff as recommended by Citygate, the table below provides an *illustration* or sample of how this might be phased in over several years and the associated annual estimated cost in FY 10-11 dollars:

Sample Phasing and Additional Cost Plan

Phase	Item	Ongoing Operating Cost	One Time
One	Detailed review of audit and strategic plan	Staff Time	
	Reconfigure Staffing to Enable Paramedic Rescue Ambulance #3	No Cost	
	Add 16 hrs/week for fire prevention clerical support <i>(Does not continue in Phase II)</i>		\$19,200
	Add 8 hrs/week Fire Captain technology support		\$30,000
	Near term totals:	0	\$49, 200
Two	Add one Battalion Chief – Training Officer	\$250,045	0
	Increase office support staff (clerical) by a minimum of .5 positions	\$39,000	0
Three	Add one Technology Support position	\$101,450	
	Add one Public Education position	\$81,640	
	Outer Year Totals:	<u>\$472,135</u>	0
<i>Long Term</i>	Design and locate a modest training facility	\$75,000	<i>Unknown</i>