



# City of Morro Bay

Morro Bay, CA 93442

(805) 772-6205

## **NOTICE OF SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** the Morro Bay City Council will be holding a Special City Council Meeting on **Monday, August 11 at 6:00 p.m.** to be held at the Morro Bay Community Center Multi-Purpose Room, 1001 Kennedy Way, Morro Bay, California to hear the following:

### **Discussion and Authorization to Contract with San Luis Obispo County Fire and Sheriff Departments for Public Safety Dispatch**

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, IF YOU NEED SPECIAL ASSISTANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN A CITY MEETING, PLEASE CONTACT THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE AT LEAST 24 HOURS PRIOR TO THE MEETING TO INSURE THAT REASONABLE ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE MADE TO PROVIDE ACCESSIBILITY TO THE MEETING.

DATED: August 6, 2014

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Jamie Boucher, City Clerk

**FINANCE**  
595 Harbor Street

**ADMINISTRATION**  
595 Harbor Street

**FIRE DEPT.**  
715 Harbor Street

**PUBLIC SERVICES**  
955 Shasta Avenue

**HARBOR DEPT.**  
1275 Embarcadero Road

**CITY ATTORNEY**  
595 Harbor Street

**POLICE DEPT.**  
850 Morro Bay Boulevard

**RECREATION & PARKS**  
1001 Kennedy Way

# City of Morro Bay

## City Council Agenda

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### *Mission Statement*

*The City of Morro Bay is dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the quality of life. The City shall be committed to this purpose and will provide a level of municipal service and safety consistent with and responsive to the needs of the public.*

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**SPECIAL MEETING  
MONDAY, AUGUST 11, 2014  
MORRO BAY COMMUNITY CENTER MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM – 6:00 P.M.  
1001 KENNEDY WAY, MORRO BAY, CA**

ESTABLISH QUORUM AND CALL TO ORDER

PUBLIC COMMENT RE: ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA ITEM:

- I. DISCUSSION AND AUTHORIZATION TO CONTRACT WITH SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY FIRE AND SHERIFF DEPARTMENTS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY DISPATCH; (ADMINISTRATION)**

**RECOMMENDATION:** Contract with San Luis Obispo County Fire and Sheriff Departments for Public Safety Dispatch, and authorize the Mayor to execute the contracts on behalf of the City.

ADJOURNMENT

**MATERIALS RELATED TO AN ITEM ON THIS AGENDA SUBMITTED TO THE CITY COUNCIL AFTER DISTRIBUTION OF THE AGENDA PACKET ARE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION AT CITY HALL LOCATED AT 595 HARBOR STREET; MORRO BAY LIBRARY LOCATED AT 625 HARBOR STREET; AND MILL'S COPY CENTER LOCATED AT 495 MORRO BAY BOULEVARD DURING NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS.**

**IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, IF YOU NEED SPECIAL ASSISTANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN A CITY MEETING, PLEASE CONTACT THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE AT LEAST 24 HOURS PRIOR TO THE MEETING TO INSURE THAT REASONABLE ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE MADE TO PROVIDE ACCESSIBILITY TO THE MEETING.**



AGENDA NO: I

MEETING DATE: August 11, 2014

# Staff Report

**TO:** Honorable Mayor & City Council

**DATE:** July 31, 2014

**FROM:** Edward S. Kreins, Interim City Manager

**SUBJECT:** Discussion and Authorization to Contract with San Luis Obispo County Fire and Sheriff Departments for Public Safety Dispatch

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the City contract with San Luis Obispo County Fire and Sheriff Departments for Public Safety Dispatch, and authorize the Mayor to execute the contracts on behalf of the City.

Implementation will take place as soon as the Police, Fire, and Harbor staffs are prepared to make an effective transition.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

Maintain the current system and do not contract with the County for dispatch services.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

Based on the contract proposals received from the San Luis Obispo County Fire and Sheriff Departments, there is an estimated reduction in annual cost for this service of \$42,000, with additional potential savings in years two and three of the contract.

## **SUMMARY**

The City Manager, along with representatives from the Morro Bay Police and Fire Departments, and SLO County Fire and Sheriff Departments, have been reviewing a proposal to contract with the County for dispatch services, and have discussed the benefits of such proposal, the associated transition costs, and implementation of the program. Meetings have been held with all parties affected by this transition, including Council members, Police and Fire personnel, Police and Fire Associations, Police Volunteers, SEIU for Harbor representation, and members of the community, who have heard about the possibility, and wanted to have their questions and concerns addressed.

Prepared By:   EK  

Dept Review: \_\_\_\_\_

City Manager Review: \_\_\_\_\_

City Attorney Review: \_\_\_\_\_

## **BACKGROUND**

The 2012/13 San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury recommended the cities of Arroyo Grande and Grover Beach consolidate their dispatch service. The City of Arroyo Grande ultimately contracted with the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Department, while the City of Grover Beach decided not to contract out. I am very familiar with the original proposal, as well as having reviewed dispatch contract services in other jurisdictions. Also, having served as the Chief of Police in three jurisdictions, I am familiar with contracting dispatch services.

One of the concerns I had when I arrived in Morro Bay and reviewed the Police Department operations, was the dispatch function. I discussed the service with Police Chief Christey and Fire Chief Knuckles, and after careful analysis, decided to look into the possibility of contracting police and fire dispatch with the County.

I spoke with Sheriff Ian Parkinson and Undersheriff Tim Olivas about the possibility of a contract for dispatch services. We discussed approximate cost and the potential benefits to the City. I advised them I would be studying the possibility of such a contract.

I met with Chief Christey and Chief Knuckles and asked them to prepare a report for my review with all of the pros and cons they could find on the subject. One of my major concerns was the history of dispatch services in Morro Bay, the problems associated with recruiting, testing, training, retention and overtime, as well as the morale of the employees. It became obvious all were a problem, and there was the possibility the City would lose at least three of the five employees in the next year. The City has used nineteen persons as dispatchers in the last six years. In addition to the recruiting, hiring, training, retention and scheduling conflicts, the department experiences difficulty handling multiple 911 calls at the same time, thus increasing response times, delaying the fire service responses, and a myriad of other problems.

Chief Christey worked with Chief Knuckles on the report. We held several meetings to discuss concerns as to how the move would affect stakeholders in the community, as well as the current employees, but saw far more advantages than disadvantages. The final report was presented for my review near the end of June.

Potential benefits for the Fire Department include the following:

- The Fire Department will have the same radio coverage for their mobile units in Morro Bay using SLO County Fire's dispatch channel and repeater system. There will be an increase in coverage with their handheld units in the areas of Sunset Street, South Bay Blvd., South Quintana, and north Morro Bay. There are no "dead spots" in Morro Bay using SLO County Fire's dispatch channel.
- Reduction of Code-3 medical aid responses in Morro Bay, with the use of emergency medical dispatch (EMD). A study, using Los Osos dispatch data, is currently being performed for comparison information. There is a possibility of a 25% to 40% reduction of Code-3 responses.

- Reduction in Code-3 medical aid responses; the department will be able to respond with its rescue unit, while leaving an engine at the fire station for City response to a simultaneous emergency incident. At the present time, the department must send two engines to every call for emergency medical aid.
- Reduction in response to care facilities for ambulance transportation type of incidents that will be identified through EMD (10% to 15% in San Luis Obispo City).
- Improved Auto-Aid and Mutual-Aid requests through San Luis Obispo Emergency Command Center (SLOECC). (100%)
- Obtain auto-paging for general alarms for call back personnel. (100%)
- Improved consistency dispatching units during greater alarms to 100% with the use of SLOECC Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD).
- During low frequency high risk incidents (LFHR) such as fires, multiple dispatchers will be able to handle 911 calls while dispatching fire units simultaneously through mobile data computers (MDC).
- Use of electronic mapping through the MDC to enhance responses especially with mutual aid response in Morro Bay, the County and the State.
- Future mutual aid opportunities, such as “Community Boundary Drops” will enhance response to north Morro Bay. Local Estero Bay communities such as Los Osos, Cayucos, Morro Toro, Cambria, and surrounding State Responsibility Area (SRA) are dispatched by SLOECC. Morro Bay is currently the **only** stand-alone fire dispatch center in the Estero Bay.
- With the Harbor Department being a part of the response in San Luis Obispo County Coastal Incident Response Plan (CIRP), the dispatch and command channels will be aligned with our neighbor water front rescue agencies. The Harbor Department is the **only** stand-alone water rescue dispatch in San Luis Obispo County. With the use of SLOECC, **all** ocean rescues in San Luis Obispo County will be dispatched on the same channel.

Issues related to the Police Department include:

Contracting Police dispatch services will eliminate the drain on dispatch personnel resources for coverage of vacant shifts. With only 5.5 personnel, it is extremely difficult to cover planned vacations, and unplanned absences. Further, covering vacated shifts leads to overtime usage and burnout. That is a burden on the budget, as well as the remaining dispatchers. If the Police Department outsources dispatching services, then this will increase efficiency because managers will no longer be tasked with recruiting and training dispatch personnel and covering unplanned vacancies. Further, the City will no longer be burdened with maintaining and updating its

current dispatch technology; however, there will be costs associated with integrating technology and communication systems with the contract provider.

Staff is aware of the concerns expressed by stakeholders about the reduction in face-to-face contact at the Police Department during “off hours.” The department currently employs one dispatcher twenty-four hours a day. That person greets and assists the public when they visit the department. Although the department currently parallels the rest of the City in that the lobby hours are Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., the on-shift dispatcher is available 24/7 by phone or in person by using the call-box outside the building. After the proposed transition, staff will continue to be available during regular business hours. After hours, the public will be connected with SLO County dispatch. We recognize that system may have an impact on the culture of community service at the department and affect members of the community, who have grown accustomed to immediate personalized public safety services via the business line seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day; however, the public will continue to have access to public safety services in this model through 911 calls, call-boxes, and crime related business calls.

Another concern that has been addressed is the employees affected by this change, some of whom have been employed by the City for ten or more years. Chief Knuckles met with Fire personnel to discuss the advantages to their service, and he has also discussed the matter with the Fire Association. Likewise, Chief Christey and Susan Slayton, Director of Administrative Services, met with the dispatchers and the Police Officer’s Association to discuss the matter. We have also met with the Police volunteers to assure them of their value to the community, and they in no way will be affected negatively by this move.

It should also be noted the Police Department will have to create a new system for police records, and will need to develop a system that includes one full-time records employee. I am recommending the retention of a full-time records person who will be tasked with maintaining police related records. That position has been factored into the potential cost.

Although, not the primary reason for suggesting a change, cost is obviously an important issue. Based on the report and information we have received as to cost, the City of Morro Bay will save a minimum of **\$42,912** the first year. That includes all transition costs, with the exception of a possible \$9,000 in conversion for police vehicles, and costs related enhancing the City’s radio systems to ensure radio repeater coverage between Sheriff’s Dispatch and the City of Morro Bay, SLO County Fire and Sheriff’s dispatch, and employing a full-time records technician for the police department. That does not include any savings in recruiting, training, retention or overtime, which will occur.

Sheriff Parkinson, in a letter dated 4/22/14, stated, “The benefits of contracting dispatch services for an agency the size of Morro Bay are the ability to provide a higher level of service to the citizens of the City, reduced costs, and the ability to provide services like emergency medical dispatching (EMD) that are not available in smaller dispatch centers. The benefit to the County is that additional staff is available at no cost, multi-agency coordination is improved during emergencies and service to all customers is enhanced when dispatchers have adequate time to deal with the multitude of calls a dispatch center receives.”

I discussed the transition with Chief Steve Annabali of the Arroyo Grande Police Department, and asked for his opinion on the City of Arroyo Grande now being served by the County on a contract. Chief Annabali advised it was one of the best moves that City has made. Service levels have improved; they are very comfortable with the response times, and the ability of the Sheriff's dispatchers to relate directly to the needs of Arroyo Grande. He felt the quality of service they receive has enhanced the overall ability of the police department, and improved organizational efficiency. Although cost savings was a factor, he had listed the potential savings as his third or fourth reason for making such a move. He stated he has not received complaints from the community since they made the transition.

If the community of Morro Bay is going to make such a move with dispatch, then this is the best time the City will ever have. SLO County Fire has said they may hire one of the dispatchers, and there is a potential for the Sheriff's Department to hire two dispatchers. This move will have the least impact on employees at this time, and may result in no employees actually being laid off. The one dispatcher remaining could potentially be employed as the Records Technician, with no reduction in base pay.

### **CONCLUSION**

The City Manager, Police Chief, Fire Chief, Harbor Director, representatives from SLO County Fire and the Sheriff's Department are prepared to make a presentation to further address any questions and concerns of Council Members and the community.