

California City Fire Rescue

(California City Fire Department)



Operational Report

June 2016

Presented to the City Council and Community for the exploration of a Kern County Fire Contract for Fire Services

Prepared by:

Jeff Armstrong, Fire Chief



Fire Department Mission:

To preserve the quality of life, property, and the environment within our Community, State, and Nation through education and the professional delivery of emergency medical, fire and rescue services.



VISION

Our Vision Is:

- *That we are widely recognized as a department which demonstrates excellence in the delivery of its services.*
- *That we honor our community's trust by demonstrating our commitment to duty.*
- *That we strive to continually improve services and programs to the community, ensuring they are made available and are clearly understood by our stakeholders.*
- *That we proactively identify and analyze our community's risks, thereby maintaining an efficient response model.*
- *That we build strong relationships and consistent collaboration with our regional partners and support agencies.*
- *That our internal culture reflects a diverse, respectful and professional atmosphere, nurtured by a cooperative and evolving internal communication processes.*
- *That comprehensive training, employee development and succession planning will ensure the future success of our fire department.*
- *That we effectively manage our resources and utilize technology and progressive tactics to continually improve our programs.*
- *That our leadership and workforce will hold one another accountable for honoring our mission and values, while continuously striving to reach our goals.*
- *That the California City Fire Department will consistently exceed the expectations of our community.*

Message from the Fire Chief:

As I write this letter to the City Council and Community, I am concerned about the future of our Fire Department and the level of service I (we) will be able to provide the City beyond 2018. I will be looking to the City Council for strong leadership as we approach the end of the Special Tax (Measure A) and as priorities are set for the City and its limited budget.

Your Fire Department is strong, healthy and better poised to serve the community now, than it has been in years past. Despite the external factors that continue try to cause us to lose focus on our mission and despite not having a Fire Station for nearly 3 years; your Firefighters are a resilient group and continue to deliver a high quality service and place the needs of the Community first. While we have experienced some light turnover in the past few years, the core membership continues to be dedicated and experienced. Small Departments who are not competitive in wages will always experience some turnover due to pay, benefits and other opportunities that exist in the Fire Service. I do believe more could be done to retain employees but most of that is out of my control. I make every effort to empower employees and give them ownership in the Organization in hopes that I will increase morale and convince more of them to stay with us long term.

I am pleased to provide you with this overview of your Fire Department and our current services delivered to the Community. In this document, I will address some alternatives for the future, if funding is reduced, that includes a contract with Kern County for Fire Services in the City. As we plan for the future and this option is discussed, it is my hope to present the City Council with valuable information, transparent data, options to consider, and reasonable solutions.

Our service is rich in history and tradition, and we deliver a tailored service to the City, its residents and visitors. I could recap our history and tell you about our long standing relationship with the Community and our superior level of service; however, you are all familiar with our Department and what service(s) we provide. The current focus is now on the future and how we will be able continued to protect life and property in California City. As we explore keeping our own Fire Department or contracting those services to Kern County; I hope to facilitate a transparent, well communicated, well documented and cordial process.

Whether for only a short time more, or another many more years, it has been my pleasure to serve as your Fire Chief.

Sincerely,

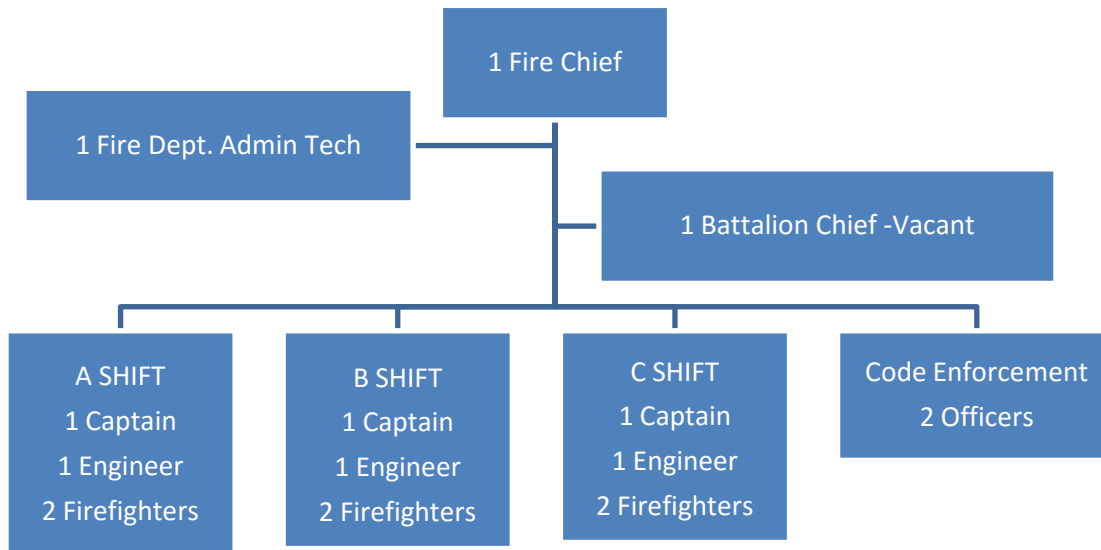
Jeffrey A. Armstrong, FIRE CHIEF

Programs and Services

The following core programs and vital services provided to the Community, by the Department, as expected by past practice or as required by law:

- ***Emergency Medical Services (Paramedic Assessment Engines)***
- ***Fire Prevention***
- ***Fire Suppression***
- ***Public Safety Education***
- ***Fire Investigation***
- ***Hazardous Materials Response***
- ***Technical Rescue***
- ***Domestic Threat Preparedness***

Fire Department Staffing & Organizational Chart:



Proposed Budget for FY 15/16: \$2,387,800

- This amount includes requests for over \$100,000 in new Fire Station equipment / supplies and \$70,000 in Capital replacement items.

Fire Administrative Division:

The Administrative personnel of the Fire Department are charged with the overall support of Operations and management of the organization. The Fire Administrative positions consist of a Fire Chief, Battalion Chief and an Administrative Technician. This Division ensures the integrity of the Department's finances by keeping expenditures within the boundaries set forth by the governing body. Operational personnel who are assigned to special projects or other duties support Administration through collaborative work. The Department staff of 13 (currently) accomplishes much through multi-tasking and supporting each other in specific areas of responsibility.

Fire Department Administration Costs:

Fire Chief: 1 Full Time

Employee Cost: \$138,279 (Salary, plus Benefits/Retirement, WC \$ Unemployment) PEPRA

Battalion Chief: Vacant Since August 2015

No costs

Fire Department Administrative Technician: 1 Full time

No costs - 100% of Salary / Benefits moved to Code Enforcement for FY 16/17

Operations Division

The Operations Division of the Fire Department has the primary responsibility of responding to calls for service within the community and surrounding area, is led by the on-duty Captain and reports to the Fire Chief. The shift Firefighters perform daily activities such as:

- Training
- Emergency Response
- Inspections
- Hydrant Maintenance
- Equipment testing and maintenance
- Station maintenance
- Public Education
- Fire Investigation
- Incident Command
- Mutual Aid Response
- Strike Team assignments

Our staff provides “all-risk” response and is in a state of readiness to respond to any need of the community or State. Staff is trained for the response to structure fires, Wildland fires, medical emergencies, special rescues, vehicle accidents, hazardous materials incidents and a variety of public service calls. The Fire Department provides Advanced Life Support Services for Medical emergencies by staffing our apparatus with licensed Paramedics who augment the response from the private Ambulance Service. We meet or exceed industry standards and National recommendations for qualifications and training. The Fire Department response is supported through an automatic aid agreement and a long history that exists with the Kern County Fire Department.

Operations Division Current Costs (Salaries and benefits):

3 Captains:	\$440,987
3 Engineers:	\$407,749
6 Firefighters:	\$532,699

Operations Total: \$1,381,435

- Fire Employees will be receiving 1% COLA through 2018 (per MOU and occurs April) at an estimated annual increase of: \$7,439 and \$7,513 (including the Fire Chief).

Total Fire Department Staffing Costs (13 positions): \$1,519,714

Other items presented in the Department’s budget under Personnel Services:

- Medical Fees (Employment Physicals)
- Vacation sell-back

* Overtime - Historical Costs of overtime to maintain 4-0 staffing: \$240,000 - \$270,000

Operations and Maintenance Budget:

These costs are associated with outfitting the Department staff with Personal Protective Equipment, uniforms, training, office supplies, station supplies and facility operation. Some of these costs would remain the City’s responsibility, in the event the contract for Fire Service required the City retain ownership and control of the facilities.

FY 13/14 costs: \$354,847

FY 14/15 costs: \$576,874 (high costs of vehicle maintenance and Station demolition)

Estimated year end 15/16 costs: \$510,687

- For the purposes of accomplishing our mission and daily tasks, the Fire Department is divided into “Sections” under the Fire Chief (Administration). One shift Captain has each Section, while the Fire Chief oversees Fire Prevention and Code Enforcement along with all associated programs.

Support Officer: Responsible for all logistics, equipment, facilities and apparatus

Operations Officer: Responsible for operational needs, training, Safety, SOG’s, hydrants and Special Operations in the OHV Area.

Administrative Officer: Responsible for EMS, Training Officer, Community Affairs, PIO, Communications, Emergency Services, Grants, Staffing and hiring.

In addition to operating costs and salaries, the Department specific programs should be mentioned and evaluated for cost/benefit.

Paramedic Program:

The Emergency Medical Services Division is led by a Fire Captain and includes Paramedics on every apparatus for responses in the City, County and State. The EMS Captain, often called our “EMS Coordinator”, ensures compliance with all laws and regulation with regard to the delivery of Emergency Medical Care. He is supported by the Department Medical Director (a physician) who, under contract provides oversight, advice, training, narcotic ordering, and quality control to the Department EMS Program. A Firefighter / Paramedic assists the EMS Coordinator with EMS supply ordering and inventory. This is an example of how Operation Division staff supports Administration in filling multiple roles in our small Department.

The Fire Department members who have a current paramedic license are given a 2.5% salary increase. Although dictated by the MOU, I would still associate those costs with the Paramedic Program. Here is a 3 year trend analysis of what having a Paramedic Fire Department costs the City:

Paramedic Stipend (10 employees): \$17,093 (MOU)

Paramedic Specific EMS Supplies: \$17,647 (past 3 year average)

Paramedic licensing/other certificates: \$1,500 (10 employees every other year)

Medical Director: \$6,000 annually (\$500 per month)

Average annual costs of Paramedic Program: \$42,240

Fire Prevention:

The Fire Prevention program and line item funds equipment for the inspection program, Arson Division and public Education, such as school presentation and hand-outs. The Fire Department is self-sufficient with most Fire Investigations, getting limited assistance from CCPD and the Regional Arson Task Force on complex incidents.

Average Annual budget allocations for these programs is: \$10,066 (Excluding overtime)

- These programs and associated costs would be absorbed by a County Fire Contract and the County Fire Prevention model used.

Vehicle Maintenance:

Vehicle Maintenance of the Department's Heavy Fleet (Suppression apparatus) is handled by KME/Kovatch in Ontario CA., through an exclusive agreement and contract approved by the Council in 2014. Light and Staff vehicles are taken to Keife and Sons Ford in Mojave.

While we enjoy a discounted shop rate due to our agreement and contract, potential savings could be seen by bringing the Vehicle Maintenance to the City shop. (Warranty items excluded)

Average Annual Vehicle Maintenance costs: \$79,282

- These costs, plus some vehicles would be absorbed by a County Contract

California City Fire Rescue maintains the following fleet:

2 Structure Engines, 1 front-line / 1 reserve (2015 & 1999)

1 Brush Engine *purchased with Grant funds, used for strike teams (2007)

1 Brush Patrol * Partially Grant Funded (2009)

1 Squad / Off-Road Rescue (F150 with Camper shell) * partially Grant funded (2012)

2 Staff vehicles / SUV's (2006 & 2011) Fire Chief and Arson

See Fire Department Capital replacement plan for more information and replacement timeline

Debt Service:

The Fire Department is currently financing / leasing 3 vehicles and will owe on a facility:

Patrol 190: Final Payment June 2016 \$ 22,081

Squad 190: (F150) Final payment November 2016 \$8,596

Medic Engine 190: \$59,705 annually (5 more payments)

Fire Station Loan: TBD

While two of the vehicles will be paid off this year, the question will have to be answered; who will continue to make the payment on Medic Engine 190

The next anticipated vehicle purchase is an SUV in FY 17/18 (not financed). Engine 290 will need to be replaced in 2021 (after Engine 190 is paid off) and it would be the recommendation of the Fire Chief that we finance that with another low interest lease. Patrol 190 may require replacement in the next 5 years, based on maintenance issues and performance. (see capital replacement plan)

Dispatch Services:

The Fire Department is dispatched by Kern County ECC, the joint Dispatch Center for Kern County Fire and Bakersfield City Fire. All 9-1-1 calls come into the Police Dispatch Center (PSAP) then the calls requiring Fire or Medical are transferred to ECC.

CCPD Dispatch has dispatched for the City Fire Department in the past. Potential cost savings could exist with this concept, but not at current PSAP staffing. Costs for additional dispatchers and training would be incumbent on the Fire Department. That cost would place us back at levels now spent or above.

At this time, the Fire Chief does not advocate for changing dispatch centers as the impacts to Fire Operations mutual aid would pose significant problems.

Annual Costs for Dispatch Services are between: \$80,000 - \$85,000

- These costs would be absorbed in a County Contract

Facilities

Fire Station:



California City is currently in the process of building a new Fire Station that will accommodate 4 (or more) firefighters per day, plus the administration staff.

In the County proposal, the City would maintain ownership and some maintenance responsibility for this building.

Annual average facility operation and maintenance: \$17,960
(Includes utilities)

Borax Bill (Station 192):

The Police Department takes the lead on the maintenance and operation of Borax Bill Park. The Fire Department maintains crew quarters at the park for up-staffing during the busy OHV riding times.

OHV Staffing (Borax Bill)

Based on scheduled holidays, expected visitors and historical records, the Fire Department will provide staffing at Borax Bill (Fire Station 192) for Medical and Rescue responses. This area is within the City and is the responsibility of the Fire Chief and his/her department to provide service. Staffing has varied over the years based on available Grant funds, however there remains times that coverage cannot be maintained from the City Fire Station.

- *We should discuss this need with County Fire and ensure service levels do not decrease and that it is covered in any proposal/contract.*

Future Staffing and Service Alternatives:

As an alternative to maintaining staffing and service levels as they are; the Fire Department may be required to cut staffing in future due to funding. It should be noted that anything less than 4 per day (as a standard practice) will result in a dramatic reduction in service level and may result in some calls not being handled in a timely manner.

The minimum level of staffing the Fire Chief is willing to propose is three (3) per day. This, after the Special Tax (Measure A) has expired when we are no longer mandated by the voters to provide 4 firefighters daily (2018) and if the council chooses to not pursue other or new funding for Public Safety.

With staffing of three (3), we will no longer be able to staff two (2) Apparatus / vehicles daily and will need to evaluate participation in Strike Teams. (A revenue plus recruitment/retention tool) However, staffing of three (3) daily meets the County-wide staffing model, minimum staffing as approved by the County Fire Chiefs and is compliant with the Kern County Fire Chiefs Operational Area agreement. This staffing level would not jeopardize our Automatic Aid received by Kern County Fire.

This staffing level would have unknown effects on our recent ISO Rating improvement.

The Fire Chief is also proposing that, if the City retains its Fire Department, we not fill the Battalion Chief position and that the Incident Command component of our Staffing continues to be handled by the Fire Chief, along with updating a County Fire Automatic Aid agreement that includes a Battalion Chief when "Chief 190" is not available. (Note: This would be difficult if we switched Dispatch Centers)

Personnel Costs: Three Person Engine Company, Plus Fire Chief and P.T. Admin.

3 Captains:	\$440,987
3 Engineers:	\$407,749
3 Firefighters	\$320,862
1 Fire Chief	\$138,276
1 P.T. FD Admin	\$20,098 (unknown costs for benefits)
Overtime	\$200,000

Total Personnel: \$1,527,972 (based off current actual employees)

Not budgeted: 1% COLA, Medical fees, Vacation sell back or Part Time Salaries

Personnel Costs: Three Person Engine Company, No Admin plus 50% Chief

3 Captains:	\$440,987
3 Engineers:	\$407,749
3 Firefighters	\$320,862
1 Public Safety Director	\$54,080 (excludes benefits)
Overtime	\$200,000

Total Personnel: \$ 1,432,678

Alternative Budget snapshot:

	Three person Engine Co 1 Chief, PT Admin	Three person Engine Co 50% Chief, no Admin
Personnel	\$1,527,975	\$1,432,678
Operations and Maintenance	\$400,000	\$360,000 *
Capital outlay	\$20,000	\$20,000
Debt Service	\$59,705	\$59,705
Total Budget:	\$2,007,680	\$1,872,383

*reflects a 50% decrease in vehicle maintenance by conducting in-house (City yard)

Current proposed Budget snapshot (FY16/17):

	Four person Engine Co, 1 Fire Chief, no admin, no BC
Personnel	\$1,725,783 *includes vacation sell-back, medicals and OT
Operations and Maintenance	\$415,990
Capital outlay	\$139,200 *includes Cardiac monitor, Exhaust system, new Jaws
Debt Service	\$106,827 *last year it will be this high (\$59,705 in future)
Total:	\$2,387,800

Estimated FY 17/18 budget:

	Four person Engine Co, 1 Fire Chief, no admin, no BC
Personnel	\$1,725,783 *includes vacation sell-back, medicals and OT
Operations and Maintenance	\$380,000
Capital outlay	\$75,000
Debt Service	\$59,705 Medic Engine 190 plus Station loan
Total:	\$2,247,927

Considerations:

The following items should be considered and questions related to these asked of the County Fire Department. Some of these reflect a positive change with a Kern County contract, while others may require further clarification/requirements.

Specific City and Council requirements should be made clear before further negotiations take place. Some considerations identified are:

- Communication between Building Department and Fire Department
- Plans Review (process and timeline)
- Fireworks (Permits and Enforcement)
- OHV staffing under Kern County
- Paramedic Engine Company
- Facility ownership
- Station coverage requirements
- Fire Department representation at City meetings
- New point of contact in County Fire for the City Manager and Council
- Code Enforcement's new manager and communication with Kern County FD

