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STEVE TATE
Mayor

August 25, 2011

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Honorable Richard J. Loftus, Jr.
Presiding Judge
Santa Clara County Superior Court
191 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95113

DAVID H. YAMASAKI
Chief Executive Officer/Clerk
Superior Court of CA County of Santa Clara
BY D. ALDYCKI

**RE: City of Morgan Hill response to "Fighting Fire or Fighting Change?
Rethinking Fire Department Response Protocol and Consolidation
Opportunities"**

Dear Judge Loftus:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury's report on firefighting, and resulting recommendations and findings.

Finding 1

It is extremely costly to equip a fire department for only the occasional fire response; the County and fifteen town/cities have not been proactive in challenging fire departments to adopt changes that are more cost effective and that better serve their communities. Further, unions are more interested in job preservation than in providing the right mix of capabilities at a reasonable cost, using scare tactics to influence the public and fostering firefighter unwillingness to collaborate with EMS.

Disagree. The City of Morgan Hill does concur that fire services are expensive. However, it disagrees with the Grand Jury's finding that "cities have not been proactive in challenging fire departments to adopt changes that are more cost effective and that better serve their communities." Morgan Hill has worked with its current service provider, Santa Clara County Central Fire Protection District (CCFD), to contain its annual expense by leaving the Deputy Fire Marshall position vacant since July 2010 and working regionally with the South Santa Clara County Fire Protection District (SCFD) and the City of Gilroy for Battalion Chief coverage. Furthermore, Morgan Hill, CCFD, Gilroy, and SCFD worked together for over two years evaluating regional opportunities. This work continues today with the City, CCFD, and SCFD.

Recommendation 1B

All fifteen towns/cities – Campbell, Cupertino, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Milpitas, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, Santa Clara, Saratoga, Sunnyvale – and the County (for CCFD and SCFD) should determine the emergency response service they want to achieve, particularly as to the result, then determine how best to achieve that.

Agree. The City Council, through its contract with CCFD, has formal emergency service response levels it expects to achieve.

Finding 3

Whether the emergency responder is a firefighter-paramedic or an EMS paramedic matters little to the person with the medical emergency; using firefighter-paramedics in firefighting equipment as first responders to all non-police emergencies is unnecessarily costly when less expensive paramedics on ambulances possess the skills needed to address the 96% of calls that are not fire related.

Agree. The City continues to seek innovative service delivery methods intended to meet call demand in an efficient manner.

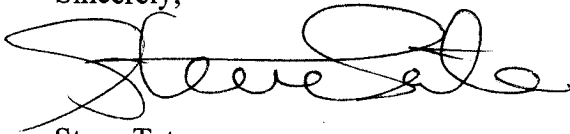
Recommendation 3A

All fifteen towns/cities – Campbell, Cupertino, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Milpitas, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, Santa Clara, Saratoga, Sunnyvale – and the County (for CCFD and SCFD) should adopt an emergency services department mentality and staff or contract accordingly to meet demand.

Agree. The City has formally adopted the following guiding principles for future regional service delivery intended to efficiently meet demand.

- 1) Morgan Hill and its surrounding unincorporated area are served by the same service provider*
- 2) Fire and EMS services in that territory are managed by a single entity*

Sincerely,



Steve Tate
Mayor
City of Morgan Hill