



Agenda Report

Fullerton City Council

MEETING DATE: JUNE 2, 2020

TO: CITY COUNCIL / SUCCESSOR AGENCY

PREPARED BY: KENNETH A. DOMER, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: AUTOMATIC AID AGREEMENT FOR EXCHANGE OF FIRE, RESCUE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES BETWEEN CITY OF PLACENTIA AND CITY OF FULLERTON

SUMMARY

On July 1, 2020, the Placentia Fire and Life Safety Department will begin providing fire and emergency medical services to residents of Placentia. The City's contract with the Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) for similar services terminates on June 30, 2020. Currently, the City of Fullerton has an Automatic Aid Agreement with the Orange County Fire Authority as the service provider for Placentia and each City seeks the same agreement as of July 1, 2020.

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize City Manager to execute Automatic Aid Agreement for Exchange of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services between the City of Placentia and City of Fullerton.

PRIORITY POLICY STATEMENT

This item matches the following Priority Policy Statement:

- Public Safety.

FISCAL IMPACT

There should be no fiscal impact based on the continuation of an Automatic Aid Agreement with the City of Placentia.

DISCUSSION

Common between adjoining jurisdictions, the City has automatic aid agreements with other city fire departments for the instance in which one city's apparatus is the closest unit to a call for service that is physically within the adjoining city. Automatic Aid is assistance that is dispatched automatically by a contractual agreement between two fire

departments (cities or city and special district) while Mutual Aid is dispatched, upon request, by the responding fire department and it is usually requested when available resources are not deemed enough to handle the situation. In addition to Automatic Aid Agreements, the City also has Mutual Aid agreements with multiple jurisdictions.

The City currently has an Automatic Aid agreement with the OCFA as the current service provider to the City of Placentia. It is important to note that while the OCFA will not continue as the service provider to the City of Placentia, they are the current provider of fire and emergency medical services for the City of Buena Park and therefore the current agreement with the OCFA will remain as a valid document. Based on the City of Placentia's decision to cease its contract with the OCFA and create its own Fire and Life Safety Department to provide fire and emergency medical services, it is necessary to enter into an Automatic Aid agreement with the City of Placentia effective July 1, 2020.

Background

In June 2018, the City of Placentia chose not to renew its OCFA contract and instead began efforts that included soliciting requests for approval for fire and emergency medical services. Analysis of the City's prior calls for service (workload analysis) showed that a majority of Placentia's 911 calls are for emergency medical services (80%) and less than 1% of calls were for significant structure fires. This ratio is similar across other Orange County fire agencies. The review of alternate service delivery models by Placentia also revealed that the Orange County model of emergency medical services differs from the majority of counties in California in that 56 out of 58 counties in California utilize, but not necessarily exclusively, private 911 paramedic services. Orange County and Los Angeles County use fire-based 911 paramedic services. Many Orange County cities contract with the Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) for their fire department and fire-based 911 paramedic services while "full-service" cities such as Fullerton provide their own fire and fire-based paramedic services (that is, typically two firefighters on an engine are fully licensed paramedics).

Based on their request for proposal and desire to implement a different approach to emergency medical / paramedic services, the City of Placentia sought proposals from adjacent cities and firms that met their stated goals of improving response times and quality of care while ensuring local control and fiscal responsibility. Placentia chose to create its own fire department while contracting for paramedic services by selecting Lynch Ambulance. Under this scenario, the city will deploy a paramedic staffing model to respond to 911 medical emergencies in a manner not different from many other cities throughout California. Lynch Ambulance, the new Placentia service provider, is licensed and approved by the Orange County Medical Director.

Placentia's proposed service model is utilized throughout California and the rest of the Country. This model, however, creates the impression that there is not a "like for like" exchange of resources in the case of an automatic aid response. One jurisdiction will respond to an Advanced Life Support (ALS) medical emergency with a fire engine (four personnel with at least two licensed paramedics) and an ambulance (two certified Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs)) while the Placentia model responds with licensed paramedics (two personnel) in an appropriately equipped van and a transport ambulance (two certified EMTs).

The differing response by the physical number of personnel (not necessarily their capabilities) is what leads to external concern that there is not a like-for-like response.

This is the reason that the City Managers of adjoining cities to Placentia, specifically Brea and Fullerton, are strongly supportive of making sure that an automatic aid agreement be entered into in the same manner that exists with the OCFA currently. This provides a level playing field in which automatic aid responses can be assessed and the respective Fire Chiefs and City Managers can react if there is an imbalance based on the new response approach by Placentia. Currently, there is an imbalance between Metro Net Fire Authority cities (fire dispatching to include the cities of Fullerton, Brea, Anaheim, Orange, Fountain Valley, Huntington Beach and Newport Beach) and the OCFA in that Metro Net agencies respond into OCFA jurisdictions more than 60% of the time, albeit in a traditional “like-for-like” basis.

Accordingly, entering into an Automatic Aid agreement with Placentia at this time continues the current relationship between adjoining cities and allows the Fire Chiefs to review Placentia’s model in the field and make changes, if needed and as warranted. As part of the agreement, reviews of services will be conducted every 90 days during the first year. Additionally, the Fire Chiefs will finalize a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the specific details of the services to be provided under this Agreement and the general operational policies, including, but not limited to, response areas and types of equipment, dispatch and communications, incident reporting, training, operational command and evaluation of effectiveness. This MOU will be amended from time to time with the concurrence of the City Managers.

It is important to note that resident and firefighter safety is paramount when it comes to any relationship between jurisdictions providing fire coverage and entering automatic aid agreements. Accordingly, the Fire Chiefs are working together with the executive officers to identify all operational and equipment issues to be addressed in the MOU to ensure that automatic aid is successful for both cities. Working together, and relying on the professional experience of our Fire Chiefs and their executive officers, will ensure a continuation of high quality and responsive fire and emergency medical services to our residents and those of Placentia.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – Draft Automatic Aid Agreement