



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

September 12, 2023

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Lewis Broschard, Fire Chief

RE: Fire Chief's Report

Operations Section Update

- On August 3rd Contra Costa Fire units were dispatched to the scene of a residence in San Pablo for an odor investigation. The benign sounding incident escalated to a major event that resulted in a 3-day mitigation of a hazardous materials scene within a residential neighborhood. Stored in several outbuildings at the home were well over 600 different chemicals from several hazard classes including oxidizers, poisons, and explosives. The danger from the unknown types and quantities required an evacuation order to be applied to the surrounding blocks of homes. Contra Costa OES and the Red Cross opened an evacuation center nearby. A unified command was established between Con Fire and San Pablo Police Department for the duration of the incident. The Walnut Creek



bomb squad played a large role working in conjunction with the Contra Costa County Fire hazardous materials team to identify and catalog the large number of chemicals. Additional assistance was provided by the Alameda County bomb squad, FBI, Contra Costa County Health hazardous materials team, and the State Department of Toxic Substances. Private industry was helpful in providing a remote location where the bomb squads could destroy the more unstable chemicals in a controlled environment. Altogether hundreds of responders cycled through the incident in various capacities. The active phase of the incident continued for three days and the total mitigation lasted several more. Most residents were allowed back into their homes by the end of the second day. A return to normal was achieved after a state contracted remediation firm removed and properly disposed of the remaining chemicals that were deemed stable to be left in the residence by the emergency responders.

- In the early morning hours of August 12 Contra Costa County Fire responded to the report of a commercial structure fire in Pittsburg. The crews arrived on scene within five minutes to find heavy smoke from a 3 story commercial building. Due to the size of the building and fire conditions, a second alarm was called by the initial arriving companies. The affected building was a large movie theater that was built in 1936. It has undergone many alterations to occupancy type over the years. Crews identified the building as abandoned, but initiated a fire attack and search to ensure that no one was inside the building. While crews were inside the building, the smoke and fire conditions changed rapidly and crews were removed from the building. Due to heavy fire, pressurized smoke conditions, and the deep seated nature of the fire, operations were changed from offensive (interior) to defensive (exterior). Two additional alarms of resources were ordered due to workload and water supply issues. The fire was also producing large fire brands and embers that were being sent into the surrounding neighborhood. The fourth alarm units were used to patrol the neighborhood to ensure that no other structures were impacted by the embers. The defensive fire operations were complicated by low water pressure due to the large volume of water being used. Contra Costa Fire worked with City of Pittsburg Water to increase the hydrant pressure in the area. The City of Pittsburg also assisted with police for traffic control and Building Department personnel. No other structures were damaged and there were no injuries reported.



Training and Safety Division

- The division completed the Fire District's quarterly training on intentional mass casualty incidents (IMCI). All fire companies and chief officers received refresher training on interacting with allied police agencies and procedures to operate in an active shooter environment. Our responders are trained and equipped to enter into warm zones with police escort in order to triage and extricate victims from active shooter scenarios. Our Captains and Chief Officers are trained to work collaboratively in a command environment with law enforcement to efficiently direct removing and transporting victims to definitive care.
- The division released recommendations on roadway safety mitigations for our responders during freeway incidents. These recommendations from our internal safety committee will be evaluated by senior staff for future implementation. We have had 11 significant freeway accidents involving responders at the scene of motor vehicle accidents in eight years. The results of these intrusions into our emergency scenes include injuries to responders, extensive damage to our equipment, and sadly the loss of life for at least two citizens involved in these collisions. This is a national issue that has been difficult to find a comprehensive set of solutions to reduce these types of instances.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division

- The EMS division continues to work towards completion of our tiered ambulance response project. We are planning to be operational September 19th. The impact of implementing this program will help to decompress the emergency ambulance transport system by matching the correct level of care to the reported medical issue. With ambulance patient offload times (APOT) at hospitals, paramedic staffing shortages, and an overall increase in the number of transports and 911 incidents all affecting system demand and response times, this tiered response will increase ambulance transport capacity throughout the system as one means to improve response times and service delivery.

Advanced Planning Section Update

Fire Prevention Bureau

- We were notified in August that Con Fire was awarded the Fire Prevention and Safety Grant through the Department of Homeland Security / FEMA. The amount of this award is \$420,111 with a 5% match of \$20,005. The grant funded program will implement the E-Key system into our Knox Key Program to eliminate the many Knox master keys that we have inherited from generations of consolidations and annexations. The transition will consist of installing secure key holders in all fire engines, ladder trucks, and other primary response vehicles. The grant will allow existing Knox Boxes on commercial businesses to have the old key core swapped out to the new E-Core to facilitate the changeover to the new system. There are 585 boxes that will be upgraded by this grant.
- The CEQA consultant continues to perform the necessary environmental studies for the Lafayette/Walnut Creek Shaded Fuel Break. An information guide and timeline was also created to inform the stakeholders of the current status and next steps.
- In August, two Fire Inspector I positions were filled. Currently all Fire Inspector positions are filled and there are no vacancies.
- The grant reports for the California Fire Safe Council County Coordinator were submitted prior to the deadline to remain in good standing with the program.

Public Information (PIO)

- An active recruitment is underway with interviews scheduled in mid-September to fill the vacancy created by our recent PIO retirement.

Administration Section Update

Communications Division

- The Fire Communications Manager position has been filled by Judy Woo who comes to the district with a strong background in public safety dispatch. Judy has already made a positive impact in her role as the new Fire Communications Manager.
- Three new Fire Dispatchers have been hired and just completed their fourth week of classroom based training. In the next few weeks, they will transition to their floor based training sessions prior to being fully released to serve as independent Fire Dispatchers. All of these individuals come to the district with extensive experience and we are pleased to have them join our team.
- The Communications Division leadership team continues to work with COAR Architects on the pending remodel of the communication center and future communication division offices all located at 2010 Geary Road in Pleasant Hill. The 90% design set plans have been submitted to the City of Pleasant Hill for plan review. The project was approved by the City's Architectural Review Committee and Planning Commission with some adjustments and we are awaiting final approvals from Pleasant Hill. Next steps include release of an RFP for construction and eventual award of a contract in coordination with County Capital Projects. The district hopes to begin construction in early 2024 with completion by August of 2025. The division is currently working on tentative plans for the relocation of numerous staff and associated equipment during the construction project.
- The Information Technology team and the District's IT contractor continue to work on several major projects, one of which is to provide for a stand-alone network that is supported 365 days a year 24 hours a day. The Information Technology team will be working with district and County DoIT leadership to review the recommended system design, estimated costs and implementation plan.
- Another major initiative of the division is to rebuild the current Central Square computer aided dispatch (CAD) system that was originally implemented in 2006. This major project will be time intensive and expensive, but it is critically important to our future dispatch process and emergency operations.
- Assistant Chief Peter recently deployed for 17 days to the devastating fires in Maui as a Liaison Officer on the Blue Incident Support Team (IST) for FEMA's National Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) System to help lead and coordinate the human remains search efforts. Chief Peter and the IST worked directly for the Maui Police Department on this disaster. The response included forty human remains detection dogs and five task forces from the National US&R System from throughout the Country.

Support Services Division

- The Fire District is exploring EV charging equipment for use at some stations and our Fire Training Facility. We have had site visits and are getting proposals from vendors. This will allow the District to charge electric vehicles as well as allowing for employees to purchase a charge while at work for their personal vehicle.
- One new ladder truck has arrived at our shop and is currently undergoing equipment mounting. The process should be complete by the end of September and this new ladder truck can be placed in service. This will provide much needed relief while Truck 1, the ladder truck struck by a Tesla in mid-February, gets repaired in Wisconsin.
- The District is acquiring another portable generator using grant funds to support operations in the event of a large-scale power outage.
- A number of replacement Battalion Chiefs vehicles have arrived. They are getting graphics and radios installed. There is finally some improvement in the truck and SUV market as the last few years have been difficult for us to obtain vehicles in a timely manner.
- The District is currently working to convert old fire station 86 in Bay Point to a Support facility. We are working toward installing multiple industrial washers in order to clean and return firefighters' personal protective equipment in a timely manner. We know clean gear removes toxins that infuse into our gear during incidents, especially during interior firefighting. This initiative is consistent with our cancer prevention efforts.

Fire Stations / Facilities Construction

- Fire Station 90. Surveying is complete. City of Brentwood Planning has provided some comments as to the design elements and we are presently incorporating as much as possible. This station remains on track as capable of supporting two fire companies. Early construction estimates continue to show climbing costs in the construction market. The goal remains to put this station out to bid later this fall with Fire Station 94.



- Fire Station 94. The proposed lot lines have been marked. The “coming soon” signs should be up by the end of September. Brentwood planning staff has provided good feedback on the design.

