

# PUBLIC AND SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE



*Back – Ron Brooks, Victor Edinburgh, Kenneth Taylor-Chair  
Center – Roderic Moers, William Howard, Burrel Woodring  
Front – Lois Long, Carol Sharp  
Not pictured – Marianne Della Marna, Clyde Metzler*



# PUBLIC AND SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Public and Support Services Group (PSSG) was formed during a County organizational restructuring approved by the Board of Supervisors in May 2005. This group includes most departments having a strong interface with the general public, as well as a number of internal support departments.

PSSG Administration coordinates the administrative and budget activities of fourteen County departments charged with providing services to the public and to other County departments. The departments of PSSG that were reviewed are as follows:

- Agriculture/Weights and Measures
- Airports
- Architecture and Engineering
- County Fire
- County Library
- County Museum
- Fleet Management
- Land Use Services
  - Building and Safety
  - Code Enforcement
  - Planning
- Regional Parks
- Registrar of Voters
- Special Districts

The departments not reviewed are as follows:

- Facilities Management
- Public Works
  - Surveyor
  - Transportation/Flood Control
  - Waste Systems Division
- Real Estate Services

The actions of the PSSG Committee resulted in the following findings and recommendations.

# COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

## CONFIRE JPA COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

### **BACKGROUND**

The San Bernardino County Fire Department's CONFIRE Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) Communications Center (Comm Center), is located in the City of Rialto, southwest of the Rialto Municipal Airport. It is located in the same security complex as the County Office of Emergency Services. Its primary mission is to provide 24/7 direct Fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) dispatch services.

Member agencies of the CONFIRE JPA are San Bernardino County Fire Department and all 36 consolidated fire county districts, plus fire departments for the cities of Colton, Loma Linda, Redlands and Rialto. They also contract with Running Springs and Twentynine Palms fire districts for this service.

The Comm Center is also the operational area dispatch center for several County departments. It is also responsible for mutual aid dispatching requests and it handles all air ambulance calls and multi-casualty incidents for this area.

### **FINDINGS**

The Center is now in a 5-year-old permanent Butler-built type building. They were located in a nearby temporary building with 9-1-1 and Sheriff Dispatchers. The Comm Center has 58 personnel assigned with approximately 26 on duty at any one time.

They have eight radio dispatchers and two intake personnel. They work 12-hour shifts and are cross-trained in all systems. Qualified dispatchers are in great demand and have a significant turnover in the public service field.

County Fire and the Sheriff's Department have been awarded a \$300,000 Homeland Security grant. It provided a Request for Proposal (RFP) to hire consulting services for the new joint communications center for County Fire and County Sheriff. The contract has been awarded to DMJM Designs/AECEM in Orange, California, and the results of the study will be completed by December 31, 2007. The study will recommend a permanent location, combining services of the two locations, the financing and time frame for the new center along with other recommendations.

Past Grand Jury recommendations were reviewed with the Comm Center Director. Mostly those recommendations were concerns of security and overcrowding at the center. Even though some of those conditions still exist, the proposed joint center that is being planned with the Sheriff's Department will address and solve most of those concerns. The department is small and little known and the public needs to be informed of this useful and valuable department.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 07-72 REVAMP THE PAY SCALES AND BENEFITS TO BETTER RETAIN DISPATCHERS. THIS WILL ALSO HELP IN RECRUITING EMPLOYEES.
- 07-73 ACT PROMPTLY TO IMPLEMENT THE STUDY OF THE COMM CENTER.
- 07-74 INFORM THE PUBLIC OF THIS UNIQUE AND VALUABLE DEPARTMENT.

## **Support Services Center, Hazardous Material Division, and Sewell Training Center**

### **BACKGROUND**

There are three County Fire Centers located at the San Bernardino International Airport (SBIA) on approximately 10 acres leased from the airport authority. The facility consists of a mixture of old original hangars and temporary manufactured buildings.

The Support Service Center provides three support activities: Vehicle Services (repair and outfitting of all fire engines and support vehicles), Warehouse Services and Facilities Maintenance.

The Hazardous Materials Center is responsible for routine inspections, operating household hazardous waste collection facilities and responds to citizen complaints about hazardous waste problems. This operation is recognized by the state and federal government as a leader in household hazardous waste management.

The Sewell Training Center, in conjunction with Crafton Hills College, has 11 weeks of classwork encompassing all aspects of real-life firefighting techniques that includes 480 hours of field training. The Center provides three fire academies per year.

## **FINDINGS**

The SBIA Joint Powers Authority consists of representatives from the cities of Loma Linda, Colton, Highland, San Bernardino, and the County of San Bernardino. The SBIA Authority has notified the County that they are not renewing the lease they have had with County Fire since 1995. The lease called for 10 years, plus two three-year options. The last three-year option will expire in 2011.

According to SBIA, "with the closure of Rialto Airport, we are placing some aircraft oriented business on our site. In 2011, we may need to acquire the County Fire facilities space for our SBIA use for aircraft placement and aviation use." In addition, SBIA reported, "County Fire is considered non-aviation and consequently, the FAA (who have oversight on leases at the airport) will not support a lease renewal." SBIA is uncertain whether another of their off-airport sites will be available to relocate the three centers.

In the County Fire Business Plan for 2006-07, Goal Six recommends the following steps to complete the facilities relocation: "(a) Perform a needs assessment and space allocation study; (b) Research available real estate based on space allocation study; (c) Estimate project cost and identify potential revenue sources to fund relocation of a facility; and (d) Present recommendations to Board of Supervisors for viable options."

County Fire is involved in a reorganization of 36 fire districts into four regions. The application is before LAFCO (Local Agency Formation Commission) and should be completed this year. LAFCO informs the Grand Jury that with some minor adjustments, it should be before the Board of Supervisors sometime this fall.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 07-75 EXPLORE WITH SAN BERNARDINO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ON ALTERNATE OFF-AIRPORT RELOCATION SITES.
- 07-76 EXECUTE 2006-07 BUSINESS PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RELOCATION OF THREE COUNTY FIRE COMMUNICATION CENTERS AND PRESENT RECOMMENDATIONS TO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS.
- 07-77 COMPLETE THE REORGANIZATION OF THE 36 COUNTY FIRE DISTRICTS THAT IS BEFORE LAFCO.

# LAND USE SERVICES

## **BACKGROUND**

The Grand Jury received complaints on the responsibilities and duties of the San Bernardino County Land Use Services Department. This department has a staff of approximately 200 employees. They have four divisions: Current Planning, Advance Planning, Building and Safety, which is responsible for the issuance of permits, and Code Enforcement, which regulates and enforces these codes.

The main complaint was regarding the County Development Codes provisions for native plant protection and allegedly illegal removal of Joshua trees and other native plants (S.B. Ordinance 3341, County of San Bernardino Development Code, Title 8, Division 3, 83.10.080,(c),(1),(A),(B), and Division 6, 86.09.090,(b),(4),(5),(6)).

## **FINDINGS**

During an interview with the Department, it was revealed that they have a serious shortage of professional planners due to salary competition from the private sector. This creates difficulty in recruiting new staff members.

It was also disclosed that other than Cal Poly Pomona, there is no college in this area that offers a dedicated planning career curriculum.

The Grand Jury found that many developers of both large and small developments are removing and destroying numerous Joshua trees and other native plants that are under the ordinances of protecting native trees and plants. It is the responsibility of Code Enforcement to enforce these ordinances within the County and local law enforcement to enforce the codes within their jurisdictions.

The investigation found that because there is an apparent lack of code enforcement, it may be costing the County a substantial amount of revenue as well as the loss of protected trees and plants.

The technology of aerial photos/GPS shows plant growth on larger developments. The system is newly in place, but not yet widely used.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 07-78 MAKE AN EFFORT TO NOTIFY AREA UNIVERSITIES THAT THE COUNTY HAS A SERIOUS NEED FOR PLANNERS; IT SHOULD ALSO CONSIDER OFFERING GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS TO QUALIFIED STUDENTS IN EXCHANGE FOR MULTIYEAR COMMITMENTS TO THE COUNTY WITH FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT AS AN ULTIMATE GOAL.
- 07-79 WHEN A LAND USE PERMIT IS PULLED, REQUIRE PRE-INSPECTION BEFORE THE WORK BEGINS ON LARGE AND SMALL DEVELOPMENTS. INFORM ALL LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES OF CODES AND LAWS REGARDING PROTECTED PLANTS AND TREES. THESE AGENCIES ARE REQUIRED TO ENFORCE THESE ORDINANCES AND COLLABORATE ON ENFORCEMENT WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS.
- 07-80 THE EXISTING TECHNOLOGY OF AERIAL PHOTOS/GPS BE USED TO THE FULLEST EXTENT.

# REGISTRAR OF VOTERS

## **BACKGROUND**

The Grand Jury investigated the Registrar of Voters (ROV) to look at issues concerning the last election. In order to do a comprehensive investigation, it was concluded that the Grand Jury follow the election process and get an understanding of all the pre-election requirements. Specifically, the Grand Jury attended the Logic and Accuracy testing of election procedures, observed the voting process election night, and interviewed the ROV and staff following the election.

## **FINDINGS**

The temperature in the ROV warehouse did not maintain the required 78 degrees. This temperature requirement is critical because of the temperature-sensitive paper of the VeriVoter printer attached to the Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) machine. The printed record of each vote cast from the voting machine is the backup counting of all the votes cast and, therefore, must be relied upon if there is a recount or challenge to the DRE machine.

Part of the Logic and Accuracy testing was testing a small sample ballot procedure. The ballots are run through eight scanners in the absentee ballot counting room. The process should guarantee that the optical scanners were accurately reading the test ballots. It was noticed that some of the optical scanners would shred and crumple the test ballots, requiring the ROV to duplicate the damaged test ballots in accordance with the Elections Code.

The ROV makes a complete check of each DRE machine to see if it is set to "0". The DRE machine remains sealed inside and outside during the actual election process.

The Grand Jury participated in a Logic and Accuracy testing process in which individual votes of the different precincts were cast. They were afforded the opportunity to observe the votes they actually cast and the VeriVoter printer attached to the DRE machine. These votes were tallied and verified on the machine attached to the DRE in a printed format and simultaneously stored in a cartridge that is built into the DRE unit itself.

The ROV has recently received funding from the Board of Supervisors for a remodel of the facility. The statement from ROV was that some of the funding will be

used to set and maintain the correct storage temperature for the temperature-sensitive paper from the voting machine.

The ROV is aware that issues emerged countywide regarding the election, which included a small number of DRE's being inoperable, VeriVoters running out of paper and shortage of paper ballots especially when lines began to grow longer. The ROV stated that staff is aware of these issues and will be better prepared and equipped for the next election.

The ROV reported that the training of a pool of steady workers is an ongoing challenge and a specific concern at each election, as each election is different. New technology is constantly improving and new advances assume that there can be "glitches."

Security cameras have been installed throughout the facility but will not be operational until the completion of the office remodel project indicated above. Once activated, the monitoring of cameras will be done at the ROV facility by ROV staff.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 07-81           UPGRADE THE TEMPERATURE CONTROL IN THE REGISTRAR OF VOTERS WAREHOUSE TO MAINTAIN A CONSTANT 78 DEGREES.
  
- 07-82           UPGRADE BALLOT-COUNTING SCANNERS.
  
- 07-83           DURING THE ELECTION PROCESS: (1) PREVENT THE VOTING MACHINES FROM RUNNING OUT OF PRINT PAPER AND MALFUNCTIONING; (2) ASSURE THAT THERE WILL BE NO SHORTAGE OF PAPER BALLOTS COUNTY-WIDE; (3) OFFER YEAR-ROUND TRAINING; AND, (4) ACTIVATE THE SECURITY SYSTEM.