



BRAD KILGER  
*City Manager*

September 2, 2015

Honorable E. Bradley Nelson  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Solano Superior Court  
600 Union Avenue  
Fairfield, CA 94533

**RE: 2014-2015 Grand Jury Report Entitled: Fire Protection: Communication Consolidation**

Dear Honorable Presiding Judge Nelson:

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 933.05 of the California Penal Code, the governing body of any public agency subject to the Grand Jury's review authority must respond to recommendations and findings pertaining to matters under their control. Therefore, the purpose of this letter is to comply with the aforementioned law and to advise you that after review of the 2014-2015 Solano County Grand Jury Report, the Council of the City of Benicia accepts the Report.

**Finding 2**

City Fire Departments and Independent Fire Districts in the County have begun to collaborate in acquiring equipment in compliance with Federal mandates.

**Recommendation 2**

City Fire Departments and Independent Fire Districts implement a "shared consolidation" for the purpose of obtaining equipment, hardware, and software.

**City's Response to Finding 2 and Recommendation 2**

The City of Benicia believes there is value in the concept of "shared consolidation" from the perspective of potential efficiencies and savings that may result during the acquisition of equipment, hardware, and software. An example of these opportunities includes the pursuit of regional grant funding for specialized equipment. Another example of a "shared consolidation" that has resulted in efficiencies is the Solano County Hazardous Materials Incident Team JPA. This regional approach has allowed for the ability to provide necessary services to all of Solano County at a reduced cost. We believe there are likely additional opportunities to enhance the concepts of "shared consolidation" through the establishment of a lead agency with a sustainable funding source to expand upon the concept and opportunities.

**Finding 3**

Fire communications consolidation will improve public safety.

**Recommendation 3**

Implement fire communications consolidation to enhance public safety.

**City's Response to Finding 3 and Recommendation 3**

The City of Benicia acknowledges the potential for increased efficiency in the management of emergency resources through the consolidation of the Fire Communications System. We believe that there are a number of options that can be considered ranging from a "virtual consolidation" that can be accomplished through technology that results in a standardized CAD system being used in all centers or an interface that allows the existing CAD systems to operate as a single system. This would increase the situational awareness as to the availability of resources and allow for the closest most appropriate resources, regardless of jurisdiction, to be assigned to an emergency. The potential to achieve these efficiencies would also exist in the establishment of a single dispatch agency responsible for fire dispatch services for all agencies in Solano County. Additional technological deployments, such as the establishment of a countywide Public Safety radio system similar to those in nearby counties will further enhance the public's safety. These systems again provide for seamless communications during emergency operations and reduce the impediments of jurisdictional boundaries.

The City of Benicia would be interested in exploring any of these solutions, provided that they maintain the levels of service to which our community has become accustomed, as well as providing some form of value added to the community. In addition, we believe that a lead agency with a sustainable funding source should be established through a JPA that would provide governance and oversight of the consolidated communications system. This would allow the local jurisdiction to still have a level of oversight and control of the services provided to their community.

We are concerned that a potential reduction in services may occur with the consolidation of dispatch with respect to duties that are currently provided by our dispatchers at the Police Department. The consolidation may result in the need for additional staff to address those duties currently performed by the dispatchers, resulting in a potential increased cost of operations for the City.

This response was drafted by City staff and approved by the City Council at their meeting on September 1, 2015. If you have any further questions, please let me know.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Brad Kilger  
City Manager

cc: City Council  
City Attorney  
Fire Chief  
Grand Jury