

City of Piedmont
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

DATE: October 20, 2014
TO: Mayor and Council
FROM: Paul Benoit, City Administrator
SUBJECT: Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Operations Center Evaluation

RECOMMENDATION

This memorandum is provided for information only.

No action is necessary.

BACKGROUND

The City of Piedmont maintains a well staffed, highly trained police force and fire department. On a daily basis, both the police and fire departments are capable of responding to and mitigating a wide range of emergency calls throughout the city. However, in the event of a large scale disaster or a major catastrophe, the City's first responders will become overwhelmed within minutes. When such an event takes place, the City of Piedmont will need to activate our Emergency Response Plan, staff the City's Emergency Operations Center, and request mutual aid through Alameda County's Office of Emergency Services and the State of California's Office of Emergency Services.

The City of Piedmont maintains an Emergency Operations Multi-Hazard Plan that was adopted in 2005. This plan established an Emergency Operations Center and provided the required Incident Command System training through a private contractor. The Emergency Operation Plan, Emergency Operation Center, and the Incident Command System training fulfill the requirements set by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, provides access to reimbursements from the Federal Disaster Relief Fund, establishes compliance with the California Emergency Services Act, and provides a "best practice" scenario which is essential to a focused, complete and effective response for the City of Piedmont.

Over the past twelve months, working with Piedmont's Public Safety Committee, reviewing the City's Emergency Operations Multi-Hazard Plan, and with recent changes in the City's executive staff, I have identified the need to update our Emergency Response Plan, exercise our Emergency Operations Center, and re-engage City employees to complete the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Incident Command System training.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency adopted the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as a standard to manage Emergency Operations Centers, establish uniform reporting forms, and to promote the use of common terminology. This is known as the Incident Command System or (ICS). The required training in this system consists of four courses: IS-00100, IS-00200, IS-00700 and IS-00800. These four courses are essential, and provide a solid

foundation to a well managed disaster response and ensure coordinated interactions with county, state, and federal disaster relief agencies and their personnel.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency continues to require all local, state, and federal employees, including the private sector and non-governmental personnel that have a direct role in emergency management and response, to be trained in NIMS which includes the Incident Command System. This includes all emergency services related disciplines such as emergency medical services, hospitals, public health, fire service, law enforcement, public works/utilities, skilled support personnel, and other emergency management response, support, and volunteer personnel.

The Federal NIMS Integration Center strongly recommends training for all elected officials who, in addition to City staff, will be interacting with multiple jurisdictions and agencies during an emergency incident. In addition, it is critical that the Mayor and City Council be cognizant of their policy and guidance responsibilities in a disaster situation. There may well be a necessity to enact emergency ordinances and procedures in the disaster response and recovery phases that fall outside customary municipal practices. These could include addressing issues like the immediate need to acquire emergency supplies and equipment, suspension of typical bidding and purchasing conventions, or adoption of a curfew enforcement ordinance.

As the governing body, the City Council will provide for the City's continuity of government with the authority defined in the state's Emergency Services Act, the City Charter, and local ordinances. In concert with the Incident Commander, the City Council will have to coordinate with regional agencies, Bay Area local jurisdictions, and our institutional neighbors through the Alameda County Operational Area offices. California's emergency response system is a practical matrix for the resource requests and response coordination that we will have to effect during the response and recovery periods.

The Fire Department is currently working on a plan that will provide essential training and continuing education to the City's employees regarding the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Incident Command System, updating our training records, and conducting tabletop exercises which include activating the Emergency Operations Center for a simulated event. This training should be completed by June 2015. Activating the Emergency Operations Center for a simulated event will allow our staff the opportunity to practice their respective disciplines, identify our strengths, assist in modernizing the Emergency Operations Center, and prepare for an actual event.

Assessing our needs is a challenging process with advances in the information and technology field, government mandates, and the ever present threat of a large scale earthquake on the Hayward fault. However, through training, review of the Incident Command System and Emergency Operations Center activations, we will be better prepared for the actual events, natural or manmade.

It is my plan to ensure that Piedmont's disaster preparedness training is ongoing, that the City's Emergency Plan is reviewed and updated on a regular basis, and Emergency Operations Center training exercises are conducted on an annual basis.

By: Warren (Bud) McLaren, Fire Chief