

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS INDEX SHEET**

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Resolution(s):

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Index: --Letter of the County Administrative Office dated May 12, 2008

- Item: 15.** AUTHORIZED the County representative to the Santa Cruz County Consolidated Emergency Communications Center Board to vote in favor of a survey of residents regarding options and alternatives for funding the 9-1-1 emergency communications system on a uniform, county-wide basis, as recommended by the County Administrative Officer



County of Santa Cruz

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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SUSAN MAURIELLO, J.D., COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

May 12, 2008

APPROVED AND FILED BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

DATE: May 20, 2008
COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ
SUSAN A. MAURIELLO
EX-OFFICIO CLERK OF THE BOARD

AGENDA: May 20, 2008

BY Sharon Mitchell DEPUTY

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, California 95060

THE CITY/COUNTY 911 CENTER

Dear Members of the Board:

In 1991 the County and the cities of Capitola, Santa Cruz and Watsonville executed a joint powers agreement that created the Santa Cruz County Consolidated Emergency Communications Center (the "9-1-1 Center"). The 9-1-1 Center was created to equip, maintain, operate and staff a single site, public safety communications facility to provide 9-1-1 and public safety dispatch services for the law enforcement, fire, rescue and emergency medical providers of the participant agencies.

In 1994, a new communications center was constructed. That communications center now efficiently and effectively provides emergency dispatch services to 96% of the residents of Santa Cruz County. The center demonstrates the efficiencies that can be achieved when local governments work together for a common purpose and is a model of intergovernmental cooperation. The Center has also earned national recognition and at this time is the only 9-1-1 Center in California that has achieved accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies for excellence in public safety.

On May 7, 2008 this office met with the City Managers of Santa Cruz and Watsonville regarding two matters that threaten the long-term financial stability and operations of the 9-1-1 Center that services our community. The two threats are:

- the recent Union City court decision which is inconsistent with a previous trial court and appellate court rulings upholding Santa Cruz County's 9-1-1 fee; and
- the federal mandate which reduces the number of frequencies available for local governments and requires the construction of a new communications system and the acquisition of new radio equipment for police, fire and emergency medical by 2013.

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The conclusion of our meeting was that the long-term future of the Communications Center and communications services in our respective jurisdictions was well served by a common solution to these problems. Rather than each city and the County struggling individually with these problems we should look to a common solution which would provide for repeal of each jurisdiction's 9-1-1 fee or charge in favor of a uniform 9-1-1 funding mechanism in an amount sufficient to provide financial stability for the Center's operations and provide the necessary funding to implement the new federal mandate.

As a first step in the process, which we believe will take six to nine months to implement, we agreed to seek authorization from each of the member agencies legislative body for the Santa Cruz Emergency Communication Center to begin work on a plan which would lead to a uniform 9-1-1 revenue measure that would be submitted to the voters by the 9-1-1 Center Board and to conduct a poll to determine the viability of such a measure. The poll would be paid through the 9-1-1 Center budget.

In the past there has been widespread voter support of the 9-1-1 fee and the 9-1-1 Center. In 2004 an Initiative to repeal the fee was qualified for the ballot. On November 2, 2004, the voters rejected the Initiative by 71.2%.

Recommendation

At this time it is RECOMMENDED that your Board authorize the County representative to the Santa Cruz County Consolidated Emergency Communications Center Board to vote in favor of a survey of residents regarding options and alternatives for funding the 9-1-1 emergency communications system on a uniform, county wide basis.

Very truly yours,



Susan A. Mauriello
 County Administrative Officer

cc: Capitola City Manager
 Santa Cruz City Manager
 Watsonville City Manager
 SCCECC Executive Director
 Information Services Department Director