

Committee Meeting of
November 13, 2014

Honorable Members of the Council Employee Relations
and Public Safety Standing Committee
City Hall
Torrance, California

Members of the Committee:

**SUBJECT: Police, Fire, and Communication and Information Technology –
Replacement of Emergency Notification System. Expenditure: \$110,000.**

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation of the Police Chief, Fire Chief, and Communication and Information Technology Director that Council Employee Relations and Public Safety Standing Committee approve the replacement of a City-wide Emergency Notification System. The estimated cost in the first year is \$40,000 and \$35,000 annually for the second and third years, for a total expenditure of \$110,000 for three years.

FUNDING

Funds are available in the Police Department operating budget.

BACKGROUND

Mass notification systems, often referred to as “reverse 911” systems, are widely used by government agencies to notify local communities of emergency situations. The City presently has a mass notification system called CodeRED, initially intended to deliver public messages via land-line telephone. The Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPREP) has recommended replacing the CodeRed system with newer technology that also works with smart phones, the Internet, and social media to reach the public more effectively in case of emergency.

ANALYSIS

Modern technology can now enable public agencies to reach residents and businesses through multiple communication platforms, including land-lines, cellular phones, smart phones, and numerous other Internet-accessible devices. Social media channels and “texting,” services that did not exist a decade ago are now the preferred means of communication for a growing segment of the population. The City’s ability to notify the public in case of emergency is currently limited by obsolete technology that does not operate across today’s spectrum of communication media. The Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPREP) initiated an effort to identify and evaluate mass notification systems to replace the City’s current system. The intent was to enhance the City’s ability to disseminate information in an emergency, communicate across a broad array of media platforms, and increase functionality by allowing users to selectively receive non-emergency information.

In an emergency, a mass notification system calls published and non-published land-line numbers in the telephone company's 911 database. Additionally, new systems have the capability to allow the public to self-register to receive notifications of non-emergency activities. Some of these activities may include routine updates on road closures, construction projects, and special events such as the Armed Forces Day Parade. The new system would allow the public to choose what types of alerts they want to receive, and it would allow a choice for a preferred method of delivery. Available delivery methods include land-line telephones, mobile phones, text messages, electronic mail, and mobile app alerts. In addition to these features, a new system would include an interactive tool that facilitates City staff call-outs for emergencies, and allows staff to provide response times.

After extensive research and review, the E-Prep Committee has identified a system that meets the City's needs. Staff is requesting the Employee Relations and Public Safety Standing Committee's conceptual approval to proceed with the emergency notification system replacement and negotiate a vendor contract.

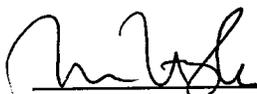
The estimated cost for a new system is \$40,000 in the first year, which would be partially offset by eliminating the existing CodeRed system, due for annual renewal in December. First year costs include system implementation, importing 911 and other contact information, and training employees. The estimated cost in years two and three is \$35,000 per year, partially offset by the CodeRed savings and by terminating Nixle service. This would result in a total expenditure of \$110,000 for three years.

Respectfully submitted,

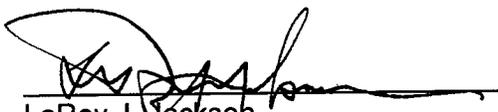
MARK A. MATSUDA
Chief of Police

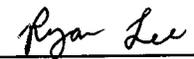
fw By:  13770
Soraya Sutherlin
Emergency Services Coordinator

CONCUR:


Mark A. Matsuda
Chief of Police


William Racowski
Chief of Fire


LeRoy J. Jackson
City Manager

for 
Richard Shigaki
Communication and
Information Technology Director