



Office of the City Manager

19b

ACTION CALENDAR
October 02, 2012
(Continued from September 11, 2012)

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From:  Christine Daniel, City Manager
Submitted by: Debra Pryor, Fire Chief
Subject: Staff Response to DFSC Comments to the May 1, 2012 Report

RECOMMENDATION

Consider the staff update along with the Disaster Fire and Safety Commission's (DFSC) request that additional funds be allocated for disaster preparedness and community emergency response training (CERT) programs, and direct the City Manager to report back with budget recommendations in January 2013 as part of the FY 2014 budget process.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Staff will analyze the commission's recommendations and provide a budget analysis with the FY 2014 budget process.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Measure GG Report

The DFSC may make recommendations to the City Manager and the City Council on how any tax proceeds should be spent. The Fire Department provides two budget presentations to the DFSC on a semi-annual basis in September and February to keep the commission informed of the Measure GG expenditures.

The DFSC created a sub-committee to review the revenue and expenditure reports. Four (4) sub-committee meetings were scheduled with the Fire Department and Budget Office during the past fiscal year. During these sub-committee meetings, the sub-committee members identified and requested additional information for staff to include in future budget reports. The items include additional information and projected expenditures for the Radio Interoperability Project. Staff is due to report back to the DFSC at the September 26 commission meeting on the final closing report for FY 2012.

As of the end of FY 2012, the ending unreserved fund balance in Measure GG is \$721,677. In February, 2012, staff had projected to the DFSC that the closing balance would be \$503,327.

Of the fund balance, staff allocated \$21,600 annually for a six-year planned replacement of the EKG monitors and defibrillators used on fifteen (15) First Responder Advanced Life Support (FRALS) apparatus. This allocation was a substantive topic of discussion during the labor negotiations to implement the FRALS program in 2009.

For FY 2013, staff has projected that the portable and mobile radios have a user life of 15 years, and projects that \$220,000 per year is needed to replace 550 radios for the Fire and Police departments.

In the fund balance report, the Budget Office identifies the allocations for equipment replacement for FRALS and Radio Interoperability. The commission recommends that “remaining” funds could and should be used for community preparedness. Staff recommends that surplus funds over and above the equipment replacement allocations could be used as “one-time” allocations for disaster preparedness activities or projects. Potential projects include doubling the number of disaster caches offered from 8 to 16 per year, and expanding the equipment provided in the caches over the next 4 years.

CERT Program

The number of Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) classes offered on an annual basis has increased by over 300% since 2008. Staff has been directed to offer a minimum of eight (8) core classes per quarter to maintain opportunities for disaster cache applicants to meet eligibility requirements. The Fire Department will offer the following classes twice per quarter:

- Light Search and Rescue
- Fire Safety
- Disaster Medical Operations
- CERT Organization

In order to better meet the demand for CERT classes, staff is pursuing to hire hourly, outside CERT instructors. In addition, staff has consolidated the core CERT classes into a 20-hour CERT Academy. The CERT Academy has been successfully piloted twice this year.

To help address high demand for CERT training, staff will expand enrollment capacity by using larger facilities for some courses. By using larger classrooms, staff will have the ability to expand class sizes for lecture-based courses from 25 to 50 per class. Staff is working with the Health, Housing and Community Services Department to use senior centers for future classes.

FEMA Curriculum

The DFSC expressed concern with the 2010 update and transition to the use of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) based curriculum and lack of “Berkeley”-specific information that was developed with previous training materials.

The CERT program managers and instructors updated the CERT training materials and lesson plans to provide program consistency. Across classes, the standardized

curriculum ensures that Berkeley CERT volunteers receive uniform training so that they can respond together effectively. Standardized training materials support interoperability across jurisdictions and newcomers to Berkeley can fit into the program without additional training.

CERT program managers are exploring opportunities to provide classes to wider audiences, such as multi-lingual and low-vision/blind persons. By using the national curriculum, program managers can access FEMA training resources for multiple audiences as they are developed.

CERT classes emphasize hazards affecting Berkeley. Instructors provide target hazard-specific information in the classroom, or deemphasize preparedness efforts for hazards that are more prone to other areas of the country. Further, FEMA allows for jurisdiction-specific hazard information to be added to the nationally-standardized curriculum. Berkeley has taken advantage of this flexibility: Based on CERT course participant feedback, program managers have expanded the CERT training curriculum beyond the normal core classes. Berkeley's CERT program now includes Animal Response, Expedient Flood Response, Ham Radio Operations, Command Post Set-Up, and the bi-annual CERT Academy.

Disaster Cache Program

The DSFC made recommendations that additional equipment be added to the Disaster Cache program. Staff had communicated to the DFSC that the Disaster Cache program was to recognize neighborhood groups, community and faith-based organizations that took significant steps toward disaster readiness.

The purpose of the Disaster Cache program is to:

- 1) Recognize neighborhood groups and community-and faith-based organizations for having taken significant steps toward disaster readiness, and
- 2) To incentivize communities to continue coordinating their readiness activities.

It is expected that cache recipient groups will continue planning and training efforts, using City-provided equipment. The cache program does not provide, nor does it take the place of, personal preparedness kits.

The Disaster Cache program has evolved since its inception. In 2006, the amount and type of equipment provided was reduced for two reasons. First, reduction in cost per cache allowed for a significant increase in the number of available caches. Second, the change to the cache equipment list corresponded to the trained skills covered in the CERT training program.

In 2003, the cost of each cache was \$13,000. Some of the more costly equipment provided to neighborhood groups at that time is not covered in the CERT training. It was initially conceived that professional first responders could use some of the equipment in a disaster. Since then, the City has aligned the cache inventory with the CERT training curriculum. This change allowed the cache program to expand its reach

to 62 caches across Berkeley. If the program focus remained currently, there would only be 18 caches in the City.¹

A staff report and DFSC recommendations are due back to Council January 2013 as part of the FY2014/2015 budget process. The report will include recommendations and consideration to add select items to future caches based on relevance to training.

BACKGROUND

In November 2008, Measure GG was passed to enhance emergency response and preparedness by eliminating rotating fire station closures; provide advanced life support on every fire company and a training officer for emergency medical services; hire staff to provide CERT training and other preparedness efforts; fund neighborhood emergency equipment caches; acquiring and maintaining equipment to enhance emergency preparedness, including equipment necessary to allow compatible radio communications throughout the City and with outside public safety agencies, and reserving tax proceeds as necessary to fund such acquisition.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Staff will continue to collaborate with the DFSC and provide a work plan and funding request in January 2013.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

CONTACT PERSON

Debra Pryor, Fire Chief, 981-5500
Aaron Lee, Assistant Fire Chief, 981-5502

¹ Based on 2012 \$18,000 cost estimate for 2003 cache contents.