

CONSENT CALENDAR

July 19, 2005

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
FROM: Council members Olds, Capitelli and Wozniak and Mayor Tom Bates
RE: *Fire Company Closures*

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council direct the City Manager to limit the closure of fire companies to no more than one company at any given time and require Fire Station 7 remain open during the fire season months of mid July through October.

BACKGROUND:

At a meeting with Assistant Fire Chief David Orth on Thursday, July 8, 2005, we learned that the current schedule for fire company closures involves one company being closed, on a rotating basis, during most of the next several months. But what we didn't previously understand is that because of summer vacation schedules, 11 vacant firefighter positions, and several people out with injuries, two companies may be closed up to 75% of the time through the next several months.

In addition, contrary to our previous understanding of the plan, we learned that Station 7, located in the very vulnerable fire area of the north Berkeley hills is also scheduled to be closed as part of the rotation. Because this information is different than what we understood and because we feel that the safety of our city is at risk, we are requesting that the City Manager restore levels of service that will allow only one company to be closed at any given time and will also exempt Station 7 from closure during the period July 15 – October 31, 2005. As part of the FY 2006 budget, the fire department was authorized to hire and train additional firefighters to fill this gap and it is anticipated that staffing levels will be restored by January. This will greatly reduce the frequency of a company closure.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Not to exceed \$300,000. Funds to be temporarily shifted from the \$4.3 million in one-time street repair supplemental funding approved by the Council in June until the City Manager is able to identify another source of revenue.

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