

**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH  
MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
ADJOURNED REGULAR MEETING  
FIRE DEPARTMENT STAFFING STUDY  
MARCH 31, 2009**

The Adjourned Regular Fire Staffing Study Session of the City of Manhattan Beach, California, was held on the 31<sup>st</sup> day of March, 2009, at the hour of 6:35 p.m., in the Police/Fire Conference Room at 400/420 15th Street, in said City.

**PLEDGE TO FLAG**

Firefighter Tom Desmond led the pledge of allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Councilmembers: Montgomery, Tell, Powell, Ward and Mayor Cohen.  
Staff: City Manager Dolan, Fire Chief Scott Ferguson, Battalion Chiefs Frank Chiella, Ken Shuck and John Weber, Fire Marshal Jeff Sanders, Fire Inspector Brian Yount, Fire Captain Dave Shenbaum, Administrative Intern Soraya Sutherlin and Fire Association Members Jim Muth and Mike Murrey.

Absent: None.

Clerk: Dolan (Acting).

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

03/31/09-2. John Lincoln Re the Fire Department Staffing Study

**John Lincoln, No Address Provided**, praised the form and content of the Fire Department Staffing Study and encouraged Council to consider a form of consolidation with other South Bay Fire Departments.

03/31/09-3. George Butts Re Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

**George Butts, No Address Provided**, shared that the Manhattan Beach CERT team was successful in raising enough funds to cover some of the program's expenses and encouraged the audience to participate in future courses.

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

03/31/09-1. Presentation and Discussion of the Fire Department Staffing Study

City Manager Geoff Dolan provided the historical perspective and purpose of the staffing study. He shared his appreciation for the work that went into its completion and expressed support for the conclusions that were going to be presented.

Fire Chief Scott Ferguson thanked the City Council for their continued support of the Fire Department. He shared the context of the presentation, indicating that each component would be linked by three factors: time, fire behavior, and staffing. He indicated that the relevance of each speaker's topic would begin broadly and finish with a specific relevance to Manhattan Beach. Fire Chief Ferguson iterated that the goal of the Study presentation was to seek a consensus for an appropriate staffing level for the community. Conversely, it was not the goal of the committee to gain a commitment from Council for specific funding or a phase-in period.

Fire Battalion Chief Ken Shuck shared the 2008 Fire Department Response Statistics.

Fire Marshal Jeff Sanders connected the duties of the Fire Prevention Bureau with the mission of the Fire Department. He explained that Full Time Employees (FTE) were able to complete (81%) of the annual inspections assigned to his division.

Fire Battalion Chief Shuck reviewed the Cascade of Emergency Response and explained which response time performance indicators could be influenced by training and efficiency.

Fire Captain David Shenbaum illustrated the Dynamics of Fire and critical tasks embedded within the Standards of Response using a series of short videos and graphics. He shared how each task was prioritized according to how quickly a fire evolved to the point of flashover.

Fire Battalion Chief Frank Chiella explained how tactical priorities are measured against a risk versus benefit model. He further categorized Manhattan Beach into four well-defined risk hazards: maximum, high, medium, and special.

Fire Battalion Chief John Weber shared the industry standards that help govern the fire service. These included such organizations as the National Fire Protection Agency, International City Managers Association, Insurance Services Office and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Building on the information previously presented, Fire Battalion Chief Weber indicated the importance of having a minimum number of firefighters on the scene (15 to 20) before a fire could flashover (8-minutes). Fire Battalion Chief Weber went on to present the results of several other studies that had been completed by other fire departments. The key components of which demonstrated the relationship between staffing, safety and efficiency.

Administrative Intern Soraya Sutherlin was introduced as a part-time person employed to assist in gathering pertinent data. She shared the research methodology and regional results of the survey. The conclusions indicated that the Fire Department was behind each of its comparables in operational (regional staffing .56 firefighters per 1,000 employees; Manhattan Beach .26) and administrative support.

Fire Inspector Brian Yount shared the results of the Manhattan Beach response time study. The results indicated that a four-person crew was able to shave over two minutes off the response time (from drive time to when the firefighters were ready to make entry) in high-density areas.

Fire Chief Scott Ferguson presented a Channel 2 News video clip of a fire that took place on 36<sup>th</sup> Place in Manhattan Beach in November of 2008. He went on to relate how each of the components previously presented related to the fire department's ability to safely and effectively respond to a well-involved house fire.

Fire Battalion Chief Chiella briefly shared the results of the funding mechanisms researched.

City Manager Geoff Dolan expressed appreciation for the combined efforts that went into the completion of the Staffing Study. Lastly, he shared the long-term staffing goals (build-out) for the fire department. In order of priority, they included:

- Constant staff one additional firefighter on Engine 21 per shift (3 FTEs)
- Management Analyst (1 FTE)
- 40-hour Training Officer/Emergency Manager (1 FTE)
- Constant staff a second Rescue to Station 22 (6 FTEs)
- Fire Inspector (1 FTE)
- Administrative Receptionist (1 FTE)

Additional discussion between staff, Council and the Fire Association included the relative plausibility of adding a ladder truck.

Fire Engineer James Muth shared the Firefighter Association's perspective. In doing so, he shared the member's appreciation for involvement in the study and support for the report's findings.

Fire Engineer Muth and Firefighter Mike Murrey expressed support for the ladder truck and presented a short video on NFPA 1710.

Council acknowledged “build out” and that consideration may be given to adding a ladder truck to complete “build out”. Direction was given to form a stakeholder committee to conduct research and present the findings for any proposed funding mechanisms and appropriate a phase-in methodology.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:51 p.m., the meeting was duly adjourned to the 5:30 p.m. Adjourned Regular Meeting to be followed by the 6:30 p.m. Regular City Council Meeting on Tuesday, April 7, 2009, in the City Council Chambers of City Hall, 1400 Highland Avenue, in said City.

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Scott Ferguson  
Recording Secretary

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Portia Cohen  
Mayor

ATTEST:

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Liza Tamura  
City Clerk