

Council Meeting of  
May 15, 2007

**SUPPLEMENTAL #3**

Honorable Mayor and Members  
of the City Council  
City Hall  
Torrance, California

**Members of the Council:**

**SUBJECT: Supplemental Material #3 to Council Agenda Item 13A**

Attached is supplemental material prepared after the original item was distributed.

Attached for your information is a proposal submitted by the Torrance Fire Fighters Association addressing the submitted addition of a peak hour paramedic unit. Additionally Fire Chief Bongard has submitted his analysis and his recommendation related to this proposal.

The City Manager also has attached his review and his best approach if the Air and Lighting unit were shut down. He concurs with the recommendation of the Fire Chief and his approach to the reallocation of staff.

The City Manager would recommend that the City Council concur in the inclusion of the dollars to fund the proposed unit as submitted in the City Manager's proposed budget and direct staff and TFFA to return in the next 60 days with the specific approach to be used to achieve the offset staffing.

Respectfully submitted,

LeROY J. JACKSON  
CITY MANAGER

By   
LeRoy J. Jackson  
City Manager

**Attachments:**

- A. Memo from Chief Bongard dated 5/15/07
- B. Memo from Otto Stiefel dated 5/10/07
- C. City Manager proposal (visual)



**TORRANCE FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
**Inter-Division Communications**  
**OFFICE OF THE FIRE CHIEF**

**Date:** May 15, 2007  
**To:** LeRoy Jackson, City Manager  
**From:** Rick Bongard, Fire Chief  
**Subject:** **Response to TFFA Proposal for a fully staffed rescue**

The basic concept of using firefighters from air/lighting 95 and hazmat 91 can be done operationally as proposed. However, the moving of the air and lighting unit and making it part of haz-mat is not an operational need as outlined and creates another premium position.

Operationally, the Air and Lighting unit is an invaluable support piece of equipment that has responded to all types of incidents since the mid 80's...We moved the fifth firefighters from T-91 and T-96 to staff the unit full time in the early 1990's. A firefighter's position was upgraded to an engineer's position when we placed the new air and lighting unit in service in 1999.

The removal of the firefighters from A/L does not diminish the need to have A/L staffed full time with the engineer. Support on rescues, fires, haz-mat incidents and PD incidents is always needed in a timely manner. The A/L also provides support at other City functions on an as needed basis. Firefighter safety is the key issue here. NFPA 1500 requires the setting up of a firefighter rehabilitation center on incidents where entry is made with breathing apparatus. Besides assisting in truck operations, (A/L responds every time a ladder truck does) the A/L unit provides bottle refilling, lighting resources, utility controls and a rehab center as the bottles are being filled. Additionally, our **Class One status** (one of forty-two in the country) is based upon staffing levels and support equipment; rescue personnel (paramedics) are not given the same weighting as suppression personnel.

Although I can't support moving the A/L unit to be part of Hazmat 91, I am strongly opposed to removing the A/L unit from full time service. I am a firm believer in being an offensive fire department. We limit losses because we place the right amount of equipment and staffing on an incident to abate the danger quickly and safely, with safety being a priority for responders. That is what a class one fire department does, operates above the standards of other fire departments based on deployment of resources, staffing, communications and water resources.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Bongard  
FireChief



**To:** Mayor Scotto; City Council; LeRoy Jackson, City Manager; Chief R. Bongard

**From:** Otto Stiefel, President Torrance Firefighters Association L1138

**Attachment B**

**Subject:** Fully Staffed 5th Rescue (24 hour)

### RECOMMENDATION

The Torrance Firefighters recommend that a 5th Rescue is added within the city of Torrance. We are offering this alternative option for consideration as to the implementation of the Rescue unit. It is referred to as Option "F". This option does not add Firefighters but provides for a 24 hour staffed Rescue unit.

### ANALYSIS

The TFFA agrees with the City and the Fire Chief that a 5th Paramedic Rescue unit is a necessity. The goal of the TFFA option is, to provide an increase in the level of service to the community without compromising safety of our personnel. We feel that we can accomplish both goals by rearranging current manpower. There will be initial and recurring costs regardless of which option is chosen.

### INITIAL & RECURRING COSTS

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| New rescue with equipment cost (Previously budgeted for) | <b>\$145,000</b> |
| Annual replacement maintenance cost (On-going)           | <b>\$42,000</b>  |

### OPTION F

Air & Lighting Firefighter to Rescue 95

Haz Mat 91 Firefighter to Rescue 95

Air & Lighting Engineer to Haz Mat 91 as Engineer/Operator/On Shift Investigator

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The three Firefighters positions from Air and Lighting and the three Firefighters positions from Haz Mat 91 would be moved to the new Rescue 95 and be trained as FF/Paramedics.

The three Engineers positions from Air and Lighting would be reassigned to Haz Mat 91 as an Engineer/Operator/On Shift Investigator position with a Haz Mat bonus and with the responsibilities of driving and maintaining the following equipment:

- Air & Lighting
- Haz Mat Trailer
- Foam 91
- Haz Mat Mass Decon Trailer
- On Shift Arson Investigator

This arraignment maintains the staffing level of the Haz Mat team and also accomplishes keeping the Air & Lighting unit available to the department for major emergencies and also available to the TPD who use this unit regularly on crime scene investigations.

The three displaced Haz Mat Firefighter positions would become regular Firefighters but maintain their current Haz Mat premium and be re-appointed into the Haz Mat team as openings occur due to promotions or retirements.

With this option we have accomplished the following:

- Provided a 24 hour 5<sup>th</sup> Rescue Unit
- Maintained the current Haz Mat team staffing
- Enhanced one Engineer position to Haz Mat Engineer
- Added a On Shift Arson investigator
- No personnel added to roster

#### RECURRING COSTS

|   |               |                 |
|---|---------------|-----------------|
| Upgrade three Firefighter Positions to FF/Paramedics:   | \$29,600 X 3= | <b>\$88,800</b> |
| Upgrade three Haz Mat Firefighter Positions to FF/Paramedics:   | \$9767 X 3=   | <b>\$29,300</b> |
| Upgrade Air & Lighting Engineer to Haz Mat Engineer   | \$20,023 X 3= | <b>\$60,069</b> |
| Constant staffing to fill partial openings<br>(Compensates for loss of A&L FF & HM FF for partial openings) |               | <b>\$79,100</b> |
| <b>Total Recurring Costs</b>  |               |                 |
| <b>\$257,269</b>  |               |                 |

#### ONE TIME COSTS

|   |               |                 |
|---|---------------|-----------------|
| Pay for displaced Haz Mat Firefighters (approx. one year before reassignment) | \$7395 X 3=   | <b>\$22,185</b> |
| Paramedic School for six Firefighters   | \$54,000 X 6= |                 |
| <b>\$324,000</b>  |               |                 |
| Fees and Licensing  | \$1400 X 6=   |                 |
| <b>\$8400</b>   |               |                 |
| <b>Total One Time Costs</b>   |               |                 |
| <b>\$354,585</b>  |               |                 |

These "One Time" costs can be reduced drastically by aggressively recruiting and hiring new employees

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who possess their Paramedic License before becoming Torrance Firefighters. The impact can also be spread out over a longer period of time (3.29 years) due to the decrease in recurring costs from what is already before the Council. A difference of \$107,731.

|                                 |                        |                    |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
|                                 | \$354,585 / \$107,731= | 3.29 yrs.          |
|                                 | \$354,585 / 3 years=   | <b>\$118,195</b>   |
|                                 |                        | + <b>\$217,719</b> |
| Per year over three year period | =                      | <b>\$335,914</b>   |

CONCLUSION

The option listed above accomplishes establishing a 5<sup>th</sup> Rescue unit within the City of Torrance staffed on a 24-hour basis. We have been able to do this without adding personnel to the roster and by rearranging current personnel.

The above option also keeps a vital piece of equipment (A&L 95) in service and available to be used as needed without a delay in its deployment.

The option would necessitate a change in our emergency operations due to the loss in the ability for the Air & Lighting personnel to be used as a two man Search and Rescue team. With the loss of this ability it would become necessary two respond a second Rescue unit to any "First Alarm" assignment with one of the Rescues being used as a Search and Rescue team and also assigned to the first in Truck company for other duties that need to be accomplished.

We would like to address one final item. As has been stated previously, the department has not added personnel in over 20 years. With the current work load (non-emergency) and the predicted increase in emergency responses, our department will need to address the lack of personnel that will be needed to accomplish all the KPI's and responsibilities to the citizens of Torrance. This will include the necessity of the department covering partial openings due to physicals and such by paying overtime to the individuals or with overtime personnel hired to cover.





