

## **Follow-up Report to the 2016-2017 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury**



### **Case #0616**

### **County Wide Dispatch for Fire**

### **Two Are Not Always Better Than One**

### **Preface**

This report contains the responses to the 2017-2018 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury follow-up to the 2016-2017 report #0616, “County Wide Dispatch for Fire.” The 2017-2018 Grand Jury findings and recommendations, as well as the agency’s responses are presented verbatim in this report.

The 2018-2019 Grand Jury follow-up determinations are presented after the agency’s response to each recommendation.

**Discussions, findings, and recommendations from the 2019-2020 Grand Jury are in text boxes framed in black.**

Complete copies of the original reports and the agency’s responses may be found on the San Joaquin County Grand Jury website at: <https://www.sjcourts.org/grandjury/>

## Summary

The 2016-2017 San Joaquin Civil Grand Jury report #0616 focused on emergency dispatch protocol, operations, and infrastructure. The report researched whether a single countywide fire dispatch center in San Joaquin County would improve public safety and reduce cost. The 2019-2020 San Joaquin Grand Jury found that the recommendations have not been implemented.

## Method of Follow-Up Investigation

The 2019-2020 Grand Jury reviewed the original 2016-2017 report #0616, the 2018-2019 and 2017-2018 Grand Jury follow-up reports. The mandatory responses were evaluated to determine:

- If the agency's responses were complete and comprehensible;
- If the agency implemented the recommendations within the stated deadlines; and
- If confirmation was necessary. Confirmation could include written documentation, interviews or site inspections.

## Glossary

- **AVL:** Automatic Vehicle Locator. Identifies the exact location of emergency vehicles and routes the closest vehicle to the emergency.
- **CAD:** Computer-Aided Dispatch.
- **UHF:** Ultra-High Radio Frequency
- **VRECC:** Valley Regional Emergency Communication Center. VRECC is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) run by American Medical Response (AMR) that dispatches for the ambulance services and many of the fire agencies in the County.

## Summary of Responses and 2019-2020 Grand Jury Conclusions

Respondent	Rec #	Response	2019-2020 Grand Jury Response
City of Stockton	R1	Not implemented	No further action requested.
	R2	Not implemented	No further action requested.

## 2016-2017 Grand Jury Recommendations

**2016-2017 Grand Jury Recommendation R1.4:** By December 31, 2017, the City of Stockton develop a plan to replace the existing core UHF radio technology that supports public safety with San Joaquin County core UHF technology.

**Stockton City Council Response dated August 22, 2017:** *The respondent partially agrees and partially disagrees with this recommendation. The City is currently working with a consultant to develop a project schedule and plan to replace its' outdated core UHF radio technology that supports City public safety agencies. The plan will be developed with regional interoperability and possible redundancy with county technology in mind, but separate from San Joaquin County's current core UHF radio technology plan. It is anticipated that a schedule will be in place prior to December 31, 2017.*

**2017-2018 Grand Jury Follow-up Response:** **The 2017-2018 Grand Jury determined further action is required.** The Grand Jury did not receive a copy of the anticipated schedule addressed above. The 2018-2019 Grand Jury may decide to follow-up on R1.4 to ensure that a project plan is published and that the system is installed within the anticipated timelines.

**2016-2017 Grand Jury Recommendation R2.1:** By December 31, 2018, have AVL deployed at the Stockton Fire Dispatch Center.

**Stockton City Council Response dated August 22, 2017:** *The respondent partially agrees with this recommendation. The City has an established timeline to implement the upgraded CAD system by January 2018, which will include AVL capability.*

**2017-2018 Grand Jury Follow-up Response:** **The 2017-2018 Grand Jury determined further action is required.** The Grand Jury did not receive a copy of the anticipated timeline schedule addressed above. As of the date of this report, the system has not been implemented by the City of Stockton, contrary to previous statements by various Fire Agencies. The 2018-2019 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury may decide to follow-up on this item to ensure that it has been implemented and performs as anticipated.

## **2018-2019 Grand Jury Discussion, Findings and Recommendations**

The 2018-2019 Grand Jury chose to follow-up on the 2016-2017 Grand Jury Recommendations R1.4 and R2.1 to determine if the plan to replace the existing core UHF radio technology and the CAD upgrade had been completed. Following interviews with City staff and a tour of the Stockton Fire Dispatch Center, the current Grand Jury requested an update of the time schedule from the City of Stockton. The City responded in August 2018 that due to changes in the specifications required by the San Joaquin County Emergency Medical Services Agency (SJEMSA) just months before the implementation of the CAD upgrade was going to occur, the deadline would be extended to March 2019. SJEMSA maintains that the City knew all specifications well in advance and that no revisions to the specifications occurred.

In March 2019, the Grand Jury followed up with the City to determine if the CAD upgrade had occurred. The City responded that it would be completed by the end of the calendar year.

**2018-2019 Grand Jury Finding F1:** The City of Stockton did not provide a plan to replace the existing core UHF radio technology when requested.

**Agency Response:** *The respondent agrees with this finding. The City had not previously completed the plan in order to share it with the Grand Jury. An update on the City's plan is provided in the response to Recommendation 1.*

**2018-2019 Grand Jury Finding F2:** The City of Stockton did not provide documentation of the changed CAD specifications despite several requests.

**Agency Response:** *The respondent agrees with this finding. The City had not previously provided documentation of the changed CAD specifications as they were still being amended. An update on the CAD project, including the requested documentation is provided in the response to Recommendation 2.*

**2018-2019 Grand Jury Finding F3:** The City of Stockton has not completed the upgrade of its CAD system that will allow for AVL technology.

**Agency Response:** *The respondent agrees with this finding. The CAD system upgrade has not been completed. An update on the CAD project, including the requested documentation is provided in the response to Recommendation 2.*

**2018-2019 Grand Jury Recommendation R1:** The City of Stockton provide a plan to replace the existing core UHF technology by September 31, 2019.

**Agency Response:** *The respondent partially agrees with this recommendation. The City has worked with a consultant to develop a project schedule to replace its outdated core UHF radio technology that supports City public safety agencies. Materials outlining the project scope by phase, project schedule and funding allocated in last Fiscal Year and the Current Fiscal Year are compiled into Exhibit 1 to this letter, The plan takes into consideration regional interoperability and possible redundancy with County technology.*

*However, the radio infrastructure will be separate from San Joaquin County's current core UHF radio technology plan.*

*The City's plan to replace the existing core UHF technology is underway. The City commenced with replacement by initiating a purchase order for the "brain" of the UHF system — an L Core. This component is the critical cornerstone that enables connectivity from dispatch consoles to field radios. The City anticipates the installation of this component as well as previously purchased radio consoles in the first quarter of 2020. Additionally, the City has earmarked over 3 million dollars in the FY 2019-20 budget for radio infrastructure upgrades which will include the replacement/upgrade of several radio channels as well as critical backbone components to increase redundancy of the existing infrastructure.*

**The 2019-2020 Grand Jury determined to take no further action.**

**2018-2019 Grand Jury Recommendation R2:** The City of Stockton complete the upgrade of its CAD system and have AVL deployed at the Stockton Fire Dispatch Center by December 31, 2019.

**Agency Response:** *The Respondent partially agrees with this recommendation. It is a City priority to complete the CAD system upgrade. However, at this time project complications do not allow a specific timeline to be established.*

*The City has been working cooperatively with public and private stakeholders to develop a timeline for the CAD upgrade, and deployable AVL, which requires uninterrupted emergency service coordination with multiple emergency first responder networks. The timeline was delayed beyond the control of the City of Stockton due to ongoing requests from the San Joaquin County Emergency Medical Services Agency (SJ EMSA) to modify the CAD-to-CAD data link, and the SJ EMSA has been unresponsive to requests from the City of Stockton for critical emergency service data that is required to upgrade and test software development. Materials demonstrating the requirement to change CAD specifications and the impacts of those changes are compiled into Exhibit 2 to this letter-*

*City staff have attempted to overcome the technical programming challenges through ongoing dialogues with the SJ EMSA and invested resources into CAD and AVL enhancements to interface city and county systems. The City's contractors have also worked to identify solutions for the new data link requests to no avail. The SJ EMSA, which is a county office has refused to provide system information to the City of Stockton which is required to completely support the most current demands for CAD-to-CAD interface.*

*The SJ EMSA requires the City of Stockton to share 18 data elements, including time of dispatch, call type, unit location, and unit status via a CAD-to-CAD link with Valley Regional Emergency Communications Center (VRECC). Making these enhancements requires the SJ EMSA to approve the VRECC to release the relevant data to carry out various technical changes. The SJ EMSA prohibited the VRECC from providing critical*

*information to the City of Stockton. For a complete CAD and A VL development, external stakeholder data is required to fully interface the systems, such as unit location, number of ambulances, EMS responders in the SJ EMSA system, and responder status for emergency calls. The system information from the SJ EMSA will support seamless twoway communication. The project timeline and go-live is contingent upon the SJ EMSA approving the release of design data to the City of Stockton. To exemplify the City's challenges, on April 25, 2018, Dan Burch released an electronic directive prohibiting the VRECC from providing critical ambulance unit time stamps to SFD dispatch and continued to request additional changes to the City of Stockton's CAD-to-CAD system upgrades.*

*During critical system failures, the City of Stockton provides Emergency Medical Service dispatch support to the SJ EMSANRECC. As backup, the City serves as the primary public safety answering point when a member of the public calls 911. As demonstrated during the recent VRECC system failure on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the majority of the VRECC dispatch system, CAD, radio, and phone system failed. Stockton Fire Department dispatch role was to ensure uninterrupted county-wide emergency fire and medical dispatch services were available. Two-way system data that is requested by the City will support complete programming enhancements to CAD-to-CAD and AVL, which must include unit locations responding unit status, and available unit details.*

*The data exchange will close known communication gaps and streamline communication to first responders and emergency services to residents requesting 911 services in San Joaquin County.*

*There is no other data available to the City of Stockton that will support the necessary custom programming. The City of Stockton firmly believes a complete CAD-to-CAD and AVL system upgrade should include SJ EMS/VRECC data to increase communication across multiple agencies. Support from the Grand Jury to facilitate the VRECC data exchange, will help move this project to completion.*

<p><b>The 2019-2020 Grand Jury determined to take no further action.</b></p>
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## Disclaimers

Grand Jury reports are based on documentary evidence and the testimony of sworn or admonished witnesses, not on conjecture or opinion. However, the Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing such evidence except upon the specific approval of the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court, or another judge appointed by the Presiding Judge (Penal Code Section 911.924.1 (a) and 929). Similarly, the Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing the identity of witnesses except upon an order of the court for narrowly defined purposes (Penal Code Sections 924.2 and 929).