

MINUTES
JOINT CITY COUNCIL MEETING
HILLSBOROUGH AND BURLINGAME CITY COUNCILS
MONDAY, March 10, 2003

Mayor Regan of Hillsborough called the Joint City Council Meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. at the Hillsborough Town Hall, 1600 Floribunda Avenue, Hillsborough California.

ROLL CALL HILLSBOROUGH: Present: Mullooly, Fannon, Kasten, Regan
Absent: Adams

ROLL CALL BURLINGAME: Present: Baylock, Galligan, O'Mahony
Absent: Coffey, Janney

NEW BUSINESS:

1. TOWN OF HILLSBOROUGH AND CITY OF BURLINGAME: Consideration of Fire Department Combined Services

Mayor Regan gave a brief summary of the history that has taken place over the last two years regarding the possibility of shared services between many of cities in the central San Mateo county area. As a result, the Town of Hillsborough and the City of Burlingame have been developing concepts toward a combined fire department. Mayor Regan indicated that the purpose of this meeting was to allow the two Councils to hear the progress to date, allow the Councils to ask questions, and discuss key issues in a public meeting. Mayor Regan added that the intent of the recommended approach is to develop data from a combined department and determine whether it should be implemented on a permanent basis.

Hillsborough Fire Chief Dave Milanese and Burlingame Fire Chief Bill Reilly presented a power point presentation to Council to help answer question that have occurred.

Background:

- Previous attempt to combine Fire Departments in 1994
- Formation of the ALS JPA
- Automatic Aid Responses, closest unit response
- Logical next step in working together, and training together
- Budget reduction impacts - do not fill vacancies

Benefits of a Combined Fire Department:

- More efficient use of personnel and equipment
- Retention - ability to be more competitive in the marketplace
- Eliminate duplication of services
- Standardize training and operations
- Improve coordination of fire companies
- Reduce cost of providing services while maintaining a high service level
- Expand Fire Prevention and Public Education Services - could provide additional training services to other cities such as, San Bruno, Millbrae, and San Mateo. This could help recover a portion of funds.
- Provide opportunity to maintain skills at all levels

Mayor Regan asked how the Burlingame Fire Station sleeping quarters compared to Hillsborough. Chief Reilly indicated that the newly remodeled Burlingame Fire Station has individual dorms for the fire fighters. Due to the budget constraints Hillsborough has been unable to remodel Fire Station 31.

Mayor Regan inquired about the new fire engines arriving in April/May and since it will not fit in the garage at Station 31 could the Town accommodate without remodeling. Chief Milanese explained that a different engine would be kept at Station 31 that would fit in the garage, or a tent structure would be temporarily erected to store the engine.

Vice Mayor Kasten asked how shared services would improve retention for each department. Chief Milanese indicated that this would increase the number of alarms, all personnel would get the opportunity to become more proficient at their position, and the ladder truck would be staffed with four personnel, which would provide better service.

Charles Steffen, Hillsborough Fire Captain and labor negotiator said that the Hillsborough Fire Department is very excited about the potential merger. The number one concern is to provide the best service possibly to the people of Hillsborough and Burlingame. Mr. Steffen indicated that adding one person to a truck company would make that piece of equipment much more proficient.

Mayor Regan asked if there were a major emergency, which city would get the better service. Chief Milanese indicated that the closest engine would respond to any alarm.

Councilmember Fannon asked why San Mateo is not interested in shared services. Chief Milanese explained that the San Mateo Fire Department is efficient in size that includes three Battalion Chiefs, six engine companies, and one truck company. However, San Mateo is very interested in taking part in the training programs Hillsborough and Burlingame could provide.

Vice Mayor Kasten raised a concern about the community relationship. Mr. Kasten explained that Hillsborough has a strong relationship with the schools, and would not want to see them neglected. Chief Reilly explained that Burlingame has been very active with the schools for many years, and combined services would not have any negative effect on the schools.

Hillsborough City Manager Anthony Constantouros said that the Hillsborough community would not see any difference in the service provided by the fire department other than the possibility of improved services.

Burlingame City Manager James Nantell said that one of the concerns Burlingame and Hillsborough would face during this merger would be the emotional and territorial concern between their citizens.

Mayor Regan opened public comment:

Dave Hood, resident of Hillsborough, noted concerns about the special police/fire assessment paid by Hillsborough residents, he asked if these fees would be re-allocated or changed.

Patrick Kelly, resident of Hillsborough, spoke with concern about the possibility that due to the merger, the insurance rating in Hillsborough could be changed from a Class 4 to a Class 7. Mr. Kelly also commented on the special tax paid per resident.

Christopher Zwingle, resident of Burlingame, spoke in concern of the merger and that there needs to be a review of fully developed budgets from both cities.

Mayor Regan closed public comment.

On motion of Councilmember Galligan, seconded by Vice Mayor O'Mahony, unanimous on voice vote, staff was directed to develop a pilot program for a combined Hillsborough and Burlingame Fire Department for a limited period and return to both City Councils for approval of the parameters of the pilot program.

On motion of Councilmember Mullooly, seconded by Vice Mayor Kasten, unanimous on voice vote, staff was directed to develop a pilot program for a combined Hillsborough and Burlingame Fire Department for a limited period and return to both City Councils for approval of the parameters of the program.

Hillsborough Mayor D. Paul Regan adjourned the meeting at 5:42 p.m.