

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **FIRE DEPARTMENT**

#### **Personnel Profile**

The Cranston Fire Department has 203 Uniformed/Sworn personnel. The actual authorized is 202. The additional position seems to be a result of one employee on extended absence. A review of the ethnicity and gender of these employees indicate:

- A. All 203 Uniformed/Sworn members of the Cranston Fire Department are White Males;
- B. Minorities are under-represented in the sworn workforce; and,
- C. Females are under-represented in the sworn workforce.

In conducting reviews of fire departments, the Study Team has not seen a paid fire department without uniformed/sworn women or minorities in 20 years. In this regard, Cranston is, indeed, unique. It is important to note that the City's non-white population is increasing. Between 1990 and 2000, an increase of six percent occurred in the City's non-white population (i.e., 5 to 11 percent).

Under Human Resources Management, the Study Team has suggested initiatives to improve women and minority representation in the Cranston Fire Department.

#### **Mission Statement**

Reportedly, there is no "Mission Statement" for the Cranston Fire Department (CFD). Over the next five years, the Cranston Fire Department will spend more than \$100 million. The reasons why there is no mission statement are unclear. The recommendation:

- A. Establish a Mission Statement, establish Service Level Objectives to meet the Mission Statement, and incorporate Values within a policy manual.

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### Fire Budget

The Fire Department's adopted budget in 1998 was listed by the City as \$18,039,538 in 1998. The FY2003 Total Budget for the Cranston Fire Department is listed in City publications as \$24,695,797, a \$6,656,259 increase since 1998, or a 36.89 percent increase. The Fire Department's budget, as published by the State of Rhode Island, was \$24,756,797 in FY2003.

### Comparative Per Capita Fire Costs

The State of Rhode Island publishes the police and fire budgets for cities and towns within the state. However, there is no consistency in reporting the data. For example, Cranston submits the total budget, while most other cities separate pension and hospitalization costs for police and fire services. Reporting of dental costs are not consistent. In light of inconsistencies in the published data in Rhode Island, relative per capita costs are not included herein. For the reader interested in those data, the likely approach is to contact officials in each city to be sure the data are consistent.

The ICMA publishes data relative to average fire per capita costs for cities in specific population ranges. The per capita costs listed in the ICMA Municipal Year Book, 2003 for 2002 per capita costs are as follows:

126 cities with a population range of 50,000 to 100,000:	\$118.45
60 cities with a population range of 100,000 to 250,000:	\$125.53
17 cities with a population range of 250,000 to 500,000:	\$119.94
7 cities with a population range of 500,000 to 1 million:	\$127.42

The City of Cranston Data for FY2002:

Cranston-Rhode Island Web site (80,072 ÷ \$21,134,085) **\$263.94**

Caution is required in the interpretation of the data. The ICMA notes that its average per capita costs include retirement and medical costs.

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#### Comparative Fire Department Staffing

Although the Study Team did not locate Fire Department staffing information by city in Rhode Island, officials may want to obtain this comparative data by contacting each of the cities. (As noted previously, the FBI publishes national data on police staffing.) The ICMA publishes fire staffing data by population range and number of cities reporting in each population range. The per capita staffing listed in the ICMA Municipal Year Book, 2003 for **2002 staffing** is as follows

<u>City Classification</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Uniformed/Sworn</u>
73/69 cities in New England	1.70	1.67
7 cities with a population range of 500,000 to 1 million:	1.93	1.69
17 cities with a population range of 250,000 to 500,000:	1.42	1.42
81/79 cities with a population range of 100,000 to 250,000:	1.57	1.41
152/148 cities with a population range of 50,000 to 100,000:	1.52	1.35
The data for Cranston:		
Cranston Authorized (202 Uniformed, 208 Total - 80,072):	<b><u>2.59</u></b>	<b><u>2.52</u></b>
City of Cranston - 2003 Estimated Population 81,674:	2.54	2.47

The Cranston Fire Department staffing ratios of Uniformed/Sworn and 'Total' employees per 1,000 residents is substantially above seven cities that serve a population of 500,000 to one million residents and that reported fire staffing data to the ICMA. If the Cranston Fire Department equaled the staffing ratio of seven cities that reported to the ICMA a population of 500,000 to one million residents, the Cranston Fire Department would need 139 Uniformed/Sworn Personnel (1.69 x 81.674 thousand residents-2003 estimate), or **63 fewer Uniformed/Sworn** personnel than 2003. If the Department equaled the fire staffing ratio of Uniformed/Sworn per 1,000 residents for the average of 148 cities with a population of 50,000 to 100,000 (1.35 x 81.674 -2003 estimate), Cranston would need 111 Uniformed/Sworn personnel, substantially fewer than the current 202.

In the Study Team's experiences in 40 states, it is most unusual for a fire department to have a higher ratio or number of sworn personnel per 1,000 population than police departments in those

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same cities. In Cranston, the Fire Department has 53 more uniformed/sworn positions than the Cranston Police Department.

Caution is required in the interpretation of the data; moreover, public safety personnel in Cranston point out that practices in Rhode Island are different.

### **Fire Grants**

The Study Team was impressed with the number and magnitude of the grants that have been obtained in recent years from various sources for the Cranston Fire Department. These grants were primarily from the Federal Department of Homeland Security via the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency. Reportedly, the grants that have recently been obtained include:

- A. Heavy rescue unit - \$200,000
- B. Utility pickup truck for special services support - \$37,000
- C. Hazardous material equipment - \$75,000
- D. Ear protection - \$21,700
- E. Communications for investigators - \$1,500
- F. Training mannequin - \$1,000
- G. Laptop computer to support operations - \$3,000

### **Perceptions of Fire Department Employees**

The Study Team always interviews employees and officials in labor groups in police departments and fire departments during Comprehensive studies. The interview perceptions on the Cranston Police Department were noted previously.

For the Fire Department, the City of Cranston arranged a meeting between members of the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF)/Local 1363 and the Study Team. The IAFF officials came to City Hall for the meeting. After entering the Conference Room and after the Study Team gave a brief introduction, the IAFF members left the room. There were no further interviews with these union officials. Only the Fire Chief and a number of the deputy chiefs agreed to meet with the Study Team. Their perceptions of strengths are listed in Chapter Six.

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### **FIRE DEPARTMENT (continued)**

#### **Fire Operations**

According to CFD records, the Fire Department handled 13,041 fire, rescue and EMS-related incidents in 2002. Reportedly, 72 percent of those incidents (9,478 calls) were EMS-related.

There are a number of accepted models for the delivery of pre-hospital EMS in the United States. The Cranston approach involves the Fire Department providing all pre-hospital Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS) EMS service in the City with four rescue (ambulance) transport units and fire apparatus responding as EMS first responder units.

In the delivery of EMS, the Cranston Fire Department staff utilize automatic defibrillators for the treatment of serious heart attack victims. This is a very progressive EMS service delivery tool, which is a state-of-the-art approach to saving lives across the U.S.

The CFD apparently has the policy of dispatching at least a rescue and an engine on all types of EMS calls. This seems to be “excessive” unit response, since, nationally, most basic EMS calls are handled by a single rescue/ambulance, unless there is a need for an additional unit due to the nature of the call, need for additional staffing and/or the rescue unit is coming from a significant distance.

The fire prevention function of the Fire Department is headed by a deputy chief who manages a broad range of related programs and activities including inspections, issuance of certifications of compliance and special permits, complaint and fire investigations, public education demonstrations, and the juvenile fire setters programs.

The Insurance Services Office conducted a classification assessment in early 2003. It took into account the Fire Department, the apparatus, maintenance, fire prevention, codes enforcement, communications, and water supply. It was noted that there are a number of areas, particularly in the Fire Department, where improvements could lead to an upgrade in the ISO rating for Cranston. The fire operations recommendations include:

- A. Ensure that workload data is maintained, reviewed, and assessed regularly in support of service-related decisions;

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- B. Implement a means of automatically documenting actual Fire Department response times;
- C. Revise the unit dispatch policy for EMS calls that provides for the dispatch of one rescue unit on most basic EMS calls with additional unit/s based on justified need;
- D. Develop and implement a stricter policy and procedure relating to the fee collection process for EMS calls;
- E. Continue aggressively working to significantly reduce the excessive Cranston mutual aid rescue responses to Providence;
- F. Implement a comprehensive pre-fire planning program where the firefighting personnel visit the target hazards in the City, tour each facility, prepare drawings and lists of hazards, and then, upon return to the station, develop the tactics and strategy for handling incidents at the particular facility;
- G. Incorporate the review and familiarization of completed pre-fire plans and related facilities into the Fire Department's training program;
- H. Assign on-duty firefighters to perform the actual official fire inspections in order to more fully support the functions of the fire prevention captain;
- I. Establish a Life and Fire Safety Education Committee to develop and implement a fire safety education program in Cranston; and,
- J. Establish and implement a plan to improve the Cranston ISO rating.

### **Training and Safety**

The Cranston Fire Department is lacking a comprehensive Safety Program that complies with Federal regulations, Rhode Island law, and widely accepted NFPA standards pertaining to safety. In addition, there is no wellness and fitness program to help ensure individual peak readiness for emergency response.

The Study Team recommends that current personnel be assigned health and wellness responsibilities. This is necessary if the Department is to take care of its most valuable resource - its employees. The recommendations include:

- A. Maintain the current two positions needed to adequately staff the Training Division, and ensure that vacancies within the division are filled rapidly;

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- B. Develop and implement a probation (rookie) training program. This should include specifics for a preceptor component to ensure consistency and quality in the program;
- C. Develop, implement, and maintain a state-of-the-art in-service training program utilizing a train-the-trainer approach to delivery and all of the criteria for credits identified in the ISO rating system;
- D. Develop and implement an officer development program. The program should support participation in college programs as well as State and National Fire Academy courses, especially the EFO program;
- E. Place a high priority on fire training certification programs with emphasis on a goal of having all CFD staff certified at the Firefighter II level, at a minimum;
- F. Implement a comprehensive computer-based records management system to include a training database component;
- G. Develop a comprehensive Safety Program in compliance with OSHA regulations and in accordance to NFPA Standard 1500;
- H. Review and revise the Infection Control Plan periodically;
- I. Review and update the rehabilitation program to fully meet standards and requirements;
- J. Support the development and implementation of a wellness and fitness program based on the program developed by the IAFF and IAFC.

### **Fire Apparatus**

In the judgment of the Study Team, the Cranston Fire Department could make a number of adjustments in the pumper, ladder truck, and rescue apparatus fleet to reduce costs while at the same time continuing to meet nationally recognized standards and criteria.

The Study Team encourages the City and the Fire Department to consider its future apparatus needs carefully. These units are quite high in cost, as well as requiring a significant commitment of personnel time and effort to maintain. Another consideration in such decisions relates to the relative availability of personnel to staff the units. With insufficient staffing, there is little justification for retaining redundant apparatus.

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### **FIRE DEPARTMENT (continued)**

Viewed generally, the apparatus in Cranston is in relatively good, though aging, condition. The cost and effort required to maintain an aging fleet are significantly more than that required for a fewer number of modern pieces of apparatus. Officials are encouraged to continue to retain two qualified mechanics to provide quality maintenance and utilize the suggested apparatus replacement criteria. The recommendations include:

- A. Continue the current approach to the maintenance of fire/rescue apparatus—work performed primarily at Station 2 by two qualified fire apparatus mechanics (civilian);
- B. Conduct an in-depth unit by unit reassessment of all cars, vans, and pickup trucks to determine justification for continued inclusion in the CFD fleet;
- C. Implementing the proposed reduction in the apparatus fleet, including removing one aging aerial truck and one rescue unit from the fleet;
  - 1. Reduce Engines from 8 to 5;
  - 2. Reduce Ladder Trucks from 5 to 4;
  - 3. Reduce Rescue Units from 6 to 5;
- D. Adopt the suggested apparatus replacement criteria; and,
- E. Conduct a thorough inventory of the hand tools and equipment on all fire apparatus and upgrade any engine or ladder (including reserve units) equipment inventory to meet ISO criteria.

### **Fire and EMS Dispatch**

Emergency dispatching of Cranston fire and rescue resources is handled by the Fire Alarm Division of the Cranston Fire Department. According to the Rules and Regulations of the CFD, the Division is responsible for “the care and maintenance of the signal and telephone service of the Department and its members shall comprise a Superintendent, Operator Supervisors, Operators, lead lineman and lineman.”

The superintendent, whose rank in the CFD is deputy chief, heads the division, is responsible to the chief, and has “general supervision of the Division and its members and to make such rules regulating the Division, which are not inconsistent with the Rules and Regulations of the Department or those made by the Chief, with the approval of the Mayor.”



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### **FIRE DEPARTMENT (continued)**

The contractual and budgeted staffing of the CFD fire dispatch function includes the following: one Superintendent (deputy chief), four Lieutenant/Fire Alarm positions, and four Firefighter positions. The minimum staffing of the CFD fire dispatch center is two personnel on duty at all times, one of which must be either a fire alarm lieutenant or a firefighter/fire alarm operator.

The officers and firefighters assigned to work in the CFD dispatch center work the same schedule as the field fire station-assigned staff—an average work week of forty-two hours; the work schedule consists of two (2) consecutive days of ten (10) hours each, two (2) consecutive days of fourteen hour nights, followed by four (4) days off.

Cranston Fire Department officials indicated to the Study Team that their fire and EMS dispatch process is not supported by a CAD system. There appears to be a recognition of the need to implement a fire/EMS CAD system; however, at this time, the fire and EMS dispatch process is entirely manual.

The Study Team was advised that the CFD utilizes a combination of VHF and UHF simplex frequencies for their dispatch and operations. The Department utilizes one tower site located at headquarters/Fire Station #2 for its transmitter and five other sites throughout the City as voting receiver sites. The recommendations include:

- A. Consolidate Police Department and Fire Department communications and dispatch under the Police Department;
- B. Implement Emergency Medical Dispatch service and related quality assurance services provided by the dispatchers serving Cranston as an enhancement to EMS service provision;
- C. If no consolidation, take the following actions:
  - 1) Update the written duties and responsibilities of the Fire Alarm Division;
  - 2) Civilianize the Fire Alarm functions;
  - 3) Implement a state-of-the-art CAD system in Fire Alarm;

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### **FIRE DEPARTMENT (continued)**

- 4) Ensure that the dispatch staffs serving Cranston are provided with a comprehensive training program that meets or exceeds state and national standards, principles, and practices.
- D. Ensure that all relevant emergency caller information is recorded by the Fire Alarm dispatch staff, including the identity of the caller.

### **Human Resources Management Fire Department**

As previously mentioned, the members of the Cranston Fire Department are represented by the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)/Local 1363. The Agreement is for the period July 1, 2001 to June 30, 2004. A number of the recommendations for HRM, some of which may require negotiations with Local 1363, are outlined as follows:

- A. Pursue actively the re-establishment of management rights through future interest arbitration proceedings and/or litigation;
- B. Remove all management personnel from current labor agreement;
- C. Eliminate most seniority provisions;
- D. Include EMT/C certification as a post-hiring, pre-completion of probationary period requirement;
- E. Implement an EMT/C loan or grant program, if 'D' above is not possible;
- F. Cease the 50 percent weighting of the written examination;
- G. Cease the 50 percent weighting of the physical ability/agility test. Consider pursuing arbitration/litigation regarding seniority provisions as violating the concept of equal opportunity, and as being in conflict with Federal laws pertaining to racial/ethnic, gender and age discrimination;
- H. Initiate more aggressive, energetic, and targeted racial/ethnic and gender minority recruitment programs designed to attract greater quantities of quality applicants for sworn and civilian positions;
- I. Develop and implement written standard operating procedures (SOPs) for all recruitment and selection activities;

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- J. Maintain a log of all grievances to include: the nature of the grievance, the rank and position of the employee filing it, the step at which the grievance was settled, and the nature of the settlement;
- K. Maintain a log of all internal and citizen complaints pertaining to alleged misconduct of employees to include: the nature of the complaint, whether the complaint was generated internally or by a citizen, whether the complaint involved a uniformed or civilian employee, the outcome of the investigation, and the discipline applied, if any;
- L. Maintain a log of all disciplinary actions to include: the rank and position of the employee involved, the nature of the misconduct, the nature of the discipline applied, and whether the discipline was grieved and with what result;
- M. Implement a psychological assessment component;
- N. Monitor personnel who repeatedly emerge in Workers' Compensation claims;
- O. Capture information pertaining to the nature and number of on-the-job injuries sustained by personnel for the purpose of developing and implementing focused prevention initiatives;
- P. Develop and implement programs designed to reduce the incidence of on-the-job injuries (e.g., flyers/brochures, incentives, awareness campaigns);
- Q. Initiate training in the areas of health/wellness, fitness, safety, and accident prevention; and,
- R. Develop standards pertaining to the amount and nature of permitted secondary employment.

### **Fire Stations**

The Cranston Fire Department has six fire stations. Station #2 houses the Fire Chief, senior staff, administrative functions, Fire Prevention Division, Training Division, EMS Division, HazMat Division, and the on-duty shift command officer. Further, the Fire Alarm Division, which handles all emergency 911 call taking and dispatch, and the Maintenance Division, which provides all fire and EMS apparatus and equipment maintenance, are located at Station #2.

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### **FIRE DEPARTMENT (continued)**

The Study Team utilized a computer model of the City of Cranston for purposes of conducting a fire station location analysis. Fire Stations 1 and 2 are approximately .5 and .6 miles, respectively, from the borders with Providence and Warwick. The proximity to the city border means that these two fire stations, where currently located, will never have full service areas within Cranston as compared to the other fire stations. These fire stations have “half/partial pie-shaped” response areas which do not allow them to operate as efficiently as the other fire stations in terms of service for the dollars spent.

Moreover, Fire Stations 1, 2, and 3 are very close together, .9 miles between Fire Stations 1 and 2 and .8 miles between Fire Stations 2 and 3, via the closest response routes. When considering the 1.5 mile ISO coverage standard for engine companies, these fire stations are significantly closer geographically than necessary.

Fire Stations 4 and 5 are approximately .75 and .7 miles, respectively, from the border with Warwick. This proximity to the City border means that these two fire stations, where currently located, also will never have full response areas within Cranston as compared to the other fire stations. These fire stations also have “half/partial-pie shaped” response areas which does not allow them to operate as efficiently as the other fire stations in terms of service for the dollars spent. Moreover, the proximity of Fire Stations 4 and 5 to each other is 1.3 miles, and indicates that there may be up to 1.5 miles of over-coverage between the engine companies located at these two fire stations. Therefore, the proximity of these two fire stations and their proximity to each other illustrates that there could be a more cost effective approach to fire services provision in this area of the City.

In the opinion of the Study Team, consideration should be given to replacing Fire Station 4 with a new fire station centrally located to the geographic areas currently served by Fire Stations 4 and 5, and closing current Fire Station #5 and Engine 5. A new, relocated Fire Station #4, could be built, for example, in the general vicinity of Oaklawn Avenue and Route 37. The specific location would need to be determined by Cranston officials based on available property for a new fire station, and roadway accesses for optimum emergency response.

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The ISO standard for ladder company response areas is that “the built-upon area of the city should have a first-due ..... ladder-service company within 2.5 miles.” A review of the current locations indicate that the CFD ladder company locations far exceed the ISO standard with significant response area overlap.

It appears to the Study Team that the City of Cranston could reasonably consider implementing a properly staffed quint ladder truck at Fire Station 1, in place of the dedicated engine and ladder companies currently assigned to that fire station. The geographic area covered by current Engine 1 and Ladder 1 responding from Fire Station 1 is limited due to the narrow area of Edgewood where this CFD fire station is located.

### **Fire Department Organization**

The Department has an authorized strength of 202 uniformed firefighting and 6 civilian support personnel. The chain of command in the Department includes one fire chief, one assistant fire chief, five deputy chiefs who head divisions, and four groups (shifts) each with a deputy chief and a complement of captains, lieutenants, and firefighters assigned to the six fire stations.

The Suppression Division is headed by four shift deputy chiefs and includes the field firefighting and rescue forces.

A deputy chief heads each of five divisions: fire prevention, HazMat, training, EMS, and fire alarm.

The organizational structure of the Cranston Fire Department seems to be top heavy in terms of the number of senior staff, and the tasks performed by a number of the senior staff members appear to be inappropriate to their rank. Some tasks performed by senior fire officers could be assigned more appropriately to junior officers, thereby allowing senior

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officers more time to perform administrative duties more appropriate to their rank. Of course, there are major costs for these extra high-ranking personnel. The recommendations include:

- A. Abolish one Assistant Fire Chief position and establish one Captain position for EMS;
- B. Abolish one Deputy Chief position and establish one Captain position for HazMat;
- C. Abolish four Deputy Chief positions and establish four Battalion Chief positions;
- D. Reassign the Superintendent of Fire Alarm position to serve as the Director of a newly created police, fire and EMS dispatch center and operation;
- E. Abolish a Captain, three Lieutenant positions and reallocating 20 Firefighters to staff Quint 1 with an Officer and four Firefighters;
- F. Abolish a Captain, three Lieutenant and 16 Firefighter positions with the phase out of Engine 2;
- G. Abolish One Captain, three Lieutenant and 16 Firefighter positions with the phase out of Engine 5; and,
- H. Abolish four Lieutenant and four Firefighter positions and establish eight civilian supervisor and dispatcher positions.

With 202 uniformed personnel, the recommendations relate to a reduction of 53 uniformed Fire Department personnel, 9 positions of which are recommended for civilianization of fire alarm. If the Fire Alarm Superintendent, a deputy chief position, and the 8 uniformed dispatchers are civilianized and transferred, the net reduction to the Cranston Fire Department is 53 positions; however, the proposed staffing over the next five years is a net reduction of 44 City-funded positions, since nine are proposed for transfer to the Police Department initially as dispatchers. Once a combined communications center is fully staffed and personnel trained, it is unlikely that all nine personnel would be needed for the future.

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#### **Fire Department Fiscal Impacts**

The Fire Department-related fiscal impacts will depend on which, if any, recommendations are implemented by the City of Cranston. The primary areas related to cost avoidance include:

- J. The reduction in the apparatus fleet by three engines, one ladder truck and one rescue unit, estimated at \$2.6 million over the 20-year life cycle of the apparatus;
- K. A reduction in the engine apparatus fleet by an additional engine, if the quint (combination engine/ladder) is implemented at Fire Station #1, estimated at \$464,000 over the 20-year life cycle of the apparatus;
- L. Implementation of the revised organizational structure is estimated at a cost avoidance of \$60,000 per year or \$300,000 over a five-year period, not including fringe benefits or cost of living; this relates to abolishing the assistant chief position, abolishing one deputy chief position, establishing two captain positions, and abolishing four deputy chief positions and simultaneously establishing four battalion chief positions;
- M. A reduction in apparatus staffing by 44 positions (three captains, nine lieutenants, and 32 firefighters) from phasing out three engine companies, estimated at a cost avoidance of \$2.1 million annually, or \$10.5 million over five years, not including fringe benefits;
- N. A reduction in civilianizing the four lieutenant and four firefighter-operator positions as part of the implementation of a combined police, fire and EMS dispatch operations, estimated at a cost avoidance of \$123,000 annually, or \$615,000 over five years, excluding fringe benefits and cost of living. The civilianization of the Deputy Chief Position (Fire Alarm Superintendent) will not likely represent savings or cost avoidance;
- O. The cost of construction of a new, centrally-located, Fire Station 4 with an estimated one-time cost of \$1 million (plus cost of property) for an 8,000 square foot fire station and cost avoidance from the operation of five fire stations, estimated at \$375,000 over a five-year period; and,
- P. The cost of approximately 1,500 additional square feet of space and fire dispatch systems and subsystems added to the new police station (if the City chooses to have the CPD responsible for the new proposed CECC), estimated at a one-time cost of \$400,000.

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### **FIRE DEPARTMENT (continued)**

#### **Review of the Fire Department Audit, Observations, and Suggestions**

The Mayor is encouraged to take 60 days to review the observations and findings in this Strategic Plan. During that period, he is encouraged to gain relevant input from the Fire Chief relative to any observations, findings, or suggestions. The input from the Fire Chief should be given substantial weight. Moreover, relevant input from the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)/Local 1363 is also encouraged. The 60-day period should be utilized to provide clarification, amplification, or corrections to any of the information in this report.