

City of Hesperia

STAFF REPORT



DATE: July 19, 2022

TO: Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Nils Bentsen, City Manager **SECOND READING AND ADOPTION**

BY: Rachel Molina, Assistant City Manager
Jamie Carone, Management Analyst
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SUBJECT: Emergency Service Roles

RECOMMENDED ACTION

It is recommended that the City Council hold a public hearing for, and place on first reading, Ordinance No. 2022-11 amending Hesperia Municipal Code Chapter 2.20 regarding the line of succession in the direction of emergency services.

***City Council requested several changes to Ordinance No. 2022-11 and Staff Report for second reading.**

BACKGROUND

Emergency management is an essential priority of local government. The City is the first line of defense against emergencies and is responsible for leading public preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation efforts. Members of a community look to local government for reassurance, direction, and connection to vital resources and recovery efforts throughout the phases of an emergency.

The City executes emergency management through procedures outlined in the Hesperia Municipal Code, Emergency Operations Plan, and Hazard Mitigation Plan. Each plan addresses certain components of emergency management but are all structured to complement one another for an efficient and cohesive response to various emergency situations.

The Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) addresses the City's planned response to extraordinary situations and natural, human caused or technological disasters. The EOP guides the activation of the City's Emergency Operations Center which provides citywide priorities, communications, and logistical support through all phases of an emergency. The Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) demonstrates long-term strategies to reduce the loss of life and property due to disasters. The HMP process encourages communities to develop goals and projects that will reduce risk and build a more disaster-resilient community by identifying potential local hazards.

The EOP and HMP are updated every four (4) years to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations. Their standards are modified to reflect the most current structure of City staff and resources available to the community. As a component of emergency management, the procedures stated in the Hesperia Municipal Code must be updated to complement language, regulations, and protocol provided in the EOP, HMP, and state and federal regulations.

Title 2, Chapter 2.20, Emergency Services, of the Hesperia Municipal Code declares the preparation and implementation of plans within Hesperia during an emergency, the direction of the Emergency Operations Center, and the coordination of emergency functions by City personnel and partners. Among personnel addressed in this section are the Director of Emergency Services, Assistant Director of Emergency Services, and Emergency services Coordinator. Additionally, this chapter establishes and defines membership of the Hesperia Disaster Council, which acts to develop emergency and mutual aid plans and agreements.

ISSUES/ANALYSIS

Multiple sections in Title 2, Chapter 2.20 establish procedures in Emergency Services that are outdated and do not comply with the current structure of City staff or other emergency plans. The proposed amendments resolve these discrepancies including representation on the Hesperia Disaster Council, roles of internal staff in emergency operations, and other protocol as pertinent. These changes are necessary for the municipal code to reflect current emergency response standards. Furthermore, as the City is in the final stages of producing the 2022 Emergency Operations Plan, these amendments allow the EOP to emphasize the responsibilities of internal staff.

Section 2.20.030 defines the members of the Hesperia Disaster Council as follows: Mayor, who shall be chairman; City Manager, who is the Director of Emergency Services; Fire Chief, who is the Assistant Director of Emergency Services; Police Chief; and Superintendent of the Hesperia School District. ~~It is recommended to maintain the seats of the Mayor and City Manager and to add a seat for the Assistant City Manager, who will act as the Assistant Director of Emergency services. The Fire Chief and Police Chief will be included as chiefs of emergency services, and the Superintendent of the Hesperia Unified School District will be replaced with such language to include representatives of other organizations as appointed by the Director of Emergency Services. Amending the membership of the Hesperia Disaster Council establishes representation from significant community leaders and ensures that input is provided by those with an official emergency responsibility.~~

It is recommended to maintain the seat of the Mayor as Chairman and assign the Mayor Pro Tem as an alternate in the Mayor's absence. The City Manager will remain on the disaster council as the Director of Emergency Services, and the Assistant City Manager will be added as the Assistant Director of Emergency Services. The Fire Chief and Police Chief will be included as Chiefs of Emergency Services. The Superintendent of the Hesperia Unified School District will remain on the disaster council, and additional seats will be added to include representatives of other organizations as appointed by the Director of Emergency Services. Amending the membership of the Hesperia Disaster Council establishes representation from significant community leaders and ensures that input is provided by those with an official emergency responsibility.

Section 2.20.050 establishes the roles of the Director of Emergency services, Assistant Director of Emergency Services, and the Emergency Services Coordinator. Presently, these roles are defined as follows: The City Manager is the Director of Emergency Services; the Fire Chief is the Assistant Director of Emergency Services; the Emergency Services Coordinator is appointed by the Assistant Director of Emergency Services. It is recommended that the Assistant City Manager replace the Fire Chief as the Assistant Director of Emergency services. This amendment is necessary to assign leadership to internal staff and reflects the role of the Assistant City Manager in other established emergency plans.

Section 2.20.060 outlines the specific powers and duties of the Director of Emergency Services. The City Manager is assigned as the Director of Emergency Services, who leads emergency organization efforts for the City and may request the proclamation of a local emergency. Within this section, the Director of Emergency Services is authorized to designate an order of succession to that office when unavailable to perform duties during an emergency. Currently, the order of succession places responsibility in the order of Fire Chief; Police Chief; second in command of the fire department; and second in command of the police department. This order of succession does not reflect the current structure of City staff or emergency response procedures. The proposed amendments will instead place responsibility on internal, senior management staff. If amended, the succession will be written as follows: Assistant City Manager; Director of Government Services/City Clerk; Director of Administrative Services; and Director of Public Works. These updates reflect the roles proposed in the 2022 Emergency Operations Plan as well as the current staff structure, which no longer includes the fire department or police department.

2.20.110 addresses the safety assessment program (SAP) which is implemented to evaluate the safety of built structures after a disaster. The City Building Official is named the SAP coordinator and is permitted to use the office of the Building Official for SAP activities. If this office is not habitable after a disaster, then the facilities at 11011 Santa Fe Avenue are offered as an alternate site. Presently, this facility houses the Hesperia Animal Shelter. Therefore, it is recommended to designate the Mojave Corporation Yard located at 17828 Mojave Street as the alternate site.

FISCAL IMPACT

There are no fiscal impacts associated with approval of the recommended action.

ALTERNATIVE(S)

1. Provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Ordinance No. 2022-11
2. Exhibit "A" Municipal Code Title 2, Chapter 2.20 redlined copy
3. Exhibit "B" Municipal Code Title 2, Chapter 2.20 amended copy