COMMITTEE REPORT
SAN CLEMENTE
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Date: February 23, 2021

PREPARED BY: Nick Berkuta, Public Safety Committee Chair

SUBJECT: Major Disaster Communications

BACKGROUND

Currently, the City of San Clemente radio communications services are provided by the County of Orange, which includes law enforcement, fire services, paramedic, lifeguard, public works and other government operations.

Complimenting the County's radio system is our locally authorized Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES). This program consists of federally licensed community volunteers who provide their time and resources as a viable alternate communication resource for governmental authorities. This network of radio operators is able to provide alternate channels of communications especially during an interruption of conventional forms of telecommunications.

DISCUSSION

During a major natural or man-made disaster resulting in a general shut-down of normal communication services including telephone and internet, the City's ability to rapidly summon essential lifesaving resources, to quickly identify problem locations or to initiate a coordinated disaster response would be severely degraded.

Currently, our City's designated disaster communications backup, RACES, lacks access to City owned locations and proper authorization, which are both needed to install radio transmitters and receivers necessary to give our City a resilient emergency disaster radio communications network.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Public Safety Committee take steps to:
- Evaluate the City's current disaster radio communications system
- Identify the amount of additional radio transmitter/receiver sites needed to provide proper radio and data transmission coverage
- Identify permissions necessary to utilize these sites
- Identify opportunities for budget financing for equipment and maintenance and
- Identify City resources necessary to exercise and drill the system in coordination with the City and County Disaster Services.