



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: COUNTY MANAGER

File #: 21-668

Board Meeting Date: 9/14/2021

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Michael Callagy, County Manager

Subject: Introduction of an Ordinance Amending the San Mateo County Ordinance Code to Reorganize County Departments

RECOMMENDATION:

Introduction of an ordinance amending Section 2.00.020 and various sections of Chapter 2.46 and adding Chapter 2.18 and Section 2.46.130 of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code to reorganize County departments and waive the reading of the ordinance in its entirety.

BACKGROUND:

Pursuant to the County Charter and Ordinance Code, the Board may create departments to serve the best interest of the County and the public it serves. The Ordinance Code provisions governing departments within the County and the structure of the County Manager's Office were last updated in March 2020. The proposed Ordinance Code changes address the organization of two newly designated departments: the Department of Emergency Management (formerly the Office of Emergency Services) and the Public Safety Communication department.

First: for the past approximately 25 years, the Office of Emergency Services (OES) was housed within the Sheriff's Office. Effective July 2021, OES transitioned from the Sheriff's Office to the County Manager's Office to better align emergency operational responses and preparedness with a countywide lens. The proposed revisions to the Ordinance Code seek to designate OES as a department and to rename it the **Department of Emergency Management (DEM)** to more clearly reflect its management and preparedness responsibilities, distinct from the direct provision of emergency services. DEM will continue to provide comprehensive emergency management that coordinates County resources to protect lives, property, and the environment through mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery from all disasters and hazards. DEM also will continue to oversee the SMC Alert notification system to provide text, voice, and e-mail messages during emergency situations.

Second, the **Public Safety Communication (PSC)** department runs the County emergency dispatch services. PSC operates the County's 9-1-1 Center to answer emergency and non-emergency calls in

order to dispatch law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services. PSC also currently answers Transit and Animal Services calls for service outside of normal weekday business hours and provides other public safety communication services. PSC reports performance measures to the Board of Supervisors bi-annually.

DISCUSSION:

Given the unique and critical nature of the Departments of Emergency Management and Public Safety Communication, as well as the permanent need for their essential safety and emergency services, DEM and PSC are more appropriately designated as Departments within the County whereby their Directors will be appointed by the County Manager and confirmed by the Board of Supervisors.

The proposed Ordinance Code changes reflect these changes to the list of County departments and describe the roles of the new departments. The proposed Ordinance Code changes also introduce minor adjustments to ensure clarity and to remove certain gendered language when describing emergency service actors.

The proposed Ordinance Code also renames the current OES as the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) to more accurately reflect the new department's emergency management responsibilities. The changes do not affect the current powers and duties of the County Manager as the Director of Emergency Services; as specified in Chapter 2.46 of the Ordinance Code, the County Manager retains the ultimate authority and control over the County's emergency services but delegates the day-to-day direction of DEM to its Director. DEM will continue to closely coordinate with the Sheriff's Office and other emergency service agencies as needed.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE:

Not applicable.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None