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## CITY OF LINDSAY PUBLIC SAFETY MERGER

### BACKGROUND

The City of Lindsay (City) was incorporated on February 28, 1910 and celebrated its centennial on Sunday, February 28, 2010. Julius Orton is credited with planting the first orange trees in the Lindsay district on his homestead, giving rise to the motto, "Central California's Citrus Center." The townsite was laid out by Captain Hutchinson and the community was named for his wife, Sadie Lindsay Patton Hutchinson.

In June 1995, the community of Lindsay was named the only unanimous choice as an All-America City. This extremely prestigious award is given annually to the ten cities in the United States which have provided outstanding examples of community problem solving. These cities are recognized not so much for their current status but for their innovation and hard work at identifying and addressing community problems.

In 1976, the Lindsay Police Department moved in with the Fire Department and the departments were combined into the Lindsay Department of Public Safety. The consolidated department ran from 1976 until 1985 when the Director of Public Safety separated the functions, but the cross training continued until the late 1990's. At that time, the Director of Public Safety ceased all cross training.

### REASONS FOR INVESTIGATION

The 2009-2010 Tulare County Grand Jury received a complaint concerning, among other items, the City Firefighter's living quarters and salaries. As a result, an investigation was initiated.

M. Brown Act and scheduled a City Council meeting on September 30, 2009 in an attempt to rectify this violation.

3. The first training session to train Police Officers in fire fighting duties started in November of 2009.
4. On February 9, 2010, the City voted to consolidate the City fire and police functions.
5. The firefighter living quarters were approximately eight feet by sixteen feet and included two or three beds, lockers and a small kitchenette.
6. Prior to the consolidation, there were three full time firefighters and approximately 22 full time police officers.

### PROCEDURES FOLLOWED

1. Relevant witnesses were interviewed.
2. Relevant documents were inspected.
3. Attended City Council Meetings.

### FINDINGS

1. On September 17, 2009, the City Council discussed the consolidation of the police and fire fighting functions at a City Council meeting in San Jose, California.
2. City officials later stated that the meeting in San Jose violated the Ralph

7. In 2000, 63 % of the City's fire calls for service were for medical aid/assist.
8. The fire fighting training that the police officers are going through does not include Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) or Paramedic training.
9. The City stated that the cost to send the police officers to the fire academy, not including salaries, is \$350 per person for a total cost of \$5250. This would train 15 police officers, yet the City states that they have approximately 22 police officers.
10. The City stated that the cost to send the firefighters to the police academy, not including salaries, is \$1600 per person for a total cost of \$4800. This would train 4 firefighters.
11. The training costs provided by the City do not include the additional cost that will be required to cover the shifts of the employees in training during their absence.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Prior to the consolidation, the firefighters need for equipment and adequate living quarters were lacking. It appears as if the needs of the police were given priority over those of the firefighters.

While the City should be commended for cross training police and firefighters, the City should thoroughly investigate the history of the prior consolidation and subsequent separation of functions in an effort to avoid having history repeat itself.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Do more of an outreach to the citizens, including the business community and retail property owners, to make them aware of the changes that have occurred with the consolidation of police and firefighters.
2. Comply with Ralph M. Brown Act.
3. Explore providing EMT and/or Paramedic training to Public Safety Officers.
4. Provide a full public accounting of cost versus savings of the consolidation on a regular basis.

## **REQUIRED RESPONSES**

City of Lindsay  
City of Lindsay Director of Public