



Lou Ann Texeira  
 Executive Officer

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February 10, 2010 (Agenda)

February 10, 2010  
Agenda Item 8a

Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo)  
 651 Pine Street, Sixth Floor  
 Martinez, CA 94553

**LAFCo Fire Workshop - Supplemental Report**

Dear Commissioners:

On February 3, Contra Costa LAFCo held a Fire Workshop. The workshop was well attended by County, city and special district officials and staff, fire commissioners, representatives from labor and the Contra Costa County Grand Jury, members of the public and the media.

The workshop, facilitated by Bill Chiat (Attachment 1 - *Bio*), included small and large group discussions, information sharing, problem identification, and discussion of potential opportunities and next steps (Attachment 2 - *Workshop Agenda*). LAFCo staff provided a brief overview of the Municipal Service Review process and outcomes; and officials from City of Orinda, East Contra Costa Fire Protection District, and the West County Fire Task Force provided updates regarding activities in their communities. The workshop also included a case study presented by Bill McCammon, Executive Director, East Bay Regional Communications System Authority and former Fire Chief, Alameda County Fire Department.

The small group discussions resulted in a list of pressing issues facing fire and emergency medical services in Contra Costa County. Recurring issues identified by the groups included funding, fiscal sustainability, service efficiency, service equity and consistency (Attachment 3 – complete list of *Pressing Issues*).

Next, the group brainstormed potential opportunities to address these issues. Some of the suggestions included: develop a common mission, evaluate service efficiencies, establish baseline and/or service standards, centralize dispatch services, and educate (i.e., the public, politicians) about fire service (Attachment 4 - complete list of *Opportunities*).

Finally, the group discussed next steps. Some of the ideas included: work to create a baseline among a consensus of fire professionals, continue to identify problems and solutions by sub-region and region,

continue to pursue best practices and governance/service models, continue public relations/education efforts and community involvement (see Attachment 5 for a complete list of *Next Steps*).

There appeared to be some interest in holding a second workshop. At this time, the Commission may wish to discuss next steps and how LAFCo might promote the continuation of dialogue and action.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Provide direction regarding next steps.

Please contact the LAFCo office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

LOU ANN TEXEIRA  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Attachments

# An Introduction to Your Facilitator and His Role in the Workshop

## Your Facilitator – Bill Chiat

William “Bill” Chiat (*pronounced shy-at*) brings a unique combination of knowledge, abilities and enthusiasm to his facilitation projects. He incorporates over 30 years of practical leadership experience in state and local governments into his work with groups, mixed with a fluency in governance issues and the challenges of today’s environment.

As a Director of **Alta Mesa Group, LLC** Bill serves as a facilitator and organizational and executive leadership development consultant with local governments. He also serves as Executive Director of the California Association of Local Agency Formations Commissions and Director of the California State Association of Counties Institute for Excellence in County Government.

Previous service includes County Executive Officer of Napa County and Director of Organizational Effectiveness in Santa Barbara County. He worked in city government as assistant to the city manager (and Organizational Development Coach) of Oxnard and in special districts as a Planning and Development Director for the Ventura Regional Sanitation District. At the state level, Bill served as the Executive Director of the Arizona Governor’s Office for Excellence in Government.

Bill began his career as a park ranger with Minnesota State Parks and an environmental educator with the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

Throughout his career Bill has often been tapped to facilitate groups addressing complex organizational and community problems. Previous facilitations range from creating a countywide oak tree removal policy to establishing a regional juvenile justice strategy, a countywide mental health strategic plan, and a city council vision and strategic plan.

Bill has a Bachelor of Science from the University of Minnesota and a Masters of Science in natural resources administration from the University of Michigan. He is a graduate of the Senior Executives in State and Local Government program, and the Leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century program, both from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Contact Bill at [wchiat@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wchiat@sbcglobal.net).

## What He’ll Be Doing

The facilitator’s role is to keep the discussion on track and to move the group along in achieving its goals. The facilitator helps to enforce the groundrules and other group standards. The facilitator will design and manage the process for the group’s work, but not the content.

The facilitator is not here as a mediator or judge. You can expect that he will add data and information that may be of value in the discussions, but will remain neutral on the content or solutions.

Among the tasks of the facilitator:

- ☞ **Manage the discussion** so everyone has a chance to speak and no one dominates.
- ☞ **Ask questions to test assumptions**, invite participation, gather information, and probe for hidden points.
- ☞ **Paraphrase to clarify**; repeat what people say to let others hear their point a second time and clarify key ideas.
- ☞ **Synthesize ideas** so people comment and build on each other’s thoughts.
- ☞ **Help the group stay on track** and point out digressions if discussion has veered off topic. “Park” off-topic comments and suggestions.
- ☞ **Look for common ground** and test assumptions to see where the group may have agreement.
- ☞ **Collect ideas** through group process activities which provide an opportunity for everyone to have a voice.
- ☞ **Summarize discussions** in a concise and timely manner.

**Remain Neutral:** While the facilitator is here as a contractor for the agency, his role is to help the group achieve its goal and not to arrive at a predetermined goal or strategy.



## FIRE SERVICES WORKSHOP

Martinez City Hall

3 February 2010

### AGENDA

Times are approximate

- |       |  |                 |
|-------|--|-----------------|
| 8:30  | Welcome from Chair   |                 |
| 8:35  | Introduction, facilitator role, agenda and groundrules   | Bill Chiat      |
| 8:45  | Where are we at today?   | Lou Ann Texeira |
|       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Conclusions of Fire Service Municipal Service Review</li> <li>◆ Work that has been accomplished to date</li> </ul>  |                 |
| 9:00  | Problem Identification – Part 1  | Small Groups    |
|       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <i>In the next three years, what do you see as the three most pressing issues for fire service in Contra Costa County?</i></li> <li>◆ <i>What are the consequences if no action is taken?</i></li> </ul>                              |                 |
| 9:30  | Problem Identification – Part 2  | Large Group     |
|       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Key points from small groups</li> <li>◆ <i>What <b>could</b> we accomplish through this effort?</i></li> <li>◆ <i>How can we make history here?</i></li> </ul>  |                 |
| 10:15 | What Do We Know?   | Bill Chiat      |
|       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Role, tools and limitations of LAFCo</li> <li>◆ Role, tools and limitations of fire agencies</li> <li>◆ Role, tools and limitations of the Board of Supervisors</li> <li>◆ Case Study of Alameda County Fire Consolidation</li> </ul> |                 |
| 11:00 | Potential Opportunities  |                 |
|       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Options Already Under Consideration</li> </ul>  | Group           |
| 11:30 | Agreement to Next Steps  | Bill Chiat      |
|       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <i>How shall we proceed? What may get in the way?</i></li> <li>◆ Next Meeting?</li> </ul>   |                 |
| Noon  | Adjourn  |                 |

## Most Pressing Issues

All in this together: mutual and auto aid

Lack of resources in an adjoining area

Sustainability of resources

Communications: radio systems; dispatching

Countywide protocol; standards of care

Funding: maintain level of service

All service should be level within county

Lack of/declining financial resources

Financial; equity in delivery; pension reform; firefighter medical costs

Funding: achieve and maintain funding for adequate level of service

Funding to sustain operations

Fire service evolves; now fire and EMS

Define primary mission: Fire? EMS? Rescue?

Have LAFCO require staffing levels

Stabilize funding source

Economics are changing

Service levels as resources become less

Control of "outgoing funds" of operations

Politics and its role in operations; move from talk to fix

Station relocation

Consistent services

Dispatch, paramedics, three persons on engines

Financial inequities across communities

Retirement obligations

Follow the "confetti trail" - look at various efforts by all parties, try to connect them and see if you can find a point to which the confetti leads

The facilitator adds that through a process such as this, a common goal might be found, which could lead to the alignment of decisions made by multiple authorities more or less towards a common goal

Funding: inequity; not enough; unstable; tax revenue varies

Service inequities

Assessed valuation dependence

How do you draw the line on service levels vs. .revenue base?

## Opportunities - What Can We Do Together?

Baseline

Common mission

Entitled by a minimum level of service

Then address where we are below standards

Evaluate service efficiencies; competition

Centralized dispatch

Cost savings

Best practices being done by others that we could use and can look at now too

Determine cost to run system: people

Reduce personnel costs

Local retirement system

Public education on what we do and what we need; reach others

Establish credibility with community

Identify those things we can't do

Countywide fire commissioners association

Work together; avoid waiting until crisis

Educate politicians

## Next Steps

Create a baseline by consensus among the professionals

Objective

Provide various governance and service models

What is the “tip” of the “confetti trail?”

Public relations: have press involved

Have community input

County; regional or smaller problem/solution

Statement on why we need to do this

Cost it out—is it financially feasible?

Determine how to provide efficient services

Pension reform