

Written materials relating to an item on this agenda that are distributed to the legislative bodies within 72 hours before the item is to be considered at its regularly scheduled meeting will be made available for public inspection at the City Clerk's Office, 300 West Third Street 4th Floor during customary business hours. Agenda reports are also on the City of Oxnard web site at www.oxnard.org.



AGENDA
OXNARD CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
Council Chambers, 305 West Third Street
March 12, 2019
Regular Meeting – 2:00 to 3:15 PM

A. ROLL CALL / POSTING OF AGENDA

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

At this time, the legislative body will consider public comments for a maximum of fifteen minutes. A person may address the legislative body only on matters not appearing on the agenda and within the subject matter jurisdiction of the legislative body. Speaker cards will not be accepted after the beginning of the general public comment period. Based on the number of speaker cards submitted, the presiding officer may impose time limits per speaker. Typically, speakers are limited to two minutes, but shorter time may be established as deemed necessary. A person not able to address the legislative body at this time because the fifteen minutes expires may do so just prior to adjournment of the meeting. The legislative body cannot enter into a detailed discussion or take action on any items presented during public comments at this time. Such items may only be referred to the City Manager for administrative action or scheduled on a subsequent agenda for discussion.

C. CONSENT AGENDA

City Clerk Department

1. SUBJECT: Approval of Minutes.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Public Safety Committee approve the minutes of the February 26, 2019 Regular Meeting as presented.

Contact: Michelle Ascencion

Phone: (805) 385-7805

D. REPORTS

Police Department

1. SUBJECT: False Alarm Reduction Program (20/10/10)

RECOMMENDATION: That the Public Safety Committee: 1) receive a report from the Police Department regarding its plan to reduce security system false alarms, and 2) provide input.

Contact: Scott Whitney

Phone: (805) 385-7624

E. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

F. ADJOURNMENT

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you require special assistance to participate in a meeting, please contact the City Clerk's Office at 385-7803. Notice at least 72 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to reasonably arrange for your accessibility to the meeting.

Agenda Item time estimates: (Staff Presentation / Committee Discussion / Public Comment)

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DRAFT

MINUTES OXNARD CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE Regular Meeting February 26, 2019

A. ROLL CALL / POSTING OF AGENDA

At 2:02 p.m., Chair MacDonald called to order the regular meeting of the Oxnard City Council Public Safety Committee in the City Hall Council Chambers, 305 W. Third Street, Oxnard, California. The City Clerk called the roll and announced the posting of the agenda. Members Vianey Lopez and Chair Bryan MacDonald were present; Member Carmen Ramirez was absent.

Staff members present were Alexander Nguyen, City Manager; Stephen Fischer, City Attorney; Jason Benites, Assistant Police Chief; Darwin Base, Fire Chief; Scott Whitney, Police Chief; and Michelle Ascencion, City Clerk.

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Public comments were received from Steve Nash (gun control).

C. CONSENT AGENDA

City Clerk Department

1. SUBJECT: Approval of Minutes.
RECOMMENDATION: That the Public Safety Committee approve the minutes of the February 12, 2019 Regular Meeting as presented.

VOTE: Lopez and MacDonald voted in favor of approval; the minutes were approved 2-0.

D. REPORTS

Police Department

1. SUBJECT: Use of Small Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (“Drones”) for Public Safety.
RECOMMENDATION: That the Public Safety Committee: 1) receive a report from the Police Department regarding the planned use of small unmanned aerial vehicles in public service applications, and 2) provide input.

The Assistant Police Chief gave a report. Discussion ensued among the Council and staff. Public comments were received from Steve Nash, Adam Vega, and Lucy Cartagena. Further discussion ensued. No action was required.

E. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

No requests were made. Chair MacDonald shared gratitude from his neighbor for the Fire Department’s recent assistance during an emergency.

F. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business on the agenda, and without objection, Chair MacDonald adjourned the meeting at 2:47 p.m.

MICHELLE ASCENCION, CMC
City Clerk

BRYAN MACDONALD
Chair



PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
AGENDA REPORT

TYPE OF ITEM: Report

AGENDA ITEM NO.: 1

DATE: March 12, 2019

TO: Public Safety Committee

FROM: Scott Whitney, Police Chief
scott.whitney@oxnard.org, (805) 385-7624

SUBJECT: False Alarm Reduction Program (20/10/10)

RECOMMENDATION

That the Public Safety Committee: 1) receive a report from the Police Department regarding its plan to reduce security system false alarms, and 2) provide input.

BACKGROUND

The Police Department is in the process of implementing an effort to reduce the incidence of false alarms. The "False Alarm Reduction Program" takes its form with a recently revised alarm ordinance, changes in Police Department procedures, and a more efficient means to manage alarm user permitting and compliance. This report will provide an overview of the efforts.

False Alarms are a Public Safety Concern

Police Department responses to false alarms is a public safety concern, as their sheer number imposes a drain on resources. During 2017, the Police Department responded to 4,555 alarm calls (2,790 commercial, and 1,765 residential). Studies across the nation have estimated that about 98% of alarm calls received by communications centers are false alarms. Oxnard's alarm call rates bear this out. In 2017, 97% of commercial alarms and residential alarms were false alarms, and almost 2% were caused by uncontrollable events such as weather. During this same year, only 77 alarm calls were "true" ("actual") alarms in which a crime occurred or a report resulted.

An analysis of Oxnard's alarm calls determined that the average alarm call required approximately 16.5 minutes of each responding officer's time. Alarm calls typically require a two-officer response, and in many cases, a K-9 officer if one was available. Given a basic two-officer response model, Oxnard police officers spent 2,505 officer-hours on alarm calls in 2017. This does not factor in dispatcher staff time, which includes receiving the call, entering the information into the Computer Assisted Dispatch system, and time spent attempting to

contact responsible parties. At any given time of the day, alarm calls compete with other calls for service.

In 2017, the Police Department began examining a number of avenues to address this, including a review of its alarm management effort, researching best practices, discussions with alarm industry professionals, and a review of Oxnard's security alarm ordinance. The result is the False Alarm Reduction Program.

Oxnard's Alarm Ordinance

Oxnard's new security and fire alarm ordinance went into effect on February 7, 2019. Ordinance 2951 (the "Alarm Ordinance") introduced a method to reduce the occurrence of false alarms, and emphasizes alarm user responsibility.

The Alarm Ordinance introduces an "enhanced call confirmation" requirement. Enhanced call confirmation requires that upon receipt of an alarm activation signal, alarm businesses must call a minimum of two (2) pre-designated contact phone numbers before requesting a police dispatch (Section 11-64.1). The Police Department will not respond to a burglary alarm if the enhanced call confirmation requirement is not met. Enhanced call confirmation exempts robbery alarms, panic alarms, duress alarms, gun stores, banks, pharmacies, and other specific locations determined by the Police Chief. Of note, agencies that have adopted enhanced call confirmation practices have reported up to 70% decreases in false alarm responses.

The Alarm Ordinance also defines what constitutes an excessive number of false alarms for an alarm user. During the course of a twelve (12) month period, an alarm user shall be entitled to one (1) false alarm response to their site without penalty. Should more than one (1) false alarm response occur during a twelve (12) month period, the alarm user would be fined \$145 for the second occurrence, and again for each subsequent occurrence within twelve (12) months of the most recent response to a false alarm (Section 11-72). This compares to the previous ordinance, in which alarm users were allowed two (2) responses before being subjected to fines, but the fine was higher (\$290).

Alarm users who have more than five (5) false alarms at their alarm site during the course of one (1) year, or do not pay false alarm fines are subject to having their alarm permit suspended or revoked (Section 11-72). Upon suspension or revocation of an alarm site's permit, the Police Department would cease responses to burglar alarms at the site. However, absent a written request from the alarm user requesting otherwise, the Police Department would still continue responses to alarm types that are designed to safeguard life safety, such as robbery, panic, and duress alarms (Sections 11-72(D)(1) and 11-72(E)(1)). In order to reinstate their permit, the alarm user must pay all fines and fees, have their alarm system inspected by a professional, and prove that their alarm system is in good working order.

Alarm User Responsibility

Oxnard's Alarm Ordinance requires alarm users with professionally-monitored systems to have a valid security alarm permit. The annual permit fee is \$25.00 (Section 11-70.1 (c)). Alarm users are required to apply and pay for their annual permit within thirty (30) days of their site's alarm

system installation (Section 11-69(A)). This includes conventional “do it yourself” alarm systems that an alarm business monitors (Section 11-69(C)). Operating a security alarm system with an expired permit is a correctable infraction, provided that the permit had been in an expired status for less than sixty (60) days, and that the permit fee is paid within ten (10) days of being noticed for the violation (Section 11-69(B)(2)). Operating a professionally monitored security alarm system without ever having obtained a valid permit for the alarm site, is an infraction (Section 11-69(B)(1)).

Under the Alarm Ordinance, users are responsible for diligently responding, or sending a representative to an alarm site within forty-five (45) minutes of a request by City staff to deactivate a malfunctioning alarm system, to provide needed access to the alarm site, or to assume responsibility for an alarm site that is unsecured. In the event that the alarm user is unwilling or unable to respond to the alarm site after being notified by City staff, the alarm user may be subject to cost recovery from the City, for incurred personnel and equipment costs (Section 11-64.3(A)(1)).

The Alarm Ordinance also addresses intentional misuse of alarm systems to summon a response. It shall be unlawful to intentionally activate an alarm system, including panic or duress alarms, to summon law enforcement when no burglary, robbery, or other crime dangerous to life or property is being committed or attempted on the premises. Violators of this provision will be subject to a civil penalty of two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250) per occurrence (Section 11-68(A)).

Police Department Procedures

To promote compliance with the enhanced call confirmation requirement, dispatchers will inquire if the reporting alarm monitoring business met the enhanced call confirmation requirement prior to calling, and will ask for those numbers prior to initiating a police response. As mentioned above, the enhanced call confirmation requirement must be met in order to initiate a police response.

Police officers will also leave written notice at false alarm response locations. The notice advises alarm users that the Police Department responded to a false alarm at their location/address. Officers will leave a notice at the location in a conspicuous place (e.g. in a mailbox, slipped under/through a door). If a responsible party is at the alarm site at the time of response, they will receive the copy. These records will be important in attempting to notify the alarm client of the problem, so they are more apt to address it, and prevent future false alarms and associated penalties.

Updates in the manner in which alarm calls are coded in the Police Department’s dispatch computer system are also being implemented. New disposition codes will be able to provide a breakdown of the various categories of false alarms.

The Police Department’s alarm administrator, a designated staff member, will work to encourage alarm owners to develop a plan to correct future problems with the alarm system, to help prevent future additional false alarm fines.

Alarm permits and false alarm management

The Police Department has contracted with a vendor to manage its alarm program. Public Safety Corporation (“PSC”) will manage alarm registration, false alarm notifications, billing, and collections. PSC will also provide customer support. Through PSC, alarm users will be able to renew their annual permits online (the specific web link will be announced soon). Once registered with PSC, users will have a logon and password, and may access their account at any time. Links to PSC will also be available on the Police Department’s website, as well as on the City’s website. Permit registration for those without computer access may be done through PSC at its customer service phone number, which will be activated soon.

The Police Department is currently working with PSC to establish the necessary processes, and anticipate that PSC’s services will begin on April 1, 2019. Because the Police Department is undertaking efforts to implement some substantial changes to our alarm permitting and management, enforcement of the ordinance will not commence until May 1, 2019.

Community Outreach

The Police Department is seeking to provide information to residents and businesses, so they have an opportunity to register and understand the new rules.

The Police Department also contacted alarm companies and provided information related to the renewed effort. The Police Department also requested that alarm businesses provide their clients a digital/hardcopy of the new Alarm Ordinance, permitting information, contact information for Oxnard’s alarm administrator, as well as for PSC.

At the time of this staff report, the following outreach efforts are being planned:

- A presentation at the March, 2019 Inter Neighborhood Council Organization
- Handouts at neighborhood council meetings
- A news release
- A social media campaign
- Information in the Weekly Neighborhood Councils Packet
- Alarm-related information on the Police Department’s website, as well as the City’s website. Included among this information are tips to reduce false alarms.
- Posting information on Channel 10

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact at this time.

Prepared by Jason Benites, Assistant Police Chief

ATTACHMENTS

Slide presentation

**Public Safety Committee Meeting
March 12, 2019**

**False Alarm Reduction
Program**

Jason Benites, Assistant Police Chief



Recommendation

That the Public Safety Committee:

- 1) receive a report from the Police Department regarding its plan to reduce security system false alarms, and
- 2) provide input.



Program Overview & Purpose

- Reduce the number of alarm calls
- Reduce the percentage of false alarm responses
- New security alarm ordinance
 - Promote alarm system owner responsibility and accountability
- New alarm permit registration, billing, collection
- False alarm notification process
- Alarm call disposition amendments



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False Alarms: A Public Safety Concern

2017: Oxnard Police responded to 4,555 alarms

- 97.23% were "false" alarms

2018: Oxnard Police responded to 4,789 alarms

- 99.3% were "false" alarms

Competes with other calls for service!



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What is a false alarm?

Oxnard's Alarm Ordinance, Section 11-63 (Q) defines a false alarm as:

"An alarm to which responding personnel, having investigated the alarm site, find no evidence of a situation requiring a response by such personnel, or, except for an alarm based on fire or medical emergency, find that the alarm site contains one or more unsecured exterior doors or windows. A false alarm includes an alarm caused by a power outage, but does not include an alarm caused by a force majeure or an extraordinary condition not reasonably within the control of the alarm business or alarm user. False alarms include situations involving an authorized person or persons at the alarm location who do not use the proper alarm code."



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Common Causes

- Malfunctioning alarm systems
- Owner, visitor, real estate agents, cleaning crews or other employee error in disarming the alarm system
- Doors or windows left open or ajar
- Animals locked inside and moving about the premises
- Mail being dropped through a door mail-drop slot
- Power outages / improper battery backup system
- Overly-sensitive systems
- Drapes or balloons blowing in the breeze
- Improperly secured doors or windows opened by wind



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Oxnard's Alarm Ordinance

Ordinance 2951

- Adopted by the City Council, effective Feb. 7, 2019
 - Promotes alarm user responsibility
 - Security alarm permit required
 - *Enhanced Call Confirmation* required
 - Excessive false alarms prohibited
- In addition, fees and penalties were updated



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Enhanced Call Confirmation (ECC)

A contemporary practice to reduce false alarms

Before calling police, alarm monitoring businesses required to attempt contact at a minimum of two (2) client-designated contact numbers

Dispatchers will ask for the numbers



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Alarm Client Responsibility

- Required to have a valid alarm permit (\$25/year)
- *Excessive false alarms* prohibited
 - Excessive false alarm = more than 1 false alarm response during a 12 month period
 - \$145 penalty per subsequent response during following 12 months
 - 5 + false alarm responses during a 12 month period may result in permit suspension / revocation
- Alarm client responsible for responding to site when unable to be secured
 - The City is not responsible for securing it



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Fines and Penalties

1st false alarm response during 12 mo. period	NO PENALTY
2nd + false alarm response during 12 mo. period	\$145 per response
Operation of professionally monitored alarm system without ever obtaining permit	\$250
Operation of alarm system with expired permit	\$145 Correctable if <60 days since expiration.
Operation of alarm system with suspended permit (regardless if false alarm or not)	\$145 per response
Operation of alarm system with revoked permit (regardless if false alarm or not)	\$290 per response



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Written notice

Oxnard Police Department False Alarm Response Notice

This document advises you that a police response to a false alarm occurred:

DATE: _____ TIME: _____ AM/PM CAD #: _____

Location: _____

Alarm users are responsible for permitting and the proper maintenance of their alarm systems. An alarm user may not have more than one (1) false alarm activation during any twelve (12) month period. Sites that exceed this will be subject to a fine of \$145 per subsequent response to a false alarm. For further information regarding the alarm ordinance, please contact Oxnard's Alarm Administrator at alarms@oxnardpd.org.

Alarm Type: ☐ Burglary ☐ Robbery/Holdup ☐ Panic/Duress

Observation(s) ☐ Premises secure, no ☐ Activated by a person

(check all that ☐ apparent cause ☐ Person without alarm code

apply): ☐ Weather ☐ Power outage ☐ Animal

☐ Improperly secured door/window

☐ Other _____

Person on site: _____ DOB: _____

Officer: _____ ID#: _____

** Ordinance 2951, Oxnard City Code 11-72: Excessive False Alarms Prohibited **



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Alarm Permit Information

- Oxnard is in the process of setting up an online security alarm permit management program
- Alarm users will be able to renew their permits online
- Links and contact information will also be posted on the Police Department and City websites
- "Go live" date is April 1, 2019
- In the meantime, apply for / renew your annual alarm license by visiting:

<https://www.oxnardpd.org/alarm-permits/>



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Outreach

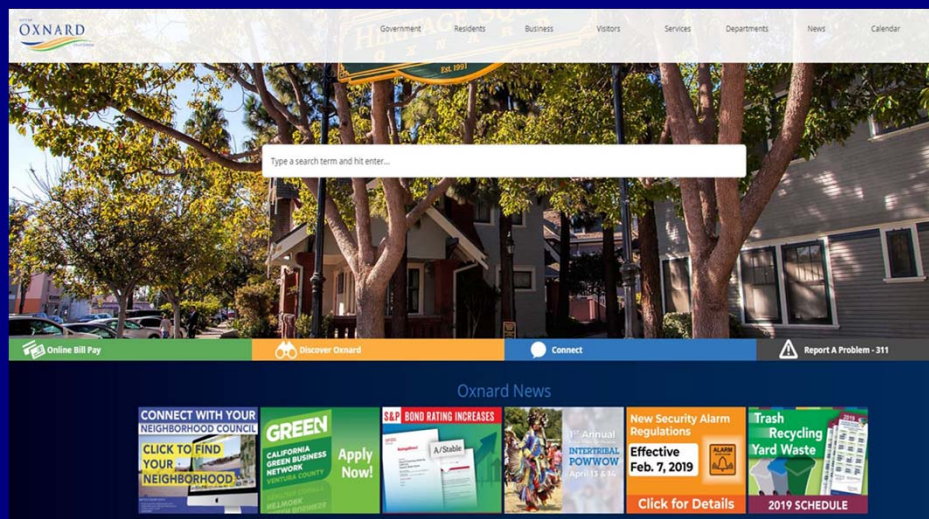
- Social Media (Nextdoor.com)
(25% of Oxnard households)
- Letters to alarm businesses (February)
- INCO (March 6)
- Public Safety Committee (March 12)
- Calling alarm companies (March-April)
- Neighborhood Council Weekly Packets (March-May)
- Oxnard utility bills (April)
- Video (Channel 10 – planned)



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<https://www.oxnard.org>



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