



Staff Report

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE BELMONT POLICE DEPARTMENT TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT NOT TO EXCEED \$15,000 WITH RAPID NOTIFY FOR AN EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM FOR BELMONT SAFE SCHOOLS

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

Summary

The Belmont Police Department, working with public and private schools in the Belmont Safe Schools Program, has identified a need for the schools to be able to send emergency messages to students, parents, and staff in the event of a significant incident occurring at the schools. After conducting research and contacting vendors, the Rapid Notify System was chosen.

Background

In 1999, the Belmont Police Department, in cooperation with the public and private schools of Belmont, formed Belmont Safe Schools Program. Belmont Safe Schools was originally set up to facilitate the communication link between the Belmont Police Department and the schools in Belmont for disaster preparedness planning. Since its inception, the Belmont Safe Schools Program has expanded to include cooperative educational efforts aimed at improving the safety of the youth of the community.

The overall goal of the Belmont Safe Schools Program is to give the necessary tools to our schools so they are as self-sufficient as possible during an emergency or disaster situation. Toward this end, each school has developed an emergency plan for their school and has practiced and drilled those plans both on their own and with the Belmont Police Department as well as Belmont-San Carlos Fire.

Significant events in recent years which have impacted our schools pointed to a need for a rapid, easy-to-use system, where schools could provide timely & accurate information to students, parents and staff in the event of an emergency/disaster situation. Two such incidents were the March-April 2006 storms, during which one of our schools experienced flooding and had to shut down during the middle of a school day and the May 2007 fatal traffic collision at Ralston Middle School. In both of these instances, giving the school the ability to send accurate, concise, and timely information to parents and other affected persons would have been invaluable.

The Belmont Police Department began looking into the various emergency alert systems available. Ultimately, an opt-in type system was chosen, where subscribers (students, parents, staff) sign-up voluntary, to receive System Management Server (SMS) text messages. This approach was chosen, as it gave the subscribers ultimate choice on participating and reduced the need for each school to maintain an up-to-date database.

Several vendors were contacted:

- Connect-Ed
- 247 Notification, Inc
- e2Campus
- Rapid Notify

Discussion

After several meetings with the 14 schools in the Belmont Safe Schools Program, eight decided to participate in the Rapid Notify System. Rapid Notify was chosen as it provided the needed features and had the lowest cost. The others six schools choose not to participate in the program at this time for various reasons, including prior commitments to other notification systems. The eight schools participating in the Rapid Notify System are:

- Notre Dame de Namur University
- Carlmont High School
- Belmont Community Learning Center
- Immaculate Heart of Mary School
- Charles Armstrong School
- Merry Moppet – Belmont Oaks Academy
- Holy Cross Pre-School
- Cipriani After-School Care

These schools account for approximately 5,000 of the approximately 9,000 students enrolled in the 14 schools of the Belmont Safe Schools Program. Notre Dame de Namur University was chosen as the test site during the development of this system and an example of the sign-up screen for the system is shown on Attachment A of this report.

The overall plan is for parents, students & staff at a participating school would go onto their school's website and sign-up to receive text message alerts over their cell phone or other mobile device capable of receiving an SMS text message. Subscribers have the option of joining or leaving the service at their choosing. In most cases the individual school will be responsible for sending messages over their system, again increasing the self-sufficiency of the school. However, if needed the Belmont Police Department will have the ability of sending messages out over the system as the situation dictated.

This school-based system is a supplement to the telephone notification system that has been in use by the City for over 15 years. That system, which is map-based, will continue to be used by the Belmont Police Department and other City Departments to send telephone messages to geographical areas of the City with information on incidents and activities affecting the area. In addition to this, all residents of San Mateo County have the option of signing up for the San Mateo County Alert Network text-messaging system. However, by giving the schools their own system we not only add to their self-sufficiency in an emergency or disaster situation, but also add an important level of redundancy in our community outreach and notification network.

General Plan/Vision Statement

Establishment of the Rapid Notify System for the Belmont Safe Schools Program supports the City's Vision Statement in the following areas:

Distinctive Community Character

- We get involved in town matters because we care about living here.

Thriving Culture

- Belmont is a wonderfully safe and supportive place to raise a family.
- Our schools and library are the pride of our community.

Fiscal Impact

The \$15,000 initial cost will come from existing funds in the City's Disaster Preparedness budget and will cover establishment of systems for all eight schools and cover first year maintenance. Further, yearly maintenance will be funded through the Belmont Safe Schools Program account.

Public Contact

Posting of City Council agenda.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the City Council authorize the Belmont Police Department to enter into a contract not to exceed \$15,000 with Rapid Notify for an emergency notification system for the Belmont Safe Schools Program.

Alternatives

1. Provide other direction to staff.
2. Take no action.

Attachments:

- A. Resolution
- B. Example of the Rapid Notify Sign-up screen for the NDNU Website

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Halleran
Police Lieutenant

Donald Mattei
Chief of Police

Jack R. Crist
City Manager

Staff Contact:
Patrick Halleran, Lieutenant
(650) 595-7430
path@belmont.gov

RESOLUTION NO.

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELMONT
AUTHORIZING THE BELMONT POLICE DEPARTMENT TO ENTER INTO A
CONTRACT NOT TO EXCEED \$15,000 WITH RAPID NOTIFY FOR AN
EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM FOR BELMONT SAFE SCHOOLS**

WHEREAS, in 1999, the Belmont Police Department, in cooperation with the public and private schools of Belmont, formed the Belmont Safe Schools Program. Belmont Safe Schools was originally set up to facilitate the communication link between the Belmont Police Department and the schools in Belmont for disaster preparedness planning; and,

WHEREAS, significant events in recent years, which have impacted our schools, pointed to a need for a rapid, easy-to-use system, where schools could provide timely & accurate information to students, parents and staff in the event of an emergency; and,

WHEREAS, after several meetings with the 14 schools in the Belmont Safe Schools Program, eight decided to participate in the Rapid Notify System; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Belmont hereby authorizes the Belmont Police Department to enter into a contract not to exceed \$15,000 with Rapid Notify for an emergency notification system for Belmont Safe Schools.

* * * * *

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly and regularly passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of Belmont at a regular meeting thereof held on May 26, 2009 by the following vote:

AYES, COUNCILMEMBERS: _____

NOES, COUNCILMEMBERS: _____

ABSTAIN, COUNCILMEMBERS: _____

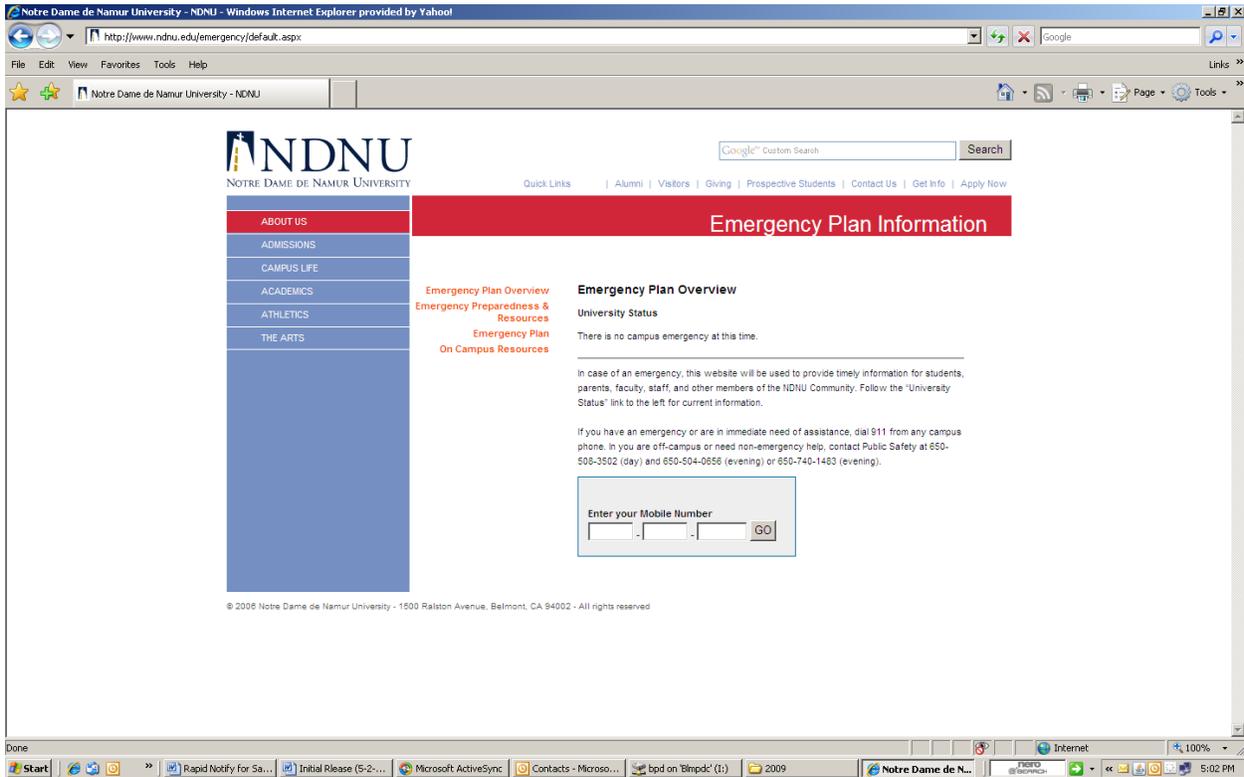
ABSENT, COUNCILMEMBERS: _____

CLERK of the City of Belmont

APPROVED:

MAYOR of the City of Belmont

Attachment A



Example Subscriber Sign-Up Screen developed for Notre Dame de Namur University