



Office of the City Manager

47

INFORMATION CALENDAR

April 14, 2020

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager

Submitted by: A.R. Greenwood, Chief of Police

Subject: Audit Recommendation Status - 911 Dispatchers: Understaffing Leads to Excessive Overtime and Low Morale

INTRODUCTION

On April 25, 2019, the City Auditor's Office issued its audit, *911 Dispatchers: Understaffing Leads to Excessive Overtime and Low Morale*¹ with recommendations to reduce overtime and vacancies, and further support dispatcher needs. The purpose of this report is to update City Council on the Police Department's progress on implementing the City Auditor's recommendations.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Staffing costs will depend on the outcome of the staffing analysis the City Auditor recommended we complete to determine appropriate staffing levels. That work is in progress. Our efforts to reduce overtime by filling budgeted vacancies has a net zero fiscal implication. The funds currently used to pay overtime come from budgeted funding meant for the vacant positions.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The City Auditor's report included 14 recommendations. As of the date of this report, 9 recommendations have been implemented, 4 are in progress, and 1 will not be implemented. Please see Attachment 1 for detailed information on the status of each recommendation. This is the first report to City Council with the next update planned for September 24, 2020.

BACKGROUND

The Berkeley Police Department (BPD) Communications Center serves as Berkeley's 911 public-safety answering point, receiving all emergency and non-emergency police, fire, and medical calls and dispatching public-safety personnel. BPD faces challenges in its efforts to recruit and fill vacancies. Staffing shortages negatively impact all police operations, including dispatch. In September of 2018, the BPD developed a team of five staff dedicated to all facets of recruitment, retention, and expediting processing of hiring,

¹ City Auditor's Office Dispatcher Audit (04/25/19): <http://bit.ly/2DvbCpv>

while maintaining quality standards. This team's focus includes recruiting dispatcher applicants.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are no identifiable environmental effects or opportunities associated with the subject of this report.

CONTACT PERSON

Captain Jen Louis, 510-981-5815

Attachments:

1: Dispatch Audit Recommendations Status Table

Attachment 1

Finding 1: It is taking longer to answer 911 calls and there are not enough call takers.	
1.1	<p><u>Recommendation:</u></p> <p>Conduct an annual staffing analysis of required minimum staffing levels and budgeted dispatchers to ensure budget staffing requests and scheduling efforts meet demand and limit the use of overtime where possible (see also Finding 2). Use the staffing analysis to communicate to Council and the public during the annual appropriations process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service level demands • The full-burdened cost of budgeting for additional staff • Whether there is sufficient funding available to budget for the additional staff or a shortfall (quantified in dollars) • Additional staffing requests, if needed
	<p><u>Implementation Date:</u></p> <p>Initial expected implementation date: We will research other available analysis options to determine if we are using best practices by June 2019.</p>
	<p><u>Status of Audit Recommendation, Corrective Action Plan, and Progress Summary:</u></p> <p>Status at time of audit issuance (4/25/19): Not Implemented.</p> <p>Agree. A monthly and yearly analysis of staffing is helpful when determining best use of the current employees in terms of scheduling. We recognize that our current use of a manual scheduling process is not optimal and that we would be better served by an automated scheduling program.</p> <p>The Department has already begun to consider several automated scheduling programs to replace our current manual method.</p> <p><u>1st Status Update (11/12/2019): Implemented</u></p> <p>Current employees continue to be staffed during days and times that mirror call volume reports (ECats). Data on service level demands continues to be reviewed monthly. Current budget does not support additional staff, however analysis of overtime expenditures was conducted as part of Call Taker recommendation. This revealed that additional positions could be funding via overtime savings.</p>

Finding 1: It is taking longer to answer 911 calls and there are not enough call takers.		
1.2	<u>Recommendation:</u>	Use the staffing analysis performed in response to recommendation 1.1, to determine future resource needs of the Communications Center, including staffing, equipment, and physical space. Take into account planned changes to services and factors that may influence call volume.
	<u>Implementation Date:</u>	Initial expected implementation date: Decide on Communications Center expansion versus relocation by December, 2019.
	<u>Status of Audit Recommendation, Corrective Action Plan, and Progress Summary:</u>	<p>Status at time of audit issuance (4/25/19): Not Implemented.</p> <p>Agree. We will need to increase our staffing levels to meet NENA staffing recommendations. Future enhancements to the 911 system such as text to 911 and Next Generation 911 will increase our call times and further hinder our ability to meet NENA standards on call answer times. The Communications Center will need to either expand the space it currently occupies in the Public Safety Building, or relocate to a separate building in order to increase the number of consoles needed to accommodate additional required staff.</p> <p>The Department has already begun discussion on the Communications Center’s spatial needs. In 2018, we implemented a new Computer Aided Dispatch system in order to enable us to receive 911 calls via the upcoming Next Generation technology. The Call Taker proposal will be submitted to Human Resources and the Personnel Board.</p> <p><u>1st Status Update (11/12/2019): Partially implemented</u></p> <p>First step identified as evaluating expansion possibilities within the existing space. BPD met with a communications center console vendor and requested a review of current Communications Center configuration. The vendor conducted an onsite evaluation and review by their design team. Evaluation revealed that even with streamlined furniture and reconfiguration, the existing space can only accommodate eight consoles. Current staffing levels necessitate 5-7 available consoles, and audit recommendations include adding 1-2 call takers per shift. Any real increase in staffing levels will require expansion. Initial conversations held regarding using available space</p>

Finding 1: It is taking longer to answer 911 calls and there are not enough call takers.		
		within Public Safety Building (PSB) as well as with BFD regarding potential expansion into BFD offices in PSB. Implementation date intentionally delayed until after Call Taker proposal process to ensure that space requirements will be met. Initial planning on this recommendation will continue.

Finding 2: The Communications Center relies on significant overtime leading to inadequate training and an unhealthy work environment.		
2.1	<u>Recommendation:</u>	Open all dispatcher positions to continuous recruitment.
	<u>Implementation Date:</u>	Initial expected implementation date: We hope to obtain approval from HR by September, 2019.
	<u>Status of Audit Recommendation, Corrective Action Plan, and Progress Summary:</u>	<p>Status at time of audit issuance (4/25/19): Not Implemented.</p> <p>Agree. Open and continuous recruitment of all dispatcher positions has long been the desire of Management. There are several factors that make hiring dispatchers challenging. The hiring process itself is lengthy due to required testing of applicants, background investigation and physical exam. Because of our limited resources in terms of floor trainers, we cannot hire more than three dispatchers at one time or the trainer's become overburdened. The Public Safety Dispatcher training program generally takes 9-10 months to complete. Often, it is not until the latter months of training that deficiencies that will not allow a trainee to complete the program are discovered. Allowing for open and continuous recruitment would give us the ability to create a pipeline of applicants to "plug in" once a trainee either completes or is released from the training program.</p> <p>Human Resources has already agreed to open and continuous hiring for Lateral Public Safety Dispatcher II classification and Management has requested the same for both the non-lateral and Public Safety Dispatcher I classifications.</p> <p><u>1st Status Update (11/12/2019): Partially implemented</u></p>

Finding 2: The Communications Center relies on significant overtime leading to inadequate training and an unhealthy work environment.

		<p>Internal conversations with BPD Personnel and Training unit uncovered potential issues with moving to open and continuous recruitment for entry level dispatchers. Main issue surrounds the internal and Human Resources work load requirement for regularly reviewing applications, confirming qualifications are met, and then scheduling and administering testing processes for candidates. Entry level positions require a more extensive testing process to allow candidates to meet minimum job qualifications. Personnel and Training discovered through the entry level officer hiring process, that increasing the number of recruitments, and communicating with interested applicants was a more effective approach. Personnel and Training is also considering implementing a variation of the open and continuous strategy that a neighboring agency utilizes. Another potential solution is to allow open and continuous recruitment where applicants have already satisfied testing portions of the minimum qualifications (Critical and POST Dispatcher examination). Open and continuous recruitments continue for experienced lateral PSD II candidates.</p> <p>The following tasks are underway to determine next steps: meeting scheduled with Human Resources to discuss workflow, procedure and ability to implement this recommendation; work with Personnel and Training and Human Resources to explore options that achieve the goals of open and continuous recruitment but are also manageable with current workloads. Planned implementation by December 2019.</p> <p>The above tasks were completed prior to presentation of the first status update. As a result, a determination was made to not pursue open and continuous hiring for <i>entry level</i> (PSD I) dispatchers at this time. There were many factors that led to this determination:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is a significant workload and timeline that precedes and follows a recruitment period including posting the position, reviewing applications, scheduling an exam date, requesting, receiving and
--	--	--

Finding 2: The Communications Center relies on significant overtime leading to inadequate training and an unhealthy work environment.

		<p>administering current validated POST PELLET-B exams, staffing and proctoring exams, scheduling and holding oral boards and other necessary testing (Critical and medical/psychological exams for example), conducting a background process, and preparing the training program. Supporting these steps is challenging as they require work from HR, BPD’s Personnel and Training as well as the Communications Center personnel.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. HR and BPD have committed to holding at least two PSD I recruitment periods per year. BPD created a Recruitment and Retention Unit that contracted with an outside firm that expanded advertising and recruitment efforts to reach more candidates. The Recruitment and Retention Unit now tracks all interested applicants, follows up with them about testing dates and the overall process, while encouraging and scheduling them to sit-along to experience the PSD position. 3. BPD has streamlined the hiring process from application to background and through to hiring. From reviewing the recruitment cycles from 2019, holding tests more frequently could not be supported from a hiring or training process standpoint. As hiring lists were nearing exhaustion, we found that the next recruitment period was only weeks away. 4. After informally polling other surrounding agencies we found that even those who posted “open and continuous” hiring followed a similar schedule as BPD has implemented. This often left applicants applying and not hearing back for months, until the actual exam date. This process is essentially no different than administering several open recruitments annually. 5. One root cause of the PSD staffing shortage is that a majority of our hires cannot pass the training program. Over the last 12 years we have failed / forced to resign 55% of our Public Safety Dispatcher hires in training. Considering that number in relation to police officer hires, we failed / forced to
--	--	--

Finding 2: The Communications Center relies on significant overtime leading to inadequate training and an unhealthy work environment.		
		<p>resign 16% of our police officer hires in training over the same time period. If we had a 55% fail rate of police officers over the last twelve years, we would have only 105 police officers working for us today. If we retained just ten percent more Public Safety Dispatcher hires over that time period (still failed 45%), we would be fully staffed today. In response to this, we are examining and improving the training program to better support the retention of hires.</p> <p>6. In order to expand the applicant pool, we have lengthened the time period for applicants to submit applications to 4-6 weeks. City job openings that are not open and continuous typically are not open longer than 3 weeks.</p> <p>BPD is committed to increasing staffing and has determined that from an efficiency and customer service standpoint, holding set recruitment periods is a more direct and manageable plan, while the benefits of open and continuous acceptance of applications are negligible.</p>
2.2	<u>Recommendation:</u>	Work with Communications Center staff to create a specific recruitment plan for dispatcher positions including recruitment events and marketing material. Use recruitment best practices to reach potential applicants and increase the number of applicants.
	<u>Implementation Date:</u>	Initial expected implementation date: In progress since 2018, the marketing firm is expected to begin work by May of 2019.
	<u>Status of Audit Recommendation, Corrective Action Plan, and Progress Summary:</u>	<p>Status at time of audit issuance (4/25/19): Not Implemented.</p> <p>Agree. Recruitment of a compassionate, competent, talented and diverse workforce is a priority for the entire department, and has been a challenge over the last several years due to a variety of reasons. Creation of a more specific plan for dispatcher positions can help reach potential applicants and increase the total number of applicants. Management recognizes the importance of both hiring and retaining applicants through the training program as being a key element in overcoming the staffing shortage.</p>

Finding 2: The Communications Center relies on significant overtime leading to inadequate training and an unhealthy work environment.

The Department created a Recruitment and Retention Team in 2018 in order to address the departmental recruitment needs. This was the first step in setting out a concrete plan. This team has developed goals and priorities, with very specific tasks. The goals include better tracking of recruitment efforts, creation of recruitment videos, attending recruitment events, hiring a marketing firm to assist with web design, employment brochures and literature, social media outreach and other advertising avenues.

1st Status Update (11/12/2019): Implemented

Recruitment and Retention Team continues to actively recruit and implement new strategies for reaching a diverse and broad group of Communications Center applicants. Communications Center personnel have been included in recruitment materials, interview processes, applicant “sit alongs”, and applicant outreach. On September 24, 2019 BPD launched a recruitment-specific website, www.joinberkeleypd.com, and accompanying social media accounts all specifically designed for BPD by an experienced marketing firm. This included recruitment videos, language, and images specifically targeting potential Communications Center applicants.

BPD implemented a program (“Text bpdjobs to (510) 399-1814) that leads applicants through immediate response text conversations where recruiters can gather information on applicants quickly and efficiently, and applicants can be provided testing and job information.

Another new strategy implemented during the most recent recruitment period included advertising on a worldwide employment related search engine (indeed.com). One of the Supervising Public Safety Dispatchers personally contacted the more than 600 applicants once the application period was open to inform them of such and to provide them with POST test preparation materials and other test information. She also coordinated sit-alongs with those interested in doing so.

Finding 2: The Communications Center relies on significant overtime leading to inadequate training and an unhealthy work environment.		
2.3	<u>Recommendation:</u>	Identify and implement feasible option to improve turnaround time on background checks for dispatcher positions. This can include outsourcing background investigations or working with Human Resources to ensure that the Department is able to complete all background investigations in a timely manner.
	<u>Implementation Date:</u>	Initial expected implementation date: In progress since 2018. In April of 2019 the Department contracted with a background investigation firm that can complete up to three backgrounds at a time with a one month turn around. The Department also hired a retired BPD officer to complete backgrounds on a part time basis. This retiree has extensive experience conducting background investigations for the Department. The Department is experimenting with now assigning multiple categories of backgrounds out at one time, instead of exhausting higher categories before moving on.
	<u>Status of Audit Recommendation, Corrective Action Plan, and Progress Summary:</u>	<p>Status at time of audit issuance (4/25/19): Not Implemented.</p> <p>Agree. The long background check process has been an impediment to successful recruitment and hiring for some time.</p> <p>The above described Recruitment and Retention Team has also identified improving the background investigation process as a critical task. Plans were considered to dedicate current employees as background investigators, hire independent background investigation companies or do some combination of the two. The proposed plan to affect change in this area is to hire an independent but highly experienced background investigation firm that can rapidly complete quality background investigations, continue to use Department employees to complete background investigations, and also continually evaluate and adapt practices.</p> <p><u>1st Status Update (11/12/2019): Implemented</u></p> <p>Two independent background investigation firms are working with BPD to complete backgrounds. Turn-around times have met promised delivery dates, with most being completed within a month. This has relieved pressure on</p>

Finding 2: The Communications Center relies on significant overtime leading to inadequate training and an unhealthy work environment.		
		internal background investigators and significantly shortened the time from application period to job offer. Data is being collected and reviewed regularly regarding turn-around times. This current pace will allow BPD to remain swift and competitive while hiring quality applicants and also ensure that we can hold multiple recruitment periods in a single year.
2.4	<u>Recommendation:</u>	Design a way to retain staff that are unable to pass the Police Desk training, for example, keep staff as PSD I and have them work as a call taker or create a new job classification for a call taking position.
	<u>Implementation Date:</u>	Initial expected implementation date: We want to have our final proposal for the call taker and revisions to the PSD classifications by June and implement by fall 2019.
	<u>Status of Audit Recommendation, Corrective Action Plan, and Progress Summary:</u>	<p>Status at time of audit issuance (4/25/19): Not Implemented.</p> <p>Agree. Historically, many trainees have gained proficiency in call taking, demonstrated excellent customer service skills and professionalism, but could complete the training program due to their inability to pass Police Desk training.</p> <p>Hiring more full time call takers would improve staffing levels, greatly relieve overtime required by dispatchers, significantly reduce overtime costs and allow us to meet NENA minimum staffing requirements. Once the Call Taker classification is approved, it would help Management to potentially retain valuable employees by offering them a position in a different classification they are already qualified to work.</p> <p><u>1st Status Update (11/12/2019): Will Not implement</u></p> <p>Call Taker proposal written and subsequently approved by the Chief. Initial meeting held with affected bargaining unit and Human Resources. Union voiced concerns about separating job duties within the Communications Center and the Call Taker position being misused. Next steps include Human Resources reviewing job classification and conducting comp survey, followed by BPD and HR meeting again with the union. Union is considering submitting counter proposal to Call Taker position, to possibly rewrite</p>

Finding 2: The Communications Center relies on significant overtime leading to inadequate training and an unhealthy work environment.

		<p>the existing PSD I position to achieve similar retention goals. Once finalized, updated job classification will then go to the Personnel Board for approval. Estimated completion Spring of 2020.</p> <p>After meeting on August 28, 2019 with HR about the overall process, and the Union about the specifics of the job position, a fresh assessment was conducted by Communications Center leadership to include reviewing more recent years of trainees. It became clear that the majority of those failing the training program were failing due to inability to pass call taking, and that the call taking training was often extending over six months. The most recent trainee who failed due to inability to pass Police Desk who would have been qualified to work in the Call Taker position was in 2011.</p> <p>A determination was made to focus on improving the training program for Call Taker training (and overall training program) to increase the success rate for trainees moving from PSD I to PSD II. This would also alleviate the Union’s stated concerns. Additionally, BPD will conduct a review of both the training program as well as the feasibility/benefit of moving forward with a Call Taker position at the next Audit Status Update.</p>
2.5	<p><u>Recommendation:</u></p>	<p>Evaluate the results from dispatcher recruitment routinely (e.g., annually or at the end of a recruitment cycle) to determine areas for improvement. Update recruitment plans.</p>
	<p><u>Implementation Date:</u></p>	<p>Initial expected implementation date: Evaluation and more robust data collection on applications began in late 2018. By the summer of 2019 the Department should begin to have an adequate data set to review.</p>
	<p><u>Status of Audit Recommendation, Corrective Action Plan, and Progress Summary:</u></p>	<p>Status at time of audit issuance (4/25/19): Not Implemented.</p> <p>Agree. Recruitment has changed over the last several years, and competition for qualified candidates is great among agencies. Continual evaluation of Departmental efforts will</p>

Finding 2: The Communications Center relies on significant overtime leading to inadequate training and an unhealthy work environment.		
		<p>be critical to staying abreast of best practices and successfully hiring quality candidates.</p> <p>The Department plans to improve tracking and review of the number of applicants, how successful applicants are through the process, and where they most often are “lost” in the process. The Department also plans to review these results in line with testing processes in order to adjust as necessary.</p> <p><u>1st Status Update (11/12/2019): Implemented</u></p> <p>Personnel and Training, working in conjunction with the Communications Center, now tracks applicant progress through the recruitment, testing, hiring and training process. Data collected includes information regarding where the applicant/employee was “lost” and what steps are in place or required to allow the applicant (or future applicants) to successfully move forward in the process. Data is reviewed at each stage, and at the end of each cycle will be assessed for effectiveness.</p>
2.6	<u>Recommendation:</u>	Implement an automated scheduling software that has built-in decision-making capabilities to automatically fill shifts based on specified qualifications and staff availability.
	<u>Implementation Date:</u>	Initial expected implementation date: As of April 2019, there have been presentations by two separate software vendors. There is a plan to research a third vendor’s software (Tyler Technology) at an upcoming annual conference. DoIT suggests implementing a scheduling software in line with other technology upgrades surrounding payroll (ERMA). The Department anticipates that review of available products and decisions as to whether to move to Implementation could occur in late Fall of 2019.
	<u>Status of Audit Recommendation, Corrective Action Plan, and Progress Summary:</u>	<p>Status at time of audit issuance (4/25/19): Not Implemented.</p> <p>Agree. Implementation of scheduling software could help relieve the current personnel engaged in scheduling, create a feeling of greater fairness and control which would be a morale boost. This would also allow for greater review over how much overtime individuals are working in order to ensure their wellness and that they are taking enough time</p>

Finding 2: The Communications Center relies on significant overtime leading to inadequate training and an unhealthy work environment.		
		<p>off. The Department is interested in balancing the above opportunities with the challenges and expense of implementing a new software solution.</p> <p>The Department has been communicating with and working alongside DoIT, union representatives and outside vendors to explore various scheduling software options. Efforts are also underway to identify best practices in other jurisdictions.</p> <p><u>1st Status Update (11/12/2019): Partially implemented</u></p> <p>Project to research, identify and recommend departmental scheduling software is underway. Team is led by a BPD Lieutenant with support from DoIT (including onsite DoIT employee (APA II)) and will include BPD stakeholders and representatives from various potentially affected unions. Vendor demonstrations have been conducted in order to clarify software capabilities and needs in preparation or RFP process. Stakeholder interviews to be conducted to identify the specific needs and concerns of work groups. This project is expected to move to RFP by Spring of 2020.</p>
2.7	<u>Recommendation:</u>	Decrease the concentration of overtime among dispatchers.
	<u>Implementation Date:</u>	Initial expected implementation date: Change in overtime distribution procedures implemented in 2018.
	<u>Status of Audit Recommendation, Corrective Action Plan, and Progress Summary:</u>	<p>Status at time of audit issuance (4/25/19): Not Implemented.</p> <p>Agree. For the past five years, the Communications Center’s overtime has averaged roughly 300 hours per week in order to meet our minimum staffing requirements. Approximately 100 additional hours would be necessary to meet NENA minimum staffing levels.</p> <p>Although we cannot reduce overtime levels until we hire more dispatchers and they successfully complete either the PSDII or call taking training program, in 2018 the scheduling supervisor was directed by the Communications Manager to re-order the way overtime is assigned in order to more equitably distribute overtime hours between all dispatchers, instead of the majority of hours falling to a portion of staff.</p>

Finding 2: The Communications Center relies on significant overtime leading to inadequate training and an unhealthy work environment.		
		<p><u>1st Status Update (11/12/2019): Partially implemented</u></p> <p>The scheduling supervisor continues to make every effort to equally distribute the overtime hours required to meet minimum staffing needs amongst all personnel. Due to the additional burden on staffing due to hiring and training new dispatchers, it will remain impossible to decrease the total number of overtime hours required until trainees successfully complete the training program. Each trainee who completes the training program will cause a reduction to overtime hours of 40-50 hours per week. Scheduling software is also anticipated to help evenly distribute overtime assignments, ensure that safe limits are met and not exceeded, and allow for review of staffing levels. Additional Communications Center personnel to provide relief anticipated to be operational by February 2020.</p>
2.8	<u>Recommendation:</u>	Develop and implement a Communications Center training plan to ensure compliance with POST training requirements. Evaluate training processes and update training plans routinely.
	<u>Implementation Date:</u>	Initial expected implementation date: In progress since January of 2019. The goal is that by end of 2019, all Communications Center Personnel will be on track with POST requirements (nearly half completed with all training hours at the halfway point of the training cycle)
	<u>Status of Audit Recommendation, Corrective Action Plan, and Progress Summary:</u>	<p>Status at time of audit issuance (4/25/19): Not Implemented.</p> <p>Agree. Ongoing training of employees is a priority for the Department. The Department sees the value and benefit of these training opportunities for the employee’s development and wellness, the Department’s mission, and the quality of service the community ultimately receives.</p> <p>In January of 2019 the Communications Center leadership team implemented a plan to track POST training requirements along with yearly Performance Appraisal Reviews. At each employee’s PAR anniversary date, their supervisor will review the number of hours of training received to date. Additionally, Personnel and Training will conduct an annual review of all Communications Center personnel to track POST training time. Finally, one of the Public Safety Dispatch Supervisors was assigned the job to</p>

Finding 2: The Communications Center relies on significant overtime leading to inadequate training and an unhealthy work environment.

		<p>work as a liaison with Personnel and Training for scheduling POST classes as well as directly with dispatchers to locate and sign dispatchers up for course of interest.</p> <p><u>1st Status Update (11/12/2019): Implemented</u></p> <p>Communications Center leadership, in partnership with Personnel and Training, now monitor training hour progress annually (tied to PARs) and quarterly with a goal of training hours being completed throughout the training cycle. At the third quarter of year one of the two year cycle, Communications Center personnel have surpassed training hours that were accomplished near the end of the last two year cycle. Plan implemented to approve a minimum of two Communications Center personnel to training each month, and complete at least two hours of online training as well. In an effort to also improve morale and overall health, focus has been placed completing training hours in classes that provide employee wellness and development.</p>
--	--	--

Finding 3: Working conditions adversely affect dispatcher morale.

<p>3.1</p>	<p><u>Recommendation:</u></p>	<p>Create a comprehensive stress management program specifically for the Communications Center that includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress management training for all staff, 8 hours minimum during career • Access to on-site educational resources to help with stress and related risks, e.g., directory of local therapists specializing in treatment of stress and traumatic stress disorders and City programs that provide information on how and where to access help • Procedures assuring participation of staff in critical incidence stress management activities (e.g., debriefing sessions when involved in traumatic call events) • A Peer Support Program • Comprehensive, ongoing training on structured call-taking processes
------------	-------------------------------	--

Finding 3: Working conditions adversely affect dispatcher morale.		
	<u>Implementation Date:</u>	Initial expected implementation date: All Communications Center Staff to receive 8 hours training by December, 2019.
	<u>Status of Audit Recommendation, Corrective Action Plan, and Progress Summary:</u>	<p>Status at time of audit issuance (4/25/19): Not Implemented.</p> <p>Agree. The Department recognizes the negative effects of stress on employees and utilizes Peer Support Counselors, a Crisis Intervention Team as well as the Employee Assistance Program and most recently the Headspace website which promotes mindfulness and meditation.</p> <p>Work with Personnel and Training to Expand current stress management toolset to include a mandatory 8 hour stress management course for all Communications Center staff.</p> <p><u>1st Status Update (11/12/2019): Implemented</u></p> <p>Multiple courses and online learning materials related to Communications Center/dispatcher stress management have been identified. Communications Center personnel have begun attending this course (goal set of at least two Communications Center personnel attending a class per month) and the department will continue to provide these training opportunities. BPD as a whole continues to aggressively work on improving the overall wellness and improving stress management skills of personnel. All employees have access to a meditation app to support stress reduction, and have access to a fully-equipped gym in the building.</p>
3.2	<u>Recommendation:</u>	Develop and implement plans to address workplace cleanliness and equipment and furniture maintenance and replacement.
	<u>Implementation Date:</u>	Initial expected implementation date: Beginning fall 2018, the Communications Center receives a deep cleaning on a quarterly basis. Standalone Hepa filters will be purchased by July 2019.
	<u>Status of Audit Recommendation, Corrective Action Plan, and Progress Summary:</u>	<p>Status at time of audit issuance (4/25/19): Not Implemented.</p> <p>Agree. Management recognizes the need for improvement in the cleanliness of the Communications Center.</p>

Finding 3: Working conditions adversely affect dispatcher morale.		
		<p><u>1st Status Update (11/12/2019): Implemented</u></p> <p>BPD has implemented a quarterly deep-cleaning schedule. After reviewing the current Hepa filters, it was determined that purchasing new individual filters for each console was not financially prudent, as we have already identified that the existing console must be replaced within the next year. BPD purchased and will install two wall mounted Hepa filters that can work in conjunction with existing (or replacement systems) and are relocatable once a new location /expansion is decided. Additionally, the carpet was replaced in the last 8 years with a low pile, sound reduction carpet that consisted of individual squares so that dirty/stained or otherwise worn areas or squares could be switched out. Replacement timeline for that product is being monitored. Further, the individual console chairs are regularly replaced and over the last several years we have worked with the COB Occupational Health and Safety Specialist to purchase chairs to conform to the specific ergonomic needs of individual dispatchers.</p>
3.3	<u>Recommendation:</u>	Conduct regular supervisor level meetings to share information about operations and staffing. Use these meetings to improve understanding of the supervisor role, identify problems, discuss changes that may affect operations, and establish communications plans for distributing information to all staff.
	<u>Implementation Date:</u>	Initial expected implementation date: Fully operational by October 2019
	<u>Status of Audit Recommendation, Corrective Action Plan, and Progress Summary:</u>	<p>Status at time of audit issuance (4/25/19): Not Implemented.</p> <p>Agree. Management recognizes the need for improved communication across all ranks.</p> <p>The Communications manager is in the process of creating a web based information portal which includes sections for polices, Supervisory blog, Communications Center blog, resources, health and wellness, new dispatcher training, and links to web based training opportunities for tenured staff.</p>

Finding 3: Working conditions adversely affect dispatcher morale.		
		<p><u>1st Status Update (11/12/2019): Implemented</u></p> <p>The Communications Manager and supervisor group now conduct formal weekly supervisor level meetings as well as informal group discussions regarding operational needs, project updates and current issues that need addressing. Information from these meetings is shared out to the entire Communications Center via email from the manager or Lieutenant.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Recommendation:</u></p>	<p>Routinely have Police and Fire staff meet with all Center Supervisors to solicit feedback on Center operations and to address any issues. Use these meetings to improve understanding of the dispatcher role and current policies of public safety, identify problems that should be evaluated for further discussion, and discuss known and expected changes that may affect the Communications Center.</p>
	<p><u>Implementation Date:</u></p>	<p>Initial expected implementation date: May 2019</p>
	<p><u>Status of Audit Recommendation, Corrective Action Plan, and Progress Summary:</u></p>	<p><u>Status at time of audit issuance (4/25/19): Not Implemented.</u></p> <p>Agree. The Department recognizes the need and benefit of such meetings. Logistically this has been challenging due to the various shifts and workdays of personnel from other divisions.</p> <p>Invite Police and Fire staff to attend the weekly Supervisor meeting whenever problems are identified or whenever known or anticipated changes may affect the Communications Center.</p> <p><u>1st Status Update (11/12/2019): Implemented</u></p> <p>BFD attends the formal weekly meeting once a month, or more frequently as needed. BFD and BPD leadership conducted a topic specific meeting to discuss potential physical expansion needs, Emergency Medical Dispatching and the opening of the Communications Center Manager position due to retirement.</p>

Audit Recommendation Status
911 Dispatchers: Understaffing Leads to Excessive Overtime and Low Morale

INFORMATION CALENDAR
April 14, 2020