



Office of the City Manager

October 26, 2020

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: *Dee* Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager

Re: Handling of Outside Jurisdiction Calls to the
Berkeley Police and Fire Communications Center

On November 12, 2019, Councilmember Harrison referred a request to the City Manager for information clarifying how non-emergency calls to the police are directed to the Communications Center when the California Highway Patrol or outside agencies receive the initial call. Information was also requested as to what staffing or technological changes would be needed to direct more calls to Berkeley's Communication Center. This information was gathered and provided to Councilmember Harrison via email a short time thereafter with an offer to meet and discuss in further detail as necessary. No further questions were received and this off-agenda memo is being completed to complete the documentation process for the short term referral.

The information provided in November 2019 remains true today: When a caller dials a non-emergency police number in a particular jurisdiction, the receiving agency will gather information about the nature of the call, including the location. Generally, where an agency determines that the call involves activity that occurred in another jurisdiction, that jurisdiction will transfer the call to the correct jurisdiction. Depending on availability and work flow, the original jurisdiction may stay on the line to "hand off" the call or may provide the proper number, conduct a transfer and then disconnect. In cases of an emergency or crime in progress, the dispatcher will stay on the line until they verify the connection is complete and all pertinent information has been relayed to the correct jurisdiction's Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP).

The Berkeley Communications Center processes non-emergency calls from outside jurisdictions according to the same protocols as non-emergency calls from within our jurisdiction. In terms of answering ringing phone lines, first priority is given to answering 9-1-1 lines, and then non-emergency lines.

Staffing in the Communications Center remains a challenge. We are currently understaffed by six dispatchers (22 of 28 positions are currently filled) with three dispatchers planning to retire in 2021 and six other dispatchers that are eligible to retire today. Historically, it takes nine to twelve months to train a dispatcher and we anticipate

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that we will need to successfully train approximately four to five people per year for the next five years. Additionally, the current authorized staffing level does not reflect the recommended staffing level increase of one call taker per shift (based on the City Auditor's April 2019 Audit Report.) These staffing levels are anticipated to handle current call volumes and do not include absorbing calls from other jurisdictions.

cc: Paul Buddenhagen, Deputy City Manager
David White, Deputy City Manager
Mark Numainville, City Clerk
Jenny Wong, City Auditor
Andrew Greenwood, Chief of Police
Matthai Chakko, Assistant to the City Manager / Public Information Officer