



REPORT TO COUNCIL 32

City of Sacramento

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STAFF
October 3, 2006

Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council

Continued from 10-3-06

Title: Police Department Communications Center Staffing

Location/Council District: Citywide

Recommendation: Adopt a **Resolution** authorizing (1) an increase in the number of Full Time Equivalents (FTE) Dispatcher I/II positions within the Police Department by 47 and (2) the Police Department to fund the costs of this staffing increase through salary savings in FY2006/07.

Contact: William Champion, Lieutenant, (916) 277-1750; Rick Braziel, Deputy Chief, (916) 433-0816

Presenters: Rick Braziel, Deputy Chief

Department: Police

Division: Communications

Organization No: 2152

Description/Analysis

Issue: The Sacramento Police Department (SPD) Communications Center is understaffed in relation to call volume, the City's current population, and customer service expectations. Current workload increases, coupled with staffing shortages, have significantly increased mandatory overtime, and restricted authorization of requested time off.

Although the Communications Division has hired 48 employees since January 2004, 58 have severed employment as of September 14, 2006 (Attachments 3 & 4). Most often, these separations are due to the pursuit of job opportunities with new law enforcement agencies within the region. The SPD Communications Center's authorized staffing level is 61 FTE. As of September 14, 2006, there are 55 Dispatcher I/II's (33 Dispatcher II's and 22 probationary Dispatcher I's). Additionally, 14 Dispatcher Recruits are involved in the current academy training program scheduled for graduation on October 20, 2006.

Using current industry standards as a guideline, the SPD recommends the Mayor and Council approve an increase of 47 authorized Dispatcher FTE positions to ensure staffing levels adequately meet current workload demands.

Policy Considerations: This Communications Center staffing crisis is negatively affecting public safety in the delivery of both Police and Fire Department services. This request is outside of the Council's adopted budget cycle and, therefore, the impact of ongoing costs associated with this request will be considered as part of the FY2007/08 budget development process.

Environmental Considerations: This activity is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it does not constitute a "project" as defined in section 15378 of the CEQA Guidelines, and is otherwise exempt pursuant to Sections 15321(b) (law enforcement activities) and 15601(b)(3) (no significant effect on the environment) of the CEQA Guidelines.

Commission/Committee Action: Not Applicable.

Rationale for Recommendation:

Workload:

The SPD Communications Center authorized staffing levels have decreased over the last fifteen years from 64 Dispatcher I/II FTE to 61. In contrast, the City's population has grown 22%, the number of the SPD's sworn personnel has increased by 32%, the number of calls dispatched has increased by 41%, and the total number of incoming and outgoing calls has risen 28% during the same time period (Attachment 2). Since 2000, an average of 15 dispatchers per year has separated employment, averaging an approximate 25% attrition rate.

Focus Group Results:

Recently, the SPD hired EJC Consultants to design and conduct focus groups to obtain feedback from Communications Center employees regarding overall job satisfaction and quality of work life. The preliminary results indicate three issues that directly relate to staffing and workload:

- The current levels of mandatory and unanticipated overtime significantly impact employee job satisfaction. (During 2005, Communications Center dispatchers worked a total of 11,340 hours of overtime. Industry report data indicates as overtime hours increase, retention rates and employee satisfaction decrease.)
- Staffing shortages create an environment in which customer service suffers.
- The majority of staff believe that the "grass is greener" at other regional police departments.

Industry Standards:

In 2004, a comprehensive report was written by the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO), in conjunction with the University of Denver Research Institute, and funded by the United States Department of Justice, regarding staffing and retention in Public Safety Communications Centers across the nation. This APCO report contains a

staffing formula structured specifically for communications centers. When the SPD Communications Center's workload statistics from 2005 are used, this formula recommends a dispatcher staffing level of 94.

Currently, the SPD Communications Center's authorized staffing level is 61. An increase of 33 Dispatcher I/II FTE positions are needed to staff daily operations within the Communications Center. Additionally, in order to hire, train, and maintain a consistent level of 94 Dispatcher I/II FTE positions, an increase in Academy Team Leaders (2 Dispatcher I/II FTE) and Communications Training Officers (12 Dispatcher I/II FTE) is required. These additional positions (14 FTE), bring the recommended Dispatcher I/II FTE staffing levels to a total of 108 positions, a total increase of 47 FTE.

The increase in the Communications Center's FTE level will allow dispatchers to answer our citizens' calls within recommended time standards, thus providing necessary public safety services in a timely manner. It will also help the City's retention of dispatchers by alleviating the burdens of consistent mandatory overtime. This recommendation does not include the possible decrease in calls that may be routed to a 3-1-1 Center, nor does it include the increased demands placed on the Police Department by Cellular 9-1-1 and additional growth both in and surrounding the City of Sacramento.

Financial Considerations: The amount of time required to hire and train 47 additional dispatchers, in addition to filling losses that result from attrition, will have a limited financial impact on the Police Department in FY2006/07. During the current fiscal year, the Department has the ability to hire 25 additional Dispatcher I/II FTE, at a cost of approximately \$558,000. The Department anticipates the ability to absorb this cost with projected salary savings due to unfilled positions existing throughout the Department. The remaining 22 Dispatcher I/II FTE will be hired during FY2007/08. It is estimated that the ongoing annual impact of filling all 47 FTE is between \$2.9 and \$3.5 million in FY2007/08 and FY2008/09. The impact of ongoing costs associated with this request will be considered as part of future budget development processes.

The outcome of the City's ability to implement a 9-1-1 fee could reduce the impact on the General Fund.

Emerging Small Business Development (ESBD): No goods or services are being purchased as a result of this report.

Respectfully Submitted by: Jim Kelly #5000
FOR William Champion, Lieutenant

Approved by: Rick Brazill
FOR Albert Nájera, Chief of Police

Recommendation Approved:

Ray Kerridge
Ray Kerridge
City Manager

Ref: COP 9-15

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Attachment 1**Background**

All the SPD Public Safety Dispatchers begin their careers by participating in a ten-week academy that provides a basic overview of essential job duties. Each dispatcher spends the majority of their 18-month probationary period in training before they can adequately perform the job independently. After dispatchers successfully pass their probationary period, they support one of three basic functions within the Communications Center. These responsibilities include: Service Desk, Radio Support, and Radio Dispatch.

Service Desk:

Dispatchers at the Service Desk answer incoming calls to the Communications Center. Dispatchers are trained to assess the citizen's need for service and determine if it meets criteria for dispatch, or referral within the Department or other outside resources. Over 80,000 incoming and outgoing calls come through the Communications Center each month. Calls to the Communications Center are answered on a priority basis. 9-1-1 emergency calls are answered first, followed by 7-digit emergency calls, allied agency calls, calls from SPD officers in the field, and non-emergency calls respectively. The SPD currently has twenty incoming 9-1-1 emergency lines, seven 7-digit emergency lines, and seven incoming non-emergency lines. When citizens call non-emergency numbers, they are queued to a call router to guide them to the appropriate location, including "0" for Dispatch. The call router message was created by dispatchers and presented to the Citizens Advisory Group for review and approval. If all non-emergency lines are busy, callers will receive a message indicating high call volume and advice to call back later.

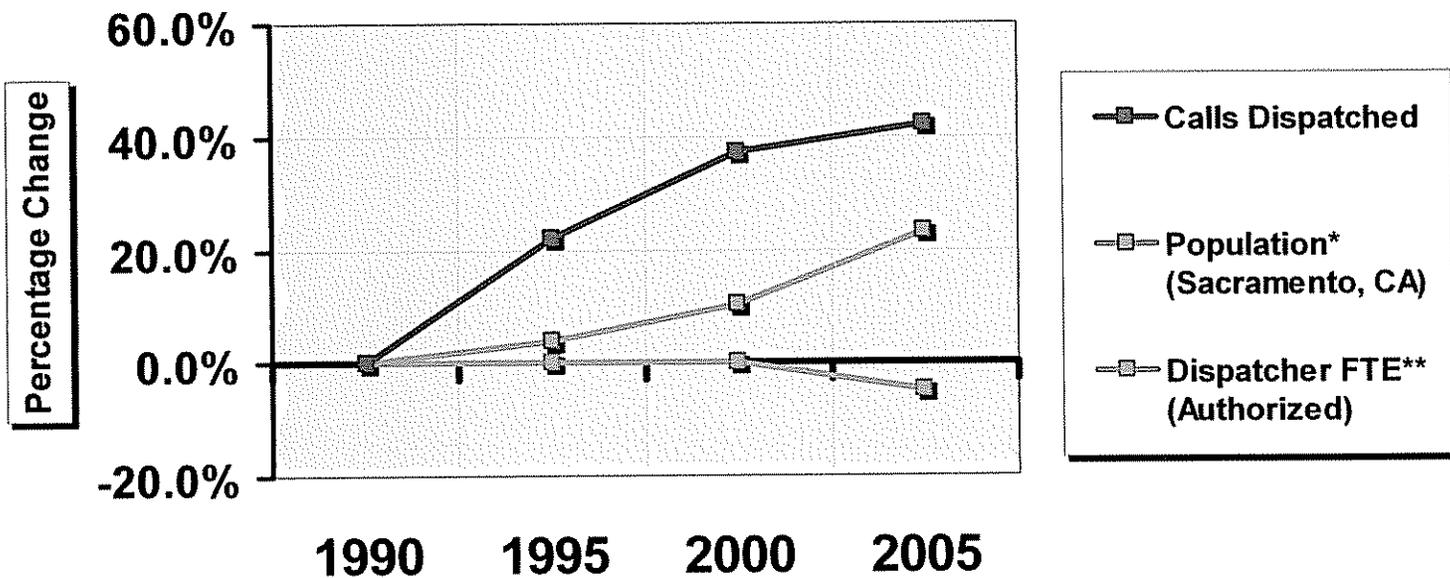
Radio Support:

Radio Support serves as a gateway between the Service Desk and the radio. Radio Support handles requests that come from radio dispatchers and field officers. This position performs duties such as starting fire/ambulance response, ordering tow trucks, contacting outside agencies, entering broadcast information from teletypes, locating responsible parties for businesses, and conducting follow-up phone calls for updates or advising of delays. In addition, this position catches the overflow for incoming 9-1-1 and emergency lines.

Radio Dispatch:

Radio Dispatch dispatches units to calls for service, tracks officers' availability and field activities, and monitors situations for officer safety. Radio dispatchers are routinely called upon to handle high stress situations such as vehicle and foot pursuits, emergency cover requests, setting perimeters, homicides, traffic fatalities, and officer involved shootings.

HISTORICAL CALL VOLUME SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT



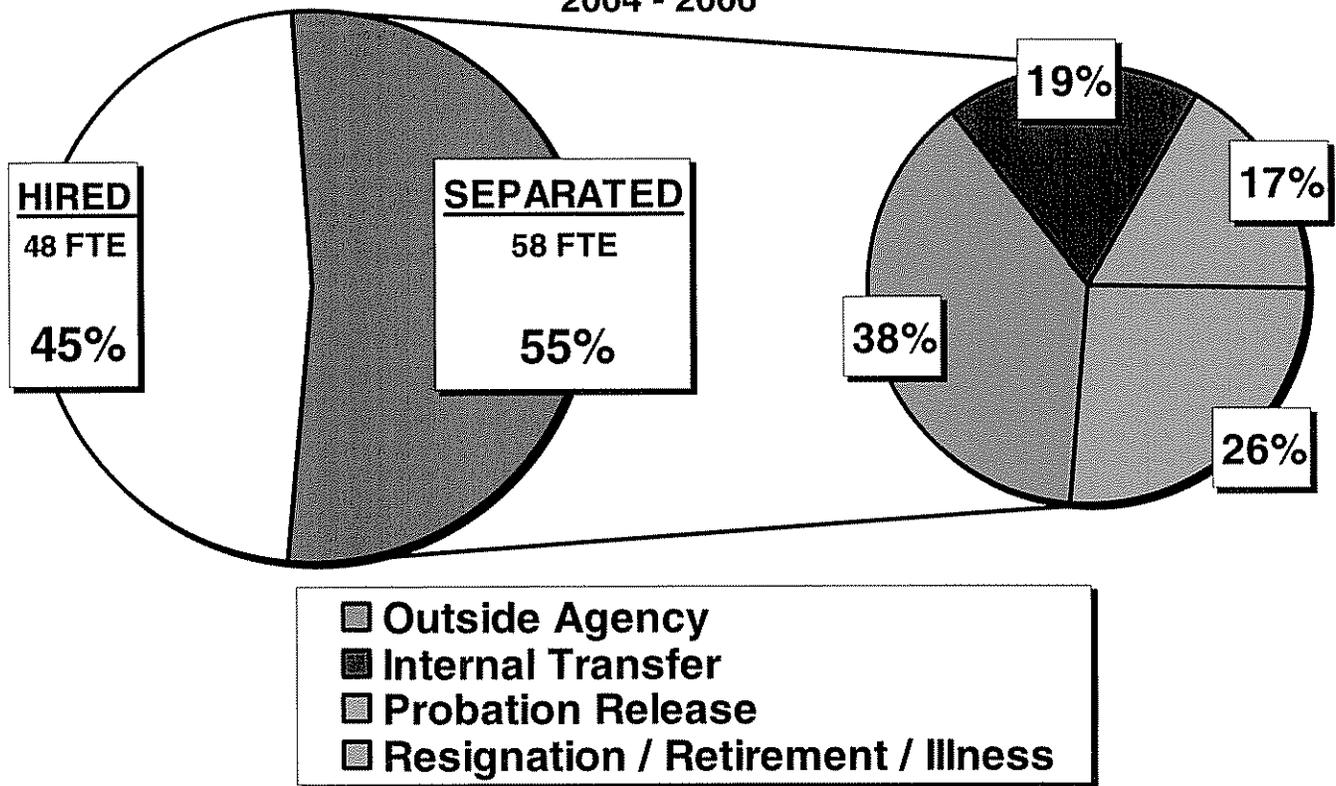
*State of California, Department of Finance.

**Information compiled using Dispatcher I/II Classification records from the Police Department's Personnel Services Division & Fiscal Section.

DISPATCHER EMPLOYMENT ACTIVITY

SACRAMENTO POLICE DEPARTMENT

2004 - 2006*



*Information compiled using Dispatcher I/II Classification records from the Police Department's Personnel Services & Communications Divisions; current as of 9/1/06.

DISPATCHER EMPLOYMENT SEPARATION HISTORY
CALENDAR YEARS 2004-2006*

Classification of Separated Employees	2004	2005	2006	TOTAL
Dispatcher Recruit	0	2	1	3
Dispatcher I	6	7	5	18
Dispatcher II	3	9	12	24
Dispatcher III	1	2	1	4
Supervising Dispatcher	1	2	0	3
Communications Center Manager	0	1	0	1
Reserve Dispatcher	1	4	0	5
TOTAL	12	27	19	58

*Current as of 9/1/06

ANNUAL LABOR COST PROJECTIONS

47 DISPATCHER I/II FTE INCREASE

	<u>FY 06-07</u>	<u>FY 07-08</u>	<u>FY 08-09</u>
2 FTE (10/06 Academy)	100,471	136,923	158,374
11 FTE (1/07 Academy)	276,296	710,528	858,827
12 FTE (4/07 Academy)	180,848	767,332	908,529
22 FTE (8/07 Academy)	-	1,276,455	1,591,283
47 FTE TOTAL	557,615	2,891,238	3,517,013

***Salary & benefit assumption includes annual step increases, annual adjustments per SPOA Labor Agreement, and promotion to Dispatcher II after 18 months.**

Attachment 6

RESOLUTION NO.

Adopted by the Sacramento City Council

DATE ADOPTED

POLICE DEPARTMENT COMMUNICATIONS CENTER STAFFING

BACKGROUND

- A. The current Communications Center authorized staffing level is 61 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Dispatcher I/II positions.
- B. The Communications Center is understaffed in relation to call volume, the City's current population, and customer service expectations. Current workload increases, coupled with staffing shortages, have significantly increased mandatory overtime, and restricted authorization of requested time off.
- C. An increase in staffing FTE is necessary to ensure the Communications Center is able to answer citizens' calls within recommended time standards, thus providing necessary public safety services in a timely manner. Additionally, a staffing increase is needed to enhance the City's ability to retain its current dispatchers by alleviating burdens of consistent mandatory overtime.

BASED ON THE FACTS SET FORTH IN THE BACKGROUND, THE CITY COUNCIL RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

- Section 1. The City Manager, or a designated representative, is authorized to increase the number of FTE Dispatcher I/II positions in the Police Department by 47.
- Section 2. The Police Department is authorized to fund the costs of this staffing increase through salary savings in FY2006/07. The impact of ongoing costs associated with this staffing increase will be considered through future budget development processes.

