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DEVON BELL
UNDERSHERIFF

To: Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors
From: Edward N. Bonner, Sheriff-Coroner-Marshal
Date: March 24, 2009
Subject: Sheriff's Department Dispatch Services Study

REQUESTED ACTION

The Board is requested to take action on the following items:

1. Accept the Sheriff's Department Public Safety Dispatch Study, including but not limited to recommendations to:
 - a. Consolidate the Public Safety Dispatch Centers.
2. Direct staff to work with the Sheriff and Personnel to develop a plan to implement the study recommendations.
3. Direct Personnel and CEO to engage in discussions with PPEO related to classifications and compensation.
4. Direct Personnel to submit the recommended classification specification changes to the Civil Service Commission for consideration and approval.

Further approval will be sought from your Board based on the plan and adjustments as developed as these items are completed.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In March 2008, your Board approved the County procurement process to retain the services of a specialized consulting firm to conduct an organization assessment of the Sheriff's Department Dispatch Services unit and provide recommendations to improve organization effectiveness. This assessment would include analysis of: organizational structure, operational practices, management practices, classifications, recruitment strategies, employment exams; current POST requirements, training programs and policies. It was intended that this study be completed on an aggressive timeline with frequent meetings with Steering Committee. The Study Steering Committee consisted of management staff from the Sheriff's Department, Personnel Department, Administrative Services Department and County Executive Office. Subsequent to that action, your Board approved the contract with Matrix Consulting Group to complete the study on behalf of the County.

As the CEO indicated in their budget message to the Board on February 24, 2009, it is clear that we cannot continue to operate with a "business as usual" philosophy. Placer County now faces the additional challenges resulting from economic downturns. It is critical that the most efficient

and economic methods be employed in the delivery of service. This study and resulting recommendations are consistent with that concept.

DELIVERABLES

The Scope of the study included a comprehensive analysis of the Sheriff's Department Dispatch Services compared to industry standards and best practices for emergency dispatch operations in a law enforcement environment. The study required the following deliverables:

1. To conduct an evaluation of current workload and services provided by the Dispatch Unit, including how staff is deployed and utilized.
2. To conduct an analysis of the Dispatch Unit's:
 - Organizational structure and management.
 - Staffing needs.
 - Recruitment and retention efforts.
 - Training needs.
 - The Emergency Operations Plan.
3. To update staff job classifications and compensation levels.
4. To evaluate the feasibility of consolidating the dispatch center in Tahoe City with the center in Auburn.

The study scope requested that the consultant provide the overview and methodology that would best meet these requirements within the time prescribed. Recommendations would be expected for actions that would improve organizational effectiveness based on industry best practices and experience of the consulting firm. The intended outcome of the study was to ensure that the Sheriff's Department Public Safety Dispatch Services were managed in a manner that supports the department's mission and core values while providing the optimum emergency services to the public in the most efficient and economic way possible. This methodology and resulting recommendations are outlined in summary in the Executive Summary attached for your Board's review and the more detailed full report provided to your Board under separate cover and available with the Clerk of the Board to the public. We are requesting your Board approve the actions as requested to proceed with the implementation of this study.

FISCAL IMPACT

The current action requested does not impact the budget. This Board action would accept the study and provide direction to staff to implement the study recommendations. We are expecting, based on the implementation plan to be developed, to expend less money in the future on background investigations, training, overtime coverage, and employee claims in general. More specifically, based on the recommendations, a reduction of overall staffing required for Public Safety Dispatch Operations is expected from the consolidation of the dispatch centers. Costs savings from reduced staffing may be offset to some extent with adjustments to the classification and compensation structure and other study recommendations related to training and recruitment and retention.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Matrix Consulting Group was retained by Placer County to conduct a master plan review of the Sheriff's Department Dispatch Unit. This report provides the project team's evaluation, analysis and recommendations resulting from our study of the Dispatch Unit.

Specifically, the scope of work for this project included:

- Detailed evaluation of the current workload and services provided by the Dispatch Unit, including how staff resources are deployed and utilized.
- General operations and organizational structure, including evaluation of industry best practices.
- Analysis of staffing levels required to handle the current workload.
- Evaluation and analysis of consolidation of the two Dispatch Centers.
- Analysis of recruitment of Dispatcher applicants and retention of current employees.
- Analysis of the Sheriff's Department Emergency Operations Plan.
- Analysis of training in the Dispatch Unit.
- Review and update of all current Dispatch Unit job classifications and compensation of each classification.

To develop this analysis the project team conducted extensive interviews and collected detailed data in an effort to develop a comprehensive understanding of the operations of the Sheriff's Department Dispatch Unit and to set the stage for this assessment. This included the following:

- An interview with key County managers involved in the Dispatch Unit operations, Personnel Department managers, and Sheriff's Department management personnel to understand key background issues that frame this study and scope of work.

- Worked closely with the Project Steering Committee (which included representatives from the County Executive's Office, Sheriff's Department, Personnel Department, Emergency Management Services, and Information Technology) at key times during the course of the project to review work products.
- Interviews with the supervisors and Dispatchers in the Dispatch Unit to obtain an understanding of it's functions, operations, goals, and objectives.
- Interviews with other selected staff (e.g. employees in other work units such as Tech Support that work closely with Dispatch Unit staff).
- Collection and review of data from a wide range of sources, both electronic (e.g., Computer Aided Dispatch / Records Management System) as well as budget and statistical reports.

Any review of an organization will reveal many improvement opportunities and changes that could be made in the organization to improve operations, management and efficiency. It is important to place the analysis of the Dispatch Unit that was conducted in this study into a complete context of the overall operations and services provided by the organization over the last several years. One of the significant factors that existed during the last several years was a significantly high attrition rate of approximately 24% (for all separations of employees) in the Dispatch Unit (compared to a 10-15% attrition rate commonly seen by the project team). Also during this time the management of the Dispatch Unit changed from a civilian manager to a temporarily assigned sworn manager. During this time the Dispatch Unit employees continued to provide quality services to the Sheriff's Department, their contract fire service agencies, and the community. The project team has found that the strengths of any organization are primarily in the people who are employed by the organization, and this is certainly the case in Placer County.

The recommendations made by the Matrix Consulting Group in this report result from our independent analysis of the data collected and interviews with members of the Sheriff's Department and other work units. This report is intended to provide information, evaluation, analysis, recommendations, and also options for County management and Sheriff's Department management in organizing and managing the Dispatch Unit to continue to provide professional communications services to the Placer County community.

Detailed analysis for each of the areas studied is provided in the chapters of the report but a summary of the recommendations and associated costs (also found at the end of each analysis section) is provided in the following table.

| Recommendation | Annual Cost / (Savings) |
|---|-------------------------|
| Staffing | |
| Staff the Auburn Dispatch Center with a minimum of three staff 24/7, and a fourth position from 0800-2200 hours to provide sufficient staffing to handle the current workload (for current operations). Page 45 | NA |
| Staff the Tahoe City Dispatch Center with one position 24/7 to provide a minimum staffing level (for current operations). Page 46 | NA |
| Organization | |
| Re-organize the Auburn and Tahoe City Dispatch Units so that they are under the authority and responsibility of one manager. Page 53 | NA |
| Develop and adopt a Dispatch Unit policy procedures manual. Page 53 | NA |
| Continue to staff the Dispatch Unit with a civilian manager. Page 56 | NA |
| Recommendation: Develop a process to select and compensate "training Dispatchers" who will provide on the job training to newly hired Dispatchers. Page 57 | TBD |
| Consolidation | |
| Develop a detailed plan to consolidate communications services in the Auburn Dispatch Center. Page 66 | NA |

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| Recommendation | Annual Cost / (Savings) |
|--|-------------------------|
| Staff a consolidated Dispatch Center with 29 personnel, a reduction of 8 staff (2 Senior Public Safety Dispatchers and 6 Public Safety Dispatchers); estimated salary & benefits savings to be determined by Personnel Department. Page 67 | TBD |
| Emergency Operations Plan | |
| Recommendation: Develop a Sheriff's Department Emergency Operations Plan as a companion document to the Placer County EOP. Page 77 | NA |
| Recruitment and Retention | |
| The Personnel Department and Sheriff's Department should establish an ad hoc committee to cooperatively develop a recruiting plan for the Dispatch Unit in 2009. Page 87 | NA |
| Develop a recruiting flyer for the Sheriff's Department Dispatcher position. Page 88 | \$500 |
| Post and maintain current Dispatcher job announcements on dispatcher and law enforcement related internet websites. Page 89 | \$500 |
| Solicit the help and participation of current Dispatch Unit employees in the recruiting of candidates. Page 90 | NA |
| Continue the trend of improving the professionalism of the Sheriff's Department, evaluate and consider the best management practices discussed in this section for implementation. Page 94 | NA |
| Develop a mentoring program for new employees. Page 96 | NA |
| Conduct a facilitated series of meetings between management, supervision and staff to address issues relating to employee training, supervision, responsibility, accountability and engagement in the workplace. The goal of addressing these issues is to increase productivity, morale, and improve the retention of quality employees. Page 100 | NA |
| Training | |
| Create a training group to meet, compile, assess and analyze the needs of the unit and provide recommendations for annual training and ensure current programs remain in compliance with regulatory agencies. Page 105 | NA |
| Develop and publish written goals and objectives for the training program. Page 106 | NA |
| Incorporate proficiency testing into the training model to assess the effectiveness of training and to identify the need for remedial training. Page 107 | NA |
| Require all training to correspond with approved lesson plans. Incorporate reviews that ensure training is consistent with current practices, policies and regulations. Page 109 | NA |

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| Recommendation | Annual Cost / (Savings) |
|--|-------------------------|
| Develop a policy that covers the periodic review of all aspects of the training program. Generate a report that shows the level of compliance for each area to include member training and certification and all training materials. Page 110 | NA |
| Classification and Compensation | |
| Eliminate the policy of paying employees classified as PSD IIs a "working out of class" payment. Instead, incorporate the training duties and responsibilities into the class specification and pay employees "special additional pay" when they are assigned to the training function. Page 117 | TBD |
| Adopt the new and revised position titles and job specifications to reflect the actual duties and responsibilities of the revised classifications and to improve the County's competitive position in the market vis-à-vis the eight counties. Page 123 | TBD |
| Adjust the Pay Grades of all Dispatch classifications to reflect the actual duties and responsibilities of the revised classifications and to improve the County's competitive position in the market vis-à-vis the eight counties. Page 123 | |
| The County should discontinue EMD certification pay and roll that additional 2.5% into the base pay calculations for the Dispatch positions. The EMD certification is required for the following positions: Public Safety Dispatcher I and II, Public Safety Dispatcher Supervisor, and the Communications Services Supervisor. Page 124 | TBD |
| Other | |
| Update the current Emergency Medical Dispatch program with new computerized software to be compatible with the local JPA, which Placer County is a member. Page 159 | \$30,000 |

