

March 13, 2019

To: Mayor and Members of Council  
From: Patrick A. Duhaney, City Manager  
Subject: Mission Critical Partners Report - Executive Summary - Emergency  
Communications Center

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On June 26, 2018, Mission Critical Partners (MCP) began work on a comprehensive assessment of the City of Cincinnati's Emergency Communications Center (ECC). MCP's scope of work included data gathering, observing operations, and conducting one-on-one interviews with a sampling of ECC employees. An online survey was also made available, allowing all employees to be involved in providing feedback on the state of the ECC and areas for improvement. MCP has provided a 110-page organizational assessment report (attached) that details their findings and recommendations for Cincinnati's Emergency Communications Center.

Below is a summary of their findings, recommendations, and ECC's update on the status of each.

## **GOVERNANCE**

Recommendations, Timeframe, and Status:

- 1) Install an advisory board comprised of the Police Chief, Fire Chief, and the Assistant City Manager / Q1 2019 (Status: *Complete*)
- 2) Create advisory subcommittees / Q1 2019 (Status: *Complete*)
- 3) Implement new leadership structure: 911 Director, Deputy Director, Operations Manager responsible for the floor, Technology Manager, Training Supervisor, and Q/A Supervisor / Q2 2019 (Status: *In Progress*)
- 4) Establish a hiring committee to hold a nationwide search for a new 911 Director / Q1 2020 (Status: *Not Started*)

### Status Update:

Recommendations 1 - 3 are 100% complete. ECC Governance serves as the Center's advisory board and meets monthly. SOP, Labor Management, and Employee Advisory subcommittees have also been established. A new leadership structure with all positions except a Deputy Director has been put in place to manage day-to-day operations.

## **TOP 5 PRIORITIES**

Recommendations, Timeframe, and Status:

- 1) Create a comprehensive strategic plan (Status: *Complete, Updates Ongoing*)
- 2) Analyze the entire network through an independent vendor (Status: *Scheduled*)
- 3) Modify IT work hours to have at least one staff member available for a portion of the night shift until all issues are resolved. (Status: *Complete*)
- 4) Establish an SOP committee to thoroughly review and rewrite, where necessary, all operational SOPs. (Status: *Complete, Policy Updates In-Progress*)
- 5) Conduct a comprehensive review of the training program, including the training manual. (Status: *Complete*)

### Status Update:

Items 1 - 5 are 100% complete. An ECC strategic plan and vision document has been drafted and presented formally in the City Council Law & Public Safety Committee. The independent analysis of the ECC network has received the needed funding and is tentatively scheduled for April of 2019. IT staff hours have been modified to extend support coverage into the evening two days per week. The SOP committee and training program review, with updates to the training manual, has been completed.

## **STAFFING AND OPERATIONS**

Recommendations, Timeframe, and Status:

- 1) Work to engage staff through the strategic planning process / Q1 2019 (Status: *Complete, Ongoing*)
- 2) Continue to track the incident volumes and parse the data by district. If at the end of 2018 incident volumes have increased, in concert with CPD, begin long-term planning to split the busiest district into two districts on two talkgroups / Q1 2020 (Status: *On Hold*)
- 3) Consider implementing Text-to-911 / Q1 2019 (Status: *Complete*)
- 4) Continue staffing a police sergeant to serve as a liaison on every shift / Q1 2019 (Status: *Complete*)
- 5) Provide call takers with refresher training on active listening / Q2 2019 (Status: *Scheduled*)
- 6) Annually review call and incident volume statistics to identify any trends / Q2 2019 (Status: *Complete, Ongoing*)

- 7) Implement three civilian supervisors per shift: one supervisor and two assistant supervisors / Q3 2019 (Status: *In progress*, staffing dependent)
- 8) Assign the assistant supervisors to the floor - one to the call take area and one to the police dispatch area / Q3 2019 (Status: *In Progress*, staffing dependent)
- 9) Implement a second power shift from 3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. to assist with the evening hour call volume / Q3 2019 (Status: *Under Review*)
- 10) Transition call backs requested by police officers from PC01 to the Inquiry position / Q3 2019 (Status: *Under Review*)
- 11) Re-evaluate the handling of the CELL incident type / Q3 2019 (Status: *Under Review*)
- 12) In cooperation with CPD, consider a policy requiring dispatch for a second call received from the same cellular number / Q3 2019 (Status: *Under Review*)
- 13) If needed, after reaching the current authorized strength of 50 call takers, increase authorized call taker strength to 52 / Q4 2019 (Stats: *In Progress*)
- 14) Review job descriptions, including NG911 responsibilities, such as Text-to-911 roles / Q4 2019 (Status: *Under Review*)
- 15) Implement a comprehensive stress management program / Q4 2019 (Status: *In Progress*)
- 16) Reintroduce some type of staff meeting that provides valued information and gives staff a chance to ask questions and air issues / Q1 2020 (Status: *Under Review*)
- 17) Implement a 360-degree annual performance review program for supervisors and managers / Q1 2020 (Status: *In Progress*)
- 18) Develop a mentoring program for new hires and those aspiring to supervisory positions / Q1 2020 (Status: *In Progress*)

Status Update:

The ECC has completed, is in progress, or has scheduled 12 of the 18 MCP recommendations related to staffing and operations. Five of the recommendations are under review and will be completed by the target date. One item is on hold as we collect data and measure the impact of splitting or augmenting the staffing of our busiest police dispatch channels.

## **QA AND TRAINING**

Recommendations and Timeframe:

- 1) Provide employee feedback for above average job performance more frequently and ensure that all treatment of employees by supervisors is fair and consistent / Q1 2019 (Status: *Complete / Ongoing*)
- 2) Fill current call taker and dispatcher vacancies in the 911 center before opening a competitive process to fill QA/QI positions / Q2 2019 (Status: *In Progress*)
- 3) Develop a structured QA/QI program with sufficient resources to support the program / Q3 2019 (Status: *In Progress*)
- 4) Send promoted supervisors, as well as those in current leadership roles who have not done so previously, to leadership courses / Q4 2019 (Status: *In Progress*)
- 5) Implement a 360-degree annual performance review program for training officers / Q1 2020 (Status: *Complete*)
- 6) Measure the effectiveness of the training program / Q2 2020 (Status: *In Progress*)

### Status Update:

The ECC has made several strides in training and quality assurance. A full-time Training and QA manager has been hired and updates to our training manuals, 911 call taker guides, and course curriculums for call takers and dispatchers have been completed. We have also started to build out the training team with the appointment of a permanent Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement Supervisor. With the assistance of central HR, the application, testing, applicant screening, and onboarding processes for new hires has been significantly reduced. Our retention rate for applicants has increased from 60% to 90% due to a more streamlined and flexible applicant testing process.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

Recommendations and Timeframe:

- 1) Analyze the entire network through an independent vendor / Q2 2019 (Status: *Scheduled*)
- 2) Modify IT work hours to have at least one staff member available for a portion of the night shift until all issues are resolved / Q1 2019 (Status: *Complete*)
- 3) Review GIS milestones for future needs of NG911 / Q2 2019 (Status: *In Progress*)

### Status Update:

The ECC continues to stabilize and improve our core technology systems. We have worked closely with our vendors to resolve outstanding support tickets for major system

functionality issues. Funding has been approved for an assessment of the Computer Aided Dispatch system network infrastructure and database to ensure our systems are fully optimized. Our technical support hours have been extended to ensure that we have coverage for our later shifts. Text-to-911 was implemented as an additional service for our citizens to request emergency assistance and we are currently planning to expand our RaveAlert system to include mass notifications to citizens.

**Conclusion:**

In 2018 the ECC processed 730,338 calls for service: 331,601 calls to 911, 240,806 calls to the center's non-emergency numbers, and 157,931 outbound calls to citizens. In 2018 there were 178,012 police incidents dispatched and 76,883 Cincinnati Fire calls for service dispatched for fire/rescue (13,496) and medical (63,387) incidents. Cincinnati Police and Fire had a combined total of 254,895 calls for service dispatched.

To keep up with this volume, the ECC will continue to progressively hire and train new employees and offer continuing education and refresher training options on a regular basis for our existing employees. The ECC is currently funded for 50 call takers, 55 Police dispatchers, 7 teletype clerks, 14 Supervisors, a Management Analyst, an Administrative Technician, a Clerk III, a Training/Quality Assurance Manager, and an Operations Manager. The Fire Department is funded for 4 Supervisors and 14 Fire Dispatchers. There are also 6 funded IT analysts and an IT Manager on the ETS table of organization providing technical support to the ECC. If we do not experience any additional staff losses, we anticipate the ECC being fully staffed by the end of this calendar year. There are currently 4 call taker vacancies, 14 Police dispatcher vacancies, and 3 Supervisor vacancies in the ECC. There are also 2 vacant IT Analyst positions. The Fire Department currently has 0 vacant Fire dispatcher positions.

The staff at the ECC strives to provide world class emergency communications service to the citizens of Cincinnati and is committed to making continuous operational and organizational improvements.

Attachment