

Dispatch Meeting 6/29/2021

Attendees: Michelle Roman (Mayor), Mark Devine (council president, police board), Chief Steven Abbott (LPD), Interim Chief Steven Preisch (LPD/Retired Officer NC Sheriff), Anita Mullane (NC legislator), Jason Cafarella (Deputy Corp Counsel), Michael Drake (Ret. Disp. Lt. NF), Frank DeMart (Ret. Fire NT), Flora Hawkins (President- Police Board), Joshua Wok (LFD union), Kevin Lucinski (LPD/PBA President)

Absent- Robert Bates (Fire Board),

Mayor greeted everyone and gave a brief review of last meeting/minutes were shared via e-mail prior to meeting. County Manager requested a response to determine ability to apply for a shared services agreement. A shared services agreement must demonstrate prolonged savings to taxpayers. Moving to county will be a minimum of \$500,000/year, which is a 27% increase to the Sheriff's budget.

- ✚ Former Interim Chief Preisch confirmed his opinion that the option to purchase an upgrade that would have the city follow the upcoming federal regulations, as well as allow the city to have cell phones, as well as landlines connect to the city emergency communications is the most prudent course at this time. With increased dispatch training and communications with the county in conjunction with the upgraded equipment, the city will have the most up-to-date emergency response. He does not recommend lay-offs needed to reduce costs for city.
- ✚ The union was willing to negotiate to help mitigate the cost of the upgrade citing the importance of maintaining local dispatch for the safety of residents and officers, as the impetus to support this. They will not negotiate reducing minimum personnel requirements in the contract due to volume of calls and point of service interactions.
- ✚ Flora Hawkins- we are not prepared to move to county yet. AG's report stating need for communication between city LPD and county has already started with meetings involving all parties. AG's report stating need for better system will be addressed with upgrade to Motorola.
- ✚ The dispatch is in the union contract in both its own individual section- Article 26, as well as part of the light duty policy in Article 25, which impacts the decision. Also, the contract holds a minimum manning clause that precludes the city from laying off police officers if dispatch were to be moved to the county. This is an issue the city has fought and lost with another union at extreme cost to the city taxpayers. The current contract is in effect until 2024.
- ✚ Due to the inability to lay-off officers and the increase in cost to both the city for upgrading of equipment, storage of data, and transfer of systems from Impact to New World, along with the increase to the county for an additional five dispatch employees at a starting cost of approximately \$500,000/year with annual COLA increases, this would not qualify under the Shared Services Agreement stipulations of showing a prolonged savings to the taxpayers at either the city or county level.
- ✚ Michael Drake (Ret. Disp. Lt. NF)- it would cost more to move to county than upgrade current equipment. Gives city time to put things in place for the future. Frank DeMart (Ret. Fire NT)- both spoke on the need for improved training of officers on handling dispatch calls through APCO. Ret.Lt. Drake stated that the city could send some officers to train the trainer and then train remainder in-house. Chief Abbott stated that he can put this additional training into the training regime by reducing training in another area that is currently being done twice a year but can be done one time annually.

- ✚ Motorola system would upgrade the local 911 system to the same level as county (from Preisch's recommendation in 2019), would cost \$270,000 to have 3 working stations that would allow for cell phones, texting, etc., all required by the end of February 2022 federal regulations. Upgrades to some hardware would be additional costs, but not exceeding \$315,000, this is at least \$90,000 less than the cost of changing systems from Impact to New World- to change to New World server at local level it would cost around \$325,000 with an additional \$80,000+ to transfer data from Impact to New World.
- ✚ Training involved in New World switch over would also be an added cost on the city side if transfer to county were to occur.
- ✚ Shared services require proof of prolonged savings to taxpayers- this does not qualify unless the city were to lay off officers- against contract and against needs of the residents of the city.
 - Officers are needed for walk up window, maintaining cameras, building security, prisoner holdovers.
 - 20% of calls are from the walk-up window- we do not want to shut down our walk-up window when we are trying to improve our community policing.
 - Over 30,000 calls per year- 5-6,000 are Medical Emergencies that stay with the county, but that still leaves over 25,000 per year that needs to be handled by our officers.
- ✚ Overall cost to the city of transferring to the county in the initial startup will be a minimum of \$350,000 upwards of \$450,000.
- ✚ Overall cost to the county of transferring city dispatch to city would be NC would need to hire 6 full time dispatchers- around \$400-500,00 for salaries and benefits that cost will be added to NC taxpayers annually with growth due to contractual obligations each year. Training of new dispatchers would be a one-time cost of \$32,000.
 - Savings would only be to the one-time training cost of \$32,000 that would not be added to annual increase in other costs.
- ✚ Police Union Contract is good for over 2 more years, and it will take that long to do the transfer appropriately, no guarantee the union will support move in collective bargaining agreement.
- ✚ Motorola upgrade will be for a minimum of 5 years at a cost of around \$270,000 and will allow for safe transfer and tracking of all calls through 911.

Due to all the reasons stated above, it is the unanimous recommendation by this committee that the city maintain dispatch and upgrade with the Motorola system to comply with federal regulations and meet to comply with the needs identified by the Attorney General's report. Annual training of all officers on dispatch protocols, improved communications with the county on both city and county protocols, and more reliable systems will result in a better quality, more efficient, and improved safety of our city. Once the new system is in place, we can be a back-up to county, if ever needed.