

April 17 2018

Mayor John Cranley
City of Cincinnati
801 Plum Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Mayor and Members of City of Cincinnati Council:

I submit this correspondence in reaction to the death of area teen Kyle Plush which occurred last Tuesday at the Seven Hills School. First, I offer my condolences and prayers to the Plush family and express my offer to do anything I can to personally help their family through this tragic event. Secondly, I would like to offer some insight on the City of Cincinnati Emergency Communication Center (ECC) which I hope will assist you in identifying the breakdown relative to this event so these issues can be rectified as soon as possible.

The Police Chief indicated, "... something went terribly wrong" in this instance which seems to suggest some isolated malfunction that occurred to an otherwise functional operation. Nothing could be further from the truth. The ECC has suffered from myriad issues for at least the last decade and even beyond.

I. **The 911 System**

Before discussing issues germane to the City of Cincinnati, it is important to recognize the issues with the 911 concept impacts large municipalities across the country. When the 911 initiative began, police executive's embraced rapid response and enforcement laden policing strategies. Citizens therefore could be the best police partner by calling immediately upon witnessing crime or suspicious events. In an era before the advent of cellular telephones the caller would have to find a landline or payphone to alert police, an inconvenience that stopped many from calling. Call volumes during this time were somewhat manageable and consistent. Today, however, the 911 system is being challenged by a number of issues:

- Cellphones are owned by a vast majority of the citizenry. Instead of a few concerned citizens finding a landline to alert police of an unfolding situation, now scores of citizens are attempting to call in to report the same incident. Today approximately 91% of the calls received at ECC come from cellular telephones.
- Successive generations have ignored pleas to call non-emergency fire and police numbers to make reports or deal with low level crimes or disputes, and use 911 only for true emergencies.
- Technology simply has not kept up with the new demands of the 911 system.

II. History of City of Cincinnati ECC

As a result of a move by the City Administration, the ECC was taken out of Police / Fire command in 2010. The ECC was later assigned to the City Manager's Office under the command of a Civilian Director. Under this configuration, ECC communication with its Fire and Police customers deteriorated to the point information sharing ceased, protocols no longer coincided with first responder needs, employee morale plummeted, and a series of failures began to occur, which generated media attention including investigative reports. In 2014, I became aware of the extent of the problems when ECC employees from both the CODE and AFSCME unions came to my office with substantial documentation indicating management failures and dysfunction, pleading for me to get involved and do whatever necessary to bring ECC back under the Police Department. Eventually, the ECC Director was released and the Police and Fire Chiefs at the time, Jeffrey Blackwell and Richard Braun respectively, selected a new ECC Director in an attempt to stabilize the operation. This did not have the desired effect as conditions actually worsened. In November of 2015, CPD was finally asked by the City Manager to put together a proposal to reposition ECC back under CPD and CFD.

III. CPD Proposal to Manage ECC

Attached is the November 29, 2015 proposal to the City Manager to regain command of the ECC. In that proposal we identified critical areas of need:

- Management
- Operations Plan
- Personnel and Training
- Service Delivery – The Impact of Wireless 911
- Technology
- Protocol development and agency integration
- Employee morale and climate considerations

In our proposal, we discussed each of these challenges and offered a timeline to achieve stabilization of the facility. From a Police Department perspective, however, there were only a few commanders who had the experience to take on the assignment. Clearly the best suited was Captain Jeffrey Butler. On 12/27/15 Captain Butler was assigned as the Commander of the ECC instructed to secure the personnel necessary to accomplish the objectives laid out in the stabilization plan. The goal was to take the Center to various operational levels:

1. Stabilization – Achieve complement for each of the operational positions, Call Takers, Dispatchers and Teletype operators. At the same time, the administrative portion of ECC was to review standard operating procedures, develop competent training for new hires as well as meaningful continuing training for tenured employees.
2. Technological Advances – The second phase of the project was to prepare ECC for new technology such as CAD, phone and mapping systems, integration with filed units and the next generation of 911.
3. Fulfill the vision of a round the clock real time crime facility working with ECC staff as critical incidents begin to unfold. This of course would maximize our various incoming intelligence systems and provide a greater degree of functionality of our citizens as well as first responders.

Despite inheriting a CAD system purchased by the previous administration without input from police and complications with the purchase of the Motorola APX radio package, I believe we were making progress in achieving these goals.

IV. What Went Wrong??

Management Issues

On 1/1/17, the City Manager and the Police Chief agreed to remove Captain Butler as the Commander of the ECC. Captain Dave Fink was named as Captain Butler's successor. Unfortunately, Captain Fink was not prepared for this position nor did he have any experience in this role. Quite frankly, he was seen as the new Captain who could be "sacrificed" for the position. Due to the extensive technology and personnel learning curve associated with this particular position, any additional progress was considerably slowed to the point one would have to wonder if we will need to restart the stabilization process at this juncture. ECC needs a commander who is knowledgeable about the ECC operation, believes in the mission and is able to foster a collaborative working environment. Managers need to assist employees to succeed in their roles and insist on professional emergency communication services.

Civilian Managers who reach the rank of Emergency Services Dispatch Supervisors (ESDS) are left without a future career path and often abandon the ECC to seek comparable positions elsewhere in City government in order to vie for promotional

opportunities. Additionally, many of those promoted to the ESDS positions were thrust into these positions without adequate training to prepare them to serve as a supervisor.

Hiring and Retention of Employees

ECC has been operating well under complement for quite some time. Despite assistance from City HR to find innovative ways to hire operational personnel; this task is remains one of the biggest challenges. There continues to be large turnover rates for ECC personnel for a number of reasons which include:

- For whatever reason, we have acquired personnel who are simply not motivated or are unable to do this type of work and just outright resign early in their career. Others remain employed but turn in marginal performance and attendance. Even though this is usually the exception, it is these employees who clog up the system and ECC management time with long drawn out grievances which are often encouraged and supported by the various labor unions. FMLA requirements also add an additional layer of complexity to these situations.
- As pointed out above there are some ECC employees who leave to seek employment with other City Departments.
- Job burnout. These positions are difficult due the inherent liability placed on ECC personnel, lack of support, lack of training and political second guessing when things inevitably go wrong.
- Long hours and shifts not conducive to family or personal demands.
- A new work force with different motivations and needs.

I'm not sure what criteria is utilized to identify candidates suitable to be ECC employees but whatever it is, it is not working as expected. It is unimaginable to me we can't find candidates who have a proven work history and a strong desire to do this type of work. We have to look at our hiring protocols. I know these folks are out there because I recommended a few, who for whatever reasons, could not pass the "eligibility test". Let me just say with Joe Wilson and Ed Ramsey now at the helm at City HR, I feel comfortable CPD will have enjoy a productive partnership and will be able to better navigate through complex personnel issues.

Technology

The technology world is starting to recognize the emergency services field needs dire help. The Next Generation 911 may offer some relief to the overloaded phone systems by offering alternatives for citizens to contact communication centers. But management must position the ECC to be ready for this transition which is coming in the very near future. At this juncture, I have doubts our ECC is prepared for this acquisition. Suffice it to say, we have to find alternatives to the phone system for routine or lower level field requests. All this technology comes at a cost.

Fortunately legislators thought this out and provided for recovery funding which is paid to Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) based on their cellular phone activity. This funding was intended to allow PSAPs to stay up to date on technological advances not merely to balance the operational budget as has become a regular practice.

But aside from the costs, large technology acquisitions need to be well planned before identifying a vendor. That is, the City should define exactly what they want these systems to do to make us better and more efficient. And then you have to understand how these systems will impact other components and integrate to the maximum degree possible. Purchasing a CAD or phone system to merely replace something believed to be out of date seems inane if it doesn't provide enhanced functionality.

And finally, the City network must be suitable and robust enough to host all the systems current and envisioned. In particular, CPD onboard vehicle systems still suffer due to network challenges.

V. What needs to happen??

To point to a single 911 operator and identify her as being solely responsible for this situation is not only ducking for cover but is also self-serving, and unfair. It is my opinion that this situation should have been considered as "extraordinary" or "unusual" and would merit all available resources from ECC **as well as the field**. Supervisors from both camps should have coordinated their efforts and communicated with one another to maximize the likelihood of achieving a successful resolution. The hallmark of an ECC is the ability to get someone help who may not be able to clearly communicate their situation or location. This is the reason we pay millions of dollars for these systems, first responder personnel and their supervisors. To say we should get out of the 911 business is a discussion left for the politicians and experts but I believe it is also short sighted and would do little to solve the actual problems.

- Commanders and supervisors need to take these positions seriously and perform the expected level of service and be helpful. In other words, they need to do their jobs, take control and actually give a damn about what they are obligated to do.
- ECC and sworn personnel should be assigned to the times of actual need, not times of employee convenience. Management should be able to retain their rights and not cave to union pressures.
- Department heads should be allowed to make decisions relative to the placement of personnel without City administration pressure.
- 911 recovery and asset forfeiture funds should be utilized for the purpose for which they were intended and not to offset budget gaps.

- ECC management must insist on exemplary service from their employees which is included in training, prescribed by policy and reinforced by competent supervisory oversight.
- ECC employee performance should be routinely monitored and documented by supervisors.
- The Department needs sufficient IT staff and analysts to provide the proper level of support services.

Captain Butler and I agree the ECC operation offers more liability than the rest of the CPD combined. Every day, ECC personnel have to make assessments and calls which will impact another person's life. I think we owe these personnel the benefit of competent management, appropriate training, functional equipment, and a supportive working environment. I can only hope the CPD will provide a fair and impartial assessment of this incident from all perspectives.

Respectfully,

Dave Bailey
DB/ad

On 11/12/15, officials from the Fire and Police Departments came together to discuss concerns involving the operation of the City's Emergency Communications Center (ECC). In this discussion, comparisons were drawn between operation of the ECC under the previous Fire/Police configuration and the current civilian Executive Director model. Fire and Police agree efficient operation of the ECC and quality service is not only critical to the operation of each agency but is equally crucial to the safety of the citizenry. A number of key areas of concern emerged from this discussion:

- Management
- Operations Plan
- Personnel and Training
- Service Delivery – The Impact of Wireless 911
- Technology
- Protocol development and agency integration
- Employee morale and climate considerations

To the Department's knowledge, the City has not conducted any type of research that could provide sufficient data to promote any one type of management model as a best practice relative to the ECC operation. Our experience in this City, however, clearly suggests lack of direct involvement and supervision by Fire and Police has led to deficiencies in the above cited categories. It is our opinion not only has ECC lost focus of the needs of two major clients, both Police and Fire, there has also been an adverse impact on ECC operational employees who feel less connected to the overall mission of the emergency service system when in reality, it is our communication personnel who provide some of the most critical contributions to the overall delivery of emergency service.

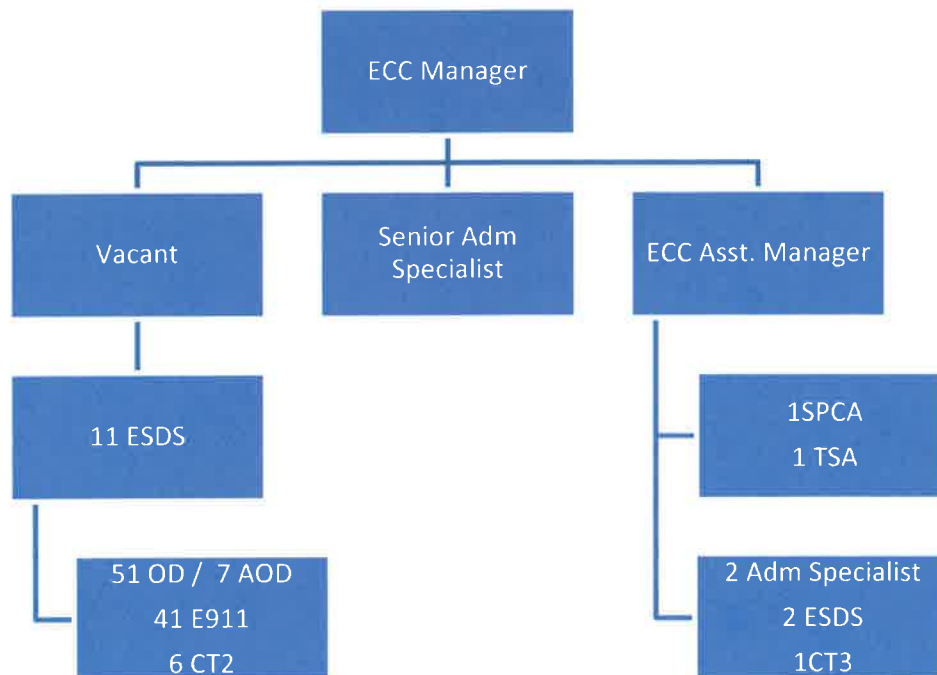
CPD is suggesting some changes which could be beneficial to the ECC operation. It involves management changes to incorporate direct supervision by Fire and Police Commanders and at the same time, proposes significant overhaul to the human resource and training functions.

ECC is comprised of three major components:

- Administrative Functions (Management and Supervision)
- Operational Functions
- Technical Functions

These functions are reflected organizationally:

Emergency Communications Center Personnel Allocation

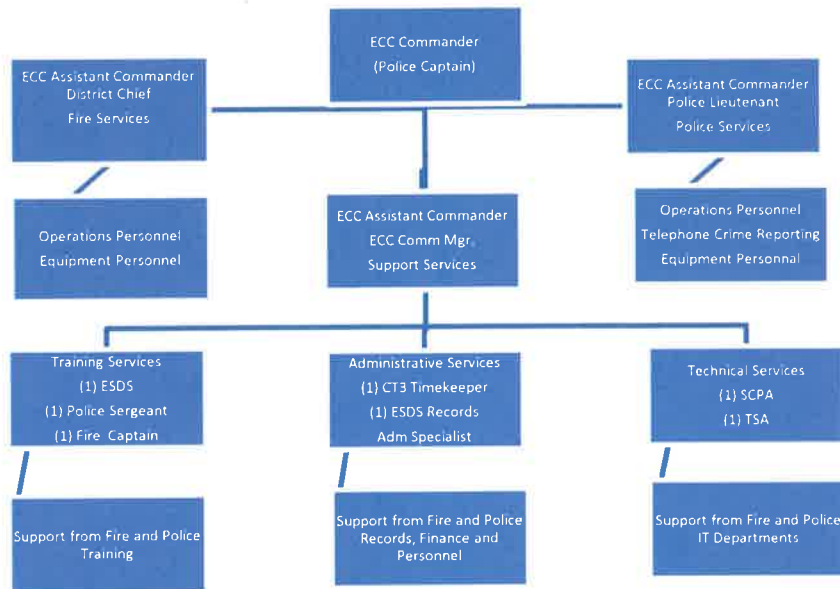


Title	FTE	Salary	Costs	Administrative
Emergency Communications Manager	1	91,350.0000	\$91,350.00	\$91,350.00
Emergency Communications Assistant Manager	1	75,666.7370	\$75,666.74	\$75,666.74
Senior Administrative Specialiaist	1	75,666.7370	\$75,666.74	\$75,666.74
Senior Cmptr/Prgmr Anlyst-EXM	1	72,386.0490	\$72,386.05	\$72,386.05
Technical Systems Analyst-EXM	1	66,748.1070	\$66,748.11	\$66,748.11
Emergency Srvcs Dspthc Supvr	2	66,677.1140	\$133,354.23	\$133,354.23
Emergency Srvcs Dspthc Supvr	11	66,677.1140	\$733,448.25	
Administrative Specialist-EXM	2	53,287.5010	\$106,575.00	\$106,575.00
Clerk Typist 3	1	39,461.5640	\$39,461.56	\$39,461.56
Clerk Typist 2	6	36,173.5730	\$217,041.44	
Asst Operator And Dispatcher	7	40,933.2480	\$286,532.74	
Operator And Dispatcher	51	54,350.7790	\$2,771,889.73	
Emergency 911 Operator	41	45,297.3960	\$1,857,193.24	
Totals	126		\$6,527,313.82	\$661,208.42
2016 Budget	131		\$7,645,520.00	

Data as of 10/24/15

In addition to the drawbacks cited above, the current model provides a number of operational and accountability challenges. Because the core business in this case essentially involves communication; problems, barriers and breakdowns ultimately occur on both sides with ECC personnel as well as the actual emergency responders. It has been our experience sworn personnel have been more effective in resolving issues on both sides. From the ECC perspective, it becomes difficult for the Director to be held accountable when performance is so greatly dependent upon the Fire and Police operations. Conversely, Fire and Police managers understandably are reluctant to participate in accountability measures such as ECCStat when they have little involvement in or knowledge about the actual operation.

CPD proposes a new organizational structure:



Title	FTE	Salary	Costs	Administrative
Police Captain	1	99,099.0000	\$99,099.00	\$99,099.00
Police Lieutenant	1	86,711.5900	\$86,711.59	\$86,711.59
District Chief	1			271
Fire Captain Training	1			271
Police Sergeant Training	1			222
Emergency Communications Manager	1	91,350.0000	\$91,350.00	\$91,350.00
Emergency Communications Assistant Manager				
Senior Administrative Specialist				
Senior Cmptr/Pgrmr Anlyst-EXM	1	72,386.0490	\$72,386.05	\$72,386.05
Technical Systems Analyst-EXM	1	66,748.1070	\$66,748.11	\$66,748.11
Emergency Srvc Dspch Supvr	2	66,677.1140	\$133,354.23	\$133,354.23
Emergency Srvc Dspch Supvr	11	66,677.1140	\$733,448.25	
Administrative Specialist-EXM	1	53,287.5010	\$106,575.00	\$106,575.00
Clerk Typist 3	1	39,461.5640	\$39,461.56	\$39,461.56
Clerk Typist 2	6	36,173.5730	\$217,041.44	
Asst Operator And Dispatcher	7	40,933.2480	\$286,532.74	
Operator And Dispatcher	51	54,350.7790	\$2,771,889.73	
Emergency 911 Operator	41	45,297.3960	\$1,857,193.24	
Totals	126		\$6,527,313.82	695,685.54
2016 Budget	131		\$7,645,520.00	

Operations Plan

Taking into account even if up to 11 positions could be potentially dedicated to the administration functions, this would allow for the staffing of up to 120 operational positions which consists of the Emergency 911 Operators, Operator/Dispatchers (including AOD) and Teletype functions. It is necessary to determine the needs for the Fire and Police functions:

Fire (Allowing for the pre-arrival instruction positions to assist with the 911 issue)

- Supervisors 1
- Dispatchers 3

Police

- Supervisors 2
- Dispatcher 10
- Call Takers 10 minimum (Flexible based on call demand)
- Teletype 1

Teletype

In order to achieve the desired Teletype staffing level will take all of the dedicated Clerk Typist 2 positions. **6**

Dispatch and Call Taking

Fire is currently operating on an 8 hour schedule for dispatchers. Not knowing the exact coefficient for training and leave, an estimate needs to be made. Assuming it takes nearly two dispatchers to fill one slot we can calculate the anticipated need:

Minimum Need	X	Estimated Staffing Coefficient	X	Shifts	=	Total
3		1.7		3		15

The Police dispatching staffing for dispatchers are currently based on a 12 hour shift although a 12/8 hour hybrid system may be more efficient. But for this calculation, our experience with 12 hour shift suggests the staffing coefficient will be somewhat higher, possibly in the range of 2.4:

Minimum Need	X	Estimated Staffing Coefficient	X	Shifts	=	Total
10		2.4		2		48

This argument generally holds true for the Call Taking positions: **48**

Total Operational Positions Necessary 117

Of the 96 operations personnel dedicated above to the police dispatch and ECC call taking needs, we envision this could be a combination of the Operator and Dispatcher and the Emergency 911 Operator positions. To maximize effectiveness among the call takers, however, a hybrid system consisting of twelve hour and 8 hour shifts should be examined. This would allow the bulk of call takers to be working during the peak hours between 1100 through 0100 hours and only the minimal number of call takers should be assigned through the slower periods from 0300 to 0700 hours.

According to a report authored by the ECC in 2013 and presented to City Council, there were 75,424 Fire CAD incidents compared to 643,835 Police CAD incidents – a breakdown of 11% and 89% respectively. The above personnel assignments closely reflect this workload statistic.

Personnel and Training

The hiring and retention of personnel has plagued the ECC operation regardless of the management model employed. Further, it is not an issue isolated to our particular operation as the problem seems to be systemic to the industry. On November 6, 2014, the Office of Internal Audit released a report (see attachment) indicating the need to achieve ECC authorized complements and a recommendation to restructure training programs. The report concluded overtime expenditures have skyrocketed and employee morale has greatly suffered as a result. Currently, the ECC is experiencing only a 50% success rate in retaining Operator and Dispatcher candidates but at the same time, laments this is a common industry statistic. CPD believes this can be improved by making enhancements to the work environment and transferring ECC training needs to the Police Training Section. The Police Training Section has been successful in administering many types of training and believes new employee and refresher training can be equally successful by merely adopting the appropriate curriculum and retaining competent subject matter experts as instructors. Both Fire and Police agree training of personnel has been a significant challenge and continue to cite a number of deficiencies in that regard. We propose highly structured new employee and refresher training to be instructed by appropriate subject matter experts with industry approved curriculum and specific performance objectives. Detailed training records would then be retained to document these efforts. A review of the current ECC training curriculum, related records, and the recent APCO audit findings will assist in establishing a baseline measurement.

CPD would also need the City Human Resources Department to assist in implementing the aggressive hiring timelines discussed in their report released earlier this year.

Service Delivery – The 911 Dilemma

Both departments feel there have been inordinate numbers of complaints from field officers and citizens citing deficient service. We believe the proposed training curriculum should also emphasize the City's insistence on outstanding customer service, recognizing customers are not only the citizens requesting service but also our emergency responders. Management and supervision also need to understand and reinforce this directive and at the same time, implement processes to measure performance in this area. Supervision must also be able to continually balance customer service needs with service demand.

Perhaps the larger issue surrounds the impact wireless telephones have had on the 911 system. At this time, we agree with ECC managers in that there is no real quick fix. Although new technologies and next generation 911 systems propose some relief to the 911 call system, their implementation is not in the near future and their arrival will cause some additional challenges for ECC managers. Until call routers can cluster calls geographically in response to unusual call volumes brought about by significant events such as traffic accidents on the interstates, the ECC will have to find ways to deal with these events. Perhaps a CAD notification feature logging these types of events and then available to the call takers, would avoid the need to spend time collecting information for duplicate calls for service. Transferring pre-arrival instruction for medical calls to the Fire dispatchers would further alleviate call takers being taken out of service. And finally, supervisors need to actively monitor the process and make adjustments whenever necessary.

Technology

Technology is absolutely a critical component of the ECC operation. Of primary concern to both agencies is implementation of the TriTech Computer Aided Dispatch system. With each agency having only limited exposure to the system, there are concerns as to the City's ability to go on line as scheduled in 2016. Another area of concern, particularly for Police, is the ability of the TriTech system to provide the information necessary to serve as a viable management tool. Additional concerns involve the everyday operation and maintenance of the Motorola 800 Mhz radio system and dispatch components. Fire and Police, however, believe there are sufficient IT personnel in each agency to mitigate many of these concerns. We anticipate a combined IT team from each agency to service ECC needs.

Protocol and Agency Integration

As we understand, ECC protocols are in need of revision. In addition to the usual modifications brought about by industry changes in best practices, existing protocols have not had the benefit of input from Fire or Police for many years. It is imperative ECC protocols are consistent with Fire and Police operational needs. Although we understand there are some revisions in progress, we would recommend immediate review and validation by both agencies. Again the existing protocols and the APCO audit data will serve as a baseline moving forward.

Employee Morale and Climate Considerations

At this juncture it seems clear to both agencies the current ECC climate leans toward returning the operation back to the former Fire/Police model. It would seem prudent for both agencies to consult with the City Human Resources Department to address climate issues and at the same time find solutions for the hiring and retention of qualified personnel.

Recommendation

The Fire and Police role at the ECC has been limited to advisory in scope. Accordingly, it is not possible to make specific recommendations in each of these categories. While both agencies agree the above challenges are pervasive in the emergency communications industry, we believe they are substantially mitigated when under direct Fire and Police supervision. This was the City's experience under the previous Fire/Police operated ECC and we believe that to be the case should it return to this configuration. Recent discussion, however, have generated concerns over a shared command model, citing accountability issues. Given the fact nearly 90% of the ECC workload involves the delivery of police services; we believe Fire and Police can still commit to providing a team command model with Police ultimately having operational responsibility to the City administration and the proposed ECCStat process. Fire and Police currently retain personnel who are familiar enough with the ECC operation that implementation of this model could be achieved in relatively short order. Under this model, however, it should be realized a number of ECC administrative positions would ultimately have to be displaced. Fire and Police already have personnel in place to deal with budget, personnel and internal investigation functions. These ECC services would be transferred to each agency.

Transition back to this model in the near future will allow the agencies to conduct work during the slower winter months and have operations moving in the desired direction by spring of 2016. This will also afford ample time to have a combined budget prepared for the 2017 fiscal period discussion.

Proposed Timeline

December 2

The City administration approves the ECC reorganization plan described in this report

Week of December 2

Implementation Team is formed and holds meeting:

- Assistant Police Chief Dave Bailey – Police Operations
- Captain Jeffrey Butler – Implementation Facilitator
- Assistant Fire Chief (To be named) – Fire Operations
- ECC Director Ms. Amity Bishop – ECC Administration
- Ms. Ella Topham – Budget
- Ms. Georgetta Kelly – Personnel and Hiring
- Captain Doug Wiesman – Training and Personnel
- Fire Training Representative
- Fire IT representative
- Police IT representative
- ECC IT representative

Weeks of December 6 through December 19

This period will allow the team to put together implementation reports for new management system to begin on January 1, 2016:

- ECC and City Human Resources – Strategic Hiring Plan for adding new hires and recommendations to retain current employees including retraining.
- ECC Fire and Police – Training Plan to address new hires and annual refresher training that a minimum incorporates industry standards training (APCO and NENA), ECC operations training and segments including Fire and Police operational training. The report should also identify the subject matter experts proposed to serve as instructors.
- ECC, Fire and Police – Operations Plan identifying specific assignments and shifts. This report should also identify the need to conduct future dialogue with any of the unions such as AFSCME or CODE
- ECC, Fire and Police – In lieu of convening the Labor Management Committee, a series of meetings must be held with current ECC management and supervision and then another with employee representatives.
- ECC and Police – Meeting to discuss current state of the ECC budget and overtime needs. Ms. Topham to render a report on any fiscal needs for the remainder of this budget cycle.
- ECC, Fire and Police – Set meeting with Mr. Chad Kenney to discuss ECCStat which at first should only track progress with the aforementioned needs.

- Fire and Police – to name command and supervisory personnel to the ECC management team
- ECC, Fire and Police – Assess the current state of technology, including the TriTech CAD implementation. City administration is expecting a report on the extent of management data generated by the TriTech system.

Week of December 20 (Which will be December 20 through December 23)

- Review reports – meet as needed

Week of December 27 through December 31

- Prepare for management transfer to take place on January 1, 2016.

January 1, 2016

- Implement new management model
- Begin the first of ECCStat meetings
- Accelerate hiring
- Implement new training program
- Determine next steps with the TriTech CAD system.
- Regular management and employee meetings
- Implement wholesale operational improvements
- Prepare for ECC fiscal considerations for next budget discussions.

Future Considerations

The future of policing will undoubtedly require direct integration with the emergency communications operation. First, there are a number of intelligence systems that will have to be synchronized with Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) systems. Technology such as private/public cameras, gunshot detection, facial recognition and license plate reader systems can and should be configured to the CAD so they can be activated in line with priority situations.

Secondly, the next generation 911 systems mentioned above may reduce call load on one hand but will instead provide electronic information such as voice, text or video information that will have to be immediately assessed and acted upon.

And third, the police profession is looking for ways to provide police services without the need of dispatching officers to the call. Increased online reporting options and interactive social media services offer promise in this regard. But at the same time these considerations all point to the need to implement a Real Time Crime and Customer Service Center. These centers will be instrumental in orchestrating better outcomes for high priority events as well as providing alternative police options to the citizens. It is our vision these centers will be staffed by both sworn and civilian personnel and necessarily will need to be attached to the ECC operation.