



Date: May 18, 2016
To: Patrick H. West, City Manager *T.M.W.*
From: Reginald Harrison, Director, Disaster Preparedness & Emergency Communications *R.H.*
For: Laura Doud, City Auditor
Subject: **One Year Update - Police & Fire PSD Overtime Audit – April 17, 2015**

As requested in your April 17, 2015 audit of the Police and Fire Public Safety Dispatcher (PSD) overtime usage, the following is a one-year status of the progress made in implementing the recommendations of the audit.

Results & Recommendations and Management Response

Concern #1 – Staffing Levels need further assessment

Recommendation #1: A thorough analysis of required minimum staffing levels should be performed to ensure scheduling meets demand and limits the use of overtime where possible.

Original Response to Recommendation #1: Both PD and FD support the recommendation to perform an analysis of minimum staffing levels and review scheduling procedures. It should be noted that PD conducts an annual review of workload and call volume to ensure adequate staffing to meet minimum performance guidelines as set forth by industry standards. FD also regularly reviews and updates their policies and procedures on staffing levels to ensure that they meet National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) performance standards on answering emergency calls. Additionally, both PD and FD supervision continuously monitor staffing levels and overtime worked to generate work schedules and make sure that they meet minimum staffing levels by shift.

Status Update to Recommendation #1: Per practice, an annual review of the PD and FD minimum staffing levels was conducted prior to the calendar year 2016 shift assignments. Call volumes and response times were found to be trending in a similar pattern to prior years, and no adjustments to the staffing plans were required.

With current overtime usage down by 32 percent (\$240,000) compared to last fiscal year, the average overtime per employee is reduced significantly. While it is anticipated that overtime will increase as a result of consolidation cross-training, total amounts should not exceed the prior fiscal year.

Concern #2 – Enhanced recruitment is critically needed

Recommendation #2: The Fire Department should adjust its budget to reflect FTEs that are reasonable to meet scheduling needs, which will reduce the need for extensive use of overtime.

Original Response to Recommendation #2: As noted in the response to recommendation #1, FD supports a thorough analysis of required minimum staffing levels, which would include an analysis of the efficiency and operationally effective balance of FTEs and overtime, which considers the employee's well-being. If this analysis leads to a recommendation to increase staffing levels, FD would address this through the City's budget process, which takes into account all the critical services provided by the City of Long Beach.

Status Update to Recommendation #2: With the consolidation of the PD and FD Emergency Communication budgets within the Department of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Communications (DC), one additional PSD position has been allocated to the FD Communications Center effective calendar year 2016. Additionally, one or two more PSD trainee positions will be allocated for the Spring 2016 Fire EMD academy. These additional resources should bring the Fire Communications Center closer to the recommended staffing level of 24.

Recommendation #3: As a group, Fire, Police DPEC and Civil Service should continue to work together to find ways to increase the number of recruitments and potential applications.

Original Response to Recommendation #3: PD, FD, DC and Civil Service agree with the recommendation. As a best practice, and in partnership, PD, FD, DC, HR, Civil Service, regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the recruitment, testing, processing, hiring, and training and retention practices for the PSD position. Civil Service disseminates the PSD job listings on external websites to target PSD students and existing PSD professionals. Civil Service, PD and FD staff also conduct multiple informational workshops at the beginning of each recruitment to vet candidates' questions and provide a realistic picture of the PSD position to improve the quality of the candidate pool. Civil Service also uses an email distribution system/list with over 100 municipalities, veteran-affiliated organizations, non-profits, universities and other organizations to publicize all classified job openings and testing processes on a weekly basis to increase the candidate pool. Recent improvements to the recruitment process have garnered significant applicant pools; therefore, the goal would be to continue to improve the quality of the pool.

Moving forward, we will continue to work with our partners to enhance outreach and recruitment efforts. Recently, National Testing Network (NTN) was contracted to oversee the written portion of the application process, which has more than doubled the number of qualified candidates made available to the departments for screening. The current certified list provided by Civil Service should allow both PD and FD to reach their goals for filling vacancies.

Additional forms of recruitment have been implemented, such as the recruitment of experienced non-career and lateral PSDs. FD, PD, DC, and Civil Service are committed to on-going evaluations to determine the results of the recruitment and hiring processes.

[Status Update to Recommendation #3:](#) DC has continued to process the existing NTN candidates to fill a Spring and Fall 2016 academy. It is anticipated that an additional NTN recruitment will be scheduled in Fall 2016 to fill a Spring 2017 academy.

Concern #3 – Allocation of overtime can be improved

Recommendation #4: Fire should consider capping the maximum number of continuous hours worked in one shift to 16 hours.

Original Response to Recommendation #4: FD agrees with this recommendation in concept; in particular, capping the maximum number of continuous hours worked in one shift to 16 hours. This may be an effective solution to the disparity recently found in the audit. However, with current 12-hour shifts, the efficiency of this resolution remains in question. We will continue to evaluate and are willing to explore a pilot study.

[Status Update to Recommendation #4:](#) Pursuant to the meet and confer process, the conversion of the FD Communications Center from a 12-hour to 10-hour work shift will be implemented in 2017. Pending the conclusion of the meet and confer process, this conversion will allow for a 16-hour cap on continuous hours worked.

Recommendation #5: The Police and Fire Communications Centers should set a limit on the cumulative number of overtime hours that a dispatcher can work.

Original Response to Recommendation #5: PD and FD support this recommendation. The current sign-up process for available overtime shifts will remain the same. However, unless exigent circumstances mandate otherwise, the Communications Center will strive to impose a 20-hour per week limit on the number of overtime hours an employee can work. This will allow for an enhanced equitable distribution of available overtime shifts. The PD and FD will

revise policies and procedures as necessary, and follow required procedures for notification to employees of the policy change.

Status Update to Recommendation #5: While DC supports this recommendation, pending the conclusion of the meet and confer process, the current sign-up process for available overtime will remain the same. Once reviewed and approved, a goal to limit overtime hours to 20-hours per work week an employee can volunteer to work will be established. Exigent circumstances may mandate that employees be held for hours beyond the 20-hour per week limit in order to maintain proper staffing to meet emergency needs for the City of Long Beach.

Recommendation #6: *As FD reaches the budgeted dispatcher FTE levels, it should consider restructuring the dispatcher workweek or schedule to discontinue the fixed or built-in two hours of overtime per week.*

Original Response to Recommendation #6: FD agrees with this recommendation. The implementation of the NTN application process and the hiring of additional background investigators was intended to streamline and expedite the hiring process. As expressed earlier in this report, we are seeing positive results from these two efficiency initiatives. It has been contemplated and planned, that once staffed to sufficient levels FD, will restructure the dispatcher workweek or schedule to discontinue the built-in overtime hours inherent in the work schedule.

Status Update to Recommendation #6: Pending the conclusion of the meet and confer process, a 40-hour work week base schedule will be implemented in the Fire Communications Center.

Concern #4 – Manual processes should be automated

Recommendation #7: *The Department should use their existing Kronos Telestaff software to schedule and manage dispatchers' schedules.*

Original Response to Recommendation #7: PD and FD support this recommendation. We recognize PSD scheduling is a complex process and requires an efficient system. We are exploring the use of Kronos Telestaff as a scheduling tool within both the PD and FD dispatch centers. Automated scheduling software could mitigate costs, scheduling errors, and compliance violations. It is anticipated, that in early May, various staff will attend a three-day, intensive training class on Kronos Telestaff software. The goal is to implement the Telestaff system as soon as practical.

Status Update to Recommendation #7: Staff continues to investigate the use of Kronos Telestaff and other scheduling tools for use in the Emergency Communications Center. We will be better able to evaluate the effectiveness of these scheduling tools once we have completed the consolidation of policies for staffing, holiday and vacation schedules for both FD and PD Communications Centers. Scheduling tools require that the criteria for staffing holiday and vacation be consistent. Currently, FD and PD operate under different policies in this regard. The estimated cost to implement Kronos Telestaff is \$55,000, plus an annual license fee.

Recommendation #8: *Review internal processes to ensure Night Shift Differential (NSD) is being paid appropriately based on MOU and City Policy.*

Original Response to Recommendation #8: PD and FD support this recommendation. Subsequent to the audit, PD and FD Communications Center personnel have met with HR staff regarding the correct use and coding of NSD. This information has been disseminated for proper timesheet documentation. All NSD and overtime hours should be substantiated by timecards, which are first verified and signed by the supervisor, prior to being submitted to payroll.

The Audit Report states that an estimated \$65,000 (PD and FD combined) of dispatcher overtime pay lacked the proper supporting documentation. It appears that these findings were based on a review of the staffing records at the dispatch centers, but not the payroll records maintained by the departments' Administration Bureaus. Administrative overtime incurred for staff training, briefings, meetings, SWAT call outs, special events, Officer Involved Shooting (OIS) review board, committee meetings, etc. are not logged with operational overtime on staffing records, thereby resulting in the belief that \$65,000 in overtime was not supported. All administrative and operational overtime hours are reviewed, approved by supervision and documented on employee timecards per established policies, procedures and protocols.

Status Update to Recommendation #8: A review of the process for NSD has been conducted. Policies and Procedures were updated to reflect current MOU and City Policy and training was provided to staff. To ensure that NSD for overtime was being paid appropriately, policy has been implemented requiring staff to document on the weekly time sheet if overtime worked was after a regularly scheduled shift then would qualify for NSD. Supervisory staff and Management conduct reviews of weekly time sheets to ensure that policies are being followed.

As DC continues to make progress toward consolidation, management is committed to ensuring fiscal prudence and quality of life issues for PSDs are not compromised. Similarly, we are committed to maintaining a working environment for the employees that allows them to thrive and provide the most effective and efficient service for their customers, the first responders and the community.

CC: TOM MODICA, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER
ARTURO SANCHEZ, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
ROBERT LUNA, CHIEF OF POLICE
MICHAEL DUREE, FIRE CHIEF
ALEX BASQUEZ, DIRECTOR, HUMAN RESOURCES
KANDICE TAYLOR-SHERWOOD, DIRECTOR, CIVIL SERVICE
RICHARD ROCCHI, DEPUTY CHIEF, POLICE
CHRISTOPHER ROWE, DEPUTY CHIEF, FIRE
REBECCA JIMENEZ, ASSISTANT TO CITY MANAGER