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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: January 26, 2016

DATE: January 6, 2016
TO: Board of County Commissioners
FROM: Sheriff Chuck Allen, Washoe County Sheriff; and

Joey Orduna Hastings, Assistant County Manager
(775) 328-2016, jhastings@washoecounty.us

THROUGH: John Slaughter, County Manager
(775) 328-2000; jslaughter@washoecounty.us

SUBJECT: Acknowledge staff update regarding dispatch consolidation conversations with the City of Reno and provide further direction to staff regarding option to pursue consolidation study. (All Commission Districts)

SUMMARY

Acknowledge staff update regarding dispatch consolidation conversations with the City of Reno and provide further direction to staff regarding option to pursue a consolidation study. (All Commission Districts)

County Priority/Goal supported by this item: Safe, Secure and Healthy Communities; and Regional and Community Leadership

PREVIOUS ACTION

On June 9, 2015 the Washoe County Internal Auditor presented her March 30, 2015 audit of the Sheriff's Office Forensics Lab/City of Reno Dispatch Agreement. The audit revealed the following:

The 1990 Agreement included the provisions that the Washoe County Sheriff's Office would provide forensic science investigation services to the City of Reno Police Department and the City of Reno would provide dispatch services to the Washoe County Sheriff's Office, at no charge to either agency. The March 30, 2015 internal audit revealed that the value of forensic science investigation services exceeded the dollar value of dispatch services in each of the fiscal years reviewed starting FY2007. Both the Sheriff's Office and the City of Reno provide critical and necessary services to each other on behalf of the community. The subject of this staff report is limited to dispatch services and does not include the forensic science investigative services.

AGENDA ITEM #

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As noted in the June 9, 2015 staff report, various attempts have been made over the years to amend the 1990 agreement however a resolution has not been reached. On page 6 of the internal audit report, the following recommendations were made:

The Sheriff's Office in coordination with County management should determine whether:

- 1.1 To work with the City of Reno to update 1990 Agreement, develop a new agreement or terminate the 1990 Agreement, and,*
- 1.2 Regionalizing communication services is still feasible, and if so, move forward in coordination with the City of Reno and other first responder agencies in the region.*

BACKGROUND

Since the internal audit report, representatives from the City of Reno, Washoe County Sheriff's Office, and the County Manager's office have met periodically to review regional communication services and dispatch consolidation. The meetings have been collaborative and provided the staff the opportunity to compare various data points: such as staffing needs, equipment needs, operational similarities/differences, technology enhancements, building/space needs, training/certification needs, anticipated challenges, and opportunities. These meetings have also included discussions of what has already been implemented such as: co-location of dispatch and supervisor staff, and cooperation as to radio communications and records systems.

However, there are many questions and analysis still required to ensure that consolidation of dispatch services is done correctly and reviewed thoroughly for the sustainable future. Some of these questions also require facilitated discussion of options and strategies related to governance structure, operating budget, and funding. The question, however, is not if we consolidate, it is how. Therefore, staff is recommending the commission of a consolidation study.

Over the last five years, Washoe County and the City of Reno have taken various steps to explore consolidation of dispatch services. In Fiscal Year 2010-11, at the direction of the Reno-Washoe Shared Services Elected Officials Committee, a working group, comprised of first responders within the region, was tasked to determine the feasibility of consolidating dispatch centers and developing a proposed plan that would contain or reduce operating costs and to improve operational efficiencies for the public and first responders. In July 2012, the Washoe County dispatch public answering point (PSAP) was co-located with the Reno E-Comm dispatch center as a first step in regionalizing emergency communications.

Over the years, various studies have been performed and reports issued recommending regionalization of dispatch services including:

- The 2012 TriData report requested by the County, which recommended "combine 911 dispatch centers into one county-wide resource",
- A 2007 report by the Matrix Consulting Group to the Regional 911 Advisory Committee which included a goal of "facilitate discussion for development of a centralized regional dispatch center serving as the public

safety answering point (PSAP) for Reno, Sparks and Washoe County”, and,

- IBM issued the 2010 Smarter Cities report that states “smarter public safety systems can provide centralized and integrated emergency response systems...”.

The proposed study contemplated here, however, would represent the first comprehensive review of the feasibility and costs (or cost savings) of a combined County/City dispatch center. Essentially, providing data and analysis needed to consolidate these services to better meet the public safety needs of the community.

This process would require a phased approach over 3-6 months and may include the following example steps:

- Phase 1 – Project initiation and team orientation
- Phase 2 – Interview personnel (County, Sheriff’s Office, City)
- Phase 3 – Review and evaluate current facilities, technology, call volume, labor, schedules, dispatch center management and supervision, and other operational issues. This phase should include on-site visit(s).
- Phase 4 – Analysis of staffing and facility requirements for consolidation of dispatch operations and recommended salary tables for employees.
- Phase 5 – Prepare financial analysis of one-time and recurring costs associated with a consolidation versus existing stand-alone options, i.e., if operations continued without consolidation. Analysis should include staffing needs, salaries and benefit costs based on the two scenarios discussed above: City salaries and benefits, and County salaries and benefits.
- Phase 6 – Prepare and present final report to include an executive summary narrative, executive summary presentation and full report.

Such a consolidation study would be focused primarily on a staffing and personnel analysis, since personnel issues and costs comprise the largest component of a consolidation and since Reno’s and the County’s dispatch functions already share a physical space. Following the study and upon direction to proceed, it is anticipated that staff from both agencies would still need to discuss other operational costs and issues.

It is also contemplated this process would include input from the community through the Washoe County Organizational Effectiveness Committee. This diverse and collaborative committee is comprised of members of the public from both the private and public sectors. It is the County’s intent to include them in the process for review and feedback throughout the multiple phases of this study.

We believe this consolidation study will likely support the concept of regional consolidation and provide the data and analysis needed to develop a transition plan to commence merged dispatch operations and provision of services.

The current conversations and meetings between the City of Reno and Washoe County have been positive and collaborative in nature and the County has no reason to believe that this dialogue will not continue in the future.

FISCAL IMPACT

Should Washoe County identify funds and seek an RFP for a consolidation study the estimated cost is \$50,000 to \$80,000. The result would be a comprehensive study to determine the feasibility, benefits, constraints and costs of consolidating public safety answering point/dispatch center operations of the County of Washoe, Nevada, and City of Reno, Nevada. Washoe County recognizes that the proposed project is complex and may result in additional phases as a result of the completed study.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of County Commission acknowledge staff update regarding dispatch consolidation conversations with the City of Reno and provide further direction to staff regarding option to pursue consolidation study. (All Commission Districts)

POSSIBLE MOTION

If the Board of County Commissioners agrees with staff's recommendation, move to "Acknowledge staff update regarding dispatch consolidation conversations with the City of Reno and provide further direction to staff regarding option to pursue consolidation study." (All Commission Districts)