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REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL BY THE CITY INTERNAL AUDITOR

AUDIT OF THE
POLICE DEPARTMENT, SUPPORT DIVISION
COMMUNICATIONS BUREAU

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT
(IAR) 060214-03

October 27, 2014

Report Highlights	Page
• There were significant amounts of overtime and sick leave	4
• Frequent turnover of Bureau Commanders has prevented continuity of operations	6
• The Bureau does not track call handling issues and complaints	7



The Council
City of Shreveport

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October 27, 2014

Councilman Joe Shyne
Chairman, Shreveport City Council

Dear Councilman Joe Shyne:

Subject: IAR060214-03-Audit of the Police Department, Support Division
Communications Bureau

Attached please find the report mentioned above. Management comments are included in the report.

Sincerely,

Leanis L. Steward, CPA, CIA
City Internal Auditor

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
AUDIT OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT, SUPPORT DIVISION
COMMUNICATIONS BUREAU
INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT (IAR) 060214-03

The purpose of the executive summary is to convey in capsule form the significant issues of the audit report. The executive summary is a vehicle for reviewing the report and should only be used in conjunction with the entire report.

INTRODUCTION

The Communications Bureau answers calls for emergency and nonemergency services at the E-911 center and operates the internal radio and paging network for the Police Department. The Communications Bureau is authorized for 45 full-time employees (1 Captain and 44 Police Communication Officers [PCO's]) and 12 part-time employees (Police Communication Officers [PCO's]).

RECOMMENDATION EVALUATION RISK CRITERIA

The chart below summarizes the recommendations outlined in the report and our evaluation of risk for the recommendations. The risk levels were determined based on the possible results for the entity if the recommendation is not implemented. This report contains 5 findings with 6 recommendations.

<i>Risk Levels</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">High Risk</p> <p>Possibility of fraud, waste, and abuse of City assets; Interrupted and/or disrupted operations; Entity's mission not being met; Adverse publicity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider hiring 2-3 full-time PCO I's to replace utilization of overtime hours. (Finding 1) • Consider changing from three 8 hour shifts to a combination of shifts (ex: 8 and 12 or 6,10 and 12). (Finding 1)
<p style="text-align: center;">Medium Risk</p> <p>Possibility of continuing, significant operating inefficiencies and high-level non-compliance issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider offering an additional career path for communication officers at upper management level such as a PCO III position. (Finding 2) • Document and track complaints and call handling problems. (Finding 3) • Provide a copy of the Standard Operating Procedures to employees of Police Communications Bureau and require signature for acknowledgement of receipt. (Finding 4) • Take steps to improve morale and stress levels in Police Communications. (Finding 5)
<p style="text-align: center;">Low Risk</p> <p>Possibility of continuing operating inefficiencies and some low-level non-compliance issues.</p>	<p>None</p>

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FINDINGS

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Appendix B Overtime Statistics

Appendix C Analysis of a 1st Year PCO Overtime Rate vs. Hiring Additional PCO

**AUDIT OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT, SUPPORT DIVISION
COMMUNICATIONS BUREAU
INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT (IAR) 060214-03**

OBJECTIVES

We have completed an audit of the Police Department, Support Division-Communications Bureau. The objective of this audit was to determine the effectiveness, economy and efficiency of operations of the Communications Bureau regarding appropriate staffing levels; overtime and sick leave analysis; adequacy of organizational structure, training, and quality assurance.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The scope of the study of internal control was limited to the general controls surrounding our objectives for the operating year of 2013. Audit procedures applied included the following: reviewing applicable records and documents, interviewing operating personnel and management, and reviewing policies and procedures.

We conducted this audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards, except that a peer review has not been performed, and included such test of procedures and controls as considered appropriate. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings, conclusions, and recommendations based on our audit objectives.

BACKGROUND

The Communications Bureau personnel answers calls for emergency and nonemergency services at the E-911 center and operates the internal radio and paging network for the Police Department. The process of 911 calls is illustrated in Appendix A. The Communications Bureau is authorized for 45 full-time employees and 12 part-time employees. The bureau's personnel are located in the Caddo Parish Communications District Number One headquarters along with communications personnel of the Fire and Caddo Sheriff's Department. Listed below are some accomplishments of the Communications Bureau during 2013:

- The Police Communication Officers were able to exceed the standard set by the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) requiring 90% of 911 calls be answered in 10 seconds during the busy hour. They answered 97% of the 911 calls in 10 seconds during the busy hour and 98% of all 911 calls were answered in 20 seconds which also exceeds the standard of 95% answered in 20 seconds.
- Police Communication Officers dispatched 75% of total dispatch incidents for the 911 center.

CONCLUSIONS/FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS

The Internal Audit Office expresses appreciation to the management and personnel of the Communications Bureau for their cooperation and assistance. Based on our review,



we have offered recommendations that may serve to enhance and improve the operating effectiveness and efficiency of the Communications Bureau.

1. Employee Leave/Overtime

Criteria: Effective management of overtime and other labor costs helps to improve budgetary considerations for an entity, employee morale, and productivity. Excessive use of overtime can lead to employee health and safety concerns.

Condition: Leave of absences of personnel has necessitated significant amounts of overtime and part-time worker hours for Police Communications. During the year 2013, there were 12 of 44 (27%) full-time Police Communication Officers (PCO's) on extended sick leave at different times of the year. At least two employees were out during the same time.

Table A below shows the hours and costs associated with overtime and part-time workers utilized to provide additional personnel for relief purposes and to cover those full-time employee absences from 2011 to 2013. **<Auditor's Note: Part-Time Workers can only fill the call takers positions and work a maximum of 19.75 hours per week per person. The budget allows for a maximum of 228 Part-Time hours weekly.>**

Table A Overtime and Part-Time Hours				
Employees	2011	2012	2013	Total
Full-Time PCO's Overtime Hours	4,390	6,366	5,228	15,984
Part-Time PCO's Hours	11,846	10,916	9,650	32,412
Overtime and Part-Time Total Hours	16,236	17,282	14,878	48,396
Part-Time Hours as a % of Total Overtime and Part-Time Hours	73%	63%	65%	67%
Total Overtime Amounts Paid	\$144,170	\$203,622	\$169,480	\$517,272
Total Part-Time Amounts Paid	\$166,165	\$131,784	\$113,964	\$411,913

Source of Overtime and Part-Time Hours: City of Shreveport's Payroll System (Doesn't include Holiday Overtime), amounts rounded.

Note: See **Appendix B** for additional information detailing overtime statistics for 2011- 2013.

Effect:

- Personnel overworked.
- Potential low employee morale.
- Increased risk of mistakes.



Cause:

- Personnel on extended sick leave. When personnel are absent for training, vacation, sick leave, or scheduled days off their posts need to be covered. Because sick leave and other life circumstances are unpredictable, it is difficult at times to cover all posts.
- Unpredictable simultaneous use of leave time (i.e. sick leave, funeral leave, jury duty).

Recommendation: To lessen the potential of employees making mistakes, improve morale and productivity, and potentially decrease overall labor costs, we recommend management:

- Consider hiring 2 - 3 full-time PCO l's to replace utilization of overtime hours.

Table B illustrates the estimated cost to hire additional Full-Time 1st Year PCO's in comparison to the average overtime costs for the years 2011-2013.

Table B Estimated Cost to Hire Additional Full-Time 1 st Year PCO's			
Additional PCO's		Estimated Salary with Benefits	
1		\$51,208 - \$64,499	
2		\$102,416 - \$128,997	
3		\$153,624 - \$193,496	
4		\$204,832 - \$257,994	
Average Annual Overtime Costs (Yrs 2011- 2013)	Estimated Annual Cost for 1 - 3 additional 1st Year PCO's	Average Annual Overtime Hours Worked (Yrs 2011-2013)	Regular Annual Hours for 1 - 3 Additional 1st Year PCO's
\$172,424	\$51,208 - \$193,496	5,328	2,080 - 6,240

Note: Estimates include a base salary of \$39,090 with benefits (retirement, insurance, medicare) as a percentage of salary ranging from 31%-65% of salary. The City's required contribution to Municipal Police Employees Retirement System for 2013 was 31%.

See **Appendix C** for an Analysis of a 1st Year PCO Overtime Rate vs. Hiring Additional PCO.

- Consider changing from three 8 hour shifts to a combination of shifts (ex: 8 and 12 or 6, 10, and 12) which allows for maintenance of a higher level of call processing ability with fewer personnel. This may reduce the total number of personnel required.

Management Plan of Action: We agree with the recommendation of hiring three additional police communications officers (PCO). Previous studies by a national organization recommended as many as 16 additional PCO's. This was submitted as an unfunded budget request for several years, but was not funded due to the significant cost. In 2010, the Police Department began requesting additional funds during the 2011



budget cycle to hire three (3) additional PCOs as a priority in 'Unfunded Needs' and has continued to do so each year. We will again submit this in our 2015 budget request.

Timetable: Funding Request – Accomplished
Funding Authorization - Unknown

2. Management Continuity/Organizational Structure

Background: The Communication Bureau consists of a Captain (Bureau Commander), Police Communication Officer II's (Shift Supervisors), and Police Communication Officer I's (Call Takers and Dispatchers). A brief description of the duties of each position follows below:

Captain (Bureau Commander) – Reports to the Assistant Chief of Police of the Support Services Division and plans, directs and supervises operations of the Bureau.

Police Communication Officer II (Shift Supervisor) – Supervises shift and assist call takers and dispatchers, handles overflow calls from the call taker position, research call data, administer training, and other administrative duties (e.g. maintaining attendance, sick leave, vacation, comp time and overtime)

Police Communication Officer I (Call Taker and Dispatcher) – Answers Public Safety, Emergency and 911 calls, and transfers caller to the correct office, or department and dispatch police units and keeps track of location and condition of each unit at all times. Handles communication between Shreveport Police Department and other law enforcement agencies. Process wrecker requests, access database files for record entries and inquiries (e.g. searching DMV, outstanding warrants, missing person, entering stolen items).

Criteria: An organization should be appropriately organized to ensure continuity of operations.

Condition: The turnover experienced at the executive management level position has prevented continuity of operations within the department. There have been at least 14 Bureau Commanders within the past 20 years, with an average tenure of approximately 2 years. This turnover does not allow for consistent management practices to be implemented and cohesiveness within the bureau. In comparison, Fire Communications has had two directors during this time period.

Effect:

- Potential low employee morale.
- Bureau may not be as efficient and effective in accomplishing missions, goals, and objectives.

Cause:

- No career path after PCOII position.
- Past Bureau Commanders have been transferred, promoted, or retired.
- Management had not ascertained the effect of the turnover of the Bureau Commanders on the bureau's operations.



Recommendation: We recommend management consider whether its organizational structure could be adjusted to provide for continuity of operations. Management may consider offering an additional career path for Communication Officers at the upper management level such as a PCO III position. This position could help relieve the PCOII's from administrative duties (i.e., preparing tapes for court, preparing documents for training recertification, payroll etc.) and allow them to focus on supervising operational activities.

Management Plan of Action: Our current commander has been in place for approximately four (4) years. We agree that a PCO III position would be a benefit to the bureau and would like to pursue that approach. We will have the Communications Bureau commander draft a Civil Service job description for a PCO III. The process for approving a new position is lengthy and must be approved on both a state and local level by Civil Service. Once the job description is complete, we will try to secure funding. Once we have authorized funding, we will proceed with the approval process through the state and local Civil Service entities.

Timetable: Job Description written by January 15, 2015.
Funding authorized – unknown at this time.

3. Quality Assurance

Criteria: Tracking call handling issues and complaints for quality assurance purposes better enables Police Communications to address problems and ensure that the public receives effective and timely assistance.

Condition: Police Communications does not track call handling issues and complaints. During year 2013 five random calls were reviewed every month by supervisors to ensure communication officers were handling the calls properly. The review of calls was discontinued in March 2014.

Effect: Call handling problems and complaint trends can't be identified and evaluated.

Cause: An informal review of call complaints is handled by the Captain but not tracked. The complaints are only documented in the employee's personnel file if there is a repeated complaint received. The review of calls was discontinued due to the PCO II's (supervisors) having to help answer calls, and perform other administrative duties.

Recommendation: We recommend management document and track complaints and call handling problems in order to evaluate any problems and prevent future mistakes and issues.

Management Plan of Action: We agree with this finding and the bureau commander is currently developing a system to track complaints and make them accessible to all supervisors. We will immediately implement the five calls per month review by PCO supervisors.



Timetable: December 15, 2014

4. Standard Operating Procedures

Criteria: A standard operating procedures manual can improve operations by providing uniformity in practice, establishing clear lines of responsibility, enhancing accountability, reducing confusion, and lessening the threat to continuity posed by employee turnover.

Condition: Although a copy of the Standard Operating Procedures for Police Communications was provided during the audit, the PCO I's were not aware that a documented Standard Operating Procedures Manual existed, according to conversations with some of the PCO I's and the results of the survey administered during the audit and completed by Police Communication Employees.

Effect:

- May not be complying with policies and procedures.
- Existing laws and regulations may be violated.
- No uniformity of practices.
- Low employee morale.
- Employees may not be aware of what is expected of them and in what way their performance may be deficient.

Cause: Employees have not been given a copy of the Standard Operating Procedures for Police Communications.

Recommendation: We recommend that all employees of the Police Communications Bureau are provided a copy of the Standard Operating Procedures and sign an acknowledgement of receiving a copy. Management should ensure that personnel understand and correctly apply the procedures. This Manual would serve as a reference tool and/or training manual for employees seeking guidance on the proper handling of transactions and situations. Any updates that are made to the manual should be distributed to Police Communications employees as well.

Management Plan of Action: The Communications Bureau commander is in the process of updating the current bureau manual. Once the revisions are complete, each PCO and PCO supervisor will sign for a copy of the manual. During the interim period, a copy of the current bureau manual is available to all personnel for review.

Timetable: December 15, 2014

5. Employee Morale

Criteria: Employee morale is important since it affects productivity, attendance, effectiveness, efficiency, quality, and employee turnover.



Condition: A survey was administered to and completed by the Police Communications personnel to determine the morale of employees and areas of concern that could be addressed to improve operations of the bureau. The results of the survey showed that there are morale issues that stem primarily from:

- Desire for more training (example: stress management, critical incident calls, refresher training in call taking and dispatch) in addition to the required training.
- Desire for documented Standard Operating Procedures for Police Communications Bureau.
- Understaffing.
- Poor communication between Police Communication Officers and Police Officers.
- Desire for State Supplemental Pay that Police Officers receive. [*Auditor's Note: La R.S. 33:2218.2 requires full-time radio dispatchers hired after March 31, 1986 to obtain POST (Peace Officer Standards and Training) certification in order to receive state supplemental pay.*]

Effect:

- Low employee morale.
- Could lead to less than exemplary performance.
- Potential increase in absences.
- Potential increase in employee turnover.

Cause:

- Documented Standard Operating Procedures have not been distributed.
- Budget constraints.
- Understaffed.

Recommendation: We suggest the following:

- Provide refresher training on call taking and dispatching procedures and more specific training on how to handle specific types of calls (example: suicide, active shooter), and stress management training.
- Provide incentives based on such things as having no unscheduled absences for a specified period of time, teamwork, meeting or exceeding NENA (National Emergency Number Association) standards. Possible incentives: employee can select position they work for 1 shift or can dress out of uniform for 1 shift.
- Distribute Standard Operating Procedures to all Communication Bureau employees.
- Rotate assigned positions more frequently to reduce stress. Or, rotate all positions on a shift every 2 hours so that each will not work any position longer than 2 hours consecutively.

Management Plan of Action: The Communications Bureau commander has already implemented an annual 'Retrainer' for all communications personnel. This retrainer will be used on a regular basis to keep our personnel up to date and consistent in their day-to-day operations.



IAR 060214-03
July 28, 2014

The Communications Bureau commander will review the recommendations made for providing incentives for attendance and develop a policy with input from other PCOs and PCO supervisors.

The distribution of Operating Procedures was covered in #4 of this audit.

The rotation of assigned positions will be discussed with the PCOs and PCO supervisors to determine the impact to our efficient and effective operations before additional steps are taken. If this can be done without any negative impact to our operations, we will put a system in place to allow position rotation during each shift.

Timetable: Retrainer – Immediate
Attendance Incentive Policy – January 15, 2015
Position Rotation – November 30, 2014

Prepared by:

Tamika Ford

Tamika Ford
Staff Auditor

Approved by:

Leanis L. Steward

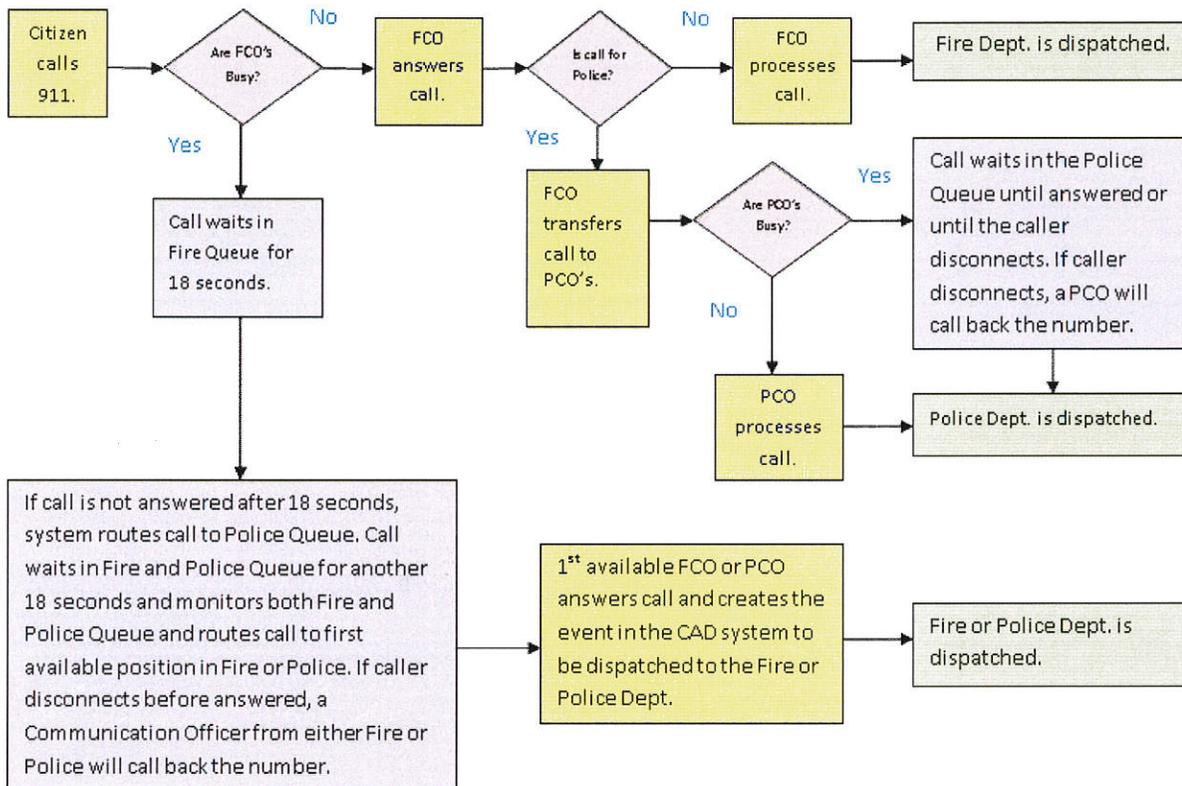
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tf:nd

c: Mayor
CAO
City Council
Clerk of Council
City Attorney
External Auditor
Commander of Police Communications
Assistant Chief of Police-Support Division
Chief of Police Department



APPENDIX A PROCESS OF 911 CALL



Abbreviation Definitions

FCO: Fire Communication Officer

PCO: Police Communication Officer

CAD: Computer Aided Dispatch



APPENDIX B

Police Communications Bureau Overtime Statistics 2011-2013			
	2011	2012	2013
Average # of PCOs working overtime per pay period (44 total PCOs)	14	17	15
Average # of pay periods overtime was worked by PCOs (24 total pay periods)	11	10	9
Average # of overtime hours worked by a PCO per pay period (40 regular hours)	6	7	6
Average # of total overtime hours worked per pay period	183	265	218
Average Annual Overtime Paid per PCO (\$40,296 average base salary)	\$4,806	\$5,221	\$4,346
Highest # of pay periods overtime was worked by a PCO (24 total pay periods)	23	23	24
Highest # of annual overtime hours worked by a PCO (2080 regular hours)	526	777	1,002
Highest annual amount paid for overtime (\$39,090 regular base salary)	\$18,952	\$29,024	\$38,155

Source: City of Shreveport's Payroll System (Doesn't include Holiday Overtime), amounts rounded.
 Note: Full-Time PCOs are paid semi-monthly (24 times a year).



APPENDIX C

Analysis of a 1st Year PCO Overtime Rate vs. Hiring Additional PCO		
Overtime Cost for a 1st Year PCO		
Annual Salary	Hourly Rate (Salary/2080 hrs)	Overtime Rate (1.5 x Hourly Rate)
\$39,090	\$18.79	\$28.19
Estimated Savings or Cost to Hire Additional Full-Time PCO		
Total Compensation (Benefits+Salary)	Hourly Rate (Total Compensation/2080 hrs)	Savings or (Cost) (Difference between Overtime Rate & Hourly Rate)
Benefits %	\$39,090.00	
31%	\$51,208	\$3.57
45%	\$56,681	\$.94
50%	\$58,635	Breakeven
55%	\$60,590	(\$.94)
60%	\$62,544	(\$1.88)
65%	\$64,499	(\$2.82)

Note: Overtime rate is calculated using only the salary not total compensation.