



# City of San Antonio

## Agenda Memorandum

**File Number:**16-3812

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**Agenda Item Number:** 4.

**Agenda Date:** 6/21/2016

**In Control:** Criminal Justice, Public Safety and Services Committee

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**DEPARTMENT:** Police Department

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:** William McManus, Chief of Police

**COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED:** Citywide

**SUBJECT:**

Communications Center Update

**SUMMARY:**

The San Antonio Police Department's Communications Center has improved answer times and reduced abandoned call rates, through hiring additional staff, shifting expediter duties and the use of voluntary overtime. Berkshire Advisors has been contracted to review the current operations and provide recommendations for improvements to attain NENA Standards. Their report is due by July 5, 2016; however they have provided us with preliminary recommendations as we continue our discussion in finalization of their report. Their primary recommendation focuses on hiring additional call takers.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The Communications Center has seen improvement in the NENA Standards for (1) Grade of Service (GOS), (2) Answer Rate; and (3) Abandoned Call Rate. These improvements were primarily achieved by hiring additional staff and moving expediters to call taking positions. Other improvements have included contracting with a third-party vendor to conduct background checks; making more offers to potential call takers than positions available, knowing 49% will drop out during the background check/training process; and offering scheduled voluntary overtime to existing call takers, allowing trained staff to fill in the gaps during periods of high call volume.

Year	Avg. Grade of Service	Avg Answer Time	911 Abandoned %
2016 YTD*	78.4%	13.1 sec	19.6%

2015 YTD*	67.1%	16.6 sec	21.8%
2015	53.3%	19.1 sec	22.0%

\*Year-To-Date Jan 1-June 16, 2016

## ISSUE:

Discussions with Berkshire Advisors have provided us with these preliminary recommendations:

1. Increasing staffing levels given the volume of calls coming into the Communications Center. Generally speaking, FTEs should be increased by 25-60% based on the staffing model.
2. Modifying the current staffing hybrid staffing model, which has a mix of employees working 8-hour shifts and others working 10-hour shifts. Fewer call takers are needed with an 8-hour schedule but 10-hour shifts provide for additional employee recuperation, which increases retention.
3. The consultant's report also suggests that emergency call-taking operations could be separated from non-emergency activities but would require a greater number of FTE to handle the call volume.

These recommendations will be finalized as discussions continue. The final report is also expected to provide additional detail on the items above and suggestions on an annual growth model and a recommended implementation plan.

The Office of the City Auditor has also conducted a review of the Communications Center and its findings will be available later this month. Preliminary results from this audit agree with the consultant's findings that staffing levels are not adequate. In addition, the audit found that shifts did not align with high call volumes, and there is a need for call quality review, a formal business continuity plan with the SAFD, public education on calling 911, and the need for a service level agreement with Bexar Metro 911.

## ALTERNATIVES:

- 1) Prepare 2017 Budget Improvement to implement all the consultant's recommendations to generate maximum improvement in the SAPD's Communications Center.
- 2) Prepare 2017 Budget Improvement to implement part of the consultant's recommendations to generate some additional improvement.
- 3) Keep the staffing at the same level without the consultant's recommended additions.

## RECOMMENDATION:

The Department recommends continuing all efforts to improve the grade of service in the SAPD Communications Center, including implementation of all consultant and Audit recommendations.

