

911 SERVICES EVALUATION COMMITTEE MEETING

7:00 p.m.

October 1, 2019

Committee Chair Dan Henderson brought the meeting to order with the following committee members present: Charles Anderson, City Manager, Jack Wilson, Alan Cranston, Joan Neal, Penny Short, Jose Santos, Issac Ross, David Tull, Anita Bell, Officer Cole Scott and Terry Carson.

Vice-Mayor Henderson thanked all of the committee member for participating and asked each of them to introduce themselves.

Vice-Mayor Henderson presented Agenda Item #1, presentation about the Seaford 911 Center. Chief Marshall Craft came forward to present the information. Chief Craft stated that he has been with the Seaford Police Department in the role of Chief for about 5 months, however, he has been in police work for about 31 years. This is the first time in his career that he has worked in a department has had its own 911 center.

Chief Craft showed a map of the area of the City of Seaford limits. The City of Seaford has the largest municipality in Sussex County and the largest police department. The department also handles the most complaints in the County which are very unique and can be time consuming. Seaford is also one of the two red zones in Sussex County; Millsboro and Seaford have the highest drug overdoses rates in Delaware. The Seaford 911 Center also services the Seaford Volunteer Fire Department district which includes a lot of population that is not in City limits. Therefore, these residents do not pay City taxes but are receiving the same services other than police service.

Chief Craft then reviewed the services that dispatch currently provides. These duties include monthly audits and validations for the warrant files. They also do hit confirmations, locates and detainers on felony warrants. They enter stolen property, vehicles, articles and missing persons into NCIC. They conduct computer inquiries for officers on all subjects contacted for various requests. If the dispatch center was no longer in operation; the officers would be responsible to run their own tags, wanted people, criminal histories or driver license status. Chief Craft added that it is nice to have the information already ran prior to making contact with a vehicle or subject so that they are aware what they may be going into. The dispatch center monitors surveillance cameras for City Hall, Seaford Police Department, local apartment complexes, local parks and the utility building. He added that we are in the process of taking on more cameras which include the hospital and Burris Logistics. Chief Craft pointed out that anytime that a prisoner is brought in, there must be a check conducted on them every 30 minutes or less to be sure they are not trying to harm themselves or having a medical emergency. Therefore, it is critical that these cameras are being monitored to be in compliance with those regulations. The dispatchers also handle walk-in lobby complaints, City utility disconnects including afterhours utility calls for reconnects and collecting fees. They also dispatch out City of Seaford utility departments during emergency situations and after-hours events.

The dispatchers provide an expected level of service to the public; providing information on local events, mapping directions and general information. They send police to non-police/EMS complaints and notify police to stand by on EMS calls that are in high drug and crime areas. The dispatchers provide assistance for technology and IT for Mobile Vision, Mobile Data Computers, Verizon, Cellular phones, Departmental desktops and laptops, phone system and manage the department's social media page.

Chief Craft explained that the current phone system would need to be upgraded to transfer administrative lines to EOC for calls that alarms companies call for services. These alarms include medical, fire and burglary. The companies call the non-emergency line for services due to their location.

If the dispatch center were to leave Seaford, the face to face contact with officers on a daily basis would be lost. The officers are updated prior to each shift on the daily activities that have occurred within the jurisdiction.

Chief Craft then provided some definitions for the committee. NCIC stands for National Crime Information Center which is a database for tracking crime-related information. The system includes a variety of records that are available for Law Enforcement and security purposes and includes 21 files; 14 person files and 7 property files. All agencies are responsible to do a NCIC validation to verify the receipt of monthly NCIC validation material. The Criminal Justice Information System "CJIS" Systems Agency, which is referred to as CSA's enters records into NCIC, which in turn, are accessible to Law Enforcement Agencies. Validation certifications are then done to be sure that the records are accurate, valid and active.

An agency completes a hit confirmation when they find a record in the NCIC system. This is done to ensure that the person or property is still outstanding and a decision is then made about extradition or returning the stolen property. An agency must confirm the hit on any record which appears to have been entered by them. There is a response time for the confirmation; for a priority 1 which is considered urgent, you must respond within 10 minutes and for a priority 2 which is considered routine you must respond within 1 hour. If a response is not completed within the specified time frame, the agency will release the individual or item.

A locate is completed in the NCIC system to indicate that the wanted person has been apprehended or the stolen property has been located. A locate message is placed against a record that remains active in the NCIC system after the hit confirmation has taken place. The locate message includes the date and time that the person or property was located as well as the other originating agency. A locate message must be transmitted when an agency other than the originating agency of the records finds the missing person, apprehends the wanted person or recovers the property on file in NCIC.

A detainer is generally a hold placed on a criminal defendant. It may be a warrant placed against an inmate for pending charges from another jurisdiction. There are people that commit crimes in more than one City or State. Law enforcement agencies and the courts have a cross-agency system that lets them know when they have someone in custody who is also wanted in another jurisdiction. When someone finishes serving jail time in the first location, a check is then completed to see if the person has a detainer warrant. If the person does, rather than being released, they are transferred to the City or State in question for the criminal charges on file.

Chief Craft then discussed the new directives and procedures that would take place if the Seaford 911 Center services are transferred to EOC/SusCOM. The officers would have to contact Headquarters Communications Center by phone regarding the NCIC entry on any person or property. Then, the entering agency would be notified to confirm the record before taking any official action on the "hit" NCIC record. For any information that needs to be entered into the NCIC system, officers would contact Headquarters Communications Center who would then enter the provided information into NCIC. If no current dispatchers are retained, the NCIC validation responsibilities would go to the Records Clerk at SPD. She currently assists dispatch with several duties and could be trained to take over this function.

Chief Craft provided a suggestion of how to keep the department staffed 7 days a week and 24 hours a day if 911 services are transferred. He asked for consideration of approval to keep a minimum of three – four dispatchers. These current dispatchers would have a job reclassification to perform duties and responsibilities of a call taker. If this were to occur, the current Records Clerk would also go into the rotation of call taker at the front desk.

The responsibilities of a call taker would include performing monthly audits and validations which are audited yearly. Monitoring the surveillance cameras at SPD, City Hall, local apartment complexes, local parks and utilities building. Monitor the processing room and prisoner cells and assist officers with the required 30 minute or less cell checks. The required cell checks are currently the officer's responsibility. Complete all lobby functions including walk-in complaints and non-emergency calls. Handle the City utility divisions after hours calls for reconnects and collect any fees. Dispatch the City's utility divisions after hours in the event of an emergency or outage. Provide an expected level of service to the public providing information on local events, mapping directions and general information. They will provide face to face contact with officers on a daily basis including going over the pass on book and updating officers on the daily activities that have occurred in the jurisdiction. They will also provide technology and IT assistance for Mobile Vision, Mobile Data Computers, Verizon, Cellular phones, departmental desktop and laptop computers, phone system and departmental social media.

The alarms for medical, fire and burglar calls would be transferred to SusCOM and EOC. Chief Craft added that there are future changes of how alarm alerts will be received. The plan is to go to an electronic interface from Alarm to Dispatch which is similar to CAD to CAD transfer.

Chief Craft attended a meeting on September 16th regarding EOC and SusCOM plans. On the EOC side, they will be going to a call taker center regardless of what the decision of the Seaford 911 Center. EOC anticipates posting jobs for three openings within the next week for call takers. EOC also has a pending resignation and also anticipates to post that job position within the next week. The call takers will become EPD, EMD and EFD certified and will handle the initial dispatch of all received 911 calls. Once dispatched, the 911 call will be transferred CAD to CAD creating no delay of service. They feel that this process will provide quicker service. SusCOM will see the incident on the CAD immediately and will be watching the threshold to activate any needed resources. EOC anticipates the hiring of applicants within the next 6-8 weeks.

The State of Delaware plans to hold EMD and EFD classes in the next two months to meet the needs of the future EOC call takers positions. The cost for the class is \$385.00 per class meaning \$770.00 for each employee. Delaware currently does not have an EPD instructor; the closest instructor is in New Jersey. There are currently no classes scheduled for EPD which also costs \$385.00 per employee. The average time to obtain EMD, EFD and EPD certification and be properly trained is a minimum of three to six months before a person can be left alone on a console.

Should the Seaford 911 center services be transferred, officers would need to use the 917 designators prior to their IBM number on the radio. All officers would call in their traffic and/or pedestrian stops as normal using the SusCOM command channel. Officers would then need to conduct their own computer inquiries during the stop. If an officer is working special duty job such as OHS unconventional enforcement, they would need to work on the TAC channel. This is done to cut down the traffic on the SusCOM command channel.

EOC/SusCOM has advised us that once Seaford 911 center is unable to maintain 24/7 services, we would need to fold down until we are able to return to 24/7 coverage. If Seaford 911 center has to fold down,

the department would implement a plan for 24/7 call taker services and would continue as long as staffing permits and/or additional changes occur.

Chief Craft shared that there were two dispatchers that have resigned. Due to the resignations, the Dispatch Manager went into the rotation to maintain staffing. There are four dispatchers that are in the process with Dorchester County, MD for jobs; they are currently pending polygraphs. A schedule is being formulated to require OT after September 21st; this schedule is based on 7 dispatchers. If another dispatcher resigns, a new work schedule would need to be put in place for 6 dispatchers. This would require additional overtime.

A job posting was put out on September 16, 2019 for a dispatcher 1 position. As of Thursday, September 19, 2019, there were 20 applications received. These included three part-time applicants that are certified in EMD, EFD and EPD. There were 17 full-time applications that were received, however, none of those applicants are certified. There has been conditional job offers for part-time employees given to fill in the gaps.

City Manager Anderson reminded the committee that this is a recommending body. This committee will make a recommendation to the City Council. The final decision is up to the City Council; not this committee.

Vice-Mayor Henderson asked if the committee had any questions for Chief Craft. Mr. Tull asked if hard copies could be provided of all of the information that is being presented tonight. City Manager Anderson stated that it can be provided and will be sent out tomorrow.

Mrs. Short asked if more officers would need to be hired due to the additional duties that they would need to do. Chief Craft stated that all warrant entries would be completed by DSP Headquarters; officers would need to be more accurate with entering in their information. He added that officers will also need to be more alert and be sure to pull over vehicles in safe locations. It nice to be able to have the dispatchers to run the information in advance and have the extra set of eyes when entering in the warrant information.

Pastor Ross asked if this committee would have the time to discuss among themselves. Vice-Mayor Henderson stated that discussion will be held and field trips will be done to both centers. He added that no business can be conducted outside of this committee due to FOIA laws. You can go out into the community and ask for thoughts, however, there cannot be a quorum present. If there are any questions, Vice-Mayor Henderson urged the group to reach out to him.

Pastor Ross asked how much time the committee had to make a decision. Vice-Mayor Henderson stated that there are three meetings scheduled. However, if it is felt that another meeting is needed that can be done. He added that time is of the essence and he feels a decision needs to be made soon.

Mrs. Neal asked what was the current staffing at the Police Department and how much walk-in traffic the department received. Chief Craft stated that there are 28 officers on paper; there are 4 currently in the academy, a School Resource Officer and 2 on field training. There is funding for nine dispatchers; due to two resigning, there are currently seven employed. There is also a records clerk and administrative assistant for the department. The department receives about 10,000 calls for service a year; however, it is hard to track the walk-in complaints.

Mr. Cranston clarified that there is currently staffing for nine dispatchers; if the center goes away then it would drop to five call takers which would do all of the duties except for dispatch. So, by stepping this

down to call center, they would retain all of the duties with just one person per shift. Chief Craft stated that was correct; he feels that is the best compromise if the dispatch center is lost. He added that he does not want to lose the center as it is a safety thing for his staff.

Vice-Mayor Henderson asked if there were any further questions for Chief Craft. With there being no further questions, he called up City Manager Anderson to present information on the City budget.

City Manager Anderson shared some information that was presented at the recent Public Hearing. The City of Seaford FY20 budget was adopted on June 11, 2019. In this budget, the expenditures for the dispatch center was \$657,109 and the revenues from the E911 funds were \$38,000. City Manager Anderson explained that there is a \$.60 charge on your phone bill which the City receives a portion of those funds. He along with the Director of Finance researched that revenue and found that it has not grown over time. He added that all current services for the 911 Center are funded thru June 30, 2020.

During the budget process, there were some staffing considerations received for the dispatch center. A request was made to hire an additional dispatcher to reduce overtime and ensure compliance with staffing requirements which are two dispatchers on a shift at all times. There was also discussion of creating a career ladder and to promote all dispatchers that qualify to Dispatcher II from Dispatcher I. Hire or promote if possible, a person to become a Dispatch Administrator Assistant. This position would assist the dispatch administrator and learn the process of accreditation. During the FY20 budget deliberations, the Director of Finance performed several costing analyses related to the needed staffing and promotional recommendations offered by the Chief of Police and Dispatch manager to meet the critical needs of the department. This resulted in a projected increase of approximately 19% for FY20 and did not address pay increases or any other cost drivers. The decision was made to remove all proposed new positions from the FY20 budget including positions in Administration, Police, ED and Dispatch. City Manager Anderson pointed out some other cost drivers from the department which included additional equipment needs, space limitations, future cost trajectory and mandates.

City Manager Anderson explained that the dispatch administrator used to be in the communication center with the rest of the staff. She recently moved out of the center into an office; she put in a request to the 911 Board for about \$90,000 for equipment for that office. The idea was making it similar to the space that she previously had in the dispatch center. This last year, EPD was added for all dispatchers to complete. This was paid by the E911 Board this year, however, the City had to pay overtime for staffing during the training periods.

City Manager Anderson explained that the budget process is started in January which goes through several rounds. All of the Directors put forth their requests for their departments and then items are prioritized. The main revenue source for the City of Seaford is through the electric business. During FY19 & FY20 those revenues were down \$403,000.00. This is due to people using solar, net energy metering and people being more conservative. There were also some key businesses that closed that caused a loss in revenue.

City Manager Anderson then discussed the expenditures for the pool and golf course. In FY19, the City provided \$36,000 and in FY20 the City provided \$35,000 for the pool. For the golf course, FY19 amount was \$358,000 and in FY20 it was \$362,000. The revenues for the golf course this past year was \$15,000.

City Manager Anderson pointed out that in the sewer plant line item, there was a transfer of \$210,000 from the sewer fund to general fund in FY19. In FY20, the City had to budget a transfer of \$477,000 which was one of the things that we were leaning on to balance the budget this year. Vice-Mayor Henderson pointed out that the City Council elected to increase that amount to \$477,000 which took

away some reserves for future capital needs. So, instead of saving money for a future plant expansion and modernizations which is upcoming and mandated several years from now; the City Council elected not to save money but rather spend the money to make up some ground. This caused the significant increase from the previous year on that line item. City Manager Anderson added had we not paid that large loan off, we would not have had the availability of that revenue. Most of this money is being set aside for future expansion and it also allows us to not have to raise rates.

City Manager Anderson explained that we do a 3-year Capital Improvement plan for each department within the City. For the police department, renovations are needed at their current facility to include site work, locker room and lobby renovations, roof replacement and gym with an estimated amount of \$650,000. The plan is to take a loan out for the renovations to be completed. The department recently entered into a leasing program for their vehicles. During FY20, the cost is estimated at \$55,737.84, FY21 \$102,171.60, FY22 \$148,605.36 and FY23 \$195,039.12 if we stick with the leasing plan. This is a big increase in this line item over time. New uniforms were also put in place with an estimated cost of \$46,000. There were many officers that did not have uniforms and they have not been updated in several years. There was also \$4,000 included in the budget to replace two computers and \$5,995 for VSA. For the dispatch center, the only request was two chairs in the amount of \$3,000.

City Manager Anderson then shared the budget information for the pool. The pool has had very minimal work done to it and our consultant; Cannon Pools has been able to keep it going. He has expressed some concerns that something will need to be done in the near future. There is not a handicap accessible bathroom provided onsite; a handicap porta john has to be brought in during the season. There are also electrical items that are in need of repairs and equipment that is in need of constant replacement. The preliminary cost estimate that was provided to complete these repairs and modernize the pool was \$750,000. City Manager Anderson pointed out that this number is not currently in the budget; this number is kept in front of the City Council for their information.

City Manager Anderson shared the total capital requests from FY17 through FY20. This number does change due to pricing refinements, equipment status changes and other factors. In this current budget, the total budgeted capital was \$1,974,436. There are a lot of high price projects that are in need such as the Spruce Street Water Tower painting and police department renovations which have been put off for many years. City Manager Anderson shared the status of the reserve accounts which are relied on to balance the budget. He pointed out that year after year the number in reserves is growing. City Manager Anderson showed the reserve transfer history; there is a budgeted number each year to pull from reserves to balance the budget. This past year in FY19, there was no money needed to pull from reserves to balance the budget.

City Manager Anderson showed the revenue from property taxes. In the last year, a reassessment was completed of each parcel in the City and it was decided to do a revenue neutral rate. He added that we have seen a lot of non-profit groups coming into the City which makes them exempt from paying taxes.

City Manager Anderson pointed out that an increase in the electric sales would yield the largest return. However, by doing this, the commercial and industrial customers would see the largest increases. In the last five years, we went through a process where we reduced our rates by 13%. The City would like to be cautious about raising those rates back up to where we were in the past if it can be helped.

City Manager Anderson presented information on three options for the 911 Center which was brought up by Chief Craft earlier. City Manager Anderson stated the three options he sees for the center are to shut the center down and transfer all calls over to Georgetown, keep the center and find the funding or

make it a call center. City Manager Anderson distributed a spreadsheet that was done by the Director of Finance that was done for this budget year showing the salary of each employee. This spread sheet also showed the changes that were going to be made to the salaries by promoting dispatchers. The increase was \$117,164.00 which included the 19% increase that was discussed. It was pointed out that these changes did not take place, however, employee raises were given. City Manager Anderson then discussed what it takes to hire a dispatcher. The Director of Finance ran the numbers which showed it to be \$52,113.90, \$56,524.52 or \$59,538.98 depending on which insurance option they take; single, employee/child or employee/spouse/family. City Manager Anderson then provided information on the cost analysis of having a E911 Center and a Call Center. The estimated cost for a E911 Center is \$619,109 yearly and for a Call Center the estimated cost is \$383,115. Therefore, it is a cost savings of \$235,994 to have a call center rather than a E911 Center.

Vice-Mayor Henderson asked for any questions or comments from the committee. Mrs. Short asked what the gap was from what was done for the dispatcher salaries from last year? Vice-Mayor Henderson stated that there was \$657,000 budgeted for the dispatch center in FY20. City Manager Anderson pointed out that does not include just personnel cost; there are some other items included in that number as well.

Ms. Bell stated that she went before Council and asked for the City to pay for EFD (Emergency Fire Dispatch) certification which was a cost of \$48,000 plus overtime employee coverage. This was a one-time fee unless new employees are hired and then the State of Delaware will pick up the cost of any recertifications. Then, she put in a request for EPD (Emergency Police Dispatch) which was completely paid for by the State of Delaware other than the overtime for shift coverage and employees to attend the training. Ms. Bell pointed out that in 2016, the structure of the dispatch center was dispatcher 1 and dispatcher 2 on each shift along with a dispatch administrator. She requested a restructure of the dispatch center to help those employees with seniority so they could be promoted to dispatcher 2. Ms. Bell felt that she is the one to blame and was not aware that this would put the center in danger of being shut down. She added that she was asked of ways to save on overtime. She proposed hiring one additional full-time employee to be her assistant and help as needed in the center. She also proposed to get a pool of certified dispatchers that are working for other agencies that can fill the gaps. She also suggested to pay out for vacation times in straight pay. Ms. Bell added that she did save money on some budget items, Smart 911 was picked up by the State of Delaware and they are also paying for certifications. As far as moving her into another office, it was illegal for her to be sitting in the same room when she was grading the calls of the employees. City Manager stated that he has discussed this several times with Ms. Bell and he has expressed that he feels that she did the right thing. These items needed to be looked into; Ms. Bell stated that cannot argue the fact that the City will save money. City Manager Anderson stated that this discussion was held in close due to the effect it would have on people's jobs. He added that this issue has come up in the past at least three times and it died under its own weight. It was felt by the leadership team that we did not want to create a negative impact on our workforce if it was not going to move forward. Ms. Bell stated that she understood, however, she just wishes it would have been done differently. Vice-Mayor Henderson stated that he agreed; there are a number of things that could have been done differently. He added that the act of bringing this into a discussion causes insecurity and this 911 center is budgeted through June 2020. Ms. Bell pointed out that many of the dispatchers are scared about their jobs and they are applying just like their peers. She added that she is not able to encourage them to stay since it is unknown what the future of the center is. City Manager Anderson stated that time is of the essence for this committee; if we do want to salvage good people, a decision needs to be made soon.

Vice-Mayor Henderson asked the committee members to review the information that was provided. He urged them to reach out to him with any questions they may have. He asked the committee to think of three things

1. What does the City of Seaford look like with a fully functioning 911 center and what will it take to pay for it;
2. What does it look like if the Seaford 911 Center folds down;
3. What would be the hybrid of the two options per the Chief's recommendation of a Call Center.

Vice-Mayor Henderson asked the committee to keep in mind what revenues the City would need to keep the center fully operating and cost savings for the center. The next meeting is scheduled for October 15th, a field trip will be done to the Seaford 911 Center and Sussex County Emergency Operations Center. Vice-Mayor Henderson reminded the group that time is of the essence and Ms. Bell is trying to keep her staff and department running to the best of her ability.

Mr. Cranston stated that for cost saving measures, he may need assistance to know what is essential. Vice-Mayor Henderson stated that at the Public Hearing that was held, he came away feeling from the people that spoke that they are not willing to sacrifice any services including the 911 Center. He added that is a determination that needs to be done by the committee.

Mrs. Short asked how many calls are received now from the center in Georgetown and how they would absorb them since Seaford has one of the larger call volumes. She asked if they would increase their staff to take on the additional call load. City Manager Anderson stated that the staff at the center will be able to answer those questions; he asked that the committee think of those type of questions so they can be asked during that time.

Chief Wilson stated that the number of calls for the fire department is increasing each year. He added that the dispatch center is important to Seaford Volunteer Fire Department. The fire department serves approximately 77 square miles in their jurisdiction. He added that only a small percentage of those residents are paying City taxes to operate the Seaford 911 Center. He asked how this affected this situation. Vice-Mayor Henderson stated that it is a very interesting situation that has been brought up. He added that the residents that live in the 5.3 square mile City finance the 77 square mile area for fire and EMS. City Manager Anderson stated that the City is supporting a large portion of those EMS and fire calls. If the City went to the County requesting funding for those people not paying City taxes, other departments would want that funding as well. The County is already providing that 911 service so they would probably not accommodate that funding request.

Pastor Ross stated that the group needs to look at the best solution for the City. He thinks about what the citizens think about this situation. The demographics are changing and the money has to come from somewhere to support the 911 center if it stays. This is a very serious issue that the committee needs to think about by looking at both sides. There are many people out in the City that are not able to pay their bills daily so an increase can cause them hardship.

Vice-Mayor Henderson stated that he feels that the Mayor did a good job of putting together a diverse committee. He asked the committee to interact with people individually to get their feedback and bring it back to the group.

Mr. Cranston feels that the response time and the effect on the people are the main things to consider with this decision for him. Vice-Mayor Henderson stated that there is no way to measure what the

impact on response may be, however, you can look at the other 22 municipalities that use Sussex County EOC. You can look at their delay rates and data to see a potential impact.

It was decided to have the next meeting on October 15th starting at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall.

With no other business or questions, Vice-Mayor Henderson asked for a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Neal so moved; Officer Scott seconded the motion; motion so passed with all present voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 p.m.

Tracy Torbert, City Clerk