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**From:** Jesse W Cooper

**Sent:** Thursday, May 25, 2017 8:38 AM

**To:** Communications All

**Cc:** Sandra T Renteria; Frank Piccioli; Mark Shore; Dorie Levy; Jason Stokes

**Subject:** Communications Bureau Update

I wanted to take a few minutes to update everyone in the Bureau on some recent issues and share some changes with all Bureau personnel. As you all know, we have been struggling to maintain minimum staffing for quite some time. There are a number of factors that are contributing to this situation. While our vacancy number is certainly a concern, we have to look at all of the issues that are affecting our staffing. Just as a little background for the month of April 2017:

- We were holding 36.5 vacant positions
- 36 operators were in some form of training (9-1-1 or radio)
- The Bureau used 7,364.25 hours of leave (the equivalent of 46 full time positions)

Realistically speaking, we were not dealing with just 36.5 vacancies, but rather 118.5 positions of our total allocation that were not taking calls or dispatching. This is significant when you consider that we effectively need every one of our positions all of the time staffed/working in order to meet our goal of answering 9-1-1 calls within 10 seconds or less and fully staffing our radio positions (while allowing for time off) based off of our staffing data. In April, we answered our 9-1-1 calls at 82% when our goal is 90%. Remember, 90% is the minimum – we have always strived to be as close to 100% as we can – lives depend on our answering those calls immediately. We have not had answer times this low in many years. Because of this, our use of overtime has continued to increase. The Department's budget for OT (sworn and civilian) was exhausted very early in our fiscal year. As a result, each month's OT that is used has been funded from somewhere in the Department or the City. Our use of OT is very high and is not sustainable. For April the

Department used \$2,238,765. As you can imagine, this is occurring every month and that is a large amount of funding that is not budgeted, so it is causing a serious fiscal situation for the City.

I just wanted to make sure to be transparent with you so you know what we are facing. Our goal is always to answer emergency calls and maintain officer safety – we are cognizant of that and will continue to make that our priority. We need to balance that with being fiscally responsible, and also doing our best to not overwhelm you with mandatory OT. There are some things we need to immediately employ in order to try and minimize expenditures through the end of the fiscal year as quickly as possible. I know the ultimate answer is to reduce our call volume and increase our staffing, so that is our focus. There are a few things we are doing and will be instituting:

- We are progressing with ASAP-PSAP – we are working that and probably about 45-60 days out from our first implementation. This will hopefully reduce some alarm calls coming in for call takers and make our response to these calls more efficient.
- We are working on implementation of an upgraded 9-1-1 system and text-to-911 capability that will further impact our operations.
- All 3 shifts are consolidating some of our radio talk groups such as reducing INFO operators, moving to a single HOTMON, and during shift III consolidating some TAC talk groups. This is in an effort to reduce the amount of radio bodies we need to supplement 9-1-1 and ultimately reduce the number needed on OT each day if possible.
- Effective immediately, we will continue to allow primary and secondary scheduled vacations (and scheduled LF), but any additional discretionary time off requests will not be granted. While we are rarely able to grant any time off requests now, we need to try and keep as much staffing as we can to cover for the high number of callouts occurring each day. Granting time off when it looks like we may have a few hours of overstaffing generally ends up with us working short due to callouts. Last week we had a day with 21 callouts in a single day. It is not functional to grant time only to have to cover with OT or mandatorily order people to holdover that do not want to work to cover for BC/BV (it's also not fair to grant the time only to cancel last minute). This restriction on discretionary time off will also impact the use of BV/BC for AWR coverage. Shift swaps and AWRs will be granted but they will need to be full 8/10 hours during this time period. Any time already scheduled and approved by TQ will not be cancelled, but will be allowed. This change will apply to pending requests that have not been approved and any new requests. This will be re-evaluated by Chief Renteria and I after July 1 to determine how long this may have to remain in effect, but the primary focus will be an immediate reduction in OT if possible until the end of June for the fiscal year.
- Chief Renteria and I will be forming a committee of supervisors, employees, and AFSCME to evaluate efficiencies in the Bureau. Myla will be sending something out soon on that. Our goal is to get a diverse group together to discuss various aspects of how we may be able to achieve practical efficiencies in the Bureau. If you are interested please submit a memo of interest. If you are not wanting to be on the group or are not selected, please still forward any recommendations for consideration so the group can discuss and consider them. Just as Chief Williams did with reallocation to Patrol to reduce OT and increasing staffing, we are open to considering alternative ideas to improve our efficiencies and help alleviate some of the OT which we know is not healthy long-term for both fiscal reasons as well as the health/wellness of everyone.

These are just a few items we are having to implement immediately to try and mitigate some of our spending to allow the City and Department to come in on budget for this fiscal year. Even for next year the Department's OT budget is not that substantial so we must determine what we can do moving forward to operate more efficiently. The Training Unit has been doing a great job of recruiting and hiring – they are starting approximately 6 people every 6 weeks which is helping, but with attrition we are struggling to get ahead. As a note, with a 9-month hiring freeze a few

years ago and our normal attrition rates, we have been struggling to get ahead. Our 2016-17 attrition rate is about average as most other years, but this requires constant hiring and training to maintain our numbers. We were lower during recession years, but we are back to average from 2002 forward for this year. Also, since it takes so many to get 1 hired it is difficult to get ahead with having to interview and background so many to get a single new hire. They are doing a great job though and please keep those recommendations coming since we ultimately need to close the vacancy number and decrease unscheduled leave to make progress.

I apologize for the length of this but I feel it is important to share with you where we are and what we are facing so you know why some of these changes are necessary. Everyone in the Bureau has been doing a great job of continuing to provide excellent service to the public and our officers despite these staffing challenges. For that, I am thankful for the work you do every single day. I know it is a tough time but we know we have been through these periods in the past and have overcome them together. Please keep up the great work and share your ideas so the employee committee can vet and consider options. As you do this, think of what you are proposing and what impacts it may have so the group can consider the pro/con of any recommendations. Thank you and as always if you have specific questions or concerns let me or your shift manager know and we will do our best to provide you with any information.

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