



**Date:** January 7, 2019  
**To:** St. Mary's County Commissioners  
Dr. Rebecca Bridgett  
**From:** Stephen Walker, Director  
**Subject:** Departmental Reorganization

### **Historical Background:**

In July of 2019 an organizational analysis was completed by a consulting group that specifically addressed our 911 communications operations. This included several staffing recommendations for improving our center. In considering this information we decided to take a deeper look at our operations and expanded that to other divisions within our department. This resulted in specific recommendations I am making to you that will enhance our operations.

### **Summary:**

- The area to address is staffing in our 911 center; recommendations being submitted are intended to assist the Department of Emergency Services in **filling vacant positions in the Communications Center and reducing turnover**. This will be accomplished by bolstering pay for entry level dispatchers, which has the added goal of increasing our ability to attract qualified applicants and ensure proper staffing.
- Upon my appointment to Director of Emergency Services I assessed duties and responsibilities of Division Managers in Emergency Services. I learned the duties and responsibilities of the Emergency Manager were narrow and limited. In reviewing the Emergency Managers resume and past work experience, it became clear that his skills and abilities far outweighed what he was responsible for and the duties he was performing. In response, I modified his job description and began assigning him additional responsibilities. I have attached a reclassification form and proposed job description that describes all his duties and responsibilities, specifically items not previously identified.

### **Specific issues to be addressed – by Division:**

#### **Communications Division:**

- 1.) **Eliminate (4) four Public Safety Dispatch Assistant (Grade 7) Supervisor positions, maintaining the FTE positions at a lower grade and responsibility.**

Currently we have eight positions for Public Safety Dispatch Assistant Supervisor. The original purpose of this number of Assistant Supervisors was due to the structure that was in place. This structure had specific dispatcher qualifications and duties; Police Dispatchers handled only police calls for service, Fire and EMS dispatchers only handled fire and ems calls for service. While a few dispatchers at that time were cross trained and had the training to dispatch all three disciplines, there was not a requirement this. Moving forward, the Department of Emergency Services has modified the requirements for our 911 center.

All dispatchers are required to be cross trained as a condition of employment in the St. Mary's County 911 dispatch center and promotion to Assistant Supervisor or Supervisor requires certification in the ability to dispatch police, fire or EMS calls for service.

With this change in our operations, there is no longer a need for (8) Public Safety Assistant Supervisors; four (4) Assistant Supervisors for Fire & EMS dispatching and four (4) Assistant Supervisors for Police dispatching, totaling 8 positions.

Our new standard will be (4) four Public Safety Dispatch Assistant Supervisors that are fully cross trained in both disciplines and this change will satisfy that need.

Note: Currently we have six Public Safety Assistant Supervisors filling these positions. All these employees will maintain their rank until they are promoted or perhaps decide to leave the agency. Reducing from 8 to 4 Public Safety Dispatcher positions will be accomplished through attrition.

**Recommendation #1:**

**Eliminate (4) four Grade 7 supervisory positions, maintaining these positions as Grade 5 dispatchers.**

*Dispatchers currently holding Grade 7 rank will continue as a Grade 7 Assistant Supervisor. We will eliminate these positions through attrition. As of December 23, 2019 (2) Assistant Supervisor Positions are vacant. With approval, these will be converted to PS Dispatcher I positions; future vacancies in the grade 7 positions will be handled in the same manner.*

		<Position Conversion>								
9330	Dispatch Assistant Supervisor	Exchange 2 vacant Assistant Supervisor positions for lower level Dispatch I positions - Note: two current Assistant Supervisor positions will remain at that level until promotion or they decide to leave agency - The positions will be eliminated through attrition.	C07.01	-2	(94,058)	(7,195)	(8,823)	(36,650)	\$ (11) (146,737)	
9320	Dispatch I		C05.01	2	75,213	5,754	7,055	36,650	\$ 9 124,681	
\$										
Dispatch Assistant Supervisor Positions (2) reclassified to Dispatch I Total (22,056)										

***This action results in a savings of approximately \$22,056.00. This recommendation is cost neutral.***

**2.) Inadequate Dispatcher Starting g Pay for entry level dispatchers.**

The current starting pay for Dispatchers in our 911 Center is as follows:

- Full time: 34,236.80 plus benefits, i.e. retirement, annual leave, sick leave, etc.
- Grade 4 Upon completion of training, they are increased (at about 6 months) to \$36,857.60  
At one year of service, they are increased to \$41,496.00 and move to a grade 5.
- Hourly (Part-time): 37,606.40, plus sick and safe leave.
- Grade 5 Hourly employees only receive increases when there is a cost of living increase for all employees.

Our 911 center has a perpetual problem of maintaining full staffing. Currently we have little to offer that makes our center competitive with other centers. Recently we had a dispatcher from a neighboring county that applied. This candidate offered the luxury of hiring a trained candidate, reducing the amount

of time required to have them ready to dispatch solo, thereby alleviating a staffing shortage. Unfortunately, the mechanism for hiring a trained dispatcher through a lateral entry program is not well defined and we did not hire this person.

Currently hourly employees start at a higher grade and with an increased salary. The argument for this higher salary is they receive less benefits and less hours. With the addition of sick and safe leave, that gap has narrowed. Additionally, as we are not at full capacity, many of our hourly employees work 40 plus hours a week, which results in their total income being more than full-time employees, which seems a bit unfair.

In response I am submitting a recommendation that will normalize our salary structure and will also provide some incentives for new employees to excel during their training period.

**Recommendation #2:**

Modify the entrance level salary for all dispatchers to \$37,606.40 and start all new dispatchers at Grade 5 step 1. There will be no entry level salary difference between full time and hourly (part-time) employees.

The first pay raise for full time employees will be at the 1-year anniversary date, unless there is a CSMC mandated COLA increase.

Candidates that apply for employment with our center hoping to transfer from another 911 center, that are fully trained 911 center operators, (from a recognized 911 Center PSAP), that are accepted for employment with our 911 center will receive a starting salary of \$41,496. (Additional compensation may be offered depending on qualifications).

RECOMMENDATION 1 - ES COMMUNICATIONS (1701)									
<Current New Dispatch Hired>									
9320 Full Time Dispatch I	1st - 6 months	C04.01	17,118	1,310	1,605.71	9,163	2	\$	29,198
	2nd - 6 months	C04.04	18,429	1,409.80	1,728.62	9,163	2	\$	30,732
	Total Annual Cost		35,547	2,719	3,334	18,325	4	\$	59,930
	Promoted to Dispatch II								
	>2nd Year	C05.05	41,496	3,174	3,892	18,325	5	\$	66,893
Total First and Second Year at Current Rate									\$ 126,823
<Proposed New Dispatch Hired>									
9320 Full Time Dispatch I	Year one	C05.01	37,606	2,877	3,527	18,325	5	\$	62,340
	Year two (merit & promoted to Dispatch II)	C06.02	43,077	3,295	4,041	18,325	5	\$	68,743
Total First and Second Year at Proposed Rate									\$131,083

**The cost for this modification is \$131,083.00 for the first and second year, as depicted. The Communications Division of the Department of Emergency Services currently has approximately \$103,300.00 in savings from salaries and fringe projected through to the end of 2020. This recommendation is cost neutral.**

**Recommendation # 3**

**Re Class current Dispatch II positions from Grade 5 to Grade 6.**

To avoid unintended consequences and compacting the pay scale, this adjustment for current employees needs to occur.

<Current Positions Conversions>										
9320	Reclass Dispatch I	FY2020 reclass C04 to C05 Current FTEs - 6 positions (Jan-Jun 2020)	C05.xx	6,178	473	579		1	\$ 7,230	
9320		FY2021 (Full Year)	C05.xx	22,589	1,728	2,119		3	\$ 26,438	\$33,669
9323	Reclass Dispatch II	FY2020 reclass C05 to C06 Current FTEs - 10 positions (Jan-Jun 2020)	C06.xx	2,898	222	272		0	\$3,391	
9323		FY2021 (Full Year)	C06.xx	\$8,898	681	835		1	\$10,415	\$13,806

***This cost for this action is \$47,475.99 for the remainder of this FY and next year. The Communications Division of the Department of Emergency Services currently has approximately \$103,300.00 in savings from salaries and fringe projected through to the end of 2020. This recommendation is cost neutral.***

**Emergency Management Division:**

- 1.) Adjust the current Emergency Manager’s pay grade to more accurately reflect his current duties and responsibilities.

**Recommendation:**

Reclass the Emergency Manager’s pay grade to Grade 10.06.

RECOMMENDATION 2 - EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (0701)										
<Current>										
5510	Manager I - ES		9.10	-1.0	\$73,466	\$5,620	\$6,891	\$270	\$9	\$86,256
<Proposed>										
	Manager I - ES		10.06	1.0	\$76,419	\$5,846	\$7,168	\$270	\$9	\$89,713

***The cost of this adjustment is: \$3,457.00. The Emergency Management Division of the Department of Emergency Services currently has approximately \$57,600.00 in savings from salaries and fringe projected through to the end of 2020. This recommendation is cost neutral.***

**Timeline:**

This reorganization will begin immediately upon approval by the CMSC.

**Fiscal Impact:**

Please see attached spreadsheet for financial impact.

**Collaboration:**

The Department of Human Resources and the Department of Finance assisted in preparing this request.

