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Committee: Human Resources	Date: 2/21/2024
Common Council Item Number: ID#24-9079	Date: 3/5/2024
Submitted By: Assistant Chief Ron Oremus	City Administrator Approval: 01/31/2024
Finance Department Review: 02/16/2024	City Attorney's Office Review: 02/15/2024
Subject: Consideration and Possible Action to Authorize Two (2) Emergency Communications Center Supervisor Positions for the Police Department	

Details:

The purpose of this proposal, if approved, would be to reallocate previously approved 2024 operating budget funding for three (3) dispatchers to two (2) Emergency Communications Center Supervisor (ECCS) positions. These supervisors would be "floor" or "working" supervisors, meaning they would remain dispatchers, but with additional supervisory duties. The three dispatcher positions were approved by the Finance Committee and the Common Council in 2023 through the 2024 budget process. Adding supervisory staff would be a modification to the current dispatch center staffing model to enhance management efficiency and reduce the projected personnel budget. There are many layers to our request to change from the approved three (3) dispatchers to two (2) ECCS's:

NG911: In 2023, we learned that the much-anticipated NG911 (Next Generation 911) would finally be implemented by the State in mid-2024. While it is exciting to see how this will help the City better serve the members of this community, we also learned this would allow us to receive 911 cellular calls direct from mobile phones instead of having these calls transferred from Waukesha County Communication Center; shaving 40 to 90 seconds in emergency response. These additional calls will add extra burden to the Emergency Communications Center personnel. This is one factor for our request to add staffing to the 2024 operating budget, as detailed below.

Staffing Levels: Independent of NG911, our Emergency Communications Center Manager (ECCM), Duane Bondar, utilized industry-accepted staffing software, called Project Retains, to learn that our dispatch staffing levels (which had not been increased in about 20 years), would optimally require an increase of 11 from the current staffing of 16 dispatch personnel (1 manager and 15 dispatcher). This would total 27 dispatch personnel. With this number of personnel being unrealistic to add to the City's budget operating budget, Chief Thompson instead asked for an increase of six (6), two (2) dispatch supervisors and four (4) dispatchers. This was submitted through the 2024 budget process. The result, however, was the approval of monies for three (3) dispatchers and no dispatch supervisors. When we learned this from Finance Director Joe Ciarro, upon the executive operating budget being released, Chief Thompson called Director Ciarro and asked if we could use the funds, assuming it was approved through Council, for two (2) ECCS's (dispatch supervisors) in lieu of three (3) dispatchers. From his financial perspective, Director Ciarro's only concern was not overspending the approved funds.

Dispatch Supervision: Dispatch currently runs three 8-hour shifts for its 24/7 operation. It is comprised of three positions: a non-emergency call taker, a police dispatcher, and a 911 call taker/fire dispatcher. Staffing currently requires five (5) dispatchers to maintain each shift. On March 8th, 2022, there was a fatal fire in the City of Waukesha. I was tasked with conducting a comprehensive review of an emergency services delay that occurred in dispatch (available on request). As part of the Conclusion and Best Practices, it was clear additional accountability measures should be put in place. Having one supervisor managing 15 dispatchers covering three

shifts every hour of every day is vastly different and more challenging than supervising 15 subordinates working Monday-to-Friday on one collective shift. When the Dispatch Supervisor (who had been in place at the time of the fatal fire incident) resigned later in 2022, we hired his successor and elevated the title to an Emergency Communications Center Manager with the intent of adding supervisors under his span-of-control to assist with accountability. The ECCM is responsible for managing the center, whereas the supervisor is responsible for personnel performance and calls during their assigned shift.

Fire Department: While the Police Department manages the City of Waukesha Communications Center (Dispatch), the Fire Department has asked to move from a three-position model to a four-position model that would separate the 911/Fire Dispatcher position into two positions. The Fire Department had supported the request to increase personnel, and despite our gratitude for the Finance Department, Finance Committee, and the Council as a whole supporting the increase of three dispatchers, this increase is not substantial enough to meet the Fire Department's request.

Finance/Council Approval: As the Police Department presented our budget to the Finance Committee, there was concern expressed by a couple of Committee members regarding having enough dispatchers to accomplish our mission. It was expressed by Assistant Chief Wagner and I that we are greatly appreciative of any personnel increases given the narrow margins in the operating budget, and that we would evaluate the approved monies to see how we could best maximize our dispatch center staffing.

Options & Alternatives:

Maintain the budget, as approved, for three (3) dispatcher positions and the Committee approving the Staffing Resolution with them in the list of authorized positions.

Financial Remarks:

The span-of-control for our Emergency Communication Center Manager has shown to unreasonably large for him to be effective. Adding two working dispatch supervisors would spread the workload to a manageable level. The dispatch supervisors would be assigned to different shifts and since they are working "floor" supervisors, they would be required to work one of the dispatch positions during their scheduled work hours if overtime existed. This would be a cost savings on the amount of overtime needed, and an increase in morale and overall well-being so a dispatcher would not have to get potentially ordered-in to work the overtime.

Specifically, there was \$210,000 added to the 2024 operating budget for three (3) dispatchers. If approved, the two (2) ECCS positions would be approximately \$180,000. This is a savings of \$30,000 to the City's 2024 operating expenses.

Executive Recommendation:

Chief Thompson and the Command Team fully support this change in personnel and ask for approval of the Human Resource Committee for consideration and possible action to authorize two (2) Emergency Communications Center Supervisor positions for the Police Department.