

## XVII – SUPPORT SERVICES BUREAU

This chapter presents findings and recommendations relating to the Support Services Bureau. After an initial background section that describes the bureau and its current operations a discussion of improvement opportunities in the following divisions and units is presented: internal affairs; communications; alarm; detention services; records; and facilities.

### A – BACKGROUND

The Support Services Bureau, which is currently led by a deputy chief who serves as the acting bureau commander, includes the following diverse units:

- Internal Affairs
- Communications
- Detention Services
- Records/Legal Services
- Property
- Auto Pound
- Facilities Management

A brief description of the functions and operations of each division and unit follows.

#### **Internal Affairs**

The Internal Affairs Division (IAD) conducts investigations of all written complaints filed against any police department employee and also accepts commendations of officers who are recognized by citizens for outstanding service. IAD is also responsible for administering the department's drug testing program, providing investigation of internal policy violations such as sick leave abuse, absent without leave from court violations, tardiness policy violations, and other minor departmental infractions. The division is commanded by a deputy chief and consists of four types of units: administrative team; three operations units; random drug testing team; and a records management unit.

- **Administrative team.** The administrative team is led by a sergeant and is staffed with one sworn personnel (a police officer). The team is primarily responsible for providing office management duties such as ordering supplies, managing payroll functions, and other day to day office support services for internal affairs division.
- **Operations teams.** Three operations units (referred to as Unit A, Unit B, and Unit C) are assigned to the Internal Affairs Division. These teams are primarily responsible for conducting thorough and unbiased investigations of department employees who have been charged with misconduct or policy violations. These investigations could involve complaints for alleged or suspected violations of departmental regulations, the Code of Conduct, the City of Dallas Personnel Rules,

the Civil Service Board Code of Rules, and Regulations, Administrative Directives, the Charter or Ordinances of the City of Dallas, or the laws of the State of Texas or the United States. Each of the three teams is led by a lieutenant and staffed with seven to ten sworn personnel. Operations Unit A has eight sworn personnel (three sergeants and five senior corporals); Operations Unit B has seven sworn personnel (three sergeants and four senior corporals); and Operations Unit C has ten sworn personnel (five sergeants and five senior corporals).

- **Random drug testing team.** The random drug testing team is responsible for conducting random weekly drug testing of department personnel as required by departmental guidelines. The unit is responsible for overseeing the contract vendor who provides testing services, and payment for these services. The team is led by a sergeant who is assigned to Operations Unit C, and has no additional authorized staffing.
- **Records management unit.** The records management unit is responsible for receiving, processing, and filing all complaints against department personnel; maintaining all IAD files; ensuring that complainants are properly notified of the receipt and disposition of their complaint; and for purging complaint and incident files as allowed by approved retention schedules. The unit is overseen by a sergeant and is staffed with three non-sworn personnel (office assistants).

## Communications

The communications unit is a 24-hour a day, seven day a week operation whose primary function is to serve as the critical communication link between the public and the field officers. The unit also provides a variety of services that support the delivery of services to citizens. A captain leads the communications unit which is divided into a number of subunits and teams: administrative team, communications, direct entry team, and expediter team.

- **Administrative team.** The administrative team provides a range of administrative support for the communications unit. The team is divided into three sub-units: Alarm Processing Unit, UCR Team, and NCIC Team. The administrative functions are managed by a lieutenant who is assisted by an administrative sergeant and a division secretary. This staff works from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- **Alarm processing.** The Alarm Processing Unit's primary function is to process alarm permits, issue citations for illegal alarm system operations, and hold conferences with permit holders. The unit is authorized for six sworn personnel (two sergeants and four senior corporals) and two non-sworn personnel.
- **Uniform crime reporting.** The Uniform Crime Reporting team reviews offense reports and coding crimes in the manner specified by the FBI for uniform crime reporting. The team currently generates 16 monthly reports to Austin and 18 monthly departmental reports. The team is led by a sergeant who oversees one senior corporal and two office assistants. The staff works weekdays from 6:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

- **National Crime Information Center.** The National Crime Information Center (NCIC) team is responsible for entering information into the NCIC system. A sergeant oversees this unit that includes a total staff of 17 non-sworn personnel on three watches seven days a week.
- **Communications.** The communications unit dispatches officers to calls-for-service that are transferred from the 911 call center that is operated by Dallas Fire-Rescue. The unit also operates a service desk that assists dispatchers by handling requests from police officers in the field relating to records, warrants, and the need for additional support (ranging from a tow truck to a helicopter to the crime scene response team).

Dispatchers and service desk personnel are assigned to work one of three watches, each of which is managed by a lieutenant. 23 personnel are assigned to the first watch, which runs from 10:30 p.m. to 6:30 a.m.; 22 personnel are assigned to the second watch, which runs from 6:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.; and 21 personnel are assigned to the third watch, which runs from 2:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

- **Direct entry.** The direct entry unit assists officers in the field by typing reports that are dictated by officers over the phone. The unit is led by a sergeant who oversees staff assigned to one of three watches. Eight are assigned to the first watch (from 10:30 p.m. to 6:30 a.m.; seven are assigned to the second watch from 6:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.; and nine are assigned to the third watch 2:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.
- **Expediter.** The expediter unit handles calls by phone that may not require a police officer to respond in person. At present, such calls include home burglaries where the intruder is gone from the premises and no longer an immediate threat; or reports of lost property. The unit, which operations 24-hours a day, is led by a sergeant. The staff assigned to the unit is assigned to three watches. The first watch, which runs from 10:30 p.m. to 6:30 a.m. is staffed with two personnel. The second watch, which runs from 6:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. is staffed with seven personnel. The third watch, which runs from 2:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., has six personnel.

## **Detention Services**

The Detention Services Unit, which reports to a lieutenant, reviews the arrests of all adult prisoners (including probable cause determinations), conducts criminal history checks on adult prisoners to determine whether the case can be enhanced, administers intoxication tests to prisoners taken into custody by department personnel, ensures that appropriate paperwork is disseminated to the Dallas County Sheriff's Office, and serves as a liaison between the department and the sheriff's office. Unit staffing is assigned to three watches seven days a week and each watch is led by a lieutenant.

## **Records/Legal Services**

The Records/Legal Services unit is overseen by a manager who oversees three primary units: records section, open records unit, and legal services unit.

- **Records section.** The records section is responsible for reproducing and distributing offense reports, storing and retrieving scanned documents, accessing offense reports through the STARR and FORTIS systems, researching and selling

public information documents to the public, maintaining jail arrest records, entering, modifying, canceling and clearing stolen property records processing missing persons entries on the NCIC system. 38 non-sworn personnel are responsible for performing the duties assigned to the records section.

- **Open records unit.** The open records unit is responsible for processing and tracking responses to open records requests, and serving as a liaison between the police department, the City Secretary's office, and the records management officer for the City of Dallas. One lieutenant, one senior corporal and two non-sworn personnel are responsible for processing open records requests.
- **Legal services unit.** The legal services unit is led by a lieutenant. The unit conducts an administrative review of all criminal cases filed by the police department, serves as a liaison between the department and the offices of the District Attorney, City Attorney, the city's risk management department, and a variety of criminal justice agencies; notifies officers of the need to appear in court for cases in Denton, Collin, Ellis and Rockwall counties; and provides staff support to the criminal law and police unit attorneys. The unit has a total authorized staffing for three sworn personnel (one sergeant and two police officers) and 12 non-sworn personnel. The unit consists of two sub-units: Case Filing Team, and Subpoena Assistance Team. The Case Filing Team is comprised of nine non-sworn personnel: a supervisor and eight office assistants. The Subpoena Assistance Team is comprised of two sworn personnel (a sergeant and police officer) and seven non-sworn personnel (office assistants).

## Property

The Property Unit is a 24-hour operation responsible for receiving, storing, and disposing of drugs, evidence and stolen, recovered or found property. The unit is commanded by a lieutenant and consists of three teams that focus on general property, drug evidence and weapons evidence. The teams are Evidence Team, Guns/Drugs Team, and Property Recovery Squad. They are organized as follows:

- **Evidence team.** The evidence team is led by a coordinator and is responsible for handling physical evidence submitted to the department as important to the investigation and solving of various crimes. The unit is staffed primarily with storekeepers and technicians who are scheduled to work on three separate watches. The first watch (12:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.) includes three non-sworn personnel; the second watch (8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) is staffed with four non-sworn personnel; and the third watch (4:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.) is authorized for staffing with four non-sworn personnel and 1 sworn personnel (police officer) of which one non-sworn position is currently vacant (senior storekeeper).
- **Guns/Drugs team.** The guns/drugs team is led by a sergeant. This team is charged with handling drugs and processing weapons that are confiscated by Dallas police personnel during response to alleged criminal activities. They are responsible for logging, identifying, storing, disposing, documenting and maintaining records on the guns and drugs that may be needed for future legal proceedings. The team is staffed with seven non-sworn personnel and three sworn personnel. Two of the non-sworn positions (drug technicians) are currently vacant. Hours of assignment are 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

- **Property recovery squad.** The property recovery squad is led by a sergeant. The squad is composed primarily of route detectives who are responsible for making weekly visits to area pawnshops to collect pawn and purchase tickets; physically recovering stolen property and completing paperwork for Magistrate hearings; pursuing owners when an item is recovered but possibly not reported due to lack of serial number; assisting the evidence and gun/drugs teams. The team is staffed with seven non-sworn personnel (all office assistants) and six sworn personnel (all senior corporals). This squad works Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. unless duty dictates other hours.

### **Auto Pound Unit**

The auto pound is a 24-hour seven day a week operation that performs a number of administrative and operational functions relating to the impoundment and release of vehicles. In particular, the unit is responsible for management of inventory, security, processing of impounded vehicles, maintenance of the auto pound fleet, facilitation of auctions, paperwork related to property transfers, and liaison with wrecker companies. The unit is authorized for ten sworn personnel (one lieutenant, four sergeants, three senior corporals, and two police officers) and 44 non-sworn personnel.

### **Facilities Management**

Facilities management is a relatively new unit that oversees management, maintenance, operations, security systems and security staffing for the Jack Evans Headquarters Facility at 1400 South Lamar Street. Functions performed by the unit includes issuing keys, furniture, timecards, carpool tags, parking space assignments; conducting building tours; coordinating issues related to the future Police Museum (including acquisitions and fundraising); and coordinating meetings at the headquarters. The team is led by a sergeant and has five additional sworn personnel (two senior corporals, and three police officers) and seven non-sworn public safety officers. This unit reports to a lieutenant of police in the Legal Services/Records Section.

## **B – INTERNAL AFFAIRS**

This section is divided into four parts: organization; ensuring efficient operations; enhancing effectiveness; and staffing.

### **ORGANIZATION**

#### **The Internal Affairs And Public Integrity Units Should Be Combined**

As discussed in Chapter VII, there is no need for the Public Integrity Unit (which investigates criminal issues involving any city employee) and the Internal Affairs Division (which investigates issues relating to non-compliance with police department policy) to be organizationally separate. The functions performed by the units are sufficiently similar that, from a management perspective, it is beneficial to combine them. The fact that the criminal investigations performed by the Public Integrity Unit must be distinct from the administrative investigations performed by the Internal Affairs Division while not unimportant, is not a barrier to combining these functions because procedures can be established to ensure that these distinct investigations neither overlap nor conflict.

When these functions have been consolidated the deputy chief who leads the division, a lieutenant who oversees public integrity investigations and a lieutenant who oversees internal affairs investigations should jointly determine which cases should be assigned to internal affairs investigators and which cases should be assigned to public integrity investigators. For cases that require both an internal affairs investigation and a public integrity investigation these managers should work out the procedures for ensuring that these investigations do not conflict.

Combining these functions will allow the department to achieve some economies in clerical and administrative support. One clerical position, therefore, should be discontinued when the combination of the internal affairs and public integrity units has been accomplished.

## **ENSURING EFFICIENT OPERATIONS**

### **The Department Should Reassess Its Overall Approach To Conducting Internal Affairs Investigations**

The internal affairs process in the Dallas Police Department is plagued by a variety of problems. First, the time required to complete investigations is lengthy. In interviews, employees reported frequent instances in which more than a year passed before an internal affairs investigation was completed. Moreover, 87.7 percent of the respondents to the employee survey disagree or strongly disagree that internal affairs investigations are timely. Delays in completing internal affairs investigation are much more than a minor inconvenience to employees. In addition to the emotional burden placed on individuals waiting for an investigation to be completed, in interviews numerous instances where employees were not allowed to compete for a promotion because an internal affairs investigation was pending were cited. Furthermore, there are obvious costs to the department of delay in cases where officers have been removed from their primary assignment pending the completion of an internal affairs investigation.

Even more troubling, however, is the fact that internal affairs investigations are not perceived to be fair. The perception of many officers is that the goal of the internal affairs unit is to find an infraction for which an officer can be disciplined – even if it is unrelated to the initial complaint that was being investigated. While it was beyond the scope of this engagement to assess the fairness of internal affairs investigation the fact that concerns about fairness are so widespread is troubling. 72.9 percent of the respondents to the employee survey disagree or strongly disagree that investigations are fair.

A number of steps should be taken to reduce the time required to complete investigations.

- **The type of cases investigated by internal affairs should be changed.** Part of the reason it takes so long to complete an internal affairs investigation is because the unit is inundated with cases that do not require a formal investigation. The types of cases that are referred to the centralized internal affairs unit should be primarily cases that have the potential to result in the termination of an employee or a

suspension involving the loss of pay.<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that the department recognizes the need to reduce the number of cases investigated by internal affairs and has taken a good first step by requiring cases involving missed court time, reporting late to work or violations of the department's sick leave policy to be handled by line patrol sergeants.

- **Documentation requirements should be reduced.** The Internal Affairs Division currently takes a "one size fits all" approach to documenting internal affairs cases. A review of case files suggests that documentation of many cases is excessive (given the nature of the violation being investigated) and in some cases unnecessary. For example, internal affairs reports often simply regurgitate information presented in witness statements that could easily be attached to the case report.
- **Less burdensome approaches to reviewing and correcting cases should be established.** The quality control procedures currently in place for reviewing and correcting cases are, at present, excessive. For example, the entire case will be returned to the author even if only minor changes are required. In many cases, the person reviewing the case could easily make the change himself or herself and merely note to the person who authored the case that changes were made. The current process of sending cases back to their authors (sometimes repeatedly) to make minor changes makes little difference to the final disposition of the case and can markedly increase the time required to finalize a case report.

Concerns about the fairness of internal affairs investigations are more difficult to address. To the extent possible<sup>2</sup>, however, the department should communicate the rationale for the disciplinary actions taken as a result of an investigation. Doing so would help to ensure that department staff clearly understand the consequences associated with failure to comply with department policies and would also communicate to employees that the disciplinary actions being taken are fair and consistent.

## **ENHANCING EFFECTIVENESS**

### **Internal Affairs Managers And Supervisors Should Receive Additional Training**

Relatively little internal investigations specific training has been provided to the managers and supervisors assigned to the Internal Affairs Unit. Indeed, only two officers assigned to the unit have attended an internal affairs school. To address this issue all officers who supervise and manage internal affairs investigators should be expected to participate in internal affairs specific training. (Such schools typically last for one week.)

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<sup>1</sup> The department should also consider whether or not cases involving suspensions of up to five days should be assigned to internal affairs.

<sup>2</sup> Information that is shared, of course, should be limited to protect the confidentiality of persons being investigated.

## **The Department Should Explore Using Mediation To Resolve Some Types Of Complaints**

Many law enforcement agencies have found mediation to be more effective in addressing minor issues relating to officer rudeness than conducting a formal investigation.<sup>3</sup> Mediation sessions are preferred by these agencies because both the officer and the citizen leave the session with a better understanding of the perspective of the other party. Providing officers with a sound understanding of citizen perspectives relating to behavior that is perceived as being rude can help them prevent such situations from being repeated in the future. In the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, for example, supervisors investigating a rudeness complaint will ask both the officer and the complainant if they would be willing to discuss the matter face-to-face. The supervisor then mediates the discussion between the two parties. Such approaches are generally much more productive than simply telling either the officer or the citizen that one or the other was "wrong" or worse yet having the investigation result in "no decision." In addition, issues are resolved through mediation much more quickly than if a formal investigation must be conducted.

## **STAFFING**

### **Staffing Of The Internal Affairs Function Should Be Closely Monitored As The Number Of Cases Investigated By The Division Declines**

As previously discussed, combining the public integrity unit with the internal affairs division will allow the department to achieve a modest increase in administrative efficiency which will result in the reduction of one clerical position.<sup>4</sup> No other changes in the staffing of the Internal Affairs Division are recommended at present, however, despite the fact that reducing the number of cases assigned to the division should result in a substantial reduction in its workload. The capacity created by reducing the division's caseload should be invested in efforts to ensure a more timely resolution of cases. Over time, however, the division should establish an expectation with regard to the speed with which internal affairs investigations should be completed and should size the unit appropriately.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Please note that rudeness complaints are currently investigated by the patrol divisions and not by the internal affairs division.

<sup>4</sup> As will be discussed in Chapter XVIII, the staffing of the public integrity function should also be reduced to reflect the unit's relatively low workload.

<sup>5</sup> Uncertainties associated with the number of cases the division will be handling in the future and the time required to investigate these cases makes it difficult to accurately assess staffing needs at this time.

## C – COMMUNICATIONS

This section is divided into five parts: organization; expediter unit; staff review; direct entry; and staffing implications.

### ORGANIZATION

#### The City Should Consider Assigning Responsibility For The 911 – 311 Call Center To The Police Department

As a general management concept when a support service is shared by a number of user departments the department with the greatest volume of activity should be responsible for the service. However, in the City of Dallas, responsibility for the 911 – 311 call center is assigned to the fire-rescue department despite the fact that the vast majority of calls received are for police assistance.<sup>6</sup> As the following table shows, the number of dispatched incidents responded to by the police department dwarfs the number of dispatched incidents responded to by the fire department.

| Unit                | Incidents    |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Police              | 789,522(a)   |
| Fire Emergencies    | 59,129(b)(c) |
| Medical Emergencies | 147,885(b)   |

(a) 2003 police department calls dispatched.

(b) Information from 2002-2003 Fire-Rescue Department Annual Report.

(c) Excludes medical emergencies responded to by fire crews.

The fact that the police department does not oversee the call center but is the primary user of its services is especially problematic because the police department is not fully satisfied with the consistency of the quality of call-taking services it receives. While the fire-rescue department was noted to be cooperative in planning for initial and in-service training, the consensus among a significant number of police department employees familiar with call center services was that call-takers lacked the on-going direct supervision/oversight and the on-going training needed to effectively handle police calls. In particular, concerns were raised that call takers frequently fail to gather needed information before transferring calls to a police dispatcher. Examples of problems that were cited include the failure to inquire about whether a weapon was involved in robberies, inconsistent and insufficient questioning of callers to obtain the most complete description of the subject possible, and the failure to find out the make, model, year and license number of the vehicles in car jackings. These issues are of crucial importance to the police department because ensuring a safe and effective police officer response to calls requires receiving accurate information about the call prior to the response.

<sup>6</sup> The 911-311 call center provides services for a range of city departments but the police and fire departments are by far the largest users of its services. 311 calls are used to report stray animals, potholes, abandoned cars, broken water mains, garbage collection, icy streets, broken traffic signals, fire hydrant leaks, flooded streets, high weeds, trash, illegal dumping and requests for mosquito control.

Regardless of whether a decision is made to transfer responsibility for the call center to the police department, systems are needed to ensure that the department responsible for the call center is responsive to the needs of all users. (If responsibility for the call center is assigned to the police department, then these systems should be used to ensure the police department provides high quality services to the Dallas fire-rescue department and to other recipients of call center services.) In particular, systems should be established for assessing and monitoring performance on an ongoing basis. (Users should be consulted when conducting formal personnel reviews.) These systems, in turn, should be used to determine training needs for call center employees. Additionally, the managers of the call center should be held accountable for the overall quality of services provided and if service concerns are not addressed the manager should be replaced.

### **Expenditures Of 911 Monies Should Be Examined To Ensure These Resources Are Used To Address The Most Important Communications Center Needs**

In fiscal year 2002-2003 the City of Dallas received more than \$13.7 million in 911 fees resulting primarily from the surcharges on local phone bills to support City call taking and dispatch operations. The perception of some police department employees is that the resources allocated to support fire-rescue department dispatch and call center activities has been disproportionate to the amount allocated to the police department. In particular, employees notice that funds have been used to make needed improvements in call taking work areas (e.g., air quality improvements, anti-static floors and ergonomic furniture) while expenditures have not been made to address similar needs in the immediately adjacent police department dispatch center.

It was beyond the scope of this engagement to evaluate fire-rescue department services and expenditures; however, the disparity between the physical conditions in the fire-rescue department call taker and police dispatch facilities was striking. It is appropriate and worthwhile for steps to be taken to ensure that 911 monies are used to address the most urgent needs of the city's overall communications infrastructure and the police department needs to be an active partner with the fire-rescue department and other city managers in making these decisions. Regardless of which entity ultimately operates the call center, it is incumbent on the managers of the department operating the call center to seek input on how priorities should be established and how scarce resources should be allocated. In addition, these managers should communicate the basis for how any resources devoted to supporting the entire 911/dispatch operation are expended.

### **First Line Civilian Supervisors Should Supervise Communications Operations**

At present, the bulk of the staff assigned to the communications unit are civilians while sergeant provide first line supervision. While competent supervision and an understanding of police work is needed to oversee these important functions, excellent communications personnel who have spent their careers providing dispatch and other communications services are more than able to provide needed first line supervision. Replacing sworn supervisors with civilians will also provide the department with the ability to provide promotional opportunities for excellent employees within the communications unit. Please note the captain and lieutenants who manage

communications center operations will be available to provide a police perspective when needed.<sup>7</sup>

## **EXPEDITER**

### **The Expediter Unit Lacks Sufficient Staffing To Quickly Address Calls Assigned To The Unit**

The department should be commended for establishing an “expediter” unit to take reports by phone for citizen calls that do not require the response of a patrol officer.<sup>8</sup> However, because insufficient staff is currently assigned to the expediter unit the average time it takes for an employee assigned to the expediter unit to call a citizen to take a report is more than two hours and twenty minutes (141 minutes). These lengthy response times have not gone unnoticed by citizens. In the “drop-in” sessions conducted as part of this engagement numerous citizens expressed extreme displeasure with the length of time for reports to be taken by phone.

The fact that the time required to respond to calls is lengthy is not surprising when unit staffing is compared to the volume of expediter calls received. Assuming the average expediter call takes 12 minutes to complete, an insufficient number of staff are currently scheduled to handle the total number of calls received more than 17 percent of the hours in a week. Moreover, this analysis assumes that expediter calls can be queued until an employee is available to handle the call and that each staff person is fully productive for each minute of their eight hour shift (that is, that they take no breaks). If it is assumed that expediter staff are productive for seven hours during their shift, insufficient staff will be working for six out of the 21 shifts in a week even if calls are queued until an employee is available to take a call.

At present, when the time required for expediter staff to return citizen calls exceeds four hours the supervisor can make the decision to close the unit until the backlog has been eliminated. Reportedly, this happens on average about twice a week at present. Needless to say, when the Expediter Unit is shut down officers must assume responsibility for handling calls that could be handled at less cost by expediter personnel.

### **Some Types Of Calls Should Not Be Assigned To The Expediter Unit**

Currently, approximately half of the burglary calls received by the police department are assigned to the Expediter Unit. While from a policing perspective it is efficient for some burglary calls to be handled over the phone – for example, where there is no physical evidence to collect and no witnesses are available who may have seen the perpetrators leave the crime scene – from a customer service perspective handling such calls over the phone reflects a very low level of service. Burglaries are very invasive and unsettling crimes. Many citizens who have been burglarized consider their homes to have been

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<sup>7</sup> Over time, the department may consider having civilian managers oversee communications operations. In the short-term, however, retaining sworn managers is appropriate.

<sup>8</sup> Calls that can be effectively handled by the Expediter Unit include: theft, missing person, identify theft and criminal mischief.

violated and because the crime is so personal in nature want and expect a police officer to respond in person. Indeed, during the drop in sessions conducted as part of this engagement a number of citizens were vocal in expressing their displeasure that their burglary had been handled by phone. From a customer services perspective, therefore, burglary calls should be handled in person unless the citizen expresses a preference for the report to be taken by phone. While citizens are already given the option of having an officer respond in person some appear not to understand that this is an option they can choose.

It is also worth noting that from a policing perspective if officers responding to burglary scenes determine that conducting a thorough preliminary investigation at the crime scene is worthwhile, leads may be generated that may result in the crime being solved. If the calls are handled over the phone there is almost no chance that the crime will be solved (unless the individual who committed the crime is arrested on another matter and confesses to having committed the burglary).

The Expediter Unit should also discontinue taking lost property reports. The consultant was advised that the Dallas Police Department is the only department in North Texas that takes lost property reports (e.g., cell phones and credit cards). Reportedly insurance companies and the phone company refer their clients to the police department so that they might secure a police report believing that this keeps their clientele "honest." Lost property reports should not be taken by the expediter unit. Credit card and phone companies should be so advised of this change in policy. If citizens call to make such reports the call taker should politely indicate that police reports are not needed to document such incidents.

### **Staffing Of The Expediter Unit Should Be Increased**

A number of steps were taken to determine the appropriate staffing of the expediter unit. First, queuing analysis was used to determine the number of staff that needed to be on duty each hour assuming a 90 percent probability that when a call is received unit staff will be available to respond.<sup>9</sup> (The results of this analysis are presented in Exhibit XVII-1). Next, linear programming was used to determine the best way to schedule employees to ensure sufficient staff is available to handle calls while minimizing overall staffing requirements. The recommended schedule is presented in the following table.

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<sup>9</sup> This analysis assumes that each call or referral handled by the Expediter Unit takes an average of 12 minutes to complete. In addition, this analysis assumes that all burglary calls are handled by patrol officers.

| Watch  | Hours                   | Days Off               | Number Needed |
|--------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| First  | 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. | Saturday and Sunday    | 1.6           |
|        |                         | Monday and Tuesday     | 0.8           |
|        |                         | Tuesday and Wednesday  | 0.8           |
|        |                         | Thursday And Friday    | 1.6           |
| Second | 6:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.  | Saturday and Sunday    | 1.6           |
|        |                         | Sunday and Monday      | 1.6           |
|        |                         | Tuesday and Wednesday  | 2.4           |
|        |                         | Thursday and Friday    | 2.4           |
| Third  | 2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. | Friday and Saturday    | 1.6           |
|        |                         | Saturday and Sunday    | 2.4           |
|        |                         | Sunday and Monday      | 0.8           |
|        |                         | Monday and Tuesday     | 0.8           |
|        |                         | Tuesday and Wednesday  | 0.8           |
|        |                         | Wednesday and Thursday | 1.6           |
|        |                         | Thursday and Friday    | 0.8           |

A relief factor was then applied to each shift to ensure the required number of employees would be working while allowing for vacations, holidays, illness and other excused absences. The number of staff that should be assigned to each shift after accounting for relief needs is presented in the following table.

| Watch           | Hours                   | Days Off               | Number | Relief Factor | Number After Relief |
|-----------------|-------------------------|------------------------|--------|---------------|---------------------|
| First           | 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. | Saturday and Sunday    | 1.6    | 1.25          | 2.0                 |
|                 |                         | Monday and Tuesday     | 0.8    | 1.25          | 1.0                 |
|                 |                         | Tuesday and Wednesday  | 0.8    | 1.25          | 1.0                 |
|                 |                         | Thursday And Friday    | 1.6    | 1.25          | 2.0                 |
| <i>Subtotal</i> |                         |                        |        |               | <i>6.0</i>          |
| Second          | 6:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.  | Saturday and Sunday    | 1.6    | 1.25          | 2.0                 |
|                 |                         | Sunday and Monday      | 1.6    | 1.25          | 2.0                 |
|                 |                         | Tuesday and Wednesday  | 2.4    | 1.25          | 3.0                 |
|                 |                         | Thursday and Friday    | 2.4    | 1.25          | 3.0                 |
| <i>Subtotal</i> |                         |                        |        |               | <i>10.0</i>         |
| Third           | 2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. | Friday and Saturday    | 1.6    | 1.25          | 2.0                 |
|                 |                         | Saturday and Sunday    | 2.4    | 1.25          | 3.0                 |
|                 |                         | Sunday and Monday      | 0.8    | 1.25          | 1.0                 |
|                 |                         | Monday and Tuesday     | 0.8    | 1.25          | 1.0                 |
|                 |                         | Tuesday and Wednesday  | 0.8    | 1.25          | 1.0                 |
|                 |                         | Wednesday and Thursday | 1.6    | 1.25          | 2.0                 |
|                 |                         | Thursday and Friday    | 0.8    | 1.25          | 1.0                 |
| <i>Subtotal</i> |                         |                        |        |               | <i>11.0</i>         |
| <b>Total</b>    |                         |                        |        |               | <b>27.0</b>         |

## **STAFF REVIEW**

### **Steps Should Be Taken To Improve The Stability Of Staff Review Software**

The software application used for the staff review, direct entry and expeditor functions is currently unstable. When the backlog of reports needed to be reviewed or returned to officers gets too long the system crashes. This not only prevents the expeditor, direct entry and staff review functions from being performed until the system is brought back up but the items in the queue are lost. Consequently, staff at the patrol division who are responsible for verifying that officers have completed required reports must spend time working to figure out why reports were lost. Moreover, when the direct entry function is not operating, patrol officers who currently rely on the system to dictate reports face a longer time to contact a direct entry worker when the system is restored due to the fact that a backlog of officers will be trying to dictate reports at the same time.

This clearly is an important issue and a priority should be placed on increasing the memory of the system and taking other steps to ensure the system's stability.

### **Attention Should Be Focused On Reducing The Time Required To Correct Reports That Are Returned To Officers**

Steps should be taken to improve the turn-around of reports sent back out to officers for clarification or correction. While patrol supervisors are advised each week about the number of "unreceived" reports pending, little emphasis appears to be placed on correcting these reports. For the period from January 1, 2004 through April 30, 2004, there were 5,249 unreceived or returned reports relating to a wide range of calls. The time required to correct these reports adversely affects the department's public image. Indeed, open records unit staff report members of the public coming to the police department to secure copies of accident or other types of reports only to be told, sometimes repeatedly, that the report is still pending.

Addressing this issue does not require investments in information systems and software; rather, the problem can be address simply by focusing management attention on it. Patrol supervisors should take the steps necessary to ensure that reports returned to officers are completed in a timely manner.

### **Expeditor Staff Should Be Cross-Trained To Perform The Staff Review Function**

At recommended staffing levels staff assigned to the expeditor unit will devote an average of 30.2 percent of their shift handling calls or approximately 2.42 hours per shift. Assuming they are productive for seven hours a shift this leaves an average capacity for each expeditor employee of 4.58 hours per shift to perform other duties. If expeditor staff are cross-trained to review reports – a responsibility currently assigned to the staff review unit – positions currently dedicated to the staff review function can be redeployed or discontinued.

| Watch  | Hours Of Staff Review Capacity Needed(a) | Hours Of Available Expediter Capacity | Net Staff Review Capacity Needed |
|--------|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| First  | 5.7                                      | 21.0                                  | 0.0                              |
| Second | 16.2                                     | 26.1                                  | 0.0                              |
| Third  | 14.2                                     | 30.2                                  | 0.0                              |

(a) Conservatively assumes that each report takes two minutes to review. Supervisor estimates were that a report can be reviewed in one minute.

Implementing this recommendation should not be difficult because, to its credit, some expediter staff have already been trained to perform the staff review function.

## DIRECT ENTRY

### **The Direct Entry Function Is An Expensive Accommodation To Officers Whose Writing Skills Are Marginal Or Who Cannot Or Would Prefer Not To Type Reports**

The department currently employs 24 staff over three shifts to type reports for officers who dictate them over the phone. Providing this service is an expensive accommodation to officers with marginal writing skills or who cannot or would prefer not to type. For officers whose writing skills are marginal, direct entry does assure clarity and elimination of ambiguity in written reports. For officers who are not skilled typists a modest amount of time may be saved by dictating reports rather than typing them although these savings will be offset by the time officers spend waiting for direct entry staff to become available for dictation.

To address this issue the department should establish an expectation that all officers be competent in writing – usage of the English language – and that they should be reasonably competent typists. As discussed in Chapter VII, typing skills and the ability to communicate in writing should be a requirement of all new officers hired by the department. For officers who currently lack typing skills or lack the ability to write effectively, typing training and remedial writing training should be provided. After two years, all officers should be expected to directly enter their reports into their mobile data terminals and the direct entry function should be discontinued.

Please note that at recommended staffing levels the cross-trained expeditor staff should have ample capacity to perform other duties currently performed by direct entry staff that are not directly related to typing reports.<sup>10</sup> At recommended staffing levels 15.3 hours of expeditor time will be available to perform other duties on the first watch, 9.9 hours will be available on the second watch, and 16.0 hours will be available on the third watch.

<sup>10</sup> Such activities include reviewing miscellaneous incident reports for the staff review unit. In addition, sufficient capacity will be available to perform other activities performed by direct entry personnel including completing juvenile arrest reports, making changes to reports, and entering reports for officers who do not have access to a network computer or mobile data terminal and reports that have more than 16 lines of information in the property category.

## DISPATCH

### The Dispatch Unit Staffing Should Be Increased To Ensure Needed Positions Are Filled 24-Hours A Day

The dispatch unit currently lacks sufficient staffing to ensure enough staff is available to cover all required positions 24-hours a day while allowing for vacations, holidays, illness and other excused absences. At present, the 11 dispatch positions must be filled on each shift to cover all required positions.<sup>11</sup> To fill these positions 24 hours a day, 19 staff must be assigned to each shift but at present, the number of dispatch staff employed on the second and third watches falls short of this number.

| Watch  | Staff Required | Relief Factor(a) | Required Staffing | Current Staffing | Staffing Shortfall |
|--------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| First  | 11.00          | 1.75             | 19.25             | 19.00            | (0.25)             |
| Second | 11.00          | 1.75             | 19.25             | 18.00            | (1.25)             |
| Third  | 11.00          | 1.75             | 19.25             | 16.00            | (3.25)             |

In the same way, the number of staff assigned to the service desk is insufficient to ensure required staffing levels are met 24-hours a day while allowing for vacations, holidays, illness and other excused absences.

| Watch  | Staff Required | Relief Factor(a) | Required Staffing | Current Staffing | Staffing Shortfall |
|--------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| First  | 3.00           | 1.75             | 5.25              | 4.00             | (1.25)             |
| Second | 3.00           | 1.75             | 5.25              | 4.00             | (1.25)             |
| Third  | 3.00           | 1.75             | 5.25              | 5.00             | (0.25)             |

To address this issue, 19 dispatchers and five service desk personnel should be assigned to each watch. At this level of staffing a modest amount of overtime will be required to ensure positions are filled 24-hours a day. The department should budget for this overtime in the same way it budgets for the full-time personnel who are assigned to the dispatch unit.

### Dispatch Procedures And Priorities Should Be Aligned With Overall Department Goals And Objectives

At present, dispatchers feel significant pressure to dispatch calls as soon as an officer becomes available no matter how geographically close the officer is to the call. This pressure is understandable given that it currently takes, on average, more than 20 minutes for a call to be dispatched after it has been received. However, this can create a

<sup>11</sup> Unlike the expediter function for which staffing is based on the volume of calls received by time of day, staffing of the dispatch function is determined by the number of consoles and channels that must be covered. These needs do not vary based on the volume of activity – during periods of low activity, for example, it is not practical to have patrol divisions use the same radio channel and have them use different radio channels during periods of peak activity. As a consequence, constant staffing is needed around the clock.

situation where the actual time required for officers to respond to a call increases. It is not uncommon for the first available officer to be sent to a call on the other side of their division even though another officer much closer to the incident is about to become available.

Ensuring dispatch procedures and priorities are aligned with overall department goals and objectives will become even more important as the overall recommendations presented in this report are implemented. Just as the lieutenants and deputy chiefs assigned to patrol operations divisions will need to balance the need for an appropriately fast response to calls with the need to use officers to address crime reduction initiatives, in the same way dispatchers will need guidance on how long a call might be held so that the officer assigned to the beat in which the call occurs might be able to respond. In particular, patrol lieutenants will need to work closely with the dispatchers who dispatch calls in their patrol division to ensure they understand the strategies the division is employing to achieve its objectives and the role dispatchers should play in achieving those objectives.

**Dispatchers Should Be Encouraged To Ride With Officers Whenever Possible**

As part of their initial training dispatchers are required to ride with patrol officers but after this initial training is completed there is no expectation that dispatchers continue to ride with officers. Such ride-alongs are invaluable in improving the quality of dispatch services because they give dispatchers a first-hand understanding of the environment within which officers work. In addition, these ride-alongs will give dispatchers a better understanding of the range of strategies a patrol division is employing to reduce crime, ensure fast response to calls for service, and increase crime solution. Developing a first-hand understanding of these strategies will enable dispatchers to better tailor dispatch services to meet division needs. To this end, an expectation should be established that dispatchers ride with officers at least three times a year.

At the same time, it would be useful for sworn officers to observe dispatch operations from time-to-time. Such observations will be useful in ensuring that the expectations line officers have for dispatchers is reasonable.

**SUMMARY**

**Implementing These Recommendations Will Result In A Net Reduction Of Communications Center Staffing**

As the following table shows, implementing these recommendations will result in a reduction of 14 communication section positions.

| Unit         | Current Staffing | Recommended Staffing | Addition/(Reduction) |
|--------------|------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Expediter    | 15.0             | 27.0                 | 12.0                 |
| Staff Review | 8.0              | 0.0                  | (8.0)                |
| Direct Entry | 24.0             | 0.0                  | (24.0)               |
| Dispatch     | 53.0             | 57.0                 | 4.0                  |
| Service Desk | 13.0             | 15.0                 | 2.0                  |
| Total        | 113.0            | 99.0                 | (14.0)               |

## **D – ALARM UNIT**

### **The Alarm Unit Should Be Relocated To An Area That Allows For Easier Public Access**

The primary functions of the alarm unit – processing alarm permits, issuing citations for illegal alarm system operations, and holding conferences with permit holders – makes access to the public and conference facilities important; Yet the unit's current location lacks either of these features. An analysis of the location of functions should be performed and every effort should be made to relocate the alarm unit to an area that allows for easier public access. Temporarily the unit might share public information/press facilities on the ground floor of the headquarters building and use that area to hold required office conferences. (In an emergency, when the unscheduled use of PIO/press facilities is needed, the Alarm Unit staff could move elsewhere.)

## **E – DETENTION SERVICES**

This section presents recommendations relating to the scope of the detention services unit's operations, its scheduling and workload, its organization, and its staffing.

### **SCOPE**

#### **The Scope Of The Detention Services Unit Should Be Reduced**

The primary responsibility of the Detention Services Unit is to review the arrests of all adult prisoners arrested by members of the Dallas Police Department and to provide an administrative review for probable cause determinations and the issuance of arrest warrants. This is primarily a quality assurance function that in most police departments is assigned to line supervisors. While there may be some merit to having a secondary review (in addition to the review of arrests performed by supervisors) of particularly complicated or high visibility arrests a 100 percent review of all arrests is unnecessary.

The determination of what arrests should be reviewed by the Detention Services Unit and what arrests should be reviewed by supervisors should be based on an assessment of the likelihood a mistake and the associated adverse consequences that would result. An assessment of these factors suggests the following types of arrests should be reviewed by the Detention Services Unit, as well as by the supervisor of the arresting officer: arson; auto theft; burglary, aggravated assault; opium/cocaine derivative; embezzlement; family offenses; forgery/counterfeit; fraud; murder – non-negligent manslaughter; negligent traffic deaths; rape, robbery; sex offense; narcotics and weapons. These arrests account for only 19.8 percent of the total arrests currently reviewed by the detention service unit.

#### **Completing Legal Histories For Every Person Arrested Is Not Necessary**

At present the Detention Services Unit completes a criminal history for every person who is arrested. However, legal histories are only needed for offenses that may be enhanced (that is, for offenses where the legislature has established that a "higher" crime will be charged and/or increased penalties imposed based upon prior convictions.) There are

currently only a small number of Texas offenses that may be enhanced<sup>12</sup> and these offenses account for only approximately 20 percent of the department's arrests. Criminal histories may also be used by the magistrate in setting bail. However, no evidence of this usage was available. Unless such usage can be documented and/or it can be established that there is no reasonable alternative to having this service performed by the Detention Services Unit, a more limited completion of legal histories should be performed. (Before implementing this recommendation discussion should be held with the district attorney about how the legal histories currently completed are used and what the implications of discontinuing providing this information would be.) This would allow the department to reduce the number of office assistants assigned to each shift. One offense assistant per watch should be more than sufficient to handle this workload.

## **SCHEDULING AND WORKLOAD**

### **The Scheduling Of Detention Services Staff Is Not Aligned With Workload**

The scheduling of the sergeants assigned to the Detention Services Unit does not vary significantly by time of day. Indeed, as the following table shows over the course of a week roughly the same number of sergeants will be on duty in the Detention Service Unit on each hour of the day while the arrest activity (measured as a percentage of the total arrest workload) varies considerably.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> These offenses are: boating while intoxicated; cruelty to animals; delivery of drug paraphernalia, driving while license suspended; driving while intoxicated; evading arrest in vehicle; flying while intoxicated; forger/alterer prescription; harassment; prostitution; racing/intoxicated; stalking, theft and violation of protective order.

<sup>13</sup> The volume of arrest activity by time of day was calculated using information from the department's dispatch system. While some arrests processed by the Detention Services Unit appear not to be captured by this system, the information from the dispatch system likely is representative of the overall volume of arrest activity.

| Hour                     | Average Sergeants Assigned | Percent Of Arrest Activity |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Midnight To 1:00 a.m.    | 3.57                       | 8.6%                       |
| 1:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m.   | 3.57                       | 10.2%                      |
| 2:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m.   | 3.57                       | 8.8%                       |
| 3:00 a.m. to 4:00 a.m.   | 3.57                       | 4.9%                       |
| 4:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m.   | 3.57                       | 3.0%                       |
| 5:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.   | 3.57                       | 1.7%                       |
| 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m.   | 3.57                       | 0.8%                       |
| 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.   | 3.57                       | 0.4%                       |
| 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.   | 3.57                       | 0.7%                       |
| 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.  | 3.57                       | 1.3%                       |
| 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. | 3.57                       | 1.7%                       |
| 11:00 a.m. to Noon       | 3.57                       | 2.0%                       |
| Noon to 1:00 p.m.        | 3.57                       | 2.1%                       |
| 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.   | 3.71                       | 2.3%                       |
| 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.   | 3.57                       | 2.9%                       |
| 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.   | 3.57                       | 3.6%                       |
| 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.   | 3.57                       | 4.6%                       |
| 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.   | 3.57                       | 6.1%                       |
| 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.   | 3.57                       | 4.5%                       |
| 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.   | 3.57                       | 4.0%                       |
| 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.   | 3.57                       | 4.5%                       |
| 9:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.  | 3.57                       | 6.2%                       |
| 10:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. | 3.57                       | 7.2%                       |
| 11:00 p.m. to Midnight   | 3.57                       | 7.8%                       |

Moreover, while the number of sergeants assigned by day of week does vary, the days of the week with the most sergeants working are Thursday and Friday while the arrest workload is highest on Friday and Saturday.

| Day Of Week | Average Sergeants Assigned | Percent Of Arrest Activity |
|-------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Sunday      | 3.0                        | 12.8%                      |
| Monday      | 3.3                        | 13.0%                      |
| Tuesday     | 3.4                        | 13.2%                      |
| Wednesday   | 3.7                        | 14.1%                      |
| Thursday    | 4.1                        | 15.0%                      |
| Friday      | 4.2                        | 15.8%                      |
| Saturday    | 3.4                        | 16.1%                      |

The following table summarizes the disparity between the percentage of sergeants assigned to the detention services unit assigned to each watch and the percentage of arrests received over the course of the day. Ideally, staff should be scheduled so the percentage of staff working matches the percentage of daily workload.

| Day Of Week | First Watch |         | Second Watch |         | Third Watch |        |
|-------------|-------------|---------|--------------|---------|-------------|--------|
|             | Staff       | Arrests | Staff        | Arrests | Staff       | Arrest |
| Sunday      | 33.3%       | 58.4%   | 22.2%        | 9.9%    | 44.4%       | 31.7%  |
| Monday      | 30.0%       | 43.1%   | 40.0%        | 12.9%   | 30.0%       | 43.9%  |
| Tuesday     | 36.4%       | 43.6%   | 36.4%        | 15.6%   | 27.3%       | 40.8%  |
| Wednesday   | 36.4%       | 48.0%   | 36.4%        | 13.8%   | 27.3%       | 38.1%  |
| Thursday    | 38.5%       | 51.6%   | 30.8%        | 12.8%   | 30.8%       | 35.6%  |
| Friday      | 27.3%       | 60.8%   | 36.4%        | 9.8%    | 36.4%       | 29.4%  |
| Saturday    | 30.0%       | 67.3%   | 30.0%        | 7.4%    | 40.0%       | 25.4%  |

## The Workload Of Intoxilizer Staff Is Low On The Day And Evening Watches

With the exception of the first watch, the workload of intoxilizer staff is quite low. As the following table shows while intoxilizer staff handle an average of two cases a shift during the first watch, only .2 cases a shift per employee are handled on the second watch (one every five days) and only .7 cases a shift per employee are handled on the third watch.

| Watch  | Activity | Average Employees Working | Workload Per Employee |
|--------|----------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| First  | 10.4     | 5.6                       | 1.8                   |
| Second | 0.3      | 1.6                       | 0.2                   |
| Third  | 2.1      | 3.2                       | 0.7                   |

In addition, because 38 percent of the third watch's intoxilizer workload occurs during the last hour of the shift (from 9:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.) workload on this watch could be reduced substantially if each watch began an hour later. The following table summarizes the workload per employee on each shift if the first watch began at 5:00 a.m., the second watch began at 1:00 p.m. and the third watch began at 9:00 p.m.

| Watch  | Activity | Average Employees Working | Workload Per Employee |
|--------|----------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| First  | 11.0     | 5.6                       | 2.0                   |
| Second | 0.4      | 1.6                       | 0.3                   |
| Third  | 1.3      | 3.2                       | 0.4                   |

This analysis suggests that the intoxilizer workload on the second and third watches is so low that it is not cost-effective to staff this function with dedicated personnel during these shifts.

## ORGANIZATION

### A Lieutenant Is Not Needed On Each Watch To Manage The Detention Services Unit

Given that the Detention Services Unit is staffed primarily with sergeants there is no need for a lieutenant to be assigned to each watch to manage the unit's operations. Instead, one lieutenant should be assigned to oversee the unit's overall operations and should work a flexible schedule to monitor activities on each watch as appropriate.

## STAFFING

### Staffing Of The Detention Services Unit Should Be Substantially Reduced

Reducing the scope of the Detention Services Unit's arrest review responsibilities and eliminating the need for dedicated intoxilizer staff on the second and third watches will result in a sizable reduction in the overall staffing of the detention services unit. One sergeant on each watch should be more than sufficient to review "high risk" cases. However, to ensure this position is filled 365 days a year two sergeants will need to be

assigned to each watch.<sup>14</sup> However, because the expected arrest review workload on the second and third watches will be relatively low these sergeants should also perform the intoxilizer function during these watches. (The shift schedule of the dedicated intoxilizer staff assigned to the first watch should also be changed to start at 9:00 p.m. instead of 10:00 p.m. to increase the number of cases handled by the officers assigned to this watch.) In addition, the staff responsible for completing legal histories should also be trained to conduct intoxilizer tests to ensure adequate capacity if workload on any shift proves to be unexpectedly high. Two of these office assistants should be assigned to each watch to ensure that one position will be filled 365 days a year. In addition, only one lieutenant will be needed to oversee this modified unit.

The following table summarizes the staffing implications of these changes. (As discussed in Chapter X no senior corporals or patrol officers are needed to conduct intoxilizer tests. This activity should be performed exclusively by crime technicians on the first watch.) A total of 18 positions can be discontinued or redeployed when these recommendations have been implemented. Notwithstanding these recommended changes, care should be taken to ensure that Spanish-speaking staff is assigned to each watch.

| Position          | Authorized | Recommended | Increase/<br>(Decrease) |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| Lieutenant        | 3          | 1           | (2)                     |
| Sergeant          | 15         | 6           | (9)                     |
| Senior Corporal   | 3          | --          | (3)                     |
| Police Officer    | 1          | --          | (1)                     |
| Subtotal Sworn    | 22         | 7           | (15)                    |
| Crime Technician  | 9          | 7           | (2)                     |
| Office Assistant  | 7          | 6           | (1)                     |
| Subtotal Civilian | 16         | 13          | (3)                     |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>38</b>  | <b>20</b>   | <b>(18)</b>             |

## F – RECORDS

This section presents two recommendations to improve the open records section of the Records Unit.

### **The Department Should Consider Giving Citizens The Option Of Paying For Open Records Reports By Credit Card**

Under the current system reports are not given or mailed to citizens who request them until payment has been received. This practice, while prudent in terms of ensuring that payment is received for services provided, creates an administrative burden for staff who must match payments (when they are received by mail) with the report that was pulled when the citizen requested it. Moreover, this practice increases the time required for citizens to receive reports that are requested.

<sup>14</sup> 1.75 sergeants need to be assigned on each shift to ensure one position is filled 365 days a year after accounting for regularly scheduled days off, vacations, holidays, illness, court time and other excused absences.

A simple way to avoid this problem would be to give citizens the option of paying for reports using a credit card. If necessary, citizens who choose this option might be charged an additional fee to cover the cost of payments to the credit card companies.

### **The Unit Should Ensure That At Least One Spanish Speaking Person Is Available To Serve Citizens On Each Watch**

At present, the Records Unit employs only one person who is fluent in Spanish. Given that roughly a third of Dallas' population is Hispanic and many of these citizens are recent immigrants who may not speak English, providing effective service requires an ability to communicate with these citizens in Spanish. To ensure this important dimension of customer service is addressed, the department should take steps to ensure that at least one person who is fluent in Spanish is available to serve citizens on each Records Unit watch. One way to meet this need would be to train existing personnel to speak Spanish.

## **G – PROPERTY**

This section presents an observation and recommendation relating to the department's management of property.

### **Limited Storage Capacity At The Department's Centralized Property Storage Facility Are Exacerbated Because Effective Procedures Have Not Been Established To Encourage Officers To Promptly Release Property**

Interviews with Property Unit staff as well as observations at the department's centralized property facility suggest that additional storage capacity may be needed. In particular, the unit is running out of space to store seized weapons and narcotics and the storage areas for this property are not well ventilated. Additional shelving and lockers also appear to be needed within the warehouse. (Unit staff also report that although the HVAC was recently upgraded it does not work well. Facilities are often either too hot or too cold to work comfortably.)

The actual need for additional capacity, however, is difficult to evaluate because much of the property currently stored at the facility might be released, sold, or destroyed if officers authorized its release. At present, officers have little incentive to authorize the release of materials when it is no longer needed and supervisors focus little attention on encouraging them to do so. In addition, the current software system makes the partial release of property associated with a case extremely cumbersome. This problem could be easily addressed by making programming changes.

### **The Department Should Focus Consistent Attention On Ensuring The Timely Release Of Property**

The department should take two key steps to ensure the timely release of property. First, the department should ensure that adequate systems are in place to support the timely release of property. The upgrade to the property inventory management systems (PRIMS) that is currently underway should be greatly beneficial when fully implemented.

Regardless of how effective property management systems are, however, property will not be released in a timely manner unless officers are encouraged to do so. To this end, patrol and investigative sergeants should provide consistent encouragement to officers to release property in a timely manner. In addition, if the current problem is not corrected, one of the factors that should be considered as part of an officer's annual performance appraisal is whether the officer releases property in a timely manner.

**The Adequacy Of The Property Storage Facility Should Be Evaluated After Steps Are Implemented To Ensure The Timely Release Of Property**

After the department has taken steps to ensure that it is not storing more property than necessary it should consider what investments are needed in its storage facilities. Issues of ventilation in storage vaults and the work environment for employees, of course, should be assessed and addressed prior to the completing the overarching assessment of whether additional storage space is needed.

**H – AUTO POUND**

This section discusses issues relating to staffing, security and training at the auto pound.

**STAFFING**

**The Auto Pounds Lacks Sufficient Staffing To Provide A High Level Of Service**

During periods of peak activity the auto pound does not currently provide a high level of service to its customers. Indeed, a survey of wait times conducted by the unit for the week November 7, 2003 to November 13, 2003 reveals that during the second and third watch (daytime and evening hours) total wait times exceed one hour during periods of high activity.

| Watch  | Minutes Spent Waiting In Line | Minutes Spent Waiting For Escorted Transport To Vehicle | Total Time Spent Waiting (Minutes) |
|--------|-------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| First  | 6                             | 6   | 12                                 |
| Second | 46                            | 33  | 79                                 |
| Third  | 34                            | 37  | 71                                 |

In addition, the unit does not provide a prompt response to telephone inquiries. Indeed, during the two week period from May 16, 2004 to May 30, 2004, 49.7 percent of the calls received – an average of 177 per day – were abandoned because the time spent on hold was excessive.

The level of service provided during periods of peak activity relates directly to the number of staff available to serve customers. During the first watch – when ample staffing is available to serve customers – wait times are short even during periods of peak activity. On the second and third watches, by contrast, when demand for services is high, there is simply not enough staff to address the demand for services.

It is worth noting that even though not enough employees are working to reduce customer wait time, overtime expenditures in the unit are high. In fiscal year 2002 – 2003, for example, the unit expended more than \$120,000 on overtime.

**To Improve Services To Customers The Auto Pound Should Discontinue Overnight Customer Service Operations And Increase Staffing On The Other Shifts**

While the information needed to systematically evaluate the workload of the auto pound by shift was not available, discussions with employees and managers strongly suggest that the demand for services during the first watch is dramatically lower than the demand for services during the second and third watches. Given the poor service that is provided on the second and third watches (when demand for service is reportedly greatest) continuing to release vehicles on the first watch (when demand for service is low) is not reasonable and should be discontinued. (The unit will need to continue receiving vehicles during the overnight watch, however.) Unit managers clearly understand this issue and have already made a well reasoned proposal to discontinue customer service operations during the first watch.

To improve services on the second and third watch additional staffing will need to be assigned to these shifts – no amount of reorganization will result in improved service unless staffing levels are increased. The following table summarizes the number of staff (excluding supervisors) currently assigned to each shift and the number expected to report to work each day after taking into account vacations, holidays, illness and other excused absences.

| Position                          | Number Assigned | Average Number Working | General Description Of Duties  |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|--|
| <b>Second Watch</b>               |                 |                        |  |
| Police Officer Or Senior Corporal | 3               | 1.7                    | Oversee work release staff, provide supervision to work release staff, process property from impounded vehicles        |
| Customer Service Representative   | 5               | 2.9                    | Staff cashier windows and telephone information lines and enters days  |
| Auto Pound Attendant              | 7               | 4.0                    | Inventory and impound incoming vehicles and transport customers to vehicle locations.                                  |
| <b>Third Watch</b>                |                 |                        |  |
| Customer Service Representative   | 4               | 2.3                    | Staff cashier windows and telephone information lines and enters days  |
| Auto Pound Attendant              | 7               | 4.0                    | Inventory and impound incoming vehicles and transport customers to vehicle locations.                                  |
| <b>Vehicle Processing(a)</b>      |                 |                        |  |
| Senior Corporal                   | 1               | 0.8                    | Assist with supervision and unit work.   |
| Customer Service Representative   | 2               | 1.6                    | Complete statutory paperwork, prepare and send owner/lien-holder notification letters and prepare for weekly auctions. |
| Auto Pound Attendant              | 3               | 2.4                    | Operate forklifts and provide support for weekly auctions.   |

(a) Operates five days a week for one eight-hour shift.

To improve service the division should ensure that six customer service representatives and five auto pound attendants be on duty. This level of staffing will more than double the number of customer service representatives currently on duty to serve customers and will also double the number of auto pound attendants who escort citizens to their vehicles. (Currently, three auto pound attendants staff fixed check points to inventory and impound incoming vehicles and the remaining staff– 1.0 personnel on average – escort citizens to their cars. With five auto attendants working on each shift, two auto pound attendants – or more than twice the current number – will be available to escort citizens to their vehicles). In addition, one civilian coordinator position should be assigned to oversee work release employees and to provide general support for the unit’s operations on each watch. (As discussed in Chapter X, the entire auto pound operation should be civilianized.)

Taking these steps will reduce the time citizens currently spend waiting in line to be escorted to their vehicles at least in half. During non-peak times, these staff should support the vehicle processing operations. To provide needed additional capacity, and to provide supplemental phone and customer service support during periods of peak activity, one additional customer service representative should be assigned to the vehicle processing unit. (The senior corporal currently assigned to the unit should be converted to a civilian customer service representative.)

The number of staff that should be assigned to each shift is summarized in the following table.

| Position                        | Number Needed | Number After Relief | Number After Rounding(a) |
|---------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Second Watch                    |               |                     |                          |
| Coordinator II                  | 1             | 1.75                | 2                        |
| Customer Service Representative | 6             | 10.50               | 10                       |
| Auto Pound Attendant            | 5             | 8.75                | 9                        |
| Third Watch                     |               |                     |                          |
| Coordinator II                  | 1             | 1.75                | 2                        |
| Customer Service Representative | 6             | 10.50               | 10                       |
| Auto Pound Attendant            | 5             | 8.75                | 9                        |
| Vehicle Processing              |               |                     |                          |
| Customer Service Representative | 4             | 5.00                | 5                        |
| Auto Pound Attendant            | 3             | 3.75                | 4                        |

(a) Overtime should be used to address part-time staffing needs up to .66 FTE.

In addition to these staff four supervisors should be assigned to the second and third watches. This level of staffing is sufficient to ensure that one supervisor is on duty 365 days a year to provide supervision inside and one supervisor is on duty 365 days a year to provide supervision outside. One additional supervisor should be assigned to oversee the vehicle processing operation. A manager position should also be established to oversee the overall operations of the Auto Pound Unit. This manager should be assisted by a coordinator II and a secretary (currently a customer service representative).

## **Implementing These Recommendations Will Result In A Modest Increase In Auto Pound Staffing**

As the following table shows, implementing these recommendations will results in an increase of nine positions in the Auto Pound Unit's staffing.

| Position                        | Authorized | Recommended | Increase/<br>(Decrease) |
|---------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| Lieutenant                      | 1          | --          | (1)                     |
| Sergeant                        | 4          | --          | (4)                     |
| Senior Corporal                 | 3          | --          | (3)                     |
| Police Officer                  | 2          | --          | (2)                     |
| Subtotal Sworn                  | 10         | 0           | (10)                    |
| Manager                         | --         | 1           | 1                       |
| Coordinator II                  | 1          | 5           | 4                       |
| Supervisor                      | 6          | 9           | 3                       |
| Customer Service Representative | 16         | 26          | 10                      |
| Auto Pound Attendant            | 21         | 22          | 1                       |
| Subtotal Civilian               | 44         | 63          | 19                      |
| Total                           | 54         | 63          | 9                       |

## **SECURITY**

### **The Department Should Invest In Improving The Physical Security Of The Auto Pound Facility**

The value of the inventory at the auto pound facility is significant and it is important the facility be secure. To this end, the department should replace the perimeter fence and install a video camera system, enhanced lighting and an alarm system. In addition, if auto pound attendants were provided with uniform jackets it would be easy to distinguish persons who are authorized to be at the auto pound from persons who are not authorized to be there.

Please note that the department has included in its preliminary budget for fiscal year 2004, \$218,552 for security enhancements and general maintenance at the auto pound.

## **TRAINING**

### **Auto Pound Employees Would Benefit From Additional Training**

Other than sworn officers, the employees at the auto pound receive no training. They would benefit from receiving a more extensive orientation to the auto pound and its operations. Such an orientation would give them a better overall understanding of how the entire operation is structured. In addition, employees would benefit from customer relations training. Such training is especially important because many of the citizens who come to the auto pound start out by being upset and angry that their vehicle has been towed. In addition, Spanish language skills are necessary to serve members of the public at this location. Bilingual skill development should be encouraged and rewarded.

## I – FACILITIES

This section discusses three issues to strengthen the operations of the Facilities Unit.

### **The Public Service and Building Security Functions Should Be Strengthened**

The department should consider a number of straightforward steps to strengthen certain responsibilities of this unit. The security staff should be provided with an additional radio so they are able to contact each other when one person is away from the lobby reception desk or security room. The current out-of-date phone/location directory should be updated immediately and maintained on an on-going basis. In addition, care should be taken to inform building security staff assigned to the lobby area of meetings and special events so they can better serve citizens inquiring about such meetings.

In every new construction project there are issues resulting from the difference between theoretical building design and actual building use and operation. Now that the headquarters building has been in use for a time, the location of security cameras should be evaluated and the lobby “reception” counter should be reviewed to ensure it is appropriately secure. In addition, fire and evacuation drills should be planned and staged for every department facility on a regular basis. The external utility access location for remote TV/satellite (press) vans should also be relocated – as presently located it is largely unusable because satellite transmission/reception is blocked.

### **Responsibility For Dallas Police Museum Fund Raising Should Be Assigned To The Planning, Budget And Accountability Unit**

At present, a police museum coordinator assigned to the facilities unit is charged with raising funds to support the proposed Dallas Police Museum despite the fact that this person has no background and very little experience in development and fund raising. Since, in the recommended organizational structure, the Planning, Budget and Accountability unit will have a dedicated unit responsible for coordinating the pursuit of grants and for fund raising, responsibility for raising funds for the Dallas Police Museum should be assigned to this unit and the police museum coordinator should be reassigned. The level of effort devoted to museum fund raising, however, should reflect the overall priority the department places on this activity. The department might also consider contracting with a professional in nonprofit museum development/management to coordinate museum related fund-raising efforts.