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CITY OF SACRAMENTO

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May 27, 1988

Budget and Finance Committee
Sacramento, California

Honorable Members in Session:

SUBJECT: REPORT BACK - RESPONSE TIME AND DEPARTMENT GOALS

SUMMARY

Response time is directly affected by unit availability which is determined in large part by officer staffing. Unit availability is affected by many variables, including staffing levels, the volume of calls for service, the nature of the calls received, the changing demographics of the City, and even the weather and time of day. Increasing unit availability decreases response time.

The goals of the Police Department are the prevention of crime, apprehension of offenders, recovery and return of stolen property and maintenance of social order. The Department attempts to meet these goals by efficient utilization of City resources committed to the law enforcement mission.

BACKGROUND

Response Time

Response time is defined as the time that elapses between the receipt of a call for service and the arrival of a police unit on the scene. Response time is composed of two distinct segments:

1. Dispatch Delay: The time which elapses between the receipt of a call and its dispatch to an available unit.

The level of police officer staffing, which determines unit availability, is one of many variables which affect response time. Staffing levels, the volume of calls for police services, the nature of the calls received, the changing demographics of the City, and even the weather, are interrelated factors which combine to determine unit availability, the primary variable of response time. Over the last ten years, calls for service have increased 45%, the City's population has risen 25%, but sworn staff has increased only 16%. With the seven officers to be added in the 88-89 budget year, the Department will retain its current ratio of 1.7 officers per thousand population. The Department's goal is to staff at 2.0 sworn officers per thousand population.

Police Department Goals

The goals of the Sacramento Police Department are to sustain a high quality of life in Sacramento through prevention of crime, apprehension of offenders, recovery and return of stolen property and the maintenance of social order. These goals have been distributed to department managers to serve as a guide in utilizing the resources the City has committed to law enforcement. Each of the goals is multi-faceted and inter-dependent on the others. A prime example is the most critical crime problem in the City, narcotics and gang activity. The Department's efforts to combat this problem encompass each of the goals. Special programs have been developed to focus on the problem, ie. the drug grant, the gang grant, the Street Drug teams, Tactical Units assigned on overtime, anti-drug education program in elementary schools, and liaison with community groups that have formed to combat drug use and related crime problems.

Anytime the Police Department receives new resources, priorities are considered and the resources are directed to those areas which further the Department's goals. For instance, the decision to open the South area substation was in response to a practical need to provide additional space and to improve law enforcement services. Even with this anticipated expansion, the space needs of the Police Department have not been met. The Public Safety Administration building and opening of the two substations will ultimately solve the problems, but not for many years. More immediate solutions lie in the opening of the two substations and in obtaining warehouse space to relieve the Property Room storage dilemma we are experiencing now.

The Property Room is used to store evidence, found property, Police safety equipment, etc. It is filled to capacity, as is the warehouse being leased from Southern Pacific at 501 I Street. The Police Department has exhausted all remedies to this problem, with the exception of a costly remodeling of the Southern Pacific lease building. This is not a preferred solution since it will only temporarily fix the space problem and the lease is on a month-to-month basis, not long term. A different site has been located that will solve the space needs of the Property Room until the new Public Administration building is constructed. A warehouse that will provide 30,000 square feet of storage space for a Police Property Room is available off Richards Boulevard.

The space needs problems are an example of the stumbling blocks in reaching the Police Department's goals. Adequate staffing, both sworn and non-sworn, is


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imperative to success. The Police Department has reviewed staffing requirements and identified areas needing augmentation. Special programs have been implemented to make the most effective use of available personnel.


RECOMMENDATIONS

None. This information is offered in response to requests by Council committee.

Respectfully submitted,


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APPROVED FOR COMMITTEE INFORMATION:


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ALL DISTRICTS