

# Public Safety Communications

1 Union Avenue  
203-946-6321 / 9-1-1

<b>Acting Department Head:</b> George Peet, Deputy Director 203-627-3064	<b>Positions:</b> <b>GF- 57</b> <b>SF- 20</b>
	<b>General Fund Budget:</b> \$ 3,336,240
	<b>Capital Fund Budget:</b> \$0
	<b>Special fund Budget:</b> \$2,039,623

## Legal Authority: Code of Ordinances

[Sec. 2-278 to Sec. 2-281](#) The department of public safety communications is hereby established as a functional unit of city government and said department shall be under the charge of a department head appointed by the mayor. The department head shall report to the chief administrative officer who also has oversight of the police and fire departments.

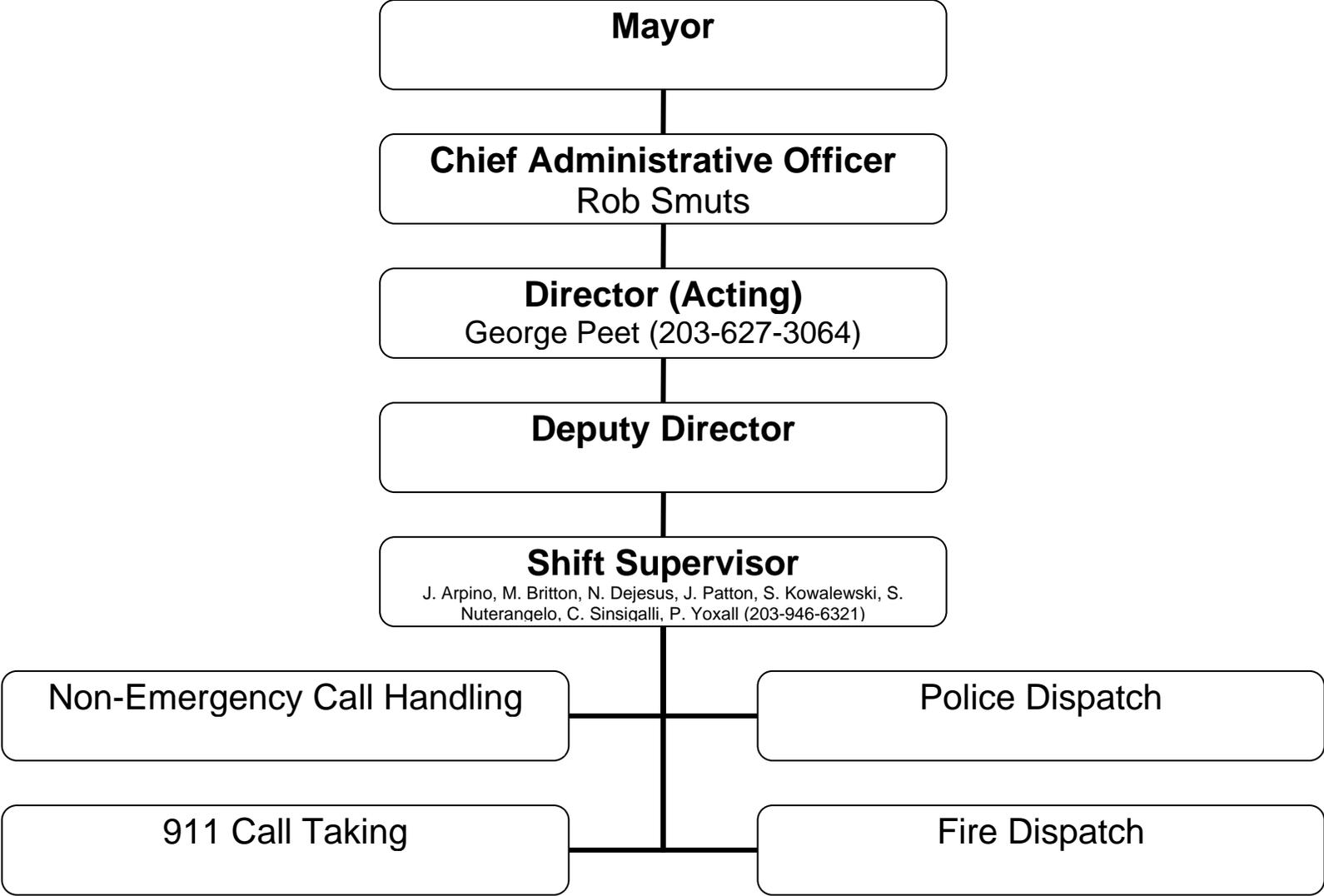
## Mission/Overview:

The mission of the Department of Public Safety Communications is to perform the following functions:

- Handle all 9-1-1 calls for Fire, Police and Emergency Medical Response.
- Dispatch Fire, Police and EMS services as appropriate.
- Coordinate emergency communication matters with Fire and Police Departments and Emergency Management Staff.
- Maintain appropriate and required records pertaining to all 911 calls and city emergency responses.
- Manage State and Federal funds received for operational and/or capital purposes.

## **Attention Required by March 31st:**

- Quarterly report due to Division of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications (DSET)
- Budget submission
- Cmed – An exact timeline has not been set, but the City of New Haven will be switching to a new service provider within the next several months
- Transition to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG 9-1-1). An exact timeline has not been set but the City of New Haven is expected to begin phasing in NG 9-1-1 in January of 2014. As this is a major change to an essential City service it will be important to update City leadership throughout the transition.



Total non-supervisory staff: 46

## Budget Summary:

- General Fund
  - Salaries - \$2,984,080
    - All staff annual base salary
    - Managers - \$159,105
    - Supervisors - \$492,288
    - Operators - \$2,332,687
  - Overtime - \$265,000
    - Overtime is paid when an employee works beyond their normal shift or on a regular day off – 24/7 emergency dispatch center must maintain minimum staffing
  - Pay Differential - \$48,500
    - Pay differential is paid to employees who work 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> shifts
  - Telephone - \$78,000
    - Funding for all telecommunications related expenses (e.g. cell phones, landlines, circuits, etc)
  - Other Contractual Services - \$8,000
    - Funding for contractually obligated services (e.g. dispatcher uniforms)
- Special Fund (9-1-1 Telecommunications Fund)
  - Salaries - \$30,000
    - Part-time dispatcher salaries
  - Salaries – OT - \$300,000
    - Funds used for reimbursing General Fund overtime
  - Telephone - \$5,000
    - Funding for costs related to repairs and maintenance of 9-1-1 system
  - Mileage - \$2,000
    - Reimbursement for mileage
  - Professional Meetings - \$6,000
    - Conferences and training seminars
  - Equipment - \$80,460.08
    - Computers, furniture, dispatch protocols, etc
  - Communications Equipment - \$50,000
    - Radio related expenses
  - General Office Supply - \$12,000
    - Misc office supplies
  - Training - \$20,000
    - Funding for required certifications
  - Other contractual Services - \$100,000
    - Maintenance agreements
  - FICA/Medicare - \$2,000
    - Part time dispatchers
  - Workman's Compensation - \$400
    - Part time dispatchers

**9-1-1 Telecommunications Fund overview**

Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) serving populations in excess of forty thousand receive a state subsidy based on the following variables: population, percent above the state median number of 9-1-1 calls received, and the average growth rate of the Consumer Price Index. Funds are used exclusively for the purpose of providing emergency telecommunications services.

## Summary of Open Items:

**Cross train staff to perform each job function.** Job functions include: non-emergency call taker, 9-1-1 call taker, fire dispatcher, police dispatcher. To date the project is approximately 50% complete. The most challenging obstacle to completing this project is the length of time it takes to fully train a police and fire dispatcher; on average 3 months per employee per job function (a total of 6 months per employee for both job functions). Additionally, employees must be removed from their current schedule in order to cross-train therefore overtime expenses are incurred while employees cross-train. In effort to keep overtime expenses from exceeding the budget the amount of employees cross-training is generally kept to a minimum. Cross training has many advantages including lowering overtime costs, reducing mandatory holdovers, increasing scheduling efficiency, improving dispatch operations, and increasing morale.

**Next generation 9-1-1 system (NG9-1-1).** The City of New Haven in conjunction with the State of Connecticut is scheduled to begin implementation of a NG9-1-1 system in early 2014. The NG9-1-1 system will be Internet Protocol (IP) based, and will utilize the State of Connecticut Public System Data Network for call delivery and employ state of the art software and hardware. It will also provide an infrastructure to allow text to 9-1-1, the ability to send images/video with a 9-1-1 call, and to call 9-1-1 directly via the internet when telecommunication service carriers make these features available to the public.

**Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) Software.** An upgrade of CAD software is scheduled for 2014. CAD software is one of the most critical tools in use in this department. CAD allows call takers and dispatchers to manage the City's public safety resources effectively and efficiently. The scheduled software upgrade will be the most significant upgrade to the existing system since it was originally implemented in 1994.

**Security alarm monitoring for the Board of Education.** The department is working with the Board of Education to replace their current security alarm monitoring vendor Sonitrol. This will greatly reduce the Board of Education's costs for security monitoring of all City schools.

**Regionalization.** The City of New Haven recognizes the benefits of PSAP regionalization and is actively seeking PSAPs in New Haven County to merge with. Currently talks with West Haven have been most promising. The State of CT recently conducted a PSAP regionalization feasibility study which presented two PSAP configuration recommendations: (1) The optimum model consists of four PSAPs including three regional PSAPs located in the northwest, southwest, and eastern areas of the state plus one statewide PSAP operated by the Connecticut State Police. This model would provide the most equitable and efficient use of resources statewide. (2) The second configuration would be based on existing Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) regions. While not as effective operationally or financially as the first configuration, this model would provide substantial improvements from current conditions and it may be more politically

acceptable. The City of New Haven has identified and recently secured a location, the former army base on Wintergreen Ave, which could house multiple PSAPs.

**Cmed.** The City of New Haven has been objecting to the annual cost of Cmed (\$326,600) for several years as the costs to the City are far greater than annual Cmed costs to New Haven's peer Cities Bridgeport (\$127,280.14) and Hartford (\$83,136.58). An ultimatum has been given to Cmed: if a cost reduction plan is not produced by October 2013 New Haven will replace Cmed with an agency that can provide similar services at a reduced cost. The City of New Haven has identified American Medical Response (AMR) as a replacement. AMR has indicated they can provide almost identical service for a significantly lower cost to the City.

## **Major Functions/Projects:**

The Department of Public Safety Communications, or Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), core responsibilities are as follows:

**The in-take and processing of 9-1-1 calls placed within the City.** 9-1-1 calls are processed by operators (call takers) who triage/prioritize then provide pre-arrival instructions (e.g. CPR, choking, childbirth, etc.) to each caller using a specially designed protocol. Calls are entered, by the operators into the Computer Aided Dispatch system and automatically routed to the appropriate dispatcher, either police, fire, or emergency medical services (EMS). Once a call is routed the respective dispatcher will then assign and dispatch appropriate resources to the call's location. The dispatcher will then track all responding resources and coordinate additional requests or special needs requests made by responders. Dispatchers also provide a vital safety link to first responders who are often placed at great risk when responding to emergencies. In 2012 the department processed 135,919 9-1-1 calls.

- New NG 9-1-1 System scheduled to be implemented in 2014

**The processing of calls placed to the City's non-emergency police number.** Using the same protocol and CAD system as 9-1-1 call takers, calls to the City's non-emergency police number are handled in a similar fashion as 9-1-1 calls, however, are generally lower in priority. Examples of common calls processed on this line include but are not limited to noise complains, parking complaints, vandalism, identity theft, missing persons, illegal drug activity, suspicious persons/vehicles, burglaries, illegal dumping, and domestic disturbances. In 2012 the department processed 218,420 non-emergency calls.

- A process has been identified to revise current practice for City towing which would greatly reduce call volume to the non-emergency number from April 1<sup>st</sup> – October 31<sup>st</sup> of each year.

**Monitoring fire alarm systems for many of the City's buildings such as all City owned schools, libraries, City Hall, and the Hall of Records.** When an alarm is triggered an electronic signal is sent via telephone line directly to a computer monitored by fire dispatchers who then immediately dispatch appropriate resources.

- Currently working with the Board of Education to eliminate the need for a third party to monitor school security alarms. Once implemented department staff will monitor security alarms which will significantly lower costs to the Board of Education.

**Maintaining appropriate and required records pertaining to all 911 calls and city emergency responses.** The department digitally records all calls, both 9-1-1 and non-emergency, along with all radio transmissions placed to and from the communications center. All recordings are initially recorded to a computer hard drive then archived onto recordable DVDs and kept indefinitely.

**Manage State and Federal funds received for operational and/or capital purposes.** The department works closely with the Division of Statewide Emergency

Telecommunications to appropriately use the 9-1-1 Telecommunications Fund which is comprised surcharges levied on all phones lines (both mobile and landline). The funding is determined by Connecticut General Statutes Emergency Telecommunications, Chapter 518a, Section 28-24 through 28-30a.

**Emergency Operations Center (EOC) coverage.** When the EOC is activated the Department of Public Safety Communications is responsible for sending a representative, at minimum supervisor level, as well as staffing telephones with operators. The operator staffing level is determined by the CAO.

**Notifications.** The department is responsible for notifying all necessary fire, police, and administrative staff of major City incidents and high-profile events. Notifications are made via email and by the City's mass notification system (Everbridge).

**Quality Assurance.** The department randomly audits calls placed to 9-1-1 and to the City's non-emergency number. Calls are audited by supervisors and scored based on customer service and adherence to call intake protocols. Employees who processed calls with major deviations to protocol are discipline and re-trained while employees who had minor deviations are met with re-training only.

## **Key Systems/Processes:**

**Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system.** The CAD system is one of the most critical tools in this department. CAD allows call takers and dispatchers to manage the City's public safety resources effectively and efficiently. It also serves as a tracking and reporting mechanism for all police, fire, and ambulance responses. As mentioned earlier an upgrade of CAD software is scheduled for 2014.

**Verint recording system.** This system records all inbound and outbound calls placed to and from the department. The system also records all radio transmissions on all fire and police department frequencies. Recordings are kept indefinitely.

**Telestaff.** Automated workforce management system responsible for scheduling of all department staff.

**Enhanced 9-1-1 system.** E9-1-1 service delivers 9-1-1 calls to Connecticut's 104 public safety answering points (PSAPs), including New Haven, via an SS7/ISDN network and provides automatic location information (ALI) with a display of the name, address and telephone number of the originating telephone. E9-1-1 has been serving New Haven, as well as all of Connecticut, from 1990 to present. The current system's hardware and software is provided and maintained by AT&T has been in use since 2000. As mentioned earlier the City in conjunction with the State of CT will be implemented NG 9-1-1 in 2014.

**Radio network.** Police operate on three 400mhz radio frequencies and fire operate on two 800mhz frequencies. All radio equipment is maintained by Utility Communications.

**PowerPhone Total Response System.** Protocols that provide incident-specific lines of questioning and pre-arrival instructions for all emergency calls received via 9-1-1. Allows call takers to quickly and efficiently find the right line of questioning based on information gathered and helps streamline the call handling process. Also helps maintain a consistent department-wide standard of care and public safety. In 2014 the department will be upgrading from paper tablets to a computerized version.

## **System Deficiencies/Attention Required:**

**Street sweeping.** From April 1<sup>st</sup> through October 30<sup>th</sup> performs street sweeping. Depending on the location, there are several ways each street gets an optimal cleaning. The “Tag and Tow” routes are in the neighborhoods where residents must move their cars on the designated street sweeping day or their cars will be ticketed and towed. Once a vehicle is ticketed, towed and delivered to a storage lot the vehicle’s information is sent to the public safety dispatch center via fax; the fax is sent by the respective tow company. Upon receipt of the fax the center’s staff then will enter the vehicle information into the City’s computer system (CAD) and also perform a check using the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database to ensure the vehicle and/or license plates are not stolen or misused.

When a citizen realizes their vehicle is missing they locate the vehicle by either dialing 9-1-1 (this generally occurs when the citizen believes the car to be stolen) or by the department’s non-emergency number 203-946-6316.

Citizens often call while vehicles are being towed to storage lots. During this time the center’s staff is forced to tell citizens to call back at a later time (often 30 minutes is given) as staff are unaware of the vehicle’s status. During street sweeping, leaf and snow removal the center often becomes inundated with such calls as these events occur during the center’s peak hours. The current tow process results in increased labor and overtime costs as additional staff are required to handle the increased telephone volume. Additionally, this results in poor service to citizens who are forced to wait for an excessive amount of time while their car is located.

A proposal to resolve this is as follows: A process to help streamline this laborious task has been identified where the vehicle’s information would be relayed to the dispatch center prior to the vehicle being towed. This process would require all tow companies to equip tow truck drivers with an internet capable device with a digital camera. The tow truck driver would also be required to transmit the vehicle’s information prior to relocating the vehicle. The tow truck driver would enter the following information which would be transmitted to the center in real-time:

Make, model, style (2 door, 4 door, hatchback), color, plate, and vehicle identification number (VIN).

**Department location.** The physical location of the department is less than ideal. Given the critical nature of work performed any disruptions in department operations could have dire consequences on the City. The department is located on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of 1 Union Ave (New Haven Police Department). The area is prone to flooding and is across the street from Union Station. Should a train carrying hazardous materials become compromised the department would most likely have to be evacuated. The east wall of the department faces New Haven Harbor along with the Northeast Heating Oil Reserve, a component of the country’s Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Due to this, the department is exposed to harbor and petroleum related incidents as well as severe weather related events (the east wall of the department is largely comprised of non-hurricane rated windows).

**Information technology (IT) support.** Currently 24/7 technology support is not provided in the City of New Haven. This department relies heavily on technology and operates 24/7 therefore 24/7 support is needed.