



CITY OF DUNWOODY

41 Perimeter Center East, Suite 250
Dunwoody, GA 30346
Phone: 678.382.6700 • Fax: 678.382.6701
www.dunwoodyga.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Warren Hutmacher, City Manager
Date: April 12, 2010
Subject: **Enhanced 911 Emergency Communications Service Provision Update**

ITEM DESCRIPTION

In late 2009, the City Manager formed an E-911 working group to conduct due diligence and develop alternatives for enhanced 911 emergency communication services. The group consists of the City Manager, the Police Chief, the IT Director and the Assistant to the City Manager. The group also includes Jim Gaddis, a citizen volunteer who was on the Citizens Task Force for 911 services. This memorandum requires no action and is an update on the progress of the E-911 working group.

BACKGROUND

Dunwoody currently has an intergovernmental agreement in place with DeKalb County for E-911 services. The agreement has a six month termination notice requirement and the County collects all the 911 service charge from both wired and wireless phone lines in the City of Dunwoody as payment for these services.

DeKalb County does not have any dedicated dispatchers or call-takers for the Dunwoody Police Department. Dunwoody has not been provided with a dedicated radio channel. Dunwoody calls for service are not given any priority over other emergency calls within North Precinct. When priority calls occur elsewhere in the precinct, Dunwoody calls are delayed.

The City Manager has requested a dedicated radio channel and dedicated dispatch staff for Dunwoody. These requests have been rejected.

E-911 service is the most important link in the public safety arena. If a call for service is not answered quickly and dispatched promptly it will not matter how many police officers or firefighters are in service. If our Police Officers cannot get the call quickly dispatched to them, then they cannot respond as quickly as our citizens deserve. This is a life and death issue for our citizens.

Without a dedicated dispatcher and radio channel, call answering and dispatching times suffer. Additionally, the Police Department has experienced problems over the past year with citizens complaining about being put on hold or waiting too long to have dispatchers send our Police Department on calls for service.

EVALUATION



CITY OF DUNWOODY

41 Perimeter Center East, Suite 250

Dunwoody, GA 30346

Phone: 678.382.6700 • Fax: 678.382.6701

www.dunwoodyga.gov

The E-911 working group has performed the following tasks in evaluating our service needs and alternatives:

1. Performed a detailed assessment of Dunwoody Police Department call volume.
2. Developed a conservative revenue estimate of E-911 service charges received within the City of Dunwoody from wired and wireless phone customers.
3. Studied carefully all state and federal requirements for expending E-911 service charge revenue
4. Toured ChatComm 911 center, the City of Chamblee 911 center and the City of Kennesaw 911 center.
5. Studied the reports from the Citizen Task force on 911 services.
6. Developed multiple expense model budgets for the operation of a Dunwoody 911 center.

ALTERNATIVES UNDER REVIEW

1. Direct Service Provision

Form a new 911 center in Dunwoody to provide 911 services directly to the Dunwoody Police Department

Benefits:

- Performance standards – answer 90% of all calls within ten seconds and dispatch 90% of all calls within sixty seconds
- Managerial control – highest degree of control

Challenges:

- Potential need to supplement 911 center from the General Fund, done by a majority of centers
- Managerial strain to balance current duties with standing up a new 911 center
- Aggressive schedule to meet planned “go live” date of January 1, 2011

2. Direct Service Provision with Chamblee as a Subscriber

Form a new 911 center in Dunwoody to provide 911 services directly to the Dunwoody Police Department and the Chamblee Police Department while contracting with Chamblee for the short term housing of prisoners

Benefits:

- Performance standards – answer 90% of all calls within ten seconds and dispatch 90% of all calls within sixty seconds
- Managerial control – highest degree of control
- Additional technical advisors including Chamblee Police Department administration
- Built-in capacity to handle Chamblee call volume, additional call-taker/dispatchers, if needed, would be covered by Chamblee 911 service fees
- Chamblee detention facility could house prisoners - reducing transport time

Challenges:

- Potential need to supplement 911 center from the General Fund, done by a majority of centers
- Managerial strain to balance current duties with standing up a new 911 center
- Aggressive schedule to meet planned “go live” date of January 1, 2011



CITY OF DUNWOODY

41 Perimeter Center East, Suite 250

Dunwoody, GA 30346

Phone: 678.382.6700 • Fax: 678.382.6701

www.dunwoodyga.gov

3. Purchasing Service from ChatComm

Purchase 911 services from ChatComm as a subscriber while remaining on DeKalb County's digital radio system

Benefits:

- Performance standards – answer 90% of all calls within ten seconds and dispatch 90% of all calls within sixty seconds
- No startup capital investment
- No regular supplements from the General Fund
- Continued pursuit and control of situation over border, particularly in the Perimeter Center area
- Strengthens established partnership of the North Metro SWAT Team
- Managerial involvement as part of the Technical Advisory Committees

Challenges:

- Failing analog radio system, timeline on a transition to a digital system remains uncertain
- ChatComm first year revenues are now projected at \$2.3 million less than expected; Sandy Springs and Johns Creek both contributing from the General Fund
- Less managerial control

4. Delaying Transition from DeKalb County 911

Remain with DeKalb County until such time the Fulton County radio system transition from analog to digital is complete allowing a transition to ChatComm while remaining on a digital radio system

Benefits:

- Transition date of January 1, 2011 can be delayed
- Benefits of purchasing ChatComm service with added benefit of seamless radio transmission

Challenges:

- Lack of performance standards
- No dedicated dispatcher staff or dedicated call-takers
- No dedicated radio channel

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Council authorize staff to proceed with preliminary negotiations with both ChatComm (as a subscriber) and the City of Chamblee (direct provision with Chamblee as subscriber) and present additional information at the May work session with the goal of moving to an alternative service delivery model by January 1, 2011.