

MEMORANDUM

May 13, 2010

TO: County Council

FROM: Linda McMillan, Senior Legislative Analyst 

SUBJECT: **FY11 Operating Budget: Consolidation of M-NCPPC Park Police and Montgomery County Police Department Functions, including Communications**

Summary of Council Actions on May 10th:

At the May 10th session, the Council reviewed the budgets for the Montgomery County Police Department and the M-NCPPC Park Police. The Council:

- Agreed with the revised Public Safety Committee recommendation to fund a class of 36 Montgomery County Police Department recruits in July 2010 (FY11) and eliminate the January 2011 (FY11) recruit class. (The memo provided to the Council for the May 10th session reflected the Public Safety Committee's May 3rd recommendation to fund a class of 40 Montgomery County Police Department recruits.) The additional 6 recruits cost \$278,100. The Executive's March 15th budget included \$1,390,500 for the January 2011 recruit class. The Council's action last Monday reduces the Executive's March 15th allocation by \$1,112,400.
- Placed \$126,920 on the reconciliation list for Montgomery County Police Department satellite facilities.
- Placed \$81,900 to the reconciliation list for M-NCPPC Parks Department to restore the proposed reductions to the current deer management program.
- Placed \$804,600 on the reconciliation list in three increments of \$268,200 each to restore funding for 18 filled Park Police Officer positions that are proposed to be abolished to meet the Executive's March 15th allocation. The loss of 18 Officers would be a 25% reduction in the number of Officers available.

Officers will be able to support County Police Officers in responding to calls. The memo notes the legal issues regarding Article 28 but also notes that MOUs could be used to move this transition forward. The memo says that the consolidation does not assume any savings from the layoff, demotion or a reduction in pay to any Park Police Officer.

- \$98,000 is unallocated and unspecified but is expected to come from reducing other duplicative services such as background investigations, crime analysis, and fleet management.

Issues for Council Discussion/Action

1. Council Policy Regarding Consolidation of Communications/Dispatch

The consolidation of County Police and Park Police communications and dispatching has been discussed sporadically for many years. Currently, Park Police and County Police have separate computer-aided-dispatch (CAD) systems. Consolidation was discussed when the County moved to the 800 MHz radio system but was not pursued. Most recently, the PS and MFP Committees have discussed consolidation both in the purchasing of replacement radios and mobile computers and in planning for a new CAD that is part of the Public Safety Modernization project.

There are two main options to consolidate dispatch:

1. The County E911 Center would receive all Park Police calls-for-service and would dispatch them on a county-wide channel that would be assigned to and monitored by Park Police. This method brings Park Police onto the county radio system and would capture Park Police data through the County CAD. It requires an additional dispatch post be established as County Police patrol functions are dispatched on one of the channels assigned to the six County Police Districts. Council staff's experience is that this is the proposal that has been discussed in the past. It was expected that there would be savings from moving to a common CAD and standardizing equipment and purchasing. It also ensured interoperability of communications equipment.
2. The County E911 Center would receive all Park Police calls-for-service and would dispatch them based on the County Police District the park property is located in. For example, a call for service for Wheaton Regional Park would be dispatched by the employee dispatching calls to Officers in the 4th Police District (Wheaton/Glenmont). This method does not require an additional dispatch post as all calls would be handled through the current County Police dispatch system. This is the consolidation proposed by the Executive as it produces personnel savings since the Park Police will not have a separate dispatch or a channel.

Council staff comments:

- **With careful planning, transition, and testing either one of these options for common dispatch can be implemented.**

- The only way to eventually achieve the savings in personnel assumed by the County Executive is to implement option 2 which uses the County's existing dispatch channels.
- **Implementing option 2 will require the Park Police to make substantial operational changes.** Park Police will have to re-align their patrol beats to match the six County Police Districts and use the County Police call codes. Park Police will have to restructure supervision as supervisors, who currently can monitor county-wide activity, may not be able to appropriately monitor separate channels, especially if they are out of their cars pro-actively patrolling parkland.
- This consolidation is different from the agreements the county has with Rockville and Gaithersburg to dispatch calls-for-services as each of these municipalities is contained in a single County Police District.
- Protocols will have to be put in place regarding the dispatch of calls related to the enforcement of park rules (such as permits) to ensure they are given appropriate priority.
- Currently, Park Police communications staff handle a wide variety of calls to the Parks, such as maintenance and building security calls. A transition plan must identify how these duties will be handled with a reduced number of Park Department staff (assuming 9 positions are transferred or abolished.)
- If this transition results in a RIF for any M-NCPPC employee, the RIF procedure and timing is different than it is for County Government. County Government's process has begun. M-NCPPC's could not be completed by September.
- **Council staff believes that there is merit to working to transition to option 2, particularly as the Council will be looking to minimize costs when the CAD is upgraded/replaced.**
- **Council staff does not believe that this transition to common dispatch can occur by September.** Such as transition should not be rushed and must provide for a test period, just as there was substantial planning and testing when implementing the new radio system. Communications is critical to officer safety.

Council staff recommends that the Council give clear policy direction as to whether the consolidation of communications is expected to result in the use of a common radio system, common CAD, the current County Police dispatch configuration, and a reduction in overall communications staffing (option 2 for consolidation). (The draft budget provision language on pages 6-7 of this memo presumes this is the Council's intent. It will need to be amended if the Council does not move in this direction.)

2. Assignment of Expected Savings and Budget Impacts

As previously noted, the Executive expects:

- \$ 511,940 in savings in Park Police
- \$1,390,500 in savings in County Police
- \$ 98,000 in savings not assigned.

Whether or not these savings can be achieved in FY11 based on consolidation of Park Police and County Police functions, the \$2 million must be accounted for either through expenditure reductions or revenue increases somewhere in the aggregate operating budget. **Council staff continues to recommend that the savings be assigned to M-NCPPC Park Police and County Police with the knowledge that they may come out of the bottom lines of each of these departments.**

Council staff recommendations:

Park Police

- Do not assume that the specified position savings can be fully achieved in FY11.
- Reduce M-NCPPC by \$511,940.
- Place this amount on the reconciliation list in two increments of \$255,970 each and determine if one or both portions can be restored as the staffing changes will not occur by September.
- Recognize that if these amounts cannot be restored, M-NCPPC will have to identify additional reductions in the Parks Department. Council staff recommends that as an immediate action, any amount not restored be budgeted as an increase in lapse in the Parks Department.

County Police

- Assign \$1,488,500 in savings from this proposal to the County Police Department (\$1,390,500+98,000)
- Assume no January recruit class (The Executive has assumed no January recruit class for a savings of \$1.39 million. The PS Committee recommendation agreed to by the Council assumes no January class but a larger July class for a savings of \$1,112,400)
- Place \$98,000 on the reconciliation list to restore the savings that is not specifically identified.
- Place \$278,100 on the reconciliation list to restore to the overall Police Department budget the difference in assumed savings because of the larger July 2010 recruit class.
- Recognize that if these amounts cannot be restored, the Police Department will have to find other savings throughout the year to offset the reduction. Council staff suggests as an immediate action, the \$98,000 be budgeted as a reduction to miscellaneous operating expenses and the \$278,100 as increased lapse.
- The Council agreed there should be a July 2010 recruit class of 36. Council staff recommends a provision be included in the budget resolution that lapse savings may not be obtained by reducing the July 2010 recruit class from the 36 funded by the Council.

3. Draft Budget Provision

Council staff is providing the following draft budget provision. Based on a meeting (requested by Council staff) of representatives from the County Police, Park Police, OMB, and Council staff, Council staff has drafted this language to focus first on consolidation of communications. Council staff recommends that, because there are substantial operational

changes for Park Police, the Council require a progress report by September 15th but not impose a timeline for the consolidation. The consolidation can begin at any time.

COUNCIL DRAFT LANGUAGE:

The current economic crisis has made it imperative that Montgomery County find ways to restructure the delivery of services in order to eliminate duplication and reduce future costs. The County Council believes that there may be long-term cost savings and operational efficiencies from consolidating the law enforcement and related support functions of the Montgomery County Division of the M-NCPPC Park Police and the Montgomery County Police Department. Any restructuring of these agencies must continue to provide residents and visitors with a safe park system.

The Montgomery County Police Department and the M-NCPPC Park Police dispatch calls-for-service by separate systems. Consolidation of communications, including call-taking, dispatch, and related reporting and records management systems has the potential to reduce long-term personnel and operating costs and ensure interoperability. Consolidating communications will have operational impacts on both the Park Police and the County Police and must be achieved through careful planning that includes adequate testing. Consolidation of communications should be the first effort undertaken in the longer term effort to consolidate law enforcement functions.

The Council requests that by July 1, 2010, the County Executive and the Montgomery County Department of Parks convene a work group with representatives from the Parks Department, Montgomery County Police Department, Office of Management and Budget, and County Council staff to develop a transition plan for the consolidation of call-taking, dispatch, and related records management functions. The consolidation of communications is expected to result in the use of a common radio system, common Computer Aided Dispatch System, the County Police dispatch configuration, and a reduction in the number of overall communications positions. The Council recognizes that this will require operational changes for the Park Police including a reconfiguration of patrol beats and supervision. As a condition of spending funds appropriated in this resolution, the work group must provide the Council with a progress report by September 15, 2010. The Executive and the Department of Parks may begin to implement this consolidation prior to the progress report. The progress report should include:

- A summary of the current process for call-taking, dispatch, and related records management functions and how they have been reassigned.
- A summary of Park Police and County Police operational changes needed for consolidation.
- A summary of how other duties currently handled by Parks Department communications staff will be reassigned under a consolidated model.
- A proposed timeline for consolidation.
- A summary of estimated short-term and long-term costs and savings.
- Information on whether there is a requirement for a change to State law or whether an inter-agency memorandum of understanding may be used.
- The expected impact on Park Department and County Government employees.

The Council also requests that the County Executive and the Department of Parks work collaboratively to determine how County Police Officers and Park Police Officers can be redeployed to support county-wide public safety needs which include pro-active patrol of parkland. A progress report on these efforts must be provided to the Council by January 15, 2011.

It is not the intent of the Council that any requirements in this provision would prevent M-NCPPC and the Montgomery County Government from entering into any inter-agency memorandum of understanding that is agreeable to both agencies and would result in efficiencies and cost savings from shared services.



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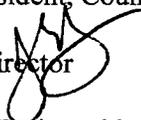
Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Joseph F. Beach
Director

MEMORANDUM

May 3, 2010

TO: Nancy Floreen, President, County Council

FROM: Joseph F. Beach, Director 

SUBJECT: Integration of Park Police with County Police

I want to take this opportunity to clarify the basis for the County Executive's recommendation that we begin the process for integrating the Park Police into the County Police force and to respond to some of the statements made by the Planning Board Chair on this subject.

Purpose

Integrating the operations of the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) Park Police meets the County's need to:

- Optimize government operations in order to improve delivery of key public safety services to County residents.
- Deploy County resources in the most efficient and cost effective manner possible by identifying redundancies and challenging old ways of doing business.

This step demonstrates the commitment of County government to continual improvement of operations in the most cost effective way.

Operations and Service Delivery

The merger of Park Police and County Police will lead to improvements in the following areas:

Interoperability: The use of a single dispatch CAD system will reduce existing communication redundancies and ensure that all public safety officers have access to a unified system. This will allow police forces to better communicate in the event of an emergency that spans both parks and county jurisdictions. Furthermore, improving interoperability will improve officer safety by ensuring that all officers are able to maintain situational awareness during emergency and non-emergency responses.

Response Time: Creation of a combined police force will allow for quicker response times as jurisdictional responsibility will no longer be a factor when fielding service calls. Over 300 parks will

Office of the Director

become a part of the patrol beat surrounding the park. As such, the regular beat officer will cover patrol responsibilities for that park.

Internal Capacity Building: Both Parks and County police have particular expertise specific to their fields of operation. A joint police structure within the county would allow for opportunities for cross-training in police operations resulting in a better trained and equipped police force.

Cost Savings

Integrating the Park Police into the County Police Department will achieve target savings through a variety of measures, including but not limited to:

- combining duplicative functions, including dispatch and call center functions;
- reducing overhead, including administration, fleet, purchasing, and records management;
- eliminating duplication in command and other services, including costs related to staff vehicles, equipment, and supplies;
 - reduce Park Police overtime costs due to meeting minimum staffing levels.

These are real, continuing savings. While the Executive's \$2 million goal is aggressive, fiscal circumstances deem it necessary to consider and implement cross-agency solutions. It is a goal that requires collaboration between M-NCPPC and the County Government. The Chart below summarizes the anticipated FY11 savings from the recommended consolidation:

Summary of Proposed Consolidation Savings		
Cancel MCPD January Recruit Class	\$	1,390,500
Transfer 9 of 11 MNCPPC Communication Positions	\$	511,941
Eliminate duplicative efforts	\$	98,000
Total Savings	\$	2,000,441

Personnel Savings

Personnel savings can be achieved chiefly through the redeployment of Park Communications Technicians to the County E911 Center, as there are currently 11 vacancies in the County's Public Safety Communication Center (PSCC) and through redeployment of officers from Parks to a combination of MCPD and Park responsibilities which would enable the MCPD to cancel the planned January 2011 recruit class. We anticipate that some transition of patrol officers and patrol responsibilities can occur by the later part of FY11. We envision this would be accomplished through a combination of contracting with M-NCPPC and some lateral transfers of Officers.

The estimated savings do not assume any layoffs of existing Park Police staff. In fact, the County will not demote or reduce the pay of any Park Police Officers. Additionally, we will accept all Park Police Officers even though, in some cases, they may not have met the County's education requirements. We

will work with M-NCPPC to ensure that existing benefit plans are maintained for existing officers. Over time, new officers will become part of the County's health and retirement plans.

Our goal is achieve savings through abolishing vacant, funded positions. As noted above, the FY11 savings do not have to come exclusively from M-NCPPC Parks Department. The majority of the \$2 million in savings will come from the elimination of the County's January 2011 recruit class. We anticipate the consolidation of experienced certified park officers by the end of FY11.

A comparison of the average cost of police officers from each agency should not serve as the basis for determining whether the merger will be cost effective. Rather the focus should be on the savings to be achieved through consolidating and streamlining staffing levels, and relative pay and benefit costs. Wages are comparable for both agencies with County Police officers currently earning slightly more than their counterparts at M-NCPPC. Examination of health insurance and pension costs, important components of personnel costs, reveal more favorable and cost-effective arrangements for the County, particularly for civilian employees.

Non-Personnel Savings

The creation of a consolidated Police force will eliminate the need for many of the administrative functions that are duplicative to each force. Information technology support, crime analysis, human resources, and training are just a few of the instances in which the creation of a joint police force will lead to the elimination of operational redundancies and generate cost savings.

Public Safety and Service Levels

We agree with the Planning Board Chair's assertion that the consolidation will affect some service levels, but we strongly dispute the assertion that this merger will endanger the public. In fact, as we've identified, there is an opportunity to reduce response times through streamlining jurisdictional control. The Parks will continue to be safe.

Park Police currently respond to service calls and deliver excellent customer service. Some of these calls are not directly related to public safety, therefore the MCPD would not respond to these calls. We acknowledge the current M-NCPPC level of service is higher that we would provide, but the fact is we can not afford this level of service any further. Given the current fiscal situation, combining Police forces provides the best opportunity to minimize service reductions in public safety.

Legal Impediments

Mr. Hanson is correct that ultimately Article 28 of the State Code will need to be amended to finalize this consolidation; however, that is not necessary to begin this process in FY11. Provided that M-NCPPC will work cooperatively and collaboratively with the County Government, an MOU between the agencies which define service and staffing levels, command responsibilities, budgets, labor, and other issues would be sufficient to begin the transition.

In addition, the County Council, in appropriating the FY11 County Government budget and FY11 Parks Department Budget and establishing the Metropolitan District tax rates should provide the necessary conditions that require M-NCPPC and County Government cooperation in implementing the integration of the two agencies.

Nancy Floreen, Council President
May 3, 2010
Page 4

While deployment logistics and ECC training will need to be addressed, we believe that the transition can begin in FY11, resulting in achievable savings in FY11.

Public Policy

What was a good idea in 1953 is not necessarily a compelling basis for public policy in Montgomery County in 2010. The County has changed dramatically over the past 57 years and we should not stop searching for more cost effective ways to provide services to the public.

Police Department consolidations have been implemented in several other jurisdictions in the past including the cities of Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Fairfax County, and Austin. Morris County, NJ, a peer county identified through the County Indicator Project, is in the process of working through evaluating a merger proposal with similar challenges. These consolidations are complex undertakings and require significant agency collaboration, but they are feasible and these jurisdictions determined that this is a necessary step to efficient and effective service delivery in their communities.

While the assertion is made that these consolidations in other jurisdictions have resulted in a deterioration in park safety, no evidence has been produced to substantiate this claim or to show factually why this would be the case in Montgomery County.

Conclusion

We fully acknowledge that the merger will be difficult and complex and will involve a multitude of issues including human resources, institutional culture, fiscal, facilities, information technology, and other issues.

However, because it is complex does not mean it should not be done. There are always reasons why the status quo should not be challenged or changed. However, if we are not willing to engage in this type of change management and restructuring, we will not be able to reduce the cost of our local government, ease the tax burden on our residents and businesses, or produce a fiscally sustainable County Government.

JFB:dt

Attachment

c: Isiah Leggett, County Executive
Timothy L. Firestine, Chief Administrative Officer
J. Thomas Manger, Chief, Montgomery County Police Department
Royce Hanson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
Mary Bradford, Director, M-NCPPC Parks Department
Chief Darien Manley, M-NCPPC Police

Park PD Consolidation with MCPD ECC Implementation

PHASE 1

Transferring call taker and dispatch to the Montgomery County Emergency Communications Center can take place within 90 days after an MOU is reached. During the 90 days the below training, familiarization and technical coordination will be completed.

Presently Rockville City PD, Gaithersburg City PD, Chevy Chase PD, Montgomery County Sheriff's Dept and the MCFRS are dispatched at the ECC and are on one CAD which includes Takoma Park PD, which now utilizes this function.

Park Police have our radio channels programmed in their radios and they would be set as their primary channel where all officers in that area would now be on the same primary channel. All 911 emergency calls and 301-279-8000 non-emergency calls are received by ECC personnel and will be dispatched with no delays which now result from transferring calls to park dispatch. Presently if the call is on park property we transfer the call and the caller receives a delay and must repeat their information.

- Park PD dispatch and CAD operations to be consolidated into the County Police Department via MOU.
- Training will be in a one 10hr day block for MNCPP personnel
 - Park Division officers will be trained in the use of the CAD function on the MDC
 - Training on 911 dispatch protocols
 - A review of the six county police districts and beat structures, our call sign designators
 - Re-training on radio operations as well as plain English protocol
 - Packet Cluster Refresher
 - Packetwriter and Ejustice familiarization (additional training if adopted)
 - MCPD officers will receive a self-tutorial training venue on Park Police operations as well as an overview of the Parks and a list of their assets and abilities.
- Park PD emergency and non-emergency call taking and dispatching will be moved to the PSCC (This does not include calls for Parks 'Department' or Park Maintenance)
- Park PD emergency and non-emergency police phone numbers will have a recording to redirect callers to:
 - 9-1-1
 - County Police Non-emergency number
 - County 3-1-1
 - Parks 'Department'
- Park Division Officers will operate from the County's Primary 6 dispatch talk Groups – talk group assignment will be based on main entrance to the park.

- A portion of Park PD dispatchers will be absorbed into MCPD ECC operations either as Communications Specialists (Call Takers and Dispatchers) or as Call Takers.
 - If current park alarm/video monitoring is done by Park PD Dispatch, function will stay with front desk or move to MCPD Security Division
- Other current Park PD Dispatcher functions will be absorbed into corresponding MCPD Units:
 - Warrant Control

Updates to Existing CAD Configuration

- Unit designators – Updated car numbers
- Personnel ID's – Update to make sure we have them all.
- Refresh of "PP" locations including Common Place Name's.
- Utilize the CAD from Saddlebrook for internal assignments
- Re-configure Park Police Panasonic Toughbooks to include our CAD

Additions for CAD Configuration

- Creation of Special Response Plans for Major Parks so Parks Division are recommended units for dispatch.
- Add Park PD data to Asset (AST) file: radios, vehicles
- Possibly add de-centralized personnel as Alias Units for ERT callouts
- Add personnel capabilities and assets to the PER file
- Add Location's of Interest (CAD Hazards) (LOI's) specific to Park PD

9-1-1 Phone System

- Creation of Park PD Dispatchers user IDs in 9-1-1 System

Hardware

- Addition of 1 Call taking Workstation (Furniture, VESTA, CAD, MAP) at PSCC
- Addition of 1 Call taking Workstation (VESTA, CAD, MAP) at AECC
- Addition of 1 CAD remote workstation per Park PD 'facility'.
 - Currently Park has 1 CAD at Saddlebrook

Mobile Data / Radio

- Park PD has a full radio console at their facility. Relocate to PSCC for Sit Room.

Personnel

- Increase MCPD ECC Complement by:
 - 9 PSCSs or PSECs
- Transition Plan for Park PD Dispatchers as well as park familiarization training to our current communication specialists at our ECC to include regulations as well as geographic knowledge of the park system
 - Bring over as either PSCSs or PSECs
 - Grandfathering of minimal requirements/testing would need to be determined.
 - Provide training to Park PD Dispatchers:
 - VESTA
 - CAD/Map
 - E*justice
- CAD related training for Park PD Officers/other Civilians
 - Remote CAD
 - Packet Cluster Refresher