

PS COMMITTEE #2  
October 30, 2014  
**Update**

**MEMORANDUM**

October 28, 2014

TO: Public Safety Committee

FROM: Essie McGuire, Senior Legislative Analyst *EMG*  
Susan J. Farag, Legislative Analyst *SJF*

SUBJECT: **Update – Emergency Communications Center (ECC) Consolidation**

Today the Public Safety Committee will receive an update on the status of ECC Consolidation. The following individuals are expected to update the Committee and answer questions:

- Police Chief Tom Manger
- Fire Chief Steve Lohr
- Assistant Chief Luther Reynolds, Montgomery County Department of Police
- Division Chief Scott Goldstein, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service
- Captain John Damskey, MCPD

**Background**

The ECC answers all 911 calls dialed in the County, as well as non-emergency police service calls. The current operation is a bifurcated model with separate Police Department and Fire and Rescue Service call takers and dispatchers. Police staff are civilian. MCFRS call takers are civilian, but their dispatchers are uniformed firefighters. Police call takers answer all incoming calls to determine if the caller needs police, fire, or medical assistance. If the caller needs police assistance, the call “stays” on the police side of the ECC operations. If the caller needs fire or medical, the initial police call taker routes the caller to MCFRS call taker (opposite side of the same room), who then further assesses the situation.

The Public Safety Committee began discussing changes to ECC operations with Executive Branch staff as part of the FY13 budget. This discussion began with an interest in combining and cross-training all call-takers so that all 911 calls can be processed without the need for a second transfer step. Subsequently, Executive staff conducted a broader analysis of ECC functions including the several inter-related components affecting the ECC (including the Public Safety System Modernization (PSSM) project and the new Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system as well as other staffing and civilianization issues). The Executive also commissioned a report from an outside consultant to provide guidance for how to structure ECC operations going forward.

As the Committee discussed this spring, at this juncture the Executive and Council have determined that the best outcome for the ECC is to consolidate all ECC operations (MCPD and MCFRS call taking, MCPD and MCFRS dispatch) into MCPD. As the Committee has discussed, this will be an extensive and complex undertaking.

Council staff notes that the FY15 budget for the ECC transition included:

- Authority to overhire call takers in MCPD, although no additional funds were allocated for this effort;
- A transition leader position, which Executive staff identified would be hired from within existing resources; and
- Additional civilian dispatch positions within MCFRS to begin the first year of civilianizing the fire and rescue dispatch function of the ECC.

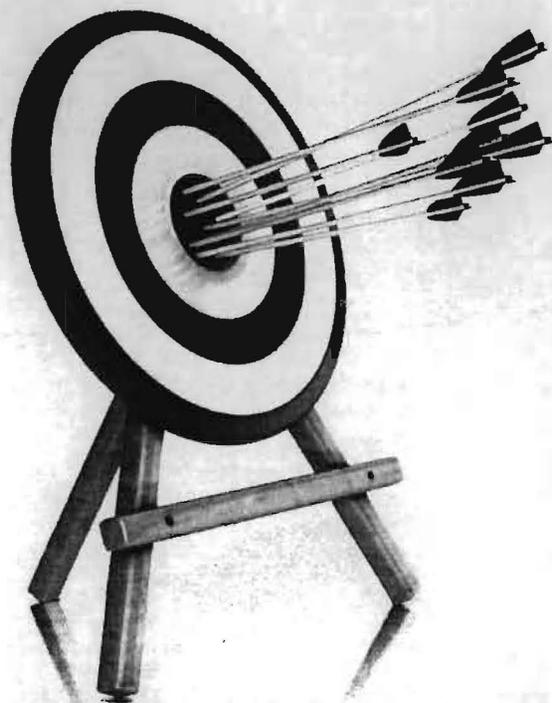
## **Update**

Executive staff prepared the powerpoint presentation attached at circles 1-10 that provides an overview of the current state of planning for the ECC Consolidation. Captain John Damskey, MCPD, has been selected as the Project Manager for ECC Consolidation.

**In Council staff's view, the presentation shows that Executive staff has made significant progress in defining the steps needed to accomplish the overall goal of a consolidated ECC.** At this juncture there appears to be much more clarity around how and when the various elements can be fit together. Circles 9-10 lay out and sequence the many overlapping variables. It is important to note that this sequence timeline is a work in progress, and that it may need to adjust over time, particularly if the timing of any individual elements changes. However, it is important to have this as a working starting point, and as a reference for the impact of changes as the actual events take place.

**The issue of training new ECC staff and cross-training existing staff continues to be a major factor in consolidation.** Circles 3-4 address these plans, and the steps for moving to a consolidated training school by the fall of 2016. One major consideration in training has been the implementation of the new CAD system and trying to avoid double training staff in the old CAD and again in the new CAD. Executive staff reports that the CAD timing issue has been resolved by adopting call taking protocols that will work with both the old and new CAD systems, thus reducing the amount of specific system training needed to accomplish the transition. This is an important solution that allows the sequencing of many other elements to proceed.

**Staffing will remain an issue of concern to monitor going through the consolidation process,** as the ECC has historically struggled with high vacancies and will have additional staffing needs to continue operations during the extensive training schedule required for consolidation. Executive staff reports initiating over-hiring in this fiscal year as a way to begin to address this issue. Going forward, Executive staff (circle 7) intends to redesign the position series in the ECC to develop a career track with clear opportunities for advancement. Council staff supports this measure as a way to improve morale and increase retention in the ECC.



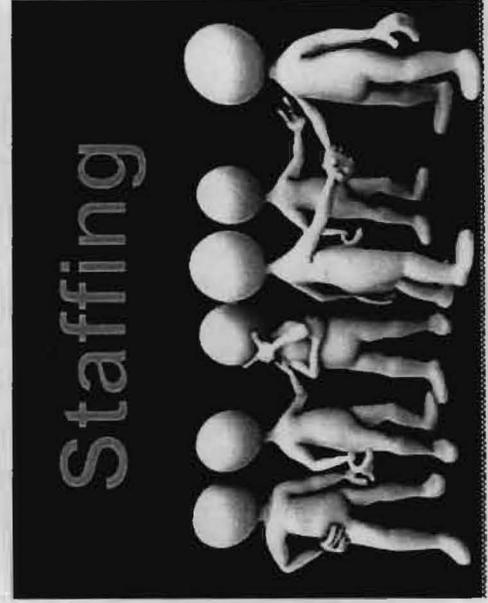
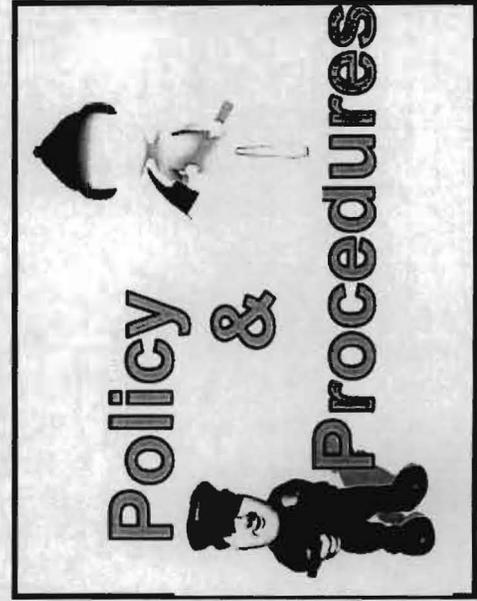
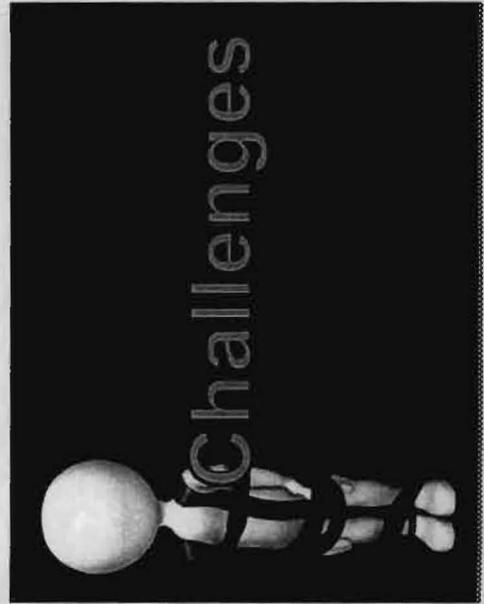
# **Consolidation of the Emergency Communications Center**

## **Vision**

The consolidation of police and fire dispatch and call taking functions within the Montgomery County Emergency Communications Center will create a singular point of contact for public safety and the community. The new ECC will be staffed by professional civilian police department employees responsible for unified call taking and dispatching of calls for service requiring fire, medical, or police resources.

Consolidation is focused on the opportunity to realize greater service efficiencies through the elimination of redundant infrastructure, personnel functions, and command and control issues, while maintaining consistent service delivery to the public.

# ECC Consolidation Project Considerations



# Training



Call Taker  
Protocols

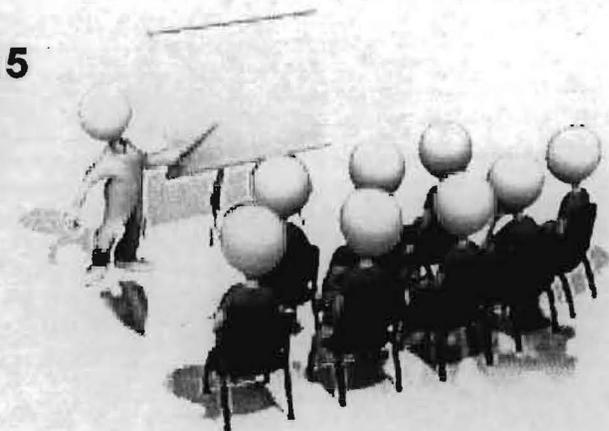
CAD

Fire and Police  
Dispatch

Consolidated  
Training Class

## PROTOCOL TRAINING

- **Protocols allow for computerized call entry following a critical questioning script in order to assign the appropriate resources to the emergency. Certification is approved by the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch and is the standard for Maryland Communication Centers**
- **Protocols =      Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD – in place now for MCFRS)  
                            Emergency Police Dispatch (EPD)  
                            Emergency Fire Dispatch (EFD)**
- **Training planned for November 2014 through March 2015**
- **Cut-over to EPD Call Taking scheduled for June 1, 2015**



## ***Training Objectives continued...***

### **Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD)**

- **The CAD project currently planned for a January 2016 cut-over**
- **Training planned for late summer 2015**

### **Call Taking & Dispatch Training (Fire & Police)**

- **Senior Police Telecommunicators begin cross-over training in Fire call taking and dispatching – January 2015**
- **Fire training will require OJT similar to current police procedure. Target date for first group of fully functional Fire/Police Telecommunicators is June 2015**
- **Police will assume Fire administrative calls following training. Target date of February 1, 2015**

### **Consolidated Training for new hires**

- **First consolidated school scheduled for fall of 2016**



Challenges

Computer Aided  
Dispatch System

Training

Hiring and  
Retention

ECC  
Consolidation  
Project

Text-to-911  
MD State Project

Time

Radio Contract



- **ECC operating as a Service Provider to both Police and Fire**
  - **Tasks required:**

- ✓ **memorandum of understanding**
- ✓ **established expectations and level of service**
- ✓ **reporting agreements**
- ✓ **policy and procedural education**
- ✓ **Standard Operating Procedures**
- ✓ **Performance reports and monitoring**

- **Targeted date of completion for MOU's and service agreements**  
**currently scheduled for May 2015**



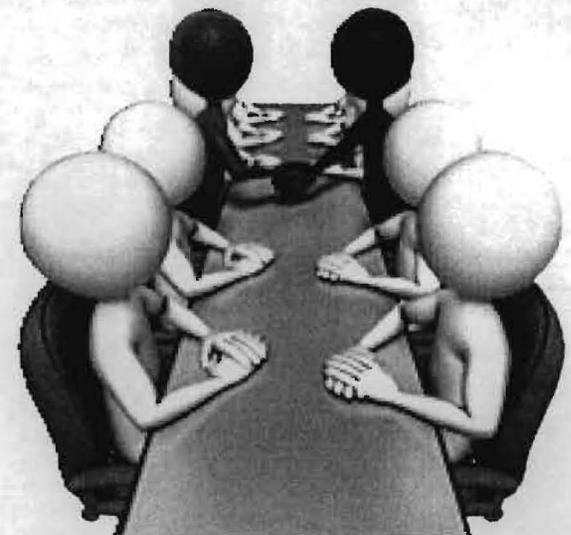


- **Staffing needs in a Consolidated ECC**
  - **Recruiting and hiring qualified and successful candidates. Over-hiring to account for attrition and planned consolidation beginning December 2014**
  - **Change management and organizational socialization continuing efforts**
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- **Staffing plan currently being developed targeting summer of 2016 for full implementation**
  - **Establish a clear career track in the ECC for employee development and advancement commensurate with new duties, skills and abilities. A new position series is currently under review targeting summer 2016 for implementation**
  - **Replace exiting sworn fire positions with civilian police department employees.**

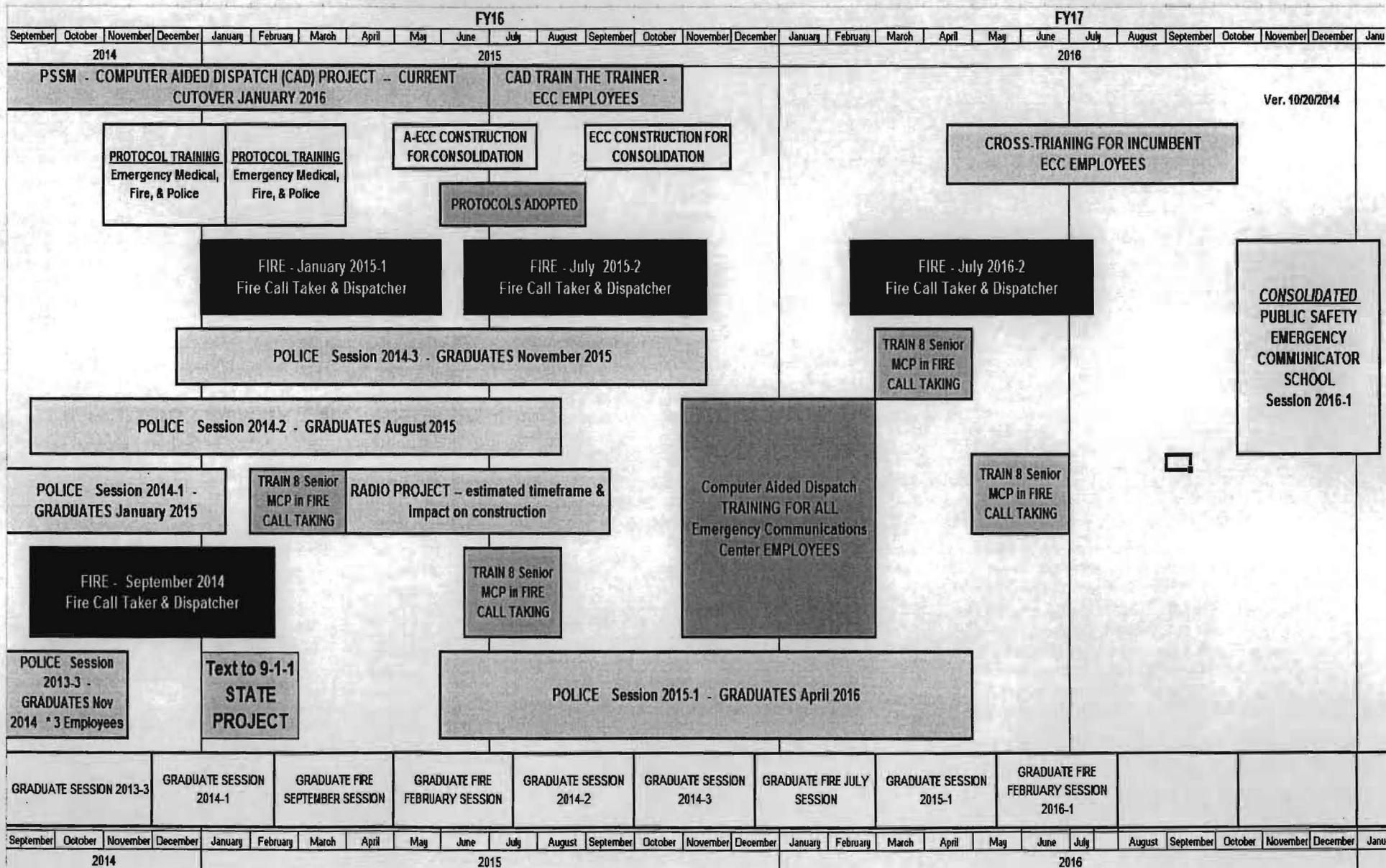




- **CIP -- Planning for a replacement Emergency Communications Center**
- **Current lease of the Public Safety Communications Center expires in November 2021**
  
- **The future of the Alternate – Emergency Communications Center in Rockville**
- **Modifications of the Alternate-ECC and the ECC become necessary with consolidation**
- **Current training space needs in the PSCC in order to satisfy increased training needs of a consolidated ECC.**

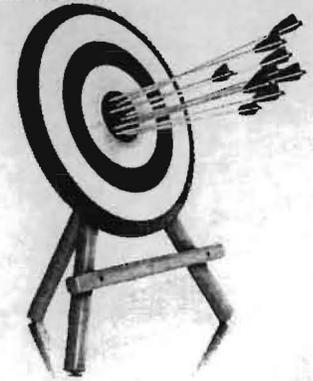


# Planning and Timelines



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# Milestone Summary & Reference Sheet



- Protocol Training for ECC beginning November 2014 thru March 2015
- Police cut-over to Emergency Police Dispatch - June 1, 2015
- Over-hiring to account for attrition & planned consolidation December 2014
- Training for new CAD late summer of 2015 anticipating a January 2016 cut-over
- Unified Call Taking – police staff begin cross-over training – January 2015.
- Fire & Police MOU's and service agreements completed May 2015
- First group of fully functional Fire/Police Telecommunicators June 2015
- Police employees begin fielding Fire administrative calls – February 1, 2015
- First consolidated fire/police Telecommunicator school fall of 2016
- Consolidated ECC staffing plan development with targeted completion - summer of 2016
- Implementation of a new Communications position series summer 2016
- Increase ECC staff by two Instructors and one Training Manager in FY15 impact
- Modifications of A-ECC and ECC to house a consolidated ECC. FY16 impact
- Training Classroom modifications to meet increased needs