

**CITY OF RICHMOND, CA
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT DEPT.**

PERSONNEL BOARD
REGULAR MEETING

WILDCAT CANYON CONFERENCE ROOM
450 CIVIC CENTER PLAZA

**October 22, 2009
MINUTES**

The Regular Meeting was called to order by Vice Chairperson Grove at 4:39 p.m. Roll call was as follows:

Present: Kisha Grove, Vice Chairperson
Jodi Lines, Board Member
Joanne Sidwell, Board Member
Kimberly Stewart, Board Member

Absent: Lewis West, Chairperson

In Audience: Robert Larson, Human Resources Personnel Officer, HRM
Ed Medina, Deputy Police Chief, Police
Byron Baptiste, Communications Manager, Police
Donna Newton, Senior Personnel Analyst, HRM
Lisa Carter, Personnel Board Secretary, HRM

1. APPROVAL TO ESTABLISH THE NEW CLASSIFICATION OF COMMUNICATIONS CALL TAKER (POLICE DEPARTMENT, COMMUNICATIONS CENTER)

Donna Newton, Senior Personnel Analyst, provided a brief overview of the proposed item regarding the request to establish the new classification of Communications Call Taker in the Police Department's Communications Center. She stated that Deputy Police Chief Ed Medina was available to answer additional questions, as well as Byron Baptiste, Communications Manager. The 911 call volume has increased to 2,953 calls and due to this increase, there was concern with the Communications Center being able to manage the increased calls, particularly since a few positions have been vacated and it has been difficult to recruit for dispatcher positions. The new classification was developed to assist with increased calls and will receive emergency and non-emergency calls, and will input relevant information into the dispatch system which will then be relayed to the dispatcher. During non-peak hours, the Communications Call Taker will assist with

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special projects and training. The position will allow the center to run efficiently and meet the safety needs of the community.

Board Member Sidwell questioned and confirmed that the union has been advised of the addition of the new classification and is part of SEIU Local 1021, and she confirmed with Ms. Newton that staff has not heard back or received any feedback.

Vice Chairperson Grove referred to the *Physical Demands* section of the classification specification and asked if this is something identified as a normal requirement for jobs like this. Ms. Newton stated that all job specifications have physical demands and this language is standard for people who work in the Communications Center.

Vice Chairperson Grove referred to the *Education and Experience* section and said for someone to be a call taker, it did not seem like much training or experience was required. She questioned whether the position could handle 911 calls. Ms. Newton stated that the Dispatcher I positions do not require to be hired with any specific experience. They are trained once hired, and the Call Taker position will also receive this on-the-job training.

Deputy Chief Medina stated that prior to the proposed position, the city had 6 or more vacancies at the Dispatch Center. They took 2 of the existing Dispatcher I positions and reallocated them to this position. They found the need of the daytime call taker to be much more valuable than the actual dispatcher position interacting with dispatch units. The center receives an enormous number of calls, not only from Richmond, but from 6 other agencies. They therefore felt this would be the best route to take in handling the call volume timely and professionally. He said that the system works the same whether a call taker or dispatcher answers the calls. Communications Manager Baptiste briefly described the types and volume of calls received and handled.

Vice Chairperson Grove thanked staff for their explanation and simply indicated for the record that she does not like the name of the title.

Ms. Newton noted a correction to the organizational chart, stating that the number of Dispatcher IIs should be 11, and Dispatcher Is should be 13, totaling 24 positions instead of 26. There will be 2 Communications Call Taker positions.

Board Member Stewart referred to 911 calls received from cellular phones, and asked if this is common practice. Mr. Baptiste said that as cell phones have become more popular, he briefly explained that in the past the California Highway Patrol was answering those calls, but they have pushed all local agencies in the state to take over their own 911 calls received from cell phones.

Board Member Stewart questioned and confirmed that the city has received no extra funding for taking on those extra calls from service providers. She voiced concern of a first-line communications call taker fielding 911 calls, and Deputy Chief Medina replied,

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stating that the exact same training is provided for every entry-level person for dispatchers and call takers. He said that they have a computer-aided dispatch software program; however, the information that goes into that screen is subjective. Board Member Stewart asked whether the questions are prompted, and Mr. Baptiste answered no; dispatchers and call takers must be intuitive enough to understand what to do. This is where the 8-month training is very valuable.

Board Member Stewart questioned the ratio of staff being trained and the actual number of employees answering calls. Mr. Baptiste stated that there are 5 dispatchers and 1 call taker who are working with calls on the radio with police officers and emergency services, as well as telephones for 911 and other non-emergency callers. The workers are extreme multi-taskers, and the Board recognized how tough the positions are. Deputy Chief Medina suggested, and invited the Board, to visit the Call Center.

Board Member Sidwell made a motion to approve the establishment of the new classification of Communications Call Taker (Police Department, Communications Center); seconded by Board Member Lines. Item was approved by the following vote: AYES: Ms. Grove, Ms. Lines, and Ms. Sidwell. ABSTAIN: Ms. Stewart. NOES: None. ABSENT: Mr. West.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

The meeting was adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Leslie T. Knight

Assistant City Manager/Human Resources Management Director

/lmh-lyc