



City Budget Office

Bureau of Emergency Communications

Analysis by Robert Cheney

DIRECTIONS TO DEVELOP

New Integrated Dispatch Training

\$470,000, 0.00 FTE

Direction Language

The Bureau of Emergency Communications received funding in FY 2018-19 for a new Integrated Priority Dispatch System, which is on the cusp of implementation. However, this did not include funding for training dispatch staff, which will require 6 days of training per dispatcher, at an overtime rate. In order to ensure that dispatchers are properly trained on the new dispatch system, Commissioner Hardesty directs BOEC to request \$470,000 for system training.

CBO Analysis

BOEC is requesting a \$470,000 increase in one-time resources to fund costs that will be incurred to train its entire emergency communications call-taking and dispatch staff on the new Integrated Priority Dispatch Software (IPDS).¹ The software is expected to be procured over the summer with training to take place in the Fall. The bureau is requesting \$374,167 from the General Fund and \$95,833 in intergovernmental partner revenue to fund the cost of this overtime. Overtime is required to meet this training need as every emergency communications operator will require the training, meaning normal shifts worked will have to be backfilled with overtime hours by other dispatchers. Total training time for each dispatcher is six days, or 48 hours, and will be completed after the software is installed.

The IPDS training will replace the bureau's annual in-service overtime, which is typically two days and costs approximately \$180,000. Expanding this training to six days would require an additional \$290,000. However, the bureau's FY 2019-20 budget is likely insufficient to cover this additional overtime cost. In fact, the bureau will need to more actively manage its personal services expenses in order to cover existing overtime and premium pay costs, as the bureau's current year expenses in these two categories is projected to exceed what is budgeted both in the current year and in FY 2019-20. Over-expenditures are primarily driven by a concerted effort to bring

¹ CBO analyzed this package as part of [Fiscal Year 2018-19 Budget Development](#).

staffing to authorized levels. For example, at the time of this writing the bureau currently has 122 non-supervisor emergency communications staff to fill 118 authorized positions. While this effort has produced notable service-level outcomes related to the bureau's key performance measures for 911 call taking, it has resulted in higher-than-budgeted personnel costs. While contingency reserves would generally be an appropriate source for one-time personnel costs for training, the bureau has depleted its contingency reserve to fund current year and next year anticipated overtime and premium costs. CBO cautions that more active management of personnel costs is necessary to ensure the bureau stay within budget in FY 2019-20.

The increased costs for training will need to be incurred in order to operationalize the new software, and the bureau's overtime budget for FY 2019-20 appears insufficient to meet both operational overtime *and* in-service training overtime. The new Integrated Priority Dispatch Software was a significant capital purchase that will be an integral component of the City's public safety efforts to develop more precise dispatch and response protocols. CBO finds the cost estimate for IPDS training to be sound; it accounts for the bureau being at full staffing and the hours estimated for training seem reasonable. However, it may be possible for the bureau to absorb some of the cost by using in-service budgeted training days. Additionally, there is the possibility that final procurement costs may be under-budget, freeing up some available one-time resources.

CBO finds the request to be a reasonable use of one-time resources that will be difficult to be fully absorbed in the bureau's budget without significant negative service impacts. However, the request came forward too late in the budget development process to be thoroughly considered for inclusion in the Mayor's Proposed budget.

CBO recommends that Council consider funding this one-time cost as part of the FY 2019-20 Adopted Budget in order to ensure BOEC staff have access to necessary training on the new IPDS system, but strongly encourages BOEC to make every effort to manage its baseline personnel costs within existing resources. If not funded in the Adopted Budget, BOEC may re-request one-time resources in the Fall BMP. Given that the procurement and implementation of IPDS is still underway, this approach is likely reasonable from a timing perspective. CBO recommends that any future requests for training resources be accompanied by 1) a detailed analysis of bureau overtime spending and 2) a plan for managing baseline staffing costs within existing resources. Options for managing these costs include proactive efforts to reduce overtime and premium pay costs and reducing staffing to fall within currently authorized FTE and funding levels.