



Superior Court of California
County of Shasta

DANIEL E. FLYNN
Presiding Judge

MONIQUE D. McKEE
Asst. Presiding Judge

August 16, 2019

Larry Lees, Chairman
SHASCOM
3101 South Street
Redding, CA 96001-2379

COPY

Re: Grand Jury Report re "911: What's your Emergency?"

Dear Chairman Lees:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your response dated August 8, 2019, to the 2018-2019 Grand Jury report regarding "911: What's your Emergency?"

I would like to thank you for your response to the Grand Jury Report. Pursuant to the provisions of Penal Code §933, I shall transmit your response to the Office of the County Clerk to be maintained on file there. An additional copy shall be provided to the Clerk of the Court also to be maintained on file.

Thank you again for your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel E. Flynn", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

Daniel E. Flynn
Presiding Judge

cc: Office of the County Clerk (original response)
Melissa Fowler-Bradley, Clerk of the Court (for Admin file)
Grand Jury

SHASCOM

SHASTA AREA SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS AGENCY
3101 South Street, Redding, CA 96001-2379
(530) 245-6500

August 8, 2019

The Honorable Gary Gibson
Presiding Judge, Shasta County Superior Court
1500 Court St., Rm. 205
Redding, CA 96001

Dear Judge Gibson:

**Re: Response of SHASCOM Board of Directors to FY 2018-19 Grand Jury Report:
911: What's your Emergency?**

SHASCOM appreciates the time and dedication which the 2018-2019 Grand Jurors contributed to their charge. The following findings and recommendations are under serious consideration and discussions are being held regarding solutions to any unresolved problems.

FINDINGS

The Grand Jury findings:

F1. *Chronic understaffing necessitates excessive overtime, creating stress and negative morale.*

Response: SHASCOM Board of Directors agrees with the finding. Staffing in 9-1-1 centers is an industry wide, long-standing issue due, in part, to what the Grand Jury identified as a "demanding job" that only "a small percentage of the population is capable of performing".

Although the Board and the Agency have taken steps to increase retention through retention bonuses and streamlining the hiring process, the small pool of available applicants in Shasta County, coupled with demanding background requirements and the complexity of the work and work schedule, have not enabled us to achieve full staffing levels for any length of time.

F2. *Public Safety Dispatchers II (PSDII) have a disproportionate overtime burden because they are qualified for all dispatcher functions.*

Response: SHASCOM Board of Directors disagrees with this finding. In 2018, there was a total of approximately 8,600 hours in overtime. Of that, 6,060 were

filled by PSD II's and 2,540 by PSD I's. Of the 35 budgeted positions, 22 are PSD II and 13 are PSD I. For the majority of 2018, there were 19 PSD II positions staffed and 9 PSD I's, which means staff from both job classifications worked approximately 300 hours of overtime annually.

F3. The amount of overtime required of PSDIIs is a disincentive for Public Safety Dispatchers I (PSDI) to advance.

Response: SHASCOM Board of Directors disagrees with this finding. 6,060 were filled by PSD II's and 2,540 by PSD I's. Of the 35 budgeted positions, 22 are PSD II and 13 are PSD I. For the majority of 2018, there were 19 PSD II positions staffed and 9 PSD I's, which means staff from both job classifications worked approximately 300 hours of overtime annually.

F4. Current recruitment efforts are inconsistent and limited, thus contributing to unfilled dispatcher positions and excessive overtime.

Response: SHASCOM Board of Directors partially agrees with this finding. The Agency has tried a number of different approaches to hiring and recruiting with the goal of finding one that attracts the most and best qualified candidates.

Within the last 5 years SHASCOM has implemented a one-day assessment center to streamline the interview and background process, which has reduced the hiring time by as much as half, greatly increasing the number of qualified applicants that can be hired in a year.

F5. The limit of four training slots restricts the number of vacancies that can be filled in a training cycle.

Response: SHASCOM Board of Directors agrees with this finding. We found that having too many people in training at the same time put a strain on the existing dispatchers and trainers, increased overtime and reduced the quality of training. Therefore, we limited the number of trainees at any given point to 4. Although this decreased the number of employees hired, we believe it will ultimately produce less stress on existing staff and trainees.

F6. Training efforts are not standardized among the trainers resulting in an inconsistent training program.

Response: SHASCOM Board of Directors agrees with this finding. SHASCOM is currently developing a comprehensive training program and training manual that would standardize training and provide for a more consistent environment.

F7. The SHASCOM Board has not effectively dealt with the overtime and recruitment issues which have caused chronic staffing problems.

Response: SHASCOM Board of Directors partially agrees with this finding. The Board has consistently made efforts to empower the Agency Director and staff to

explore and implement new strategies for recruitment and the reduction of overtime.

Large job boards, such as Monster, allow people to select multiple job positions to email their resume to, but do not require that the applicant understand the position or follow the hiring process. We have found that using local ads on Craigslist and using our staff to recruit those who they feel would make good dispatchers has been the most effective tool.

F8. *Overtime and staffing issues limit SHASCOM's ability to timely comply with all Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) accreditation requirements.*

Response: SHASCOM Board of Directors partially agrees with this finding. Although staffing has not enabled the Agency to send dispatchers to relevant training, the California Commission on Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) does provide video-based training. Since January 2019, staff has been participating in this video-based training and anticipates being fully in compliance with POST training by the end of the calendar year.

F9. *The Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system does not satisfactorily meet the needs of Redding Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services (ambulances) which causes dispatch and first responder complications.*

Response: SHASCOM Board of Directors partially agrees with this finding. Although the new system has different features and reporting than the system it replaced, it does provide most of the necessary functions in different formats. Implementation was started in October, 2018 and has not been completed. We are optimistic that any outstanding reporting formats can be made to mirror the old system before system acceptance.

The Board will reevaluate this finding once system acceptance has been completed to ensure the unique needs of our local fire and EMS agencies have been met.

F10. *SHASCOM has no systematic process for utilizing CAD system's capability for flagging specific information on populations with access and functional needs, leaving this group vulnerable in emergency situations.*

Response: SHASCOM Board of Directors partially agrees with this finding. Although the CAD system does have the capability to flag specific addresses for special needs, there are nearly 3,300 such locations that frequently change. SHASCOM is still in the process of implementing the new CAD system and has yet to reach a point where the system is fully functional.

Once system acceptance is reached, SHASCOM will research the viability of uploading the special needs list received from HHS directly into CAD. Until

then, HHS regularly sends SHASCOM the list of special needs individuals which is available to first responders upon request.

F11. *CodeRED is underutilized due, at least in part, to a lack of systematic effort to increase registrations.*

Response: SHASCOM Board of Directors disagrees with this finding. SHASCOM has done multiple educational events, community meetings and press releases to educate the public about the CodeRED notification system, including efforts after the Santa Rosa fire (2017) and Carr fire (2018). Beginning on June 24, 2019, SHASCOM did a large media blitz to inform residents of a county wide test that was occurring at the end of the week. Interviews were done on social media, television, newspapers and radio to encourage the public to sign up for the notifications and at last count had nearly 150,000 numbers enrolled. An additional 12,000 numbers were enrolled in the system following the media campaign.

F12. *SHASCOM and participating agencies' websites lack adequate information about the function of CodeRED alerts and the registration process, leaving the public with insufficient information as to why or how to register.*

Response: SHASCOM Board of Directors disagrees with this finding. The SHASCOM webpage has a prominent section dedicated to CodeRED notifications and enrollment. In each of the public awareness campaigns, SHASCOM has encouraged citizens who do not have internet access or who have difficulty enrolling to call SHASCOM so we can enroll them personally.

F13. *The current CodeRED registration process is not sufficiently effective at enabling or achieving registration of people with access and functional needs. This may leave this population vulnerable to future emergencies for lack of receiving a CodeRED alert.*

Response: SHASCOM Board of Directors disagrees with this finding. As stated in F13, the public is encouraged to contact SHASCOM directly with any special needs or difficulties when attempting to enroll in CodeRED.

F14. *There has been no available comprehensive testing or analysis by SHASCOM to determine if CodeRED meets the County's needs for an emergency alert system.*

Response: SHASCOM Board of Directors partially agrees with this finding. A county wide test was conducted on June 28, 2019 and an additional 12,000 numbers were enrolled into the system. The full results of the test should be provided in the next few months from CodeRED.

F15. *The Board does not receive standardized system-wide reporting or documentation from the various Operational meetings between participating Agencies and SHASCOM, impacting their ability to make informed decisions.*

Response: SHASCOM Board of Directors disagrees with this finding. The only operational meetings are for law operations and fire/ems operations, which are held bimonthly. Any pertinent issues arising from these meetings are brought to the Boards attention by the Agency director. Additionally, the member agency liaisons bring any issues to their respective chain of command.

F16. *There is not a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities among Board members and the Director, which results in less an effective governance. This lack of consistent and comprehensive oversight of SHASCOM allows chronic issues, as outlined in the report, to persist.*

Response: SHASCOM Board of Directors disagrees with this finding and finds nothing in the Grand Jury report that would indicate what is meant by "lack of consistent and comprehensive oversight". The Board will consider encouraging new Board members to attend an orientation of the Agency's roles and responsibilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Grand Jury recommends:

R1. *By September 30, 2019, the SHASCOM Board will begin the process of hiring a subject matter expert (management consultant) to review and analyze personnel management issues related to overtime, staffing levels, and dispatcher responsibilities and classifications (PSDI and PSDII). Funding could come from current-year budget savings or be allocated to the following year's budget.*

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented and is not warranted. The staffing shortage and recruitment challenges are felt at most 9-1-1 centers and are not unique to SHASCOM.

The responsibilities and classifications (PSD I and PSD II) were negotiated items with the employee bargaining group and are a part of their Memorandum of Understanding.

R2. *By October 31, 2019, the SHASCOM Board will instruct the SHASCOM Director to prepare a comprehensive recruitment plan that analyzes appropriate targets and details the timing and methods of recruitment.*

Response: The recommendation will be partially implemented. The current director will be retiring in September, but the full recommendation will be implemented within six months of the appointment of a new SHASCOM director.

R3. *Beginning January 31, 2020, the SHASCOM Board will require the SHASCOM Director to provide quarterly reports on recruitment efforts and outcomes, based on the comprehensive recruitment plan.*

Response: The recommendation will be implemented by January 31, 2020.

R4. *By January 31, 2020, the SHASCOM Board will require the SHASCOM Director to have prepared and initiated the Request for Proposal (RFP) process for hiring the management consultant.*

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented as it is not warranted at this time. The Board will reevaluate the recommendation at a future date after allowing time for other Grand Jury recommendations to be completed and results evaluated.

R5. *By November 30, 2019, the SHASCOM Board will require the SHASCOM Director to present a timeline for achieving compliance with accreditation certification of the dispatch center, either through POST or an alternate accreditation organization.*

Response: The recommendation was already met when a training timeline was agreed to between the Agency and POST at the January 14, 2019 Board meeting. A staff report will be presented to the Board prior to the recommended date to codify the timeline and agreement with POST.

R6. *By November 30, 2019, The SHASCOM Board will require that each employee's annual evaluation include continuing education requirements and provide a reasonable timeframe to complete the training.*

Response: The recommendation will be implemented by November 30, 2019.

R7. *By November 30, 2019, the SHASCOM Board will instruct the SHASCOM Director to conduct an in-house audit on the effectiveness of the training program and report the results to the Board by January 31, 2020.*

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented by November 30, 2019 due to the current director's retirement. The Board will instruct the new director to comply with the recommendation by January 31, 2020.

R8. *Beginning at the September 2019 SHASCOM Board meeting, and at each bi-monthly meeting thereafter, the Board will require written updates on the performance of the CAD until all issues are resolved to the satisfaction of participating Agencies.*

Response: The recommendation will be implemented at the September 2019 Board meeting.

R9. *By January 31, 2020, SHASCOM Board will instruct the SHASCOM Director to present a project plan for incorporating information on people with access and functional needs into the CAD database.*

Response: The recommendation will be implemented by January 31, 2020.

R10. *By January 31, 2020, the SHASCOM Board will instruct the SHASCOM Director to plan the implementation of an annual performance test of CodeRED with a subsequent report to the Board on the system's effectiveness within 60 days of the test.*

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented as it is not warranted. Such wide scale testing is disruptive to the Agency, which received 1,200 additional 9-1-1 calls during the 2 hours of the last system test. It can also have the unintended result of numbing the public to future emergency notifications.

The Board will continue to evaluate the need for such wide scale tests in the future.

R11. *By January 31, 2020, the SHASCOM Board will instruct the SHASCOM Director to appoint a staff member of SHASCOM to improve the CodeRED registry website and expand public registration, including persons with special access and functional needs.*

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented as it is unwarranted. With nearly 150,000 registered contacts, we feel the system is properly and adequately utilized.

R12. *By May 31, 2020, the SHASCOM Board will establish an operational, standing Advisory Board, composed of community volunteers as outlined in this report.*

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented as it is unwarranted.

This concludes the responses of the SHASCOM Board of Directors to the FY 2018-19 Grand Jury Report entitled 911 "What's your Emergency?"

Sincerely,


Larry Lees
Chairman