


## City of Alexandria, Virginia

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11-19-07

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 15, 2007

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: APPLICATION FOR FUNDS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA,  
WIRELESS E-911 SERVICES BOARD'S PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT  
(PSAP) GRANT PROGRAM

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**ISSUE:** Application for funds from the Commonwealth of Virginia, Wireless E-911 Services Board's Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) Grant Program.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council approve the Police Department's submission of a grant application for up to \$100,000 from the Commonwealth of Virginia, Wireless E-911 Services Board's Public Safety Answering Point Grant Program. The application is due by December 20, 2007.

**DISCUSSION:** The City's E-911 Center is the primary answering point for E-911 calls for Police and Fire service. It is located at the Police Department Dispatch Center in the Public Safety Center at 2003 Mill Road. Police dispatchers transfer Fire calls immediately to the Fire/EMS Communication Center at 900 Second Street for dispatching. The Police E-911 Center dispatches Police service calls. Both locations handle together over 384,000 calls annually. The Police Department has 23 authorized Emergency Communication Technicians (ECTs) positions, with 14 jobs currently filled. The attrition rate in the last two years has been over one third of the Police staff. While the Police Department is able to answer and dispatch all of its calls by using staff overtime and light duty officers, they seek to fill the 23 budgeted positions with full-time employees which is the most efficient and effective way to operate.

The grant would fund an assessment of:

- Staff retention and training
- Current staff allocations, operations and conditions affecting staff efficiency
- Current workload and project future growth
- Outside factors impacting present staffing
- Range of appropriate staffing levels

The State would provide up to \$80,000 for a consultant to perform the assessment with the City providing a 20 percent match, up to \$20,000.

The Police Department E-911 Call Center is staffed 24 hours per day, seven days per week, and is essential to providing public emergency responses. Because of the long-term difficulties in attracting, recruiting, and retaining call takers and dispatchers, I recommend that City Council approve the grant application to obtain resources to review staffing issues. We plan to consolidate police and fire communication centers when the new Police Department building opens in late 2011. Currently, because the Public Safety Center at Mill Road will be under renovation to address needed work on the building slab, consolidation is not feasible because of space constraints. In the meantime staff turnover in Police Communications continues to be an issue. This grant provides the opportunity to seek solutions to current staffing issues.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The award of this grant would provide up to \$80,000 for a one-time project. . The City's required match of up to \$20,000 will be funded from the Police FY 2008 operating budget. No positions would be supported by this grant.

**STAFF:**

David P. Baker, Chief of Police  
Amy Flenniken, Division Chief, Police  
Dale Johnson, City Radio Manager, Police  
Karen L. Winey, Grants Coordinator  
Michele Evans, Deputy City Manager