

DISPATCH SERVICES FACT SHEET

January 17, 2013

Background

A public safety answering point (PSAP) is a public agency that receives incoming 911 calls and dispatches calls for police, fire, and rescue services to the appropriate public safety agencies. The dispatching equipment for a PSAP is paid for by landline and cell phone surcharges that are paid by telephone users and distributed by the carriers and/or the State to the Emergency Telephone Systems Board (ETSB) that is responsible for overseeing the operation of a PSAP.

The PSAP for Island Lake is Wauconda. All 911 calls from Island Lake go to the Wauconda Dispatch Center, which then dispatches calls for police, fire, and rescue services. Fire and rescue calls go to the Wauconda Fire Protection District for response; calls for police service go to the Island Lake Dispatch Center. Island Lake is a secondary PSAP, meaning that it does not receive 911 calls directly and instead dispatches responses to calls for police service that are transferred to Island Lake from Wauconda.

The ETSB for Island Lake is the Lake County Emergency Telephone Systems Board. The dispatching equipment used by Island Lake is owned by the ETSB. Yearly capital and ongoing expenses incurred by the ETSB on behalf of Island Lake are approximately \$131,000, including operation and maintenance of two CAD (computer-aided dispatch) servers, routers, switches, mapping, LEADS (law enforcement agencies data system) connectivity, and the computers used at the Police station and in Island Lake police patrol cars. As a secondary PSAP, Island Lake receives \$25,000 in surcharge money annually from the ETSB.

Island Lake currently employs six telecommunicators who staff the Dispatch Center on a 24/7 basis and are represented for collective bargaining purposes by the Illinois FOP Labor Council. The telecommunicators perform dispatch functions based on calls from the Wauconda PSAP, non-911 calls from Island Lake residents, and communications with police officers. They also perform some police record-keeping functions. On most shifts, there is one telecommunicator on duty, although some shifts are staffed with two telecommunicators.

The ETSB-provided equipment used by Island Lake telecommunicators is serviceable but old. Discretion as to when and if new technology and/or updating of existing equipment will be made rests with the ETSB.

The Police Department building, where the Dispatch Center is located, is old, with antiquated wiring. Maintenance costs have been held down by donated or below cost IT services provided by a local company.

Trends

In 2010, a working group made a report to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in which it said, in part that:

- Public safety radio systems and communications/dispatch centers were historically built and operated by single agencies for their own users.
- Systems were designed to meet unique local requirements, often led to incompatibility, inefficient use of scarce resources, and higher costs for specialized equipment and procedures with little opportunity to benefit from economies of scale.
- Clear trend over the last 20 years towards public safety system consolidation, with radio networks developed to cover counties, regions, and even states.
- Similarly, jurisdictions have merged their communications/dispatch centers across agencies and jurisdictions.

In Illinois, the trend toward consolidation of dispatch centers has increased significantly in recent years. Just in the last 18 months, Libertyville consolidated its dispatching with Vernon Hills; Grayslake, joined recently by Morton Grove and Niles, has contracted with Glenview for dispatch services; Lindenhurst and Lake Villa have contracted with FoxComm (Fox Lake) for dispatch services, and Antioch has contracted with CenCom (Round Lake Beach). In addition, Bloomingdale just recently entered into an agreement to consolidate its dispatch services with Addison and Bensenville.

Part of this trend is due to technology. With modern mapping and GPS equipment, police and fire dispatching is no longer restricted to the same extent as it once was by geography. Local entities are also realizing cost savings by consolidating services.

Last fall, the Village Board began to explore the possibility of contracting by intergovernmental agreement with another agency for the provision of dispatch services for the Island Lake Police Department. As part of the exploration process, the Village bargaining team engaged in good faith negotiations with the Illinois FOP Labor Council. The conduct of these negotiations mandated that reporting to the Village Board on the progress of Union negotiations be done in executive session so as to respect the non-public nature of such negotiations and the limitations of the collective bargaining exemption to the Open Meetings Act. In December, based on fact-finding reports, the Village Board in executive session reduced the options that it would consider, for bargaining purposes, to three: the Lake County/Lake County Sheriff 9-1-1 Dispatch Center in Libertyville, the Lake Zurich Dispatch Center, and the maintenance of the current operation. These options were discussed with the Union in negotiations, and the Union representative appeared before the Village Board in executive session to present the Union's case on January 10, 2013. On January 17, the Village Board will address the choice in public session.

Costs

Island Lake has received proposals for intergovernmental agreements with Lake County/Lake County Sheriff, accompanied by draft contracts. The relative costs of services are set forth below:

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Current or Projected Annual Cost</u>	
<u>Current Operation (Island Lake)</u>	Wages	\$254,677*
	Insurance	\$ 39,503
	Payroll tax	\$ 19,483*
	IMRF	\$ 34,152*
	Liability	\$ 8,000
	Subtotal	\$355,815
	Less 911 surcharge	\$ 25,000
Total	\$330,815 per year	

* Based on wage rates last adjusted on July 1, 2009. If current dispatch services are retained, it is expected that collective bargaining would produce some upward adjustment of wage rates, with possible retroactivity to July 1, 2010 or July 1, 2011.

Lake Zurich 5-year contract beginning approximately 30-60 days after approval of contract by village boards of Island Lake and Lake Zurich

\$9,309.90 per month through FY 2013-2014 (\$111,718.73 per year)

\$10,000 one-time cost for a new amplifier

Miscellaneous set-up or equipment adjustment costs
(not expected to exceed \$5,000)

Severance pay and other costs associated with discontinuation of existing operation and transition to Lake Zurich, to be established through bargaining with the Illinois FOP Labor Council. Note that costs for the current operations are already budgeted for FY 2012-2013.

Also, the Island Lake Police Department anticipates that a records clerk would be needed following any contracting decision. The wage and benefit costs for one full time or two part time records clerks are estimated at a maximum of \$60,000 for the first year of operation.

Total estimated cost for first year of operation = \$186,719

Lake County

Three-year contract beginning 30-60 days after approval by Island Lake Village Board, Lake County Sheriff, and Lake County Board

\$10,000 per month (\$120,000 annually), through 11/30/13

\$2,000 per computer Trittech license fee (10 car computers plus one station computer = 11 computers, or \$22,000 one-time cost)

Miscellaneous set-up or equipment adjustment costs (not expected to exceed \$5,000)

Severance pay and other costs associated with discontinuation of existing operation and transition to Lake County, to be established through bargaining with the Illinois FOP Labor Council as discussed above.

Cost of one full time or two part time records clerks -- maximum \$60,000 for the first year.

Total estimated cost for first year of operation = \$207,000

\$125,004 (12/1/13-11/30/14)

\$130,210 (12/1/14-11/30/15)

Summary of Relative Cost /Savings

Current Operation

\$330,815 current cost increased by amount of collectively-bargained increases in wages and benefits.

Lake Zurich

\$330,815 - \$186,719 = \$144,096 savings in first year of contract, less cost of collectively bargained severance benefits to current telecommunicators. Savings expected to increase in subsequent years if this option is selected.

Lake County

\$330,815 - \$207,000 = \$123,815 savings in first year of contract, less cost of collectively bargained severance benefits to current telecommunicators. Savings expected to increase in subsequent years if this option is selected.

Operations, Systems, and Technology

A. Lake Zurich

The Lake Zurich Dispatch Center dispatches for the Lake Zurich Police Department, the Lake Zurich Fire Department, the Lake Zurich Public Works Department, the Hawthorn Woods Police Department, and the Kildeer Police Department. Lake Zurich has 10 full-time dispatchers plus a supervisor and a director, both of whom can operate telecommunications equipment if needed. It has ten 911 call trunk lines and a backup frequency for emergency use.

The equipment at the Lake Zurich Dispatch Center is state of the art. Its facilities are modern and provide an excellent working environment. It can easily accommodate the addition of Island Lake and has a sufficient number of work stations to allow for expansion, if needed. Its dispatchers are professional, disciplined, and well supervised.

Since the equipment is essentially the same as at Island Lake, except newer and with larger screens for monitoring and mapping calls by dispatchers, minimal training would be required to orient officers to the Lake Zurich dispatch operation. If Lake Zurich were selected, 911 calls would continue to go to Wauconda for rerouting to Lake Zurich, just as they are now rerouted to Island Lake. Transition time would be minimal; most of that time would be devoted to orienting the dispatchers to Island Lake officers and vice versa.

The supervision and direction of dispatchers is a major advantage offered by Lake Zurich. Island Lake has no dispatcher-trained supervision. Currently, supervision is provided mainly by the Chief of Police and the on-duty Sergeant, both of whom have other responsibilities.

Other jurisdictions that have contracted for dispatching services recently have reported virtually no transition problems. There is no reason to believe that Island Lake's experience would be any different. Service to residents should not suffer; if anything, it should improve.

B. Lake County

Lake County serves the Lake County Sheriff's office, the Lake County Coroner, and the Forest Preserve District, in addition to the Village of Deer Park, from its Libertyville 911 Call Center. Like Lake Zurich, it has a modern facility, with multiple stations and dispatch-trained supervision. Its equipment, like that in Lake Zurich, is state of the art.

One advantage that Lake County offers is its promise to dedicate a dispatch station to Island Lake, shared with the Lake County Forest Preserve District. Offsetting this advantage are two negatives, however. First, Lake County requires use of the County's Tritech software, which is primarily a records software system. There is a question as to how well supported the system is, and its use would require additional training of officers in its use. Second, there is a higher turnover of dispatchers in Lake County than in Lake Zurich.

A contract with Lake Zurich would represent less of an adjustment for Island Lake police officers than would a contract with Lake County, and therefore should provide better service to the residents, at least during the initial period of operation. Both proposed contracts provide for cancellation upon six months' notice, so neither party to a dispatch contract would be wedded to the contract for its term if problems develop. While the experience of most contracting parties has been good, there have been changes in dispatching arrangements. Staff has no reason, however, to expect that a contract with either Lake Zurich or Lake County would give rise to problems necessitating a cancellation.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Village Board authorize the Village of Island Lake to enter into an intergovernmental agreement with the Village of Lake Zurich regarding dispatch services. Staff believes that, consistent with national, regional, and statewide trends, a consolidation of dispatch services at some point in the near future is going to be necessary. The status of Island Lake as a secondary PSAP, the quality of the building and Village-supplied equipment, the absence of dispatch-trained supervision, and the fact that dispatching for Island Lake residents can be done as efficiently or more efficiently by Lake Zurich than by current Island Lake dispatchers are all contributing factors. Operationally, staff believes that Lake Zurich is a better choice than Lake County, although either would be a superior choice to the retention of the current operation.

In addition, the cost savings are significant. In the first year, the estimated savings are nearly \$150,000 less the cost of projected severance benefits for current employees. The savings in subsequent years should be even higher; after the first year, the cost for dispatch and police records services is expected to be about one-half the current cost.

In making this recommendation, staff is not unmindful of the contributions that Island Lake telecommunicators have made over the years and does not relish proposing a contract that will lead to layoffs. But the interests of the Village of Island Lake are best served by making the decision that we recommend today, difficult as it may be.

Staff is also aware of its obligation to negotiate the effects of any decision that may be made by the Board with the Illinois FOP Labor Council. The Village Administration intends to fulfill that obligation. In addition, staff is committed to carrying out the direction of the Board as expeditiously and efficiently as possible.