



POLICE DEPARTMENT

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

DATE: March 8, 2019

TO: Bob Kuntz, Interim City Administrator

FROM: Kevin Scott, Chief of Police

SUBJECT: Computer Assisted Dispatching System

Mr. Kuntz,

Overview

The purpose of this correspondence is to inform the Board of Aldermen about the City's current **Computer Assisted Dispatch (CAD)** technology, and why I have growing concerns that necessitates action to replace the system. I would like to present the following overview and recommendation under Staff Reports at the March 25, 2019 meeting. My desired action will require the use of reserve Proposition P funds and a Request for Proposal (RFP) process for this unbudgeted project. I have been ever focused on our CAD reliability since becoming Chief, and feel the time is right for a permanent fix. My long term projection was to budget for and complete this project in 2020, but now I am convinced that immediate action is warranted due to the frequency and types of issues with this old software.

The CAD system is at the very epicenter of our Communications/911 service operation. It is the technology used to coordinate all of our police field operations. Our Computer-Assisted Dispatch system uses a server located in our building, which communicates with computer terminals in the communications center and with mobile data terminals installed in the police vehicles. There are a multitude of CAD programs that suit different department needs, but the fundamentals of each system are the same. They include:

- Log on/off times of police personnel (sworn/non-sworn)
- Generating and archiving incidents that begin with a phone call from a citizen or originate from personnel in the field
- Assigning field personnel to incidents
- Updating Incidents and logging those updates
- Generating case numbers for incidents that require an investigation
- Timestamping every action taken by the dispatcher at the terminal

Reliable CAD technology is paramount to the safety of our personnel and our customer base. The Ballwin Police Communications operation currently services Ballwin (30,404 residents) and Manchester (18,112 residents), as well as the estimated 50,000 people a day passing through the combined jurisdictions. Our current CAD software, provided by Global is outdated and has become unreliable. **The current system was purchased and installed in 2006.** Officers are finding that the mobile application frequently becomes unusable unless a forced service restart is performed by dispatch on the on-site CAD server. After much troubleshooting by our IT staff, Global, and REJIS, no underlying reason is evident for these issues. Other

agencies within the St. Louis market have verified they also experience similar reliability issues. As stated, our current CAD server is physically located and maintained onsite and therefore is subject to the possibility of downtime and recovery in the case of either a system failure or catastrophic building loss.

Goal

1. Upgrade our current unreliable Computer-Assisted Dispatch software application and mobile clients with a modern application housing capabilities that include being accessible from anywhere, customizable, scalable, and cloud hosted.

Solution

The cost to purchase a new CAD system outright would on average be around \$300,000. I would not recommend this option due to the current policing market uncertainty. **I do feel it is extremely important to shore up our technology, as we have a large customer base and realistic projection for communications service growth through annexation and contractual agreements.** The operation of our own communications center, sets us apart in the region, allowing us to greatly personalize our service and directly engage our customers in need for enhanced public and officer safety. **It is our desire to implement a new CAD system that is cloud hosted, and at least in the interim, is leased on a year-to-year basis, with no long term commitment, as a stop-gap measure until there is more clarity in this somewhat turbulent market.**

It is estimated that in Year 1 of a new cloud hosted CAD lease, the cost would be somewhere between \$85,000 and \$90,000, to include software customization, as well as dispatch center and mobile client (in-car MDTs) set-up. In years 2 through 5, it is estimated that the lease cost would be somewhere between \$55,000 and \$60,000. These figures are based on a standard 5 year lease agreement, which can be structured as a year-to-year renewal. As I progress through the remainder of my proposal, I will highlight the applicable funding source as I conclude.

There are a number of companies in the cloud based CAD market. Modern cloud based CAD systems offer many benefits over our antiquated in-house server based system.

Benefits of a cloud based system:

- Lower initial costs vs. purchasing a new system that includes both locally installed software and hardware.
- All maintenance, updates, and back-ups are performed by our vendor at will with no downtime.
- The software is hosted on Amazon Web Services Government (AWS-GOV) servers, which is CJIS compliant and employs the utmost security measures.
- Cloud hosted means that the software is accessible from any browser on any device in any location (cell phones, tablets, laptops).
- Our recommended subscription based pricing provides much lower initial costs with scalability for future growth or market adjustments.
- Continuity of Business preserved and even enhanced (Example. In the event of a catastrophic building failure, our communications team could move and operate from any location with a laptop and internet connection).

Summary

Since implementation of the St. Louis County Public Safety Tax, Ballwin Police administration has taken a conservative approach, funding only projects that enhance overall operation. As a result we currently have \$875,670 in a reserve fund for future building enhancements. This balance carried forward from years 2017 (\$260,622) and 2018 (\$615,048). In addition, it is estimated that at the end of fiscal 2019, we will carry over and additional \$702,356, bringing the total balance of reserve Prop P funds to \$1,578,026.

The upgrade of our CAD capability is an operational priority, and I feel that we need to act prior to the next budget cycle. As a summary of our proposal:

We are asking for Board approval to move to RFP for the year-to-year lease of an entirely new CAD package from a cloud based vendor, which includes cloud based software. We are also asking for approval to use applicable funds from our Prop P reserve balance to cover Year 1 of this new system. This is a subscription based project and therefore scalable and adjustable. Year 1 projected cost will include design and set-up for our agency. This will encompass all engineering and any other operational customization that we specify. There is no equipment purchase necessary with a cloud based CAD system. Training will include a combination of both onsite classes as well as webinars. Minor software adjustments are implemented at no additional cost and can be completed in fluid fashion by our assigned in-house IT staff.

I, along with Tony Hickham will present this report to the Board. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin B. Scott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kevin" and last name "Scott" clearly legible.

Chief Kevin B. Scott

cc: Andy Hixson, Assistant City Administrator