



Office of the City Auditor
Ann-Marie Hogan, City Auditor

COUNCIL INFORMATION

April 30, 2002

To: Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council

From: Ann-Marie Hogan, City Auditor

Subject: POLICE STAFFING AUDIT

STATUS:

At the request of the City Manager, an audit of Police Department staffing was added to the City Auditor's audit plan for the year ending June 30, 2002. In a series of planning meetings with the City Manager, Chief of Police, and their deputies, the following concerns and requests for information and recommendations were put forward:

- Anticipated shortages of Police staff, especially because of the large number of officers expected to retire in the next year
- The progress made in the implementation of Community Involved Policing since its inception in the early nineties, and
- Evaluation of alternatives for the optimization of Police Department resources and improved service to the Berkeley community.

The auditors were asked to determine:

1. If Community Service Officers (CSOs) can perform tasks currently performed by sworn Berkeley Police Officers on a temporary or long-term basis to alleviate the sworn police staffing shortage.
2. If a civilian can effectively perform specific tasks currently held by five sworn Berkeley Police officers: Support Services Lieutenant (primarily information technology tasks), Bureau of Inspection and Control Lieutenant (budgetary tasks), Communications Center Lieutenant (supervises civilian dispatchers), Crime Scene Unit Sergeant (supervises civilian crime technicians), and Jail Sergeant (supervises civilian jail staff).

The answer to both of these questions is yes. Accordingly, the auditors recommend that the City open a recruitment for Community Services Officers and begin working with Human Resources to clarify the skills and new employee job classifications needed in order to allow performance of some of the duties of these Sergeants and Lieutenants by "civilians."

Additionally, the auditors recommend that other administrative or technical tasks in the Department, currently performed by sworn officers, be evaluated for possible re-assignment. We further recommend that the City Manager strongly consider creating a civilian Business Manager position, in order to effectively implement these recommendations.

A number of our recommendations were previously suggested by Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), in a report presented to Council in 1994. The Police Chief has suggested that this report should be re-studied as part of the implementation of the audit recommendations. Accordingly, the auditors have attached the 1994 report, as well as associated Council items, as an appendix to this report. The auditors have reviewed the PERF report, but do not express an opinion on the current relevance of the specific recommendations of the 1994 report.

As part of our audit work, we contacted PERF in order to obtain an opinion on whether non-sworn personnel could perform duties currently performed by lieutenants and sergeants in the five positions we studied. Their response stated that civilians could perform the duties, but also identified areas to be considered in making the determination. This letter is also included as an appendix.

In performing audit work related to the recommendation regarding the Communications Center, the auditors noted some potential for improvement, in the Police Department and Citywide, in the area of reporting on and managing sick leave usage and workers' compensation claims. Accordingly, we have included recommendations that the City more vigorously address these issues.

Service Implications

Police managers in other jurisdictions, as well as some of the City of Berkeley staff interviewed, felt strongly that significantly increasing the number of CSOs, and replacing certain other sworn positions with civilian specialists, could significantly enhance Police presence in the community, as well as overall quality of service.

Barriers to Implementation of our Recommendations

Significant barriers to effective deployment of civilians in the Department were revealed in the interviews and are documented in this report.

The feasibility of implementing our recommendations is dependent on how successful the City is in addressing the problem of tension between sworn and non-sworn employees in the Department. We recommend that this problem be addressed throughout the Department. We also recommend consideration of creation of a non-sworn Business Manager, reporting to the Chief of Police, as one step in creating a workplace where sworn and non-sworn employees can work together to most effectively deliver Police services to the Berkeley community.

In addition, the cost of the implementation of our recommendations depends on the number of budgeted and available sworn officers. If existing vacancies and other savings are not sufficient to fund the new positions, then the question of how many sworn officers should be budgeted once non-sworn employees are performing more routine duties, must be addressed by Council and the City Manager.

Due to the complexity of planning for implementation of some of the audit recommendations, the City Manager has developed a timeline for studying the issues. He has agreed to submit the first interim report back to Council by June 30, 2002, and a second report by December 31, 2002.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The cost of a patrol officer is nearly twice the cost of a CSO. The cost of professional staff in information systems and accounting/budget management, and of experienced civilian managers for the Communications Center, Crime Scene Unit, and Jail, appears to range between about 60% and 70% of the cost of each incumbent.

At the time the auditors worked with the Police Chief and the City Manager to finalize the audit objectives, it appeared that significant shortages of officers would continue for four or five years. If these conditions continue, hiring a large number of CSOs, as well as replacing sworn managers with civilian professionals, would be funded by the position vacancies in the short term.

If these conditions do not continue, the City would need to decide how to fund the new positions. Eliminating some vacant sworn officer positions, or reducing other expenses would be among the alternatives. Some of the potential funding alternatives may raise meet and confer obligations with the affected bargaining units.

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Approved:

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