



Fire Dispatch Best Practices Review

Summary Report

November 26, 2013



1. Introduction

Greater Sudbury Police Services (GSPS) is responsible for managing 9-1-1 calls on behalf of the City of Greater Sudbury and delivery of emergency dispatch for the City's Police and Fire Services. These emergency communications services are provided from a communications (dispatch) facility located at Police Services headquarters at Tom Davies Square.

The Sudbury Central Ambulance Communications Centre (CACC), a separate facility operated by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, is responsible for dispatching the City's land ambulance resources.

On March 26, 2012 the Council of the City of Greater Sudbury adopted a recommendation directing the Chief of Emergency Services to work with Police Services and the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer to investigate the feasibility of integrating EMS dispatch with the City's emergency dispatch system for 9-1-1, Police and Fire, to achieve a fully integrated emergency communications services system for Greater Sudbury.

As an initial step toward this objective the parties retained IBI Group, in association with D. Wayne Gould Consulting Services, to conduct a Fire Dispatch Best Practices Review with the following as the principle project objective...

... to investigate, from a Fire dispatch perspective, how well the City's emergency dispatch system is working relative to industry standards and Best Practices, and where appropriate, to recommend enhancements.

The consultant's scope-of-work included the following activities:

- Assembly and review of data and documentation pertinent to the operation of the communications centre.
- Multiple visits and first-hand observations of communications centre activity.
- Consultations with key communications personnel, including the Manager, supervisors and communicators serving as call takers and dispatchers.
- Best Practices comparison to industry standards and to other emergency communications operations in selected jurisdictions, in Ontario and beyond. The comparison, a portion of which is based on previous research by IBI Group, included communications centres managed by Police (e.g., Kawartha Lakes, Chatham Kent and Halifax Regional Municipality); centres managed by Fire (e.g., Barrie, Burlington, Ottawa and the joint centre in Peel); and centres managed by public safety agencies other than police or fire, such as those in Calgary, Vancouver and Fairfax County Virginia.
- A workshop attended by staff from the GSPS Emergency Communications Division, the Fire Department and other City of Greater Sudbury departments having a peripheral / support role in emergency communications. Intergraph, the vendor of the computer aided dispatch system (CAD) used by the GSPS Emergency Communications Division also attended the workshop.

The review was completed in May 2013. This report summarizes the findings and recommendations arising from the investigation.



Recommendations

A suggested work plan identifying what we consider to be the top priority recommendations is shown in Exhibit 3.1. Also shown is a suggested resourcing. We assume that project Leads will consult with their respective senior management and that jointly, they will make necessary adjustments as they carry out the recommended actions suggested by the plan.

Exhibit 3.1
Suggested Going Forward Work Plan Identifying the Top Priorities

| PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS | RESOURCING |
|--|---|
| 1. Advance current initiative to purchase a RMS, involving stakeholders in the process as appropriate. Ensure interoperability with existing Intergraph CAD. | Emergency Services (Lead) working with Fire Service, Police Communications and IT |
| 2. Assess and update Fire incident data requirements and in conjunction with this, define a Fire Planning function. | Emergency Services (Lead) working with Fire Service, Police Communications and IT |
| 3. Establish and implement a plan for Fire's transition to the new Harris radio and paging systems. | Radio Project Manager (Lead) working with Fire |
| 4. Re-establish executive level oversight of emergency dispatch by way of a Senior Management Committee. | Police Director of Corporate Services (Lead) supported by Chief of Emergency Services |
| 5. Establish a Service Agreement that addresses the needs of Police as 'provider' of emergency communications and Fire as 'client'. Define and implement accountabilities. | Police Corporate Services (Lead) working with Fire and Emergency Services |
| 6. Update Fire SOP's of relevance to communications. | Fire (Lead) working with Emergency Services and Police Communications |
| 7. Develop and implement a process for updating CAD data and recommends. | Emergency Services (Lead) working with Police Communications and Fire |
| 8. Augment the communications centre with a Fire subject matter expert / liaison. | Emergency Services (Lead) working with Fire and Police Communications |
| 9. Implement integrated paging / volunteer tracking software and station alerting solutions | Police Communications (Lead) supported by IT and Fire |
| 10. Recruit additional staff for training, incident records management and RQPM. | Police Corporate Services (Lead) working with Police Communications and Fire |
| 11. Develop and implement a training program for Police / Fire communications drawing from 'best practice' models. | Police Communications (Lead) working with Police Corporate Services and Fire |
| 12. Develop and implement a complementary RQPM program. | Police Communications (Lead) working with Police Corporate Services and Fire |