



STAFF REPORT

Date: March 10, 2015
To: City Council
From: Bryan Montgomery, City Manager 
Paul Abelson, Finance Director

SUBJECT: Report of Public Input regarding the Police Services Study and Direction to Staff on how to Proceed

Background and Analysis

At the last two City Council Meetings, the Council received updates and further detail and presentations regarding the ongoing Police Services Study. The Study was undertaken to determine how to best position the City in providing for the long-term delivery of police services. Public input was sought at those two City Council Meetings, at two subsequent Public Input Meetings held on February 25th and 26th, and public input has also been sought through social media, the City's website, the weekly F.Y.I., and the *Oakley Outreach* email blast. Residents have also been encouraged to send comments, suggestions and questions to info@ci.oakley.ca.us.

Attached is a summary of the comments, questions and suggestions received and a brief response to each. While there was not a lot of input received, some good questions were asked and comments made. None of these addressed matters that had not been analyzed, but the process of receiving the input and responding has helped allay fears and has provided more information about the possible separation from the County contract.

Staff believes that the research and estimating done thus far indicates that moving the sworn staffing "in-house" will provide short-term and long-term economies. Oakley will continue to grow and this "City-hybrid" model provides the best opportunity for Oakley to maintain and improve the quality of police services.

If the City Council desires Staff to proceed with the steps toward separation from the County contract, a critical next step is tying down the compensation and benefit package – the largest part of the departmental budget. A Closed Session is on the agenda for this City Council Meeting to discuss these matters under labor negotiations and the discussion would kick-start this very critical component

of the process. Of course, if the Council wishes that we not proceed, the Closed Session will not be necessary.

Summary Conclusion

Considering the information provided to date (including any additional testimony received at this meeting), the Council has the opportunity to deliberate the merits of the Study, and to direct Staff to either:

- 1) Begin the process of obtaining commitments for key areas of service; and when successful, report back with the results and for authorization to give the County the appropriate notice;
- 2) Not proceed any further at this time; or
- 3) Such other actions that the Council determines appropriate.

Attachment

1. Summary of Public Input (questions, comments and suggestions) and Staff responses



POLICE SERVICES STUDY

~ PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY ~

Presented on March 10, 2015

Q: Doesn't Oakley already have a Police Department?

A: Yes, the City does have a defined operational department for Police; however, the principal services of the Oakley Police Department are provided by the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office for a fee paid by the City. To further explain, while some non-sworn staff members are City employees and the vehicles and equipment are owned by the City, the sworn police officers serving Oakley are actually County employees. The City has contracted with the County for these staffing services since its Incorporation. The County employees are well "embedded" in the City organization, wear City of Oakley uniforms, drive City-marked patrol vehicles, and use title of "police officer" instead of "deputy" which likely leads many residents to believe they are all City employees within the Oakley Police Department.

Q: If things are going so well, why is this study being conducted?

A: With the clear acknowledgement of how critical police services are to the community (really the highest priority of City operations), the City Council asked staff to conduct an analysis to determine whether, over the long-term, service levels can be better maintained financially by establishing a mostly "in-house" Police Department or by remaining with the County contract.

While the services provided by the County have been outstanding, the costs of these services have increased dramatically over the last several years. In fact, this current fiscal year alone the County has increased costs by \$650,000 – just to maintain the existing service levels (i.e. these funds weren't to hire additional staff). These ever-increasing costs could threaten Oakley's ability to maintain, let alone improve, police services over time.

Q: What changes are being considered as a result of the Study?

A: The potential change would be to establish a City Police Department where the police officers are City employees. Many components of the police services function would likely continue to be contracted out, such as dispatch, forensics, information systems and fleet maintenance; and there are several that might be better handled in house, such as records, evidence and property storage. This combination of City and contracted services is what we are calling a "hybrid" model.

The Study has found that, due to what are essentially staffing overhead costs charged by the County, the City could save money by bringing the staffing component "in-house." While a portion of these savings would need to be used to offset some increased costs associated with supporting the in-house/hybrid operations, a portion could be used to better maintain and eventually improve police services. Most importantly, a key determination of the Study is that the ability to add police officers over time is greatly improved under the City hybrid model.

Q: Would the Sheriff's Office deputies currently serving in Oakley be given an opportunity to work with the City should the City break away from the County contract?

A: Absolutely. We believe that many of these deputies currently serving, as well as many of those that have previously served in Oakley, will want to become part of the in-house Police Department. The goal is to provide a compensation and benefits package that will attract and retain these quality officers.

Q: What would the compensation and benefits package be if the City hired its own police officers?

A: To help prepare a draft package, the City hired an experienced set of consultants that surveyed other cities and also met with some of the existing staff in focus group settings. The cost estimates that have been prepared include competitive salaries and benefits, including common and appropriate public safety related pay differentials. Some adjustments to the overall package are still likely and the package wouldn't be finalized until the required meet and confer activities take place with staff and final agreements with other service providers are reached.

Q: Would the hire of self-sponsored recruits save the City money (the City would not have to pay for the training, as the recruit would already have paid for academy costs)?

A: Over time, these types of hires are possible and this approach could yield some cost-savings. It is the expectation; however, that the initial hires of police officers will be already-sworn and experienced police officers of varying ages.

Q: Will lateral officers be offered a 2.7@57 CALPERS retirement plan only, or can they grandfather from a 3@50 plan?

A: State law will not allow us to offer anything higher than the PERS 2.7 @ 57 retirement plan. We did evaluate a 401k type plan, but it appears that approach would be less attractive than even this lower PERS plan. Focus groups held with the existing offers indicated a strong preference of the PERS plan versus a 401k-type plan, even if it cost them more and guaranteed less. The fact that it was guaranteed was more important.

Q: How will dispatch/radio communications be handled if the City separated from the County contract?

A: The Study did not contemplate that the City would bring dispatch services in-house, but that we would continue contracting for those services with the County or another public agency. The County contracts with a number of other police agencies and there are several cities who offer contract dispatch services to other agencies to gain economies of scale (for example, the City of Antioch currently provides dispatch services to the City of Brentwood under an interagency contract). The County provides dispatch services to a number of agencies, as there are significant economies of scale in "regionalizing" these services.

Q: Are dispatch services included in the per officer cost in the current contract with the County?

A: No, these services are billed separately and are not wrapped up in to the per officer cost.

Q: What options exist for dispatch/communications services?

A: As mentioned above, there are a number of other police agencies that provide dispatch services and the City could contract with them or continue with the County. In fact, several agencies have expressed interest in contracting with us, should we want to pursue this further, and we remain interested in considering a contract to continue dispatch/communications services with the County. As far as how these options have been reflected in Staff's analysis, while costs have been estimated, no final agreements have been reached and won't be pursued unless the City Council directs Staff to proceed with the City-hybrid model.

Q: Would the Oakley Police Department share a dispatch radio channel with other cities?

A: We would contract dispatch services and as a member of the East Bay Regional Communications System, have a dedicated radio capacity within the System -- even in a contract with another public agency. The exact channel and with whom it might be shared would depend on the contract.

Q: Will the contracted services such as evidence, records, and maintenance be staffed full time by the same people?

A: With regard to records, property and evidence, our current model has the City hiring in-house civilian staff for these tasks, though we do have a couple other agencies that are willing to contract those services - the County may even be willing to continue this role.

Q: What changes would residents see if the City went with the hybrid model?

A: The residents would not really notice any change at all and the goal would be that the transition be as seamless as possible. Over time, we believe the City will be able to hire the additional officers needed to maintain or improve the police services provided to Oakley residents.

Q: What will happen to Bethel Island? Aren't they served by the Sheriff's Office?

A: Bethel Island is not part of the City of Oakley and would not be affected by any decision made by the City Council on this matter.

Q: What would be the consequences of not changing the way police services are delivered?

A: The fear is that with the rising costs under the current County contract model, the City would not be able to afford the additional police officers that will be needed to maintain or improve the services level in Oakley.

Q: Will the transition happen all at once or be phased?

A: If the City separated from the County contract, a formal notice would have to be sent to the County and the agreement stipulates a 12 month notice, though the County has indicated that a shorter time period is possible. The 12 months may very well be what is needed for the transition that would involve putting in place various contracts and recruiting and hiring personal. You could use the term "phases" to describe the various steps the City will need to take within the 12-month period to ensure a smooth transition, but ultimately the transition would occur on a single to be determined date.

Q: How will the City ensure a smooth transition of technology and communications services?

A: *As described above, the City would use the 12-month transition period to ensure the City is ready for the transition. The City already purchases, maintains and replaces the radios and computers used by the Department. New software or equipment to accommodate changes in contractors or services being brought in-house would be purchased, installed, and tested prior to the switchover date, and staff would be trained in their use, in advance of the switch over. The contract for dispatch services would be finalized early on in the transition period though would not be effective until the switch over.*

Q: Will the savings be earmarked for increasing police staff or will it go into the General Fund?

A: *The savings would go into the General Fund, and decisions on how to use the savings would be the City Council's through the public budget deliberations. We have already identified where some near term needs are for additional police staffing and we believe those would be the highest priorities. The savings could also be used for other priorities over time. While public safety is arguably the highest priority of City services, there are no promises currently being made to earmark these savings to any one type of expenditure or priority. For example, each year, when determining budget priorities, rather than using these savings solely for additional police staff, the City Council could allocate additional funds towards additional roadway maintenance, additional security cameras, radar signs, message trailers, neighborhood traffic calming measures, non-sworn police services officers, additional emphasis on neighborhood watch and similar programs, an expanded volunteer program, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training, or emergency preparedness efforts, all of which enhance public safety, but are generally performed by civilian staff or other City departments.*

Q: With roughly 30 different areas of service examined by City staff, are budgets and contracted vs. in-house costs for each area examined available for review?

A: *Estimates have been made for each of the identified areas, however, final agreements have not been reached and won't be unless direction is provided to move forward with the separation. The largest budget item is the staffing cost and those costs have been estimated but not finalized due to the required meet and confer negotiation process with the employees. Within a couple of months, a formal budget should be ready for the City Council's review and consideration during a public meeting.*

Q: Does the City have adequate office space to handle increases in staffing?

A: *Yes, there is expansion space within City Hall for the Police Department.*

Q: What would the staffing levels be under the City hybrid model?

A: *While adjustments could be made to specific titles and functions, the proposed organizational chart adds one additional police officer overall and one additional Police Services Assistant. The Department structure also includes two Lieutenant positions that currently do not exist in the County structure, and some non-sworn staff to help with administration and records. The proposed organizational chart can be viewed on the City's website at www.oakleyinfo.com There are impacts to other City departments (primarily Human Resources, Finance and Legal) with the City hybrid model and those estimated costs have been included in the analysis.*

Q: What about the 4850 workers compensation injury costs that are incurred if police officers are hurt while in the line of duty and cannot return to work in a timely manner?

A: We have accommodated in our cost estimates for the 4850 Workers Compensation injuries. The proposal is to set up a self-retention fund that would have funds available in the unfortunate situation of a longer-term injury.

Q: What are the estimated cost savings if the City left the County contract?

A: *Current and conservative estimates are that the City would save about \$600,000 per year under the City hybrid model. Initial transition costs are estimated to be about \$600,000, so it would be just one year to recover these one-time transition costs. Thereafter, the City Council could determine to utilize these savings to hire additional officers and/or provide other important community services.*

Q: Would any additional taxes or fees be charged if the City left the County contract?

A: *As stated above, the City hybrid model is expected to cost significantly less than the County model, so no additional taxes or fees are proposed. In fact, making the transition could very well avoid the need for additional taxes to pay for the additional police officers that will be needed over time. (Many cities have asked voters to increase sales tax or add a parcel tax for police services. This has not been contemplated and one reason for a transition would be to help avoid the need for additional taxes). There are police assessments currently charged to new development, and they have increased over the years, as they are indexed to the changes in County costs; future increases to those assessments are expected to be much smaller under the City hybrid model.*

Q: What about helicopter and other police-related services that the County currently provides to Oakley?

A: *They would all continue, without change. The Air Command Unit (helicopter) and Marine Patrol are two examples of services the County provides at no direct cost to all law enforcement agencies in the County (all residents in the County pay taxes to the County to help cover these costs). There are other mutual aid services that are provided at no-cost, and of course, other regional programs and services that the City currently participates in for a fee, all of which would continue, without change.*

Q: Why consider the transition now and is time of the essence?

A: *The Study has been ongoing now for over a year and there has not been any rush; however, the estimated cost savings are significant enough that further delays would only cost the City more money and potentially delay the time within which the City can add officers to match the City's growth. If the decision were made to leave the County contract, it is estimated that the transition time would be 12-14 months.*