

### **XIII – OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE**

This chapter presents findings and recommendations relating to the Office of the Chief of Police. After an initial background section that describes the office a number of recommendations to improve operations are presented.

#### **A – BACKGROUND**

The Office of the Chief of Police includes executives who lead each of the major bureaus in the department and support staff who provide administrative and clerical support for these managers. Eighteen sworn personnel (the chief of police, four assistant chiefs, and 13 deputy chiefs) and two civilian managers comprise the department's executive leadership. These executives are supported by 14 sworn personnel (three lieutenants, nine sergeants and two senior corporals) and eight non-sworn staff.

In addition to the leaders of the department's five bureaus, two additional units report directly to the chief of police – police media relations and community affairs and employee communications. A brief discussion of the roles and responsibilities of these two offices (and the units reporting to them) follows.

**Police media relations.** Police media relations is led by a special assistant to the chief who reports directly to the chief of police. The office has two primary responsibilities. First, the unit is responsible for proactively encouraging coverage of newsworthy stories relating to Dallas law enforcement, crime prevention and the community by the local media (radio, TV, and print). In addition, the unit responds to requests for information, interviews, and authorized statements regarding major current and active crime incidents that are being handled by the police department.

The unit is authorized for two sworn personnel (one sergeant and one senior corporal) and one non-sworn support position.

The special assistant who reports to the chief also oversees three additional units – the Interactive Community Policing Coordination Unit, the Management Research Unit and the office of the legislative coordinator.

- **ICP Coordination Unit.** The ICP Coordination Unit provides citywide support for Interactive Community Policing (ICP) programs administered by patrol operations divisions and also provides a number of departmentwide programs. The unit is led by a lieutenant who oversees a sergeant and two senior corporals. In addition, one police officer reports to the unit as a special assignment.
- **Management Research Unit.** The Management Research Unit provides a range of administrative support to the Office of the Chief including technical writing, preparation of presentations (primarily for use at Dallas City Council and Public Safety Committee Briefings) and maintenance of the ICP Activity Management Program (a Windows-based software program that tracks interactive community policing activity). This computer program is used for tracking activities of various ICP programs. One senior corporal and a sergeant are assigned to the unit.

- **Legislative Coordination Unit.** The Legislative Coordination Unit works with state and federal elected officials and their staffs to ensure the department is informed about hearings and legislation that may affect it. The sergeant who leads this unit serves as liaison/coordinator for the chief with elected officials and represents the department at official hearings and legislative sessions in Austin. The sergeant is assisted by a senior corporal.

**Community affairs and employee communications.** The Office of Community Affairs and Employee Communications is led by a manager who reports directly to the chief of police. The office is responsible for working closely with the community (adults, seniors, and youth) to implement programs geared toward education and crime prevention. This office is also responsible for internal department communications relating to city-wide events, promotions, and other information of interest to employees.

The office is staffed with eight non-sworn personnel – the manager and seven community outreach representatives.

## **B – OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **The Number Of Administrative Staff Assigned To The Office Of The Chief Of Police Is Excessive And Should Be Reduced**

At present, five administrative staff provide support directly to the Chief of Police – an administrative sergeant, a second sergeant who also provides administrative support, a civilian executive assistant, a civilian executive secretary (who primarily answers telephone calls) and a public service officer. While it is important that the chief's office have sufficient staff to provide needed administrative support, given the importance of leveraging scarce resources to the proposed management framework (described in Chapter VI) it is also important that the chief set an example by ensuring that his office be staffed with no more resources than are necessary. Four full-time administrative staff should be sufficient to support the chief. Therefore, one of the two sergeant positions<sup>1</sup> assigned to the office should be discontinued or redeployed. (Please note that if additional support staff is needed to provide administrative support during periods of peak activity, the support staff reporting to the bureau commanders who work out of the same suite of offices as the chief can provide this support.)

In addition, the legislative liaison is assisted by a sworn police officer. This position is not needed and should be discontinued or redeployed.

### **Roles And Responsibilities Within The Office Of The Chief Should Be Revised**

At present, an executive secretary is responsible for fielding a high volume of telephone calls which she lacks the experience to handle effectively. Because she lacks the information needed to respond to these calls, callers are frustrated, feel they are receiving poor service, or being 'stonewalled'. To address this problem, the assigned

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<sup>1</sup> While a civilian could effectively provide administrative support to the chief, assigning a sworn sergeant to this position is warranted due to the staff development opportunities that result from working so closely with the chief.

duties of the executive secretary and the executive assistant should be revised to limit the amount of time the executive secretary spends answering the phone and to allow her to focus on other duties (e.g., typing memos, record-keeping and filing). The executive assistant, in turn, should assume responsibility for answering incoming telephone calls to the Office of the Chief. This position is extremely important as it directly impacts a caller's first impression of the office and of the police department. A citizen who calls the Office of the Chief will immediately form an opinion about the perceived level of customer service, the knowledge available, and the ability of the assistant to respond to the needs of the caller. This position should exude confidence, an "I am here to serve" demeanor, and real knowledge about who can best answer the questions or respond to the needs of the caller. The executive assistant should have sufficient access to the chief and his calendar to be responsive to phone calls requesting information or a meeting with the chief.

### **A More Structured Approach To Handling Calls To The Office Of The Chief Of Police Should Be Established**

At present there is no coordinated system for handling incoming calls to the Office of the Chief of Police. Instead, the person who answers the phone is typically the person who will handle the call – whether or not he or she has the expertise to do so. To address this problem a more structured approach to handling calls should be established. As discussed, the executive assistant should handle all incoming calls (with the assistance of the clerical staff supporting the other bureau administrators) and, based upon a pre-defined set of protocols, should determine how best to respond to the call. Taking this step will enhance customer service – citizens will be more likely to be referred immediately to a person who can help them – and will ensure that only calls that need to be handled in the office of the chief are handled in the office.

### **The Programs Coordinated By The Centralized Interactive Community Policing Coordination Unit (ICPCU) Should Be Scaled Back To Reflect The Fact That Patrol Divisions Should Be Primarily Responsible For Community Outreach**

The ICPCU, which is staffed with a lieutenant, one sergeant, two senior corporals and a police officer on special assignment has been given a nearly impossible task. In a city with the size and diversity of the City of Dallas it is extremely difficult for any centralized unit – especially one with limited staff – to have a material impact on police community relations. Despite the fact that the ICPCU provides a broad range of programs and services, even cumulatively these programs and services (summarized in Exhibit XIII-1) likely have only a modest impact on the citizens of Dallas. Indeed, it is for this very reason that the organizational recommendations presented in Chapter VII suggest that patrol operating divisions should take the lead in the department's community outreach efforts.

The role of the ICPCU should change given the expectation that patrol operating divisions will be the department's primary liaison with the community. Rather than provide services directly, unit staff should focus on developing programmatic ideas that can be implemented by patrol divisions. In addition, the unit should continue performing some citywide functions – such as representing the police department on the Crime Watch Executive Board and providing coordinating services for the crime watch programs offered in each patrol division.

One sergeant and one civilian support employee should be sufficient to fulfill this revised role and these staff should report to the Manager of Community Affairs and Employee Communications. ICPCU operations should then be coordinated with community affairs. In addition, the clerical assistant whose primary job is to support ICPCU related activities should also provide needed administrative support to the overall community affairs function.

**Implementing These Recommendations Will Results In A Reduction In Staff Assigned To The Office Of The Chief Of Police**

A net total of five positions can be discontinued or redeployed when these recommendations are implemented: administrative sergeant in the Office of the Chief; senior corporal in the legislative affairs unit, and the lieutenant, two senior corporals, and one police officer position assigned to the ICPCU. These position reductions will be offset by establishing a clerical position to support the combined ICPCU and community affairs unit.