

*City of Alexandria, Virginia*

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 18, 2008

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 35 : STAFF AND COST IMPACT OF A CONSOLIDATED EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

This memorandum is in response to Councilman Wilson’s question regarding the staff and cost impact of a consolidated communications center to be located in the new Police Facility.

Prior to beginning the programming phase of the design and construction of the new Police Facility, the City Manager determined that the construction of a new facility presented a good opportunity to combine and consolidate the City’s 911 emergency communications centers and locate a single communications center in the new facility. Currently, there are two emergency communications centers, one at the Public Safety Building on Mill Road that serves as the 911 Center for the Police Department and one at Fire Station 204 on Second Street that serves as the emergency communications center for the Fire Department.

To address how the new center would be configured and how it would operate, the City asked HDR, the Police Facility architect, to study how to proceed. Based on their recommendation, staff then retained the services of L. Robert Kimball and Associates to provide design input and study the options for staff, operations, equipment and space requirements for a consolidated/co-located emergency communications center. As part of the design input, Kimball reviewed the City’s list of proposed emergency communications equipment requirements in a consolidated center. That task has been completed.

The most intensive tasks (Task 2a and Task 3) of the Kimball study includes a review of current staffing and operations in an effort to improve operations in both centers now and to project what the City’s future needs will be in the new center. These tasks include a detailed analysis and comparison of current operations with how the center will operate in the future; current costs (status quo) compared to consolidation/co-location costs projected out beyond cut-over; capital, transition and operational costs; and staffing projections, including personnel cost estimates. Work on these two tasks has already begun. The consultant estimates that they will have the cost comparisons, staffing

projections and associated costs completed some time in April 2008. The remaining portion of the study is to be completed by late Spring.

Kimball currently estimates that any monetary savings will not be realized for a few years after the center is operational. The savings primarily will be in efficiencies gained by operating one site instead of two sites. There also will be costs associated with the consolidation of operations. Once we receive a completed staffing analysis, we will have a better idea of whether or not staffing will need to be increased to meet projected demands. With respect to Fire Communications, as a result of several Fire incidents this summer, we are already aware of staffing issues.

Staff will provide Council with more detailed data, information and costs estimates once the Kimball study has been completed.