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Date: November 10, 2009

To: Mayor & City Council

From: Patrick H. West
City Manager

Subject: Long Beach 9-1-1
Communication Center Staffing
and Service Levels

Comments: Information for
Agenda Item R-9 on the
November 10, 2009 Council
Agenda

The chart above reflects budgeted positions and as with any operation, actual staffing will vary from the budgeted numbers. The problems associated with maintaining full staffing are compounded in the Communications Center due to historic higher turnover rates and the time involved in recruiting and training new Dispatchers.

3) How do Long Beach 9-1-1 Answer Times compare to State 9-1-1 standards?

As noted above, the State of California has established a benchmark goal of ensuring that all 9-1-1 calls are answered within 10 seconds, 90 percent of the time. Since 2005, the Department annual average has exceeded the State benchmark goal. Below are the annual averages for the Department for the past five years:

- 2004 – 84.9%
- 2005 – 92.6%
- 2006 – 92.7%
- 2007 – 93.3%
- 2008 – 93.1%

As of October, the 2009 average is 91.1 percent (trending up from a low of 86 percent in July). The 2009 change is due largely to the increase in wireless 9-1-1 calls and typically greater call activity during the summer months. Since accepting all wireless 9-1-1 calls in March 2009 that were formerly answered by the California Highway Patrol, wireless 9-1-1 and overall call volume have increased (see attached charts). Fortunately, there has also been a decrease in the 9-1-1 landline calls by an average 14 percent each month. Comparing October 2008 to October 2009, the Communications Center experienced a 64.8 percent increase in total 9-1-1 calls and a 10.5 percent increase when combining both 9-1-1 and 7-digit calls.

4) Identify how many positions are currently vacant in the 9-1-1 Center.

There are currently six budgeted vacant Public Safety Dispatcher positions.

5) What steps are being taken to fill any vacant positions that are negatively impacting response to 9-1-1 callers?

The Department and City have implemented both short term and long-term solutions to fill the vacant positions and maintain response times. Short-term solutions include adjustments to shift changes and overtime use to optimally manage the Center's resources; the City Manager authorized hiring these critical positions despite a Citywide hiring freeze; as mentioned above, despite FY10 budget reductions throughout the Department, no Dispatcher positions were eliminated; newly hired staff will cover peak call periods. Long term solutions include a change in policy to encourage the use of the 9-1-1 line for emergency use only; study of consolidated 9-1-1 dispatching between Police and Fire to improve

service levels and address the Wireless 9-1-1 calls; and examination of operations and technology to optimize service.

One candidate was recently hired from a process that began in February 2009; 16 other candidates are being processed from interviews conducted in October 2009. Civil Service is completing the testing phase for the next eligible list of Dispatchers. Of the 542 applications that were distributed, 150 candidates recently completed the written exams that are now being scored.

6) What steps can be taken to expedite the hiring and training process?

The process for hiring a Dispatcher is very similar to that of hiring a recruit. It contains five parts: Recruitment and Testing, Administrative Processing of the Applicant, Background Investigation, Selection, and Psychological/Medical Examination.

The Civil Service Department has been supportive and responsive to the Department's hiring needs. They implemented changes to their recruitment and testing process that resulted in a reduction in processing time and provided the Department with an immediate list of 16 potential candidates who possessed California Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Public Safety Dispatcher Basic certification and were therefore able to waive the written test.

Although the Department's limited number of background staff impacts the number of candidates who can be processed at one time, changes to the orientation process now allow a larger group of candidates to be processed in a more timely manner.

The training period for Dispatchers is 12 months. During this time, the Dispatcher receives classroom instruction and on-the-job training with weekly feedback and periodic assessment of benchmark goals. The Department is currently reviewing the Dispatcher training process and surveying other organizations to determine best practices.

Long Beach Police Department takes great pride in the vital service provided by the Emergency Communications Center. All calls, especially 9-1-1 calls, are taken very seriously. The functions of answering calls, dispatching calls, and responding to calls for service are all considered Core Public Safety Functions. It is important to note that despite a slight decrease in July, call answering times are again back up to 93 percent in October 2009. The increase in wireless 9-1-1 calls had no impact on Priority 1, 2, or 3 response times. The Department will continue to review internal processes for best practices and implement changes as necessary to maintain expedient quality service. We will continue to provide the best possible service with the \$5.6 million allocated to the Communications Center.

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Patrick H. West, City Manager
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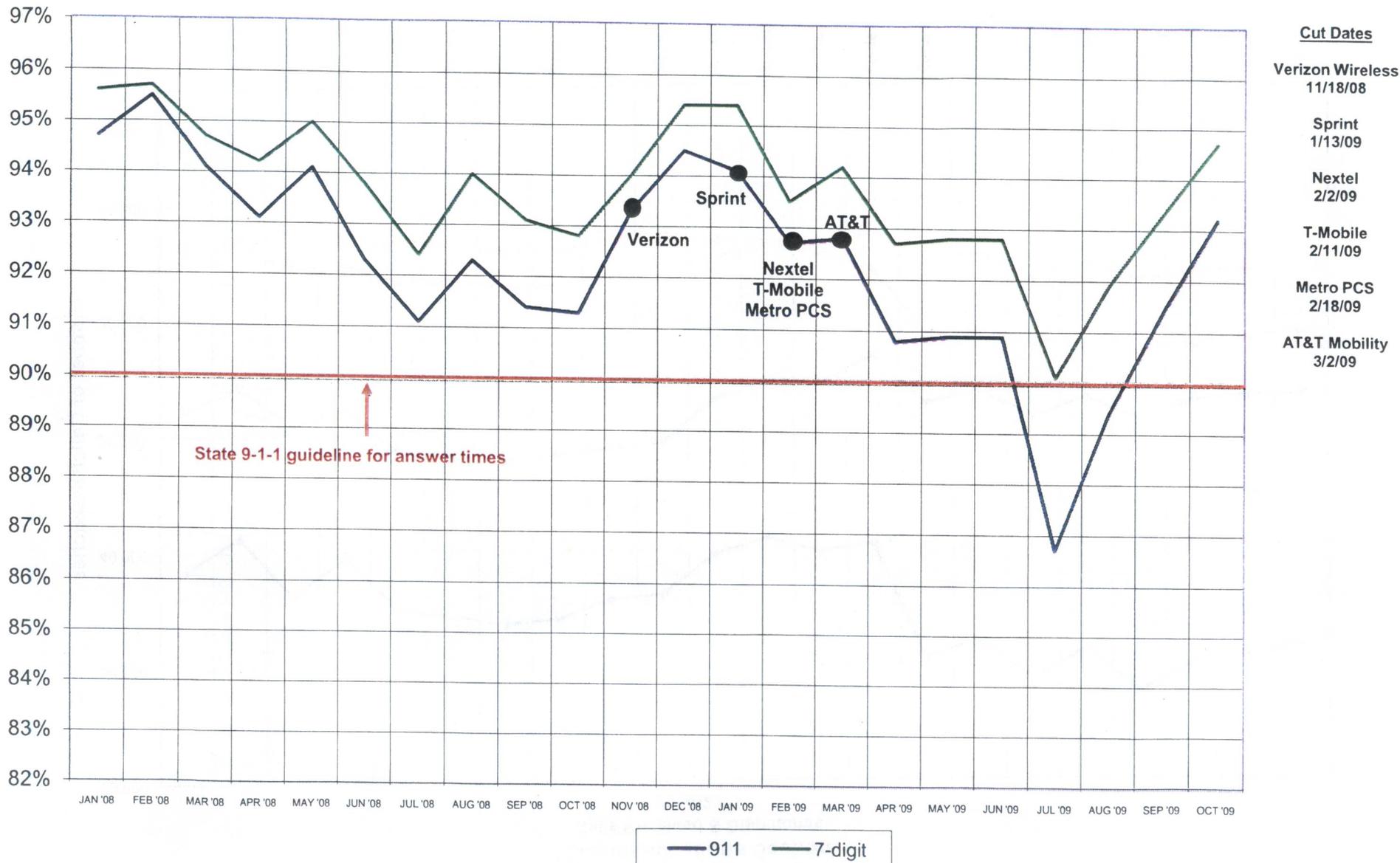
The public is encouraged to call 9-1-1 for emergency issues. This will assist the Department in maintaining call response times.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at extension 8-7301.

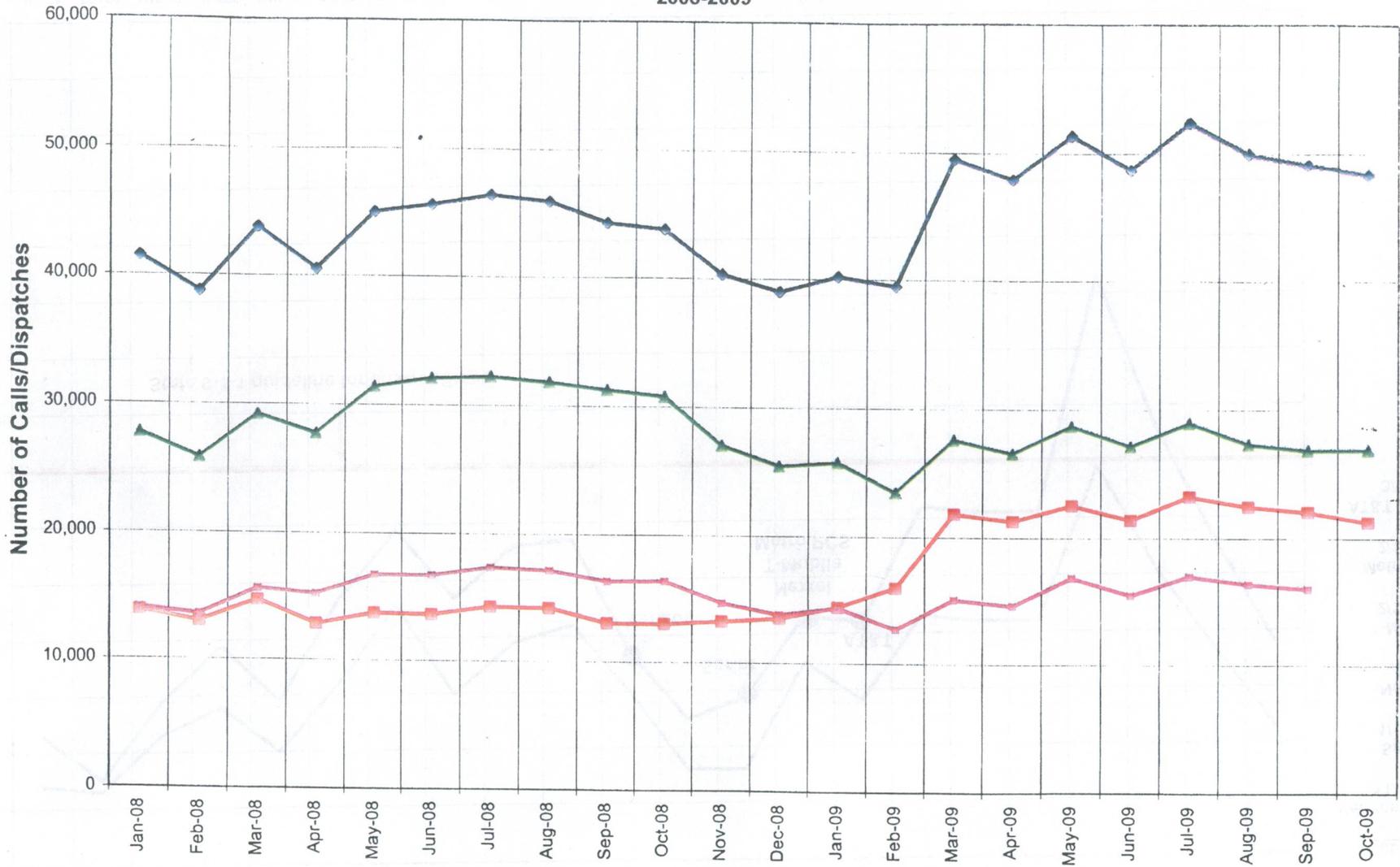
911 Staffing Memo to CM for Council (11-09-09)
BBQ:JJC:DJH

Long Beach Police Department Communications Section

9-1-1 & 7-Digit Answer Time Percentages (within 10 seconds) January 2008 - October 2009

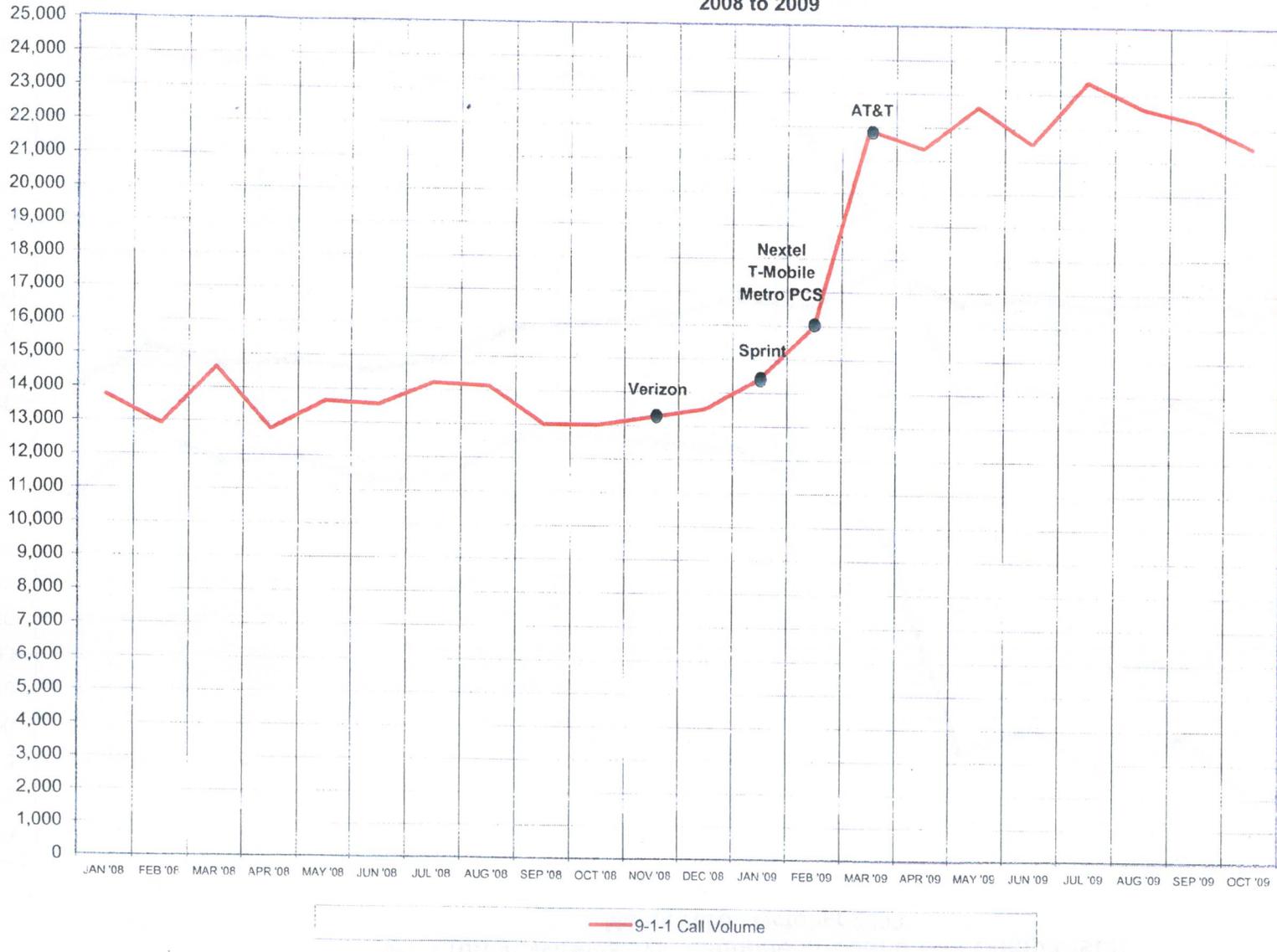


Long Beach Police Department Communications Section Calls Received & Dispatches 2008-2009



◆ TOTAL 7-Digit & 9-1-1
 ▲ 7-DIGIT
 ■ 9-1-1
 ■ DISPATCHES

Long Beach Police Department Communications Section 9-1-1 Call Volume Comparison 2008 to 2009



64.8% increase of 9-1-1 calls received in October '09 vs. October '08

Cut Dates

- Verizon Wireless 11/18/08
- Sprint 1/13/09
- Nextel 2/2/09
- T-Mobile 2/11/09
- Metro PCS 2/18/09
- AT&T Mobility 3/2/09

Long Beach Police Department Communications Section

9-1-1 (only) Wireless vs. Landline In-bound Call Comparison March 2008 - October 2009

