

CITY OF OAKLAND



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To: Members of the City Council and Members of the Public
From: Council President Kaplan
Date: July 21, 2020
Subject: 911 Grand Jury Report and Recommendations

Dear Members of the City Council and Members of the Public,

The 2019-2020 Alameda Grand Jury has issued a Report on the Oakland 911 Communications Center. According to the report, “in 2019, nearly 40% of Oakland’s 911 callers could not get through to operators within the standard time.”

Urgent calls from the community aren’t being answered timely, and dispatch staff are overwhelmed. The Council had budgeted for additional Dispatcher positions previously, but they remain understaffed as multiple budgeted positions have not been filled. This is making working conditions more difficult, and increases risks to the community by having a delay in emergency communications.

The 2019-20 Alameda County Grand Jury Final Report also states:

“The communication center’s FY 2019–20 budget authorized a total of 74 dispatchers, one communications manager, and seven supervisors. As of January 2020, there were only 59 dispatchers staffing the communication center.... The police department has ranked dispatcher recruitment ninth in order of priority behind other police position recruitments.”

Link to full report:

<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:2173a4d6-51e9-40d2-b499-ba5cf24c51c7>

The grand jury came to several major conclusions in terms of their finding about the 911 communications center:

- The center is understaffed. Current staffing levels cannot adequately handle the volume.
- Staff is hampered by outdated technology installed 18 years ago. Funding for an updated system was approved three years ago but the project has yet to be installed.
- There is insufficient staffing of dispatchers during the peak hours from 9 am to 9 pm.
- The hiring process that Oakland uses is outdated and time-consuming.

In addition to the substantial responsibility of answering 911 emergency calls, dispatchers are also tasked with additional time-consuming matters, including intake of complaints against officers, and other documentary and log maintenance requirements that add to their workload.

Full Report Enclosed for Review, Discussion, and Recommendations.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rebecca Kaplan".

Rebecca Kaplan
Oakland City Council President

City Council
July 21, 2020
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