

**Town of Payson  
Council Decision Request**

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MEETING DATE: 9/7/06                      ITEM NO:                      SUBJECT: The current part-time dispatch position to a full-time position.

SUBMITTAL DATE: 8/23/06

SUBMITTED BY: Donald B. Engler, Commander

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ADVANCE COPIES:

EXHIBITS (If applicable):

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EXPENDITURE	AMOUNT	CONTINGENCY FUNDING
ESTIMATE: \$54,806.00	BUDGETED: \$54,806.00	REQUIRED: \$0

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IF IT IS THE WISH OF THE COUNCIL TO SUPPORT RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT, THE FOLLOWING MOTIONS ARE SUGGESTED:

I move to authorize the Payson Police Department to upgrade the current part-time(19 hr/week) 911/communications dispatch position to a full-time(40 hr/week) 911/communications dispatch position.

SUMMARY OF THE TOPIC FOR WHICH A COUNCIL DECISION IS REQUESTED:

The Payson Police Department is currently authorized for 8 ½ dispatch positions in the 911/Communications Center. This proposal would increase the authorized positions in the 911/Communications Center to 9 positions. One of the greatest advantages to changing the part-time position to a full-time position is that with this minor change, we would then have adequate, two position coverage, 24/7 – 365 days a year, for the Communications Center with two available 911 stations. This has been a goal for the Payson Police Department for some time and is a recommendation of the Police Department's Three Year Plan. This upgrade to the 911/Communications Center has the potential to provide greater officer safety and also to provide a more effective service to the community. Furthermore, the Payson Police Department currently has the ability to hire three experienced dispatchers who have at least three years experience each. The department also has a trainee available for hire; therefore, there would be no delay in implementation. The Payson Police Department believes that we would be able to make this change without impacting the current approved budget of the Communications Division.

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The following explanation of the financial status should provide greater insight:

- 4 dispatchers earned approximately \$5,000.00 in overtime each last year for a total of \$22,302.00, the majority of which was covering open shifts.
- 2 part-time dispatchers earned \$10,000.00 last year.
- The communications supervisor earned \$13,300.00 in overtime last year with at least \$10,000.00 of that expense for shift coverage.
- We believe that approximately \$40,000.00 can be saved in overtime from next year's budget.
- Current funds allocated for part-time dispatch position is \$16,964.00.
- The total cost including benefits for a full-time dispatch position is \$54,806.00.
- The overtime savings of \$40,000.00, coupled with the current authorized funds for a part-time position, is \$56,964.00.
- The potential savings for next year could be approximately \$2,100.00 if this proposal is approved.

**PROS**

- With the conversion of the part-time dispatcher to a full-time position, the 911 dispatch center would have two positions, 24/7 – 365 days a year coverage.
- It is the department's belief that this can be completed with no additional funding needed other than what is currently in the police department Communications budget.
- Stress on employees who are working a considerable amount of overtime will be reduced.
- Fire and police safety increased.
- Service to the community will be increased.
- Three experienced dispatchers are currently available for hire and one new trainee is currently available for hire.
- We will be able to absorb the additional call load from Star Valley more efficiently.

**CONS**

- If the part-time position is converted to full-time, the Town will be required to pay benefits, which is included in the dollar figure listed.
- The reserve dispatcher will work less hours in exchange for hours being worked by full time employees.



## Memorandum

Date: August 24, 2006  
To: Don Engler, Police Commander  
From: Martin deMasi, Fire Chief  
Subject: Part-time to Full-time Dispatcher change

The Payson Fire Department fully supports the proposed change of the part-time dispatcher position to full-time status. This proposed change would allow the PD/FD communications center to staff two dispatchers on a 24/7 basis. This is vital to public safety because dispatchers serve as the critical link between responding resources, the folks that need our services and the rest of the world. Each year the Payson PD/FD communications center processes over 2500 fire/EMS incidents in addition to the thousands of police related incidents. With its current staffing structure it is not uncommon to have only one dispatcher on duty. This situation is less than desirable because it is virtually impossible for one dispatcher to give the required attention to both agencies, especially during the increasingly common scenario of simultaneous police and fire activity. While a well-experienced and proficient dispatcher can work wonders, there are limits of human capacity.

Responder safety is an issue. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1221, *Installation, Maintenance and Use of Emergency Services Communications Systems*, states in part that a jurisdiction shall ensure that an adequate number of dispatchers are in place to effect the prompt receipt and processing of alarms. NFPA 1221 also recommends a minimum of two dispatchers for centers that process over 730 incidents annually. Furthermore, failure to provide adequate communications capacity has been listed by NIOSH as one of the top five factors in firefighter fatalities. Proper and efficient incident management procedures require an adequate communications system to support incident activities and the dispatcher is our link to make that happen on a reliable basis.

There is no doubt that this proposed change will enhance not only the efficiency and safety of our firefighters and police officers, but will add to the safety of the public as well.