

AUDIT SERVICES OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
Monday, June 13th, 2022
Virtual Meeting via Zoom 3:30 P.M.

The Audit Services Oversight Committee met at the above date and time with the following members present: Chair-Nick Long, Vice-Chair Shanell Frazer, Resident Member Matthew Ruterbories, Mayor Elaine O’Neal, Council Member Jillian Johnson, Council Member DeDreana Freeman.

Also present: Wanda S. Page, City Manager; Bertha T. Johnson, Deputy City Manager of Operations; Tim Flora, Director, Finance; Randy Beeman, Director, Durham Emergency Communication; Tangela Gibson, Assistant Director, Durham Emergency Communication; Christina Riordan, Assistant Director, Budget & Management Services; Bo Ferguson, Deputy City Manager of Public Safety; Dr. Germaine F. Brewington, Director, Audit Services Department; the Audit Services Department Staff; and other guests.

Chair, Nick Long, called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF MINUTES – April 18th, 2022

Motion was made and it was properly seconded to approve the minutes of the April 18th, 2022, Audit Services Oversight Committee meeting.

The motion passed unanimously.

SUBJECT: RESULTS OF THE NOMINATIONS SUB-COMMITEE

Vice-Chair Shanell Frazer resigned her seat as Vice-Chair of the Audit Services Oversight Committee (ASOC) effective at the close of the June 13, 2022, ASOC meeting. On June 13, 2022, Chair – Nick Long convened a meeting of the Nominations Sub-Committee, which consisted of the current Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee. The Nominations Sub-Committee met on June 13, 2022, around 3:15 p.m. The Nominations Sub-Committee recommended that Resident Member Matthew Ruterbories be nominated for the position of Vice-Chair of the ASOC. Mr. Ruterbories was asked if he would serve in this role. He accepted the nomination and the Chair reported out the result of the Nominations Sub-Committee at the start of the June 13, 2022, ASOC meeting.

SUBJECT: 911 Staffing Performance Audit June 2022

Sonal Patel, Assistant Director of the Audit Services Department gave a PowerPoint presentation on the 911 Staffing Performance Audit June 2022. She discussed the objectives of the audit: 1) to determine if the Durham Emergency Communications Center, DECC, is meeting its goal to provide timely emergency call processing; 2) to review steps undertaken by DECC to achieve

and maintain adequate staffing levels; and 3) to review the training program at Durham Emergency Communication.

Overall, the audit concluded that DECC has made efforts to increase hiring. DECC staff are aware they should: 1) address high turnover rates; 2) utilize a staffing model used by the industry to establish minimum staffing levels; 3) revisit the possibility of alternative staffing schedules; 4) reexamine the organizational structure of the Training Division of Durham Emergency Communication to make the Division more efficient and effective.

Finding 1: The Durham Emergency Communications Center (DECC) has improved 911 call answering times since the start of FY2022.

Recommendation 1 (Management concurred)

The DECC should continue its efforts to ensure that the performance measures around 911 answer times are met.

Value Added: *Risk Reduction; Efficiency*

Finding 2: The turnover rate is high.

Recommendation 2 (Management concurred)

The Durham Emergency Communication Department staff should, in collaboration with the Human Resources staff, work to reduce turnover rates. DECC staff should perform root cause analysis and address issues identified if feasible. The DECC Department staff should also perform internal studies (surveys, focus groups) to understand why employees choose to stay.

Value Added: *Risk Reduction; Efficiency*

Recommendation 3 (Management Concurred)

The Human Resources Department staff should make exit surveys mandatory for employees who separate from DECC. Data from exit interviews should be shared with DECC staff to understand the reasons for separation.

Value Added: *Risk Reduction, Efficiency*

Finding 3: Minimum staffing levels per shift were not derived using a systematic formula.

Recommendation 4 (Management Concurred)

The DECC should utilize a staffing model used by the industry to establish minimum staffing levels and work towards staffing to the established levels. In addition, they should continually monitor the adequacy of the staffing levels.

Value Added: *Risk Reduction, Efficiency*

Finding 4: The shift schedule was last reviewed in 2020; however, no changes were implemented.

Recommendation 5 (Management Concurred)

The DECC staff should revisit the possibility of alternative staffing schedules to see if better efficacy can be achieved.

Value Added: *Risk Reduction, Efficiency*

Finding 5: Risk exists that recent turnover in trainers may affect DECC's training efforts. DECC has established a plan to mitigate this risk.

Recommendation 6 (Management Concurred)

The DECC staff should continue their efforts to ensure sufficient trainers are onboard to implement their training plan. They should reexamine the organization structure of the Training Division to make the Division more efficient and effective.

Value Added: *Risk Reduction, Efficiency*

Questions/Comments:

Questions by ASOC members:

Chairman Long asked: "What is the time frame new employees to the DECC must be employed to receive the bonus? Are people just being hired and then quitting"?

Assistant Director Patel introduced Director Randy Beeman to address Chair Long's question. Director Beeman thanked the Audit staff for all their work on this process. Director Beeman stated that the decision was made by executive leadership not to have a claw back or payback requirement for those employees who were hired and participated in this training incentive; and subsequently separated from the City. The incentives were given to external and internal candidates.

Council member Jillian Johnson asked: "What was the pre-COVID turnover? How much worse has this problem gotten in the last couple of years"?

Director Beeman was not sure; but, asked Assistant Director Patel to pull up the last chart showing turn over in 12 months. Assistant Director Patel said the chart they had was from Fiscal Year (FY) 20 quarter one (which would have been July, August, and September of the year 2019). From July 2019 to June 2022 the turnover rate increased from 37% to 64.7%.

Council member Johnson asked if the 37% in 2019 was high in comparison to the City's overall turnover rate at that time?

Assistant Director Patel said she did not have that data in front of her but would get Council member Johnson that answer.

Council member Johnson stated she just wanted to get into context this specific issue of turnover in this Department versus turnover in the broader City; and how COVID is affecting everyone. It's clear it's a particular skill set the leadership needs to focus on to find the right fit of employees for the DECC.

Director Brewington asked if the City Manager had any insight into the City's vacancy compared to DECC vacancy.

City Manager Wanda Page stated that John Scott, Interim Human Resources Director, confirmed turnover is and has been significantly higher in DECC than the City-wide average. We have had our attention on this Department since it is a critical service that we provide to our residents. We are trying to use every tool in the toolbox to try to bring people on board and have people stay around for a long time. We have recently implemented a partnership with Durham Technical Community College. This past May they set up a community-based program on training individuals in the community towards this career, 911 Emergency Communication in the academic setting. This is a unique position in public safety and requires someone that can do a lot of multitasking and have a lot of passion for this work. We are happy that Durham Tech is also focused on training individuals that we can welcome into our organization and other centers to help the pipeline. Some of the issues are not just Durham specific; but the leadership continue to engage in outreach to try to attract qualified employees who want to stay in these positions.

Resident Member Ruterbories stated he had questions surrounding the academies. Member Ruterbories asked: "Are four academies with twelve spots enough to try and improve the turnover rate? Are there any expectations that the academy numbers or spots will be revisited? Is there an ability to expand the number of candidates that can go through the academy"? With an academy starting basically each quarter, knowing the City has a higher need for these positions, are we seeing any instances where someone who is hired must wait for an academy to kick off?

Director Beeman said he does recognize the risks we have at staying at a high turnover rate. Our Training Division continues to scale up and we are engaging and innovative about how that happens. Not only are we filling the training positions or slots, but we are encouraging our floor staff to use their expertise to assist in training. We have reviewed our classroom setting and question how we can streamline it or make it more efficient. We have taken training from twelve weeks to about ten weeks of training. The training timetable is based on the individual capabilities of the recruits. Some people seem to grasp the training well at about eight to ten weeks and others may take longer. As we increase the staffing levels, I believe we will look at the academy size increasing to include a greater pipeline.

There is some queue time for new hires to start the academy, it's about a two-month endeavor to bring twelve folks on board into our next academy. This timeline is due to the process and sometimes specific candidates that can be from out of town or state. Between background checks, interviews, the processing of physiological profiles, it can be about a two-month queue,

but we do have the help of Human Resources to assist in keeping communications open with the candidates.

Resident Member Ruterbories stated he had one final question. Member Ruterbories stated that the 911 Staffing Audit report generally refers to the idea of minimum staffing levels. He commented: "I wonder if the department considers minimum staffing levels to be optimal staffing levels; or if those are two different concepts? He stated that it is interesting how that distinction ties into what the expected output from some of these sophisticated staffing models that exist out there would look like. Member Ruterbories stated that he is just trying to understand what the implementation of a staffing model would look like and how Director Beeman and his team expect that to differ from the current model.

Director Beeman stated they want to re-evaluate the staffing model using some of the industry tools. In the process of determining the current minimum staffing requirements, they had to look at call volume per number of actual employees available at that time. With the vacancy levels we could only deal with call volume and number of employees available. We want to incorporate in the model of staffing, desired service levels along with how many staff we have available; and look at those projections. There is also a thought moving forward that we will not only use the model but also focus on model results to create float shifts (high peak shifts). Looking at the data to find peak shifts or high-volume shifts would allow us to plan and be proactive in notifying staff ahead of time to come in and assist during those high-volume or peak periods. He also stated that minimum staffing is not always optimal staffing.

SUBJECT: PROPOSED LIST OF AUDIT TOPICS FOR FY23

Dr. Brewington discussed the proposed list of audit topics for FY23. She stated that five engagement topics came from input from directors; three of the engagements are roll overs (or engagements staff could not get to in FY22 – but still rank high in the risk model); and one engagement is mandatory (the annual inventory observation audit). In summary, Dr. Brewington stated that the FY23 Annual Audit Plan consists of nine engagements. She asked if there were any questions on the proposed list; and there were none.

ASOC members approved the Audit Plan for FY23.

SUBJECT: CONTINUATION OF VIRTUAL ASOC MEETINGS

Motion was made and it was properly seconded to approve to continue virtual meetings for the ASOC meetings.

The motion passed unanimously

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to discuss.

There is no ASOC meeting in July to coincide with the vacation schedule for City Council. The next meeting is scheduled for August 22, 2022. The meeting will begin at 3:30 p.m. and it will be virtual.

Chair Nick Long adjourned the meeting at 4:26pm

Respectfully submitted,

Francisca Fabian