

**RESOLUTION NO. 4900**

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE UPDATED FAIRBANKS EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Fairbanks operates a state-of-the-art emergency communications center known as the Fairbanks Emergency Communications Center (FECC); and

**WHEREAS**, the FECC provides dispatching and call-taking services to numerous police departments, fire departments, emergency medical service agencies, and municipal agencies; and

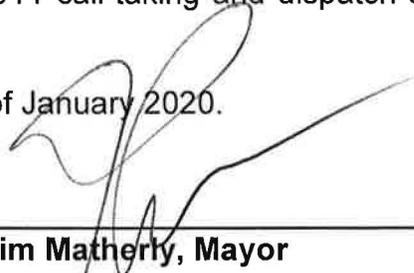
**WHEREAS**, the FECC handles approximately 75% of 911 dispatch traffic within the Fairbanks North Star Borough, Denali Borough, and the Delta Junction area; and

**WHEREAS**, the FECC 2015 business plan was supported by City Council with the approval of Resolution No. 4697, and the plan is to be updated every five years.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the City Council supports the updated Fairbanks Emergency Communications Center sustainable business plan (attached) that is premised upon the following four core foundational principles:

1. The City of Fairbanks owns and controls FECC;
2. FECC works to be a self-supporting function of City government;
3. User agencies have input in FECC governance; and
4. The City strives to provide affordable 911 call-taking and dispatch services for end-user agencies.

**PASSED** and **APPROVED** this 13th day of January 2020.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Jim Matherly, Mayor**

AYES: PASSED and APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA  
NAYS: None  
ABSENT: Pruhs  
APPROVED: January 13, 2020

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
D. Danyielle Snider, CMC, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Paul Ewers, City Attorney

**CITY OF FAIRBANKS  
FISCAL NOTE**

**I. REQUEST:**

Ordinance or Resolution No: 4900 \_\_\_\_\_

Abbreviated Title: FECC UPDATED BUSINESS PLAN

Department(s): FECC

Does the adoption of this ordinance or resolution authorize:

1) additional costs beyond the current adopted budget? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No x

2) additional support or maintenance costs? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No x

If yes, what is the estimate? see below

3) additional positions beyond the current adopted budget? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No x

If yes, how many positions? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, type of positions? \_\_\_\_\_ (F - Full Time, P - Part Time, T - Temporary)

**II. FINANCIAL DETAIL:**

<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Dispatch Operational Costs (Budget)	\$2,492,072	\$2,526,574	\$2,561,076	\$2,683,469
Dispatch Operational Joint Costs (Facility, Admin, Other)	\$672,914	\$684,793	\$696,671	\$708,550
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,164,986</b>	<b>\$3,211,367</b>	<b>\$3,257,747</b>	<b>\$3,392,019</b>

<b>REVENUES:</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
City General Fund (Police, Fire, Other)	\$2,097,258	\$2,125,015	\$2,152,773	\$2,233,129
North Pole Police & Fire Departments	\$227,850	\$248,150	\$268,450	\$288,750
Fairbanks North Star Borough (911 Services)	\$486,800	\$486,800	\$486,800	\$486,800
Local Fire Agencies	\$371,910	\$379,540	\$387,170	\$394,800
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,183,818</b>	<b>\$3,239,505</b>	<b>\$3,295,193</b>	<b>\$3,403,479</b>

Dispatch Operational Costs projections include an annual 1.5% and a one-time 4% increase in personnel costs. Dispatch Operational Joint Costs projections include an annual 2% increase. Revenue projections are based on rates and average annual calls as defined in the business plan.

Prepared by Finance Department:

Initial mb

Date 1/9/2020



# **Fairbanks Emergency** **COMMUNICATIONS CENTER**

## *A Business Plan for Sustainable Public Safety Communications*

The FECC  
911 Cushman Street  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
(907) 459-6800

<https://www.fairbanksalaska.us/fecc>  
[dispatch@fairbanks.us](mailto:dispatch@fairbanks.us)

December, 2019

**I. Executive Summary**

When our neighbors need police, fire or EMS help, the vast majority of their E911 phone calls are answered by dispatchers at the Fairbanks Emergency Communications Center – the “FECC” – which in turn dispatches resources from fire/EMS and police agencies throughout the region. The FECC is a state-of-the-art emergency communications center owned and operated by the City of Fairbanks, providing comprehensive, consolidated dispatch services to multiple user agencies. An entrepreneurial spirit – ‘build it and they will come’ – continues to drive the FECC today as it develops this third Business Plan, mapping out a path to ensuring the long-term sustainability of its business model, and the FECC’s ability to effectively meet the region’s expanding public safety communications needs.

Across the country, communities are actively consolidating public safety communications capacity. There are monetary motivations – to better leverage valuable public dollars – and also a desire to improve the availability and quality of services. As the need for its services expanded, the FECC has grown, through development of its first Business Plan in 2011, a second in 2015, and continuing with this updated 2020 Business Plan. All three business plans address the importance of developing and maintaining a sustainable business model based on a number of factors – providing the highest quality services, appropriately integrating users in advising and decision-making, increasing efficiency of operations, and through a transparent process, fairly and equitably allocating costs among all users.

What would become the FECC relied initially on a great deal of “educated guesswork” to determine how much to charge users for consolidated dispatch services, with the first User Agreements based on “good faith.” For a number of years, dissatisfaction with such an informal approach to establishing user rates was criticized from all sides. The City Council and Mayor wanted to know: “Why is the City paying so much for the FECC? Why aren’t user agencies paying a bigger share? To what extent are we subsidizing other users?” User agencies asked: “What are we paying for?” “Are we getting what we pay for,” and “Are we paying too much?” Users were less concerned about how much they pay, but that the amount they pay is equitable. In short, user agencies don’t want to subsidize other users – that’s a concern expressed by the City of Fairbanks, too. As public resources become tighter, users continue to want a highly transparent, objective measure of the true costs of doing business, and by extension a fair and equitable cost allocation method.

This 2020 Business Plan is premised upon four core foundational principles:

1. The City of Fairbanks owns and controls the FECC, and will continue to operate under its current structure.
2. The FECC must be 100% self-supporting, with no subsidy from the City.
3. User agencies continue to value a more formal advisory role in FECC operations.
4. FECC services must be affordable for user agencies.

Based on this Business Plan, every user agency, from the smallest to the largest, can be assured they are getting significant value for their emergency communications dollar, that costs passed on to user agencies are fairly and equitably determined, that they are receiving the highest quality services, and are therefore protecting those they serve.

## **II. The Organization and its Environment**

The Fairbanks Emergency Communications Center (FECC) is a consolidated public safety dispatch center providing services to two police departments, numerous fire and emergency medical services agencies, and a small number of related agencies. The FECC has operated as a separate department with the City of Fairbanks government since 2006, beginning in 2002 as part of the Fairbanks Police Department. The FECC is physically located in the City of Fairbanks Police Station at 911 Cushman Street.

The FECC is one of five, year-round (and one seasonal) public safety dispatch centers operating in the Fairbanks North Star Borough. The others are: 1) the Alaska State Trooper Dispatch Center, a state agency, 2) the University of Alaska Fairbanks Police Dispatch Center on the UAF campus, 3) Fairbanks International Airport Police/Fire Dispatch, and 4) Alaska State Forestry Dispatch, which operates only during the summer months. Two full time dispatch centers also operate on Fort Wainwright and Eielson Air Force Base.

### **Some Historical Perspective**

For decades prior to the 2002 opening of the FECC, there had been intermittent local discussions about consolidating some or all public safety dispatching services within the borough. One of the often-mentioned proposals was for a regional, consolidated dispatch center. Although there were no concrete plans in that direction at the time, when the City began designing the new police building, planners included capacity to handle a much larger dispatch center than was needed by the City at that time, or in the foreseeable future. The intention was to build capacity for the future, even though actual non-city users had not been identified. The FECC was right-sized for a consolidated and sustainable future.

Discussion of developing a consolidated, regional dispatch capacity in the community go back to the 1980s. Formally, a 2003 borough-sponsored study declared a consolidated dispatch center could be established within the newly-built FECC. On top of that, federal mandates for interoperability loomed large in the minds of planners, such that in 2004 what would eventually become the FECC began providing dispatch and related services to the City of North Pole Police and Fire Departments, but not in accordance with any borough-wide coordinated plan. Since then, with the addition of other fire and EMS agency providers, the FECC is today handling the vast majority – calculated at over  $\frac{3}{4}$  of dispatch-related traffic – from E-911 call taking, to dispatch, to call resolution, within the Fairbanks North Star Borough and beyond.

### **Current FECC User Agencies**

The FECC's current user agencies are listed below:

#### **Fire/EMS Agencies**

- Chena-Goldstream Volunteer Fire and Rescue
- Delta Area Agencies
  - Delta Junction Fire Department
  - Delta Medical Transport
  - Rural Deltana Volunteer Fire Department

- Denali Borough
  - Cantwell Volunteer Fire Department
  - Anderson Public Safety
  - Tri-Valley Volunteer Fire Department
  - McKinley Volunteer Fire Department
  - Panguingue Volunteer Fire Department
- Ester Volunteer Fire Department
- Fairbanks Fire Department
- Fairbanks North Star Borough
  - Emergency Operations
  - Hazardous Materials Response Team
- North Pole Fire Department
- North Star Fire Department
- Salcha Fire and Rescue
- Steese Area Volunteer Fire Department
- University Fire Department

**E911**

- Fairbanks North Star Borough E911
- City of Delta E911
- Denali Borough 911

**Law Enforcement Agencies**

- Fairbanks Police Department
- North Pole Police Department

**Other Services**

- Downtown Fairbanks Emergency Services Patrol
- Volunteers in Policing

**Prior Business Plans**

In the spring of 2010, the City of Fairbanks and the Fairbanks North Star Borough's Emergency Operations Department began discussions aimed at answering questions surrounding fairness of costs, and value associated with the FECC. The cities of Fairbanks and North Pole, and the Fairbanks North Star Borough, jointly retained and provided solid direction to the consulting firm Information Insights to conduct a comprehensive Workload Analysis fully describing the actual workload of the center. The main question was how much of which tasks were being undertaken on behalf of each user. Information Insights found that 18% of FECC tasks were for E-911 Call Taking, 46% for Dispatching, 27% for Records tasks, with Other Tasks taking up nine percent. With the Workload Analysis completed, the City of Fairbanks engaged Alaska Management Resources, Inc., a local planning and consulting firm, to develop a business plan for a sustainable FECC. An initial Business Plan completed in 2011 was substantially updated in 2015. This document presents an update to the 2015 Business Plan.

### III. FECC Cost Allocation Model

The FECC provides regional dispatch services for police/fire/EMS users that include computer-aided dispatch (CAD), records management and reporting, automatic and conventional paging, radio dispatching, E911 call taking, fire and police alarm monitoring, digital call logging and other administrative tasks for users. To ensure that allocation of costs to users is appropriate and fair, the FECC, in partnership with the Mayor's Office, Finance Department and user agencies, developed a new model that enabled the FECC to fully cover its costs and allocate charges to all user agencies. The projected total cost to operate the FECC in FY 2020 (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31) is \$2,956,888, which supports 22.5 full-time equivalents (FTEs).

Identifying the true costs of operating the FECC continues to be central to implementing a solid, forward-thinking, long-range business plan for the FECC. In 2011, the FECC began a process to more fairly and equitably allocate among all users the true costs of providing public safety communications in the area. True cost is a function of direct and indirect costs, as well as joint facility costs. In the 2015 Business Plan, the FECC, assisted by current users, the Mayor's Chief of Staff, and the Finance Department developed a new cost allocation model based on a modified "ala-carte approach." Under the model, user agencies pay on the basis of call volume and the specific services they receive from the center. All existing and any new police and fire agencies pay for a "General Services" package, and can choose to pay for a number of "Specialized Services."

The 2015 cost allocation model provided information to existing agencies about how much they needed to pay for services from FECC, and established a framework allowing new agencies to contract with FECC for services – to know what they will have to pay to "buy-in" – based on three service categories: 1) E911 Call Taking; 2) General Services; and 3) Specialized Services. Through this current plan, an Initiation Fee for new user agencies is also implemented

- 1. E911 Call Taking:** Currently, E911 call-taking fees allocated by the Fairbanks North Star Borough fund the portion of time allocated to call taking activities occurring before dispatching to appropriate emergency responder agencies, with the charge based on the number and costs of call takers needed to provide 24-hour coverage. At the FECC a minimum of five call takers is necessary, translating to 8,760 staff hours each year, or 1,840 hours per call taker. The total amount of call taking is deducted from the FECC operating costs before individual agency cost allocations are determined for user agencies. An annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) is applied to the agreement with the borough, as well as a 10% indirect rate. It is the intention of the city to work with the borough in order to ensure that all costs associated with E911 call taking, including extensive training required of all dispatchers, are covered in future agreements.
- 2. General Services:** The General Services portion of FECC services is much like a basic cable television package in that it includes the foundational channels every subscriber gets. For the FECC, the basic General Services package includes the many various activities generally associated with a police/fire/EMS call.

General Services include the following:

- Call taking
- Determining primary response agency/agencies, including initiating Automatic Mutual Aid, and other mutual aid
- Dispatching user agencies
- Emergency Fire/Medical/Police Dispatching
- Tracking apparatus times
- CAD entry
- Staffing call-backs
- Response Plans set up and maintenance
- Alpha paging set-up
- Alaska State Trooper notification/updates
- Red Cross notifications
- Pertinent FNSB notification
- Golden Valley Electric Association notification/updates
- Addressing other requests from user agencies

Charging for General Services is determined by call volume, meaning the number of police/fire/EMS calls dispatched by FECC for each user agency. Event-based call volume has been determined to be the most appropriate, consistent, and equitable method to calculate agency cost allocation because it is objective and easily verified. Billable call volume is based on the prior two year's audited call volume.

- **Fire/EMS Calls:** These calls tend to have a longer duration and are therefore charged out at \$70 per call, based on call-volume increments. This represents a \$10 increase over rates established in the 2015 Business Plan – if there is one call per year, then the rate for Generalized Services will be \$70. At a call volume of 200, a Fire/EMS agency will be charged a rate of \$14,000, and so on:
  - A Fire and/or Fire/EMS agency with 400 calls can expect to pay at least \$28,000 annually:
    - If call volume reaches 600, the agency can expect to pay at least \$42,000
    - If call volume reaches 800, the agency can expect to pay at least \$56,000
    - If call volume reaches 1,000, the agency can expect to pay at least \$70,000, and so on

Fire/EMS agencies that respond into the City of Fairbanks on any call, including automatic or requested mutual aid, will not be charged – that per-call charge will be covered by the City of Fairbanks. With the exception of such responses into the City of Fairbanks, each responding user agency will be assessed a per-call charge for each response. For instance, for a call that falls in both North Star's fire service area and North Pole's EMS response area, both user agencies would be assessed the per-call fee. The reasoning behind this is that FECC still has to dispatch, track times, respond to agency requests, etc., for all agencies involved in a call.

- **Police Calls:** Such calls, which are of higher volume but shorter duration, are charged out at a lower rate than Fire/EMS – at \$35 per call. That dollar amount represents an increase of \$5.00 over the 2015 rate. For the Fairbanks Police Department the per-call rate is slightly higher – at \$40 – owing to the increased utilization of dispatch staff and other in-house administrative duties. At 1,000 calls, a non-FPD police agency would expect to pay \$ 35,000, whereas FPD will be charged \$40,000.
  - A non-FPD police agency with a call volume of 2,000 would expect to pay at least \$70,000
  - A non-FPD police agency with a call volume of 3,000 would expect to pay at least \$105,000
  - A non-FPD police agency with a call volume of 4,000 would expect to pay at least \$140,000, and so on

The adjusted fee schedule for General Services is simply structured, allowing new and existing user agencies to accurately project what they will be charged during the fiscal year, again based on audited call volumes from the prior year. For future contracts, a CPI – Consumer Price Index adjustment – will be applied annually, or per contractual agreements with specific user agencies.

3. **Specialized Services:** The FECC currently offers a variety of specialized services to user agencies, including Police Records Management System, Police Mobile Field Reporting, Police Administration Call Taking and Mobile Computing Application. Like the enhanced cable television package – paying extra for HBO, Showtime, etc. – user agencies can choose from a variety of “premium services,” for which they will pay extra, on top of the fees for Generalized Services. Fees charged to agency users are based on the actual use and costs to the City of Fairbanks for each service, license or user. The FECC can offer other specialized services, with all associated costs borne by the requesting agency.
4. **One-Time Initiation Fee:** Any NEW fire, fire/EMS, police or other agency joining the FECC as a user agency will be assessed a one-time Initiation Fee of \$2,000, payable prior to beginning to receive services. This flat fee will cover the costs associated with the transition and integration of the NEW agency into FECC operations.

## **V. Market Analysis – FECC Users and the Market**

The Market Analysis in a public-sector business plan is generally a mix of discussion about customers or stakeholders, what the future of a particular market may hold, and any competitive advantage. In terms of customers/stakeholders of the FECC, police and fire/EMS providers are primary:

**Police.** Across the country, Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) provide combined services for police and fire/EMS, the majority of that work being generated by police calls – most of the work comes from calls initiated by dispatch through a 911 phone system, with most other calls initiated by officers on patrol. Therefore, many PSAPs are operated by law enforcement agencies. The FECC provides services to two police agencies, which make up a majority of the workload. The Alaska State Troopers dispatch out of its own center, utilizing state employees, as does Airport Police and Fire. The University Police Dispatch center operates with University of Alaska Fairbanks employees.

**Fire/EMS.** The FECC dispatches for fire departments that have a mix of fully paid, partially paid/part volunteer, and all-volunteer departments. The majority of fire department calls are EMS-related, with frequent interaction between law enforcement and fire/EMS providers. The FECC dispatchers are fully trained to handle fire and EMS calls, as well as police calls; FECC dispatchers are trained in EMD (Emergency Medical Dispatching), EFD (Emergency Fire Dispatching) and EPD (Emergency Police Dispatching), all of which adds to their overall training requirement. All FECC dispatchers are also certified by the National Academies of Emergency Dispatch.

**Other Clients.** The FECC also dispatches for Community Service Officers for the nonprofit Volunteers in Policing (VIP) organization, the Fairbanks North Star Borough - both its Emergency Operations and Haz-Mat Operations – as well as the nonprofit Emergency Services Patrol operated by the nonprofit Fairbanks Downtown Association.

While there are many user agencies, the ultimate FECC stakeholders are the citizens who may or may not know the center exists, or where it exists, or how it operates; the agencies are the “customers,” paying for the services provided by the Fairbanks Emergency Communications Center.

### **The Competition**

Although there are other PSAPs in the area, each providing some level of “consolidated” services, none provide expansive, consolidated E911 call taking and dispatching to the significant extent FECC does. Other area PSAPs are described below:

- **The University of Alaska Fairbanks Police Department Dispatch Center** provides call taking and dispatching services, primarily for the UAF Police Department. According to center management, the likelihood this PSAP will avail itself of the full services of the FECC is small in the short term, but not completely out of the question in the long term. The nature of dispatch services for the UAF Police Department is somewhat unique, however, and perhaps difficult to accommodate in the FECC environment. The potential for the UAF Police Department to become an FECC user agency is more likely as the University contemplates required capital expansion and continues to experience significant budget challenges.

- **Fairbanks International Airport Dispatch** is operated by the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities; it dispatches police and fire/EMS units for the Fairbanks International Airport Public Safety Department. Dispatchers also provide services related to security/access on the Fairbanks International Airport proper. Due to its responsibilities for tarmac access control as part of Homeland Security, and the uniqueness of Airport fire operations, the likelihood of the Airport Dispatch availing itself of FECC services is small.
- **Alaska State Trooper Dispatch**, operated under the Alaska Department of Public Safety, provides services limited to the Alaska State Troopers, Fish and Wildlife Protection, and the State Fire Marshall, covering a large region. The nature of services and coverage area, as well as current facility expansion, potential regional consolidation in other parts of the state, and ongoing state budget considerations, make a transition to the FECC unlikely.
- Both **Fort Wainwright (FTWW)** and **Eielson Air Force Base** have their own PSAPs for police and fire/EMS services, providing services similar to the FECC. However, because they both operate on active military bases, becoming an FECC customer is unlikely.
- **Other Competition:** During the development of this business plan there was mention by one user agency that out-of-state PSAPs could provide dispatching services to current FECC users. The availability of such services, and their efficacy for agencies within the region served by FECC, remains unclear, and does not figure into the development of this business plan.

While there may be limited opportunities for acquiring other PSAPs as user agencies of the FECC, there exists a healthy culture of collaboration among the existing PSAPs. The most significant growth potential for the FECC, however, remains adding agencies, and augmenting current services to existing agencies.

#### **Competitive Advantage and Strategic Position**

There are a number of factors that give the FECC a real competitive advantage as a PSAP and dispatch center providing regional, comprehensive, emergency communications services:

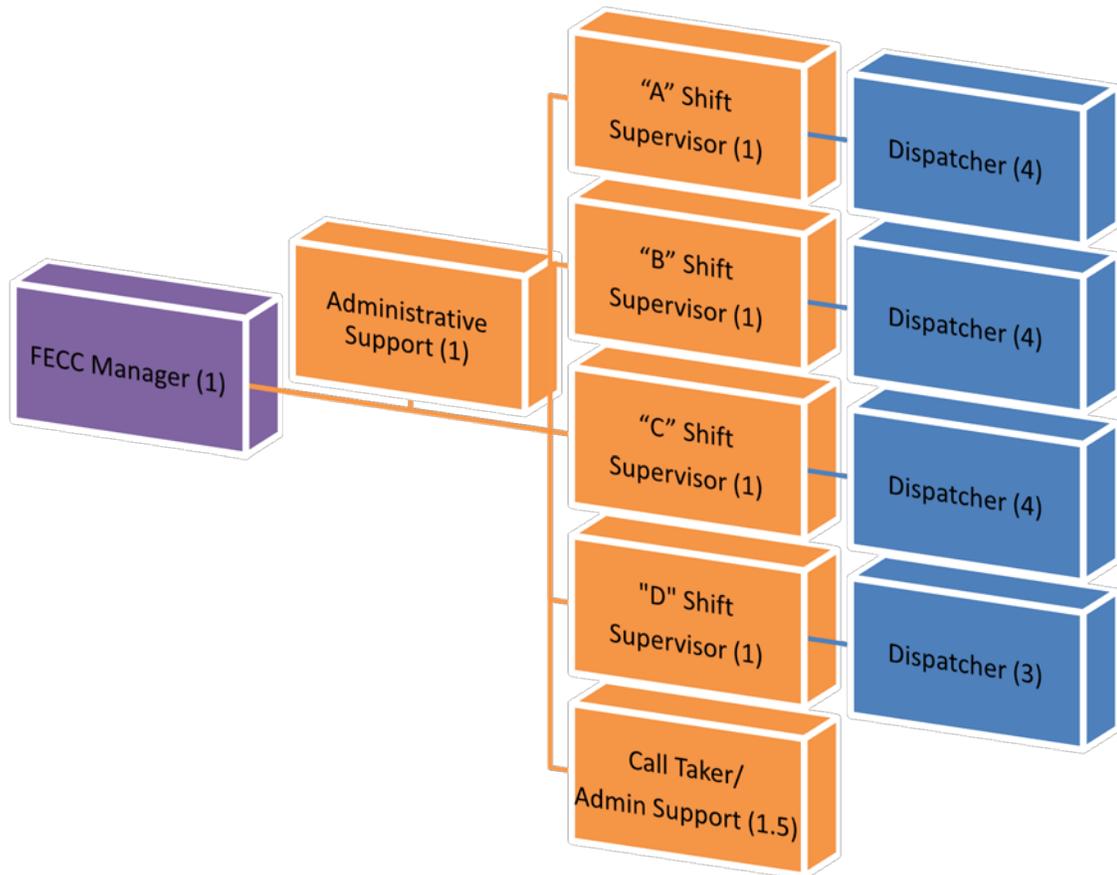
1. The building is state-of-the-art in design and technology, and has a long usable life.
2. The physical layout of the FECC can accommodate more dispatchers providing more services to more user agencies.
3. Employees are extremely well-trained, and ongoing training is robust.
4. The FECC continues to receive impressive ratings from ISO – the Insurance Services Office – which translates to reduced rates for stakeholders/customers.

#### **VI. Sustainable Human Resources Plan - Current Personnel and Projected Needs**

Maintaining a sustainable human resources infrastructure continues to be a challenge for FECC, due to a number of factors, including the growing volume and complexity of the work, increasing requirements for training/certification of staff, and the lack of a pre-trained

workforce. Projected staffing for the FECC is 22.5 full time equivalent positions (FTEs), in the following configuration, and with the job responsibilities described briefly below:

**FIGURE: FECC Organizational Chart**



- **The FECC Manager (1 FTE)** provides overall administrative leadership to the center, supervises center staff, and is the primary external liaison between the center and its user agencies.
- **Administrative Support (1 FTE)**, under the FECC Manager.
- **Shift Supervisors (4 FTEs)** provide shift supervision of dispatch operations during the four shifts – A, B, C, D – that are necessary to run a 24-hour emergency communications operation.
- **Dispatchers (15 FTEs)** are the front-line E911 call takers and dispatchers of user agency resources, including initial data entry into the CAD system. This number represents a decrease of 1 FTE from the 2015 Business Plan; that 1 FTE now lives under the FECC Manager as administrative support.

- **Call Taker/Admin Support (1.5 FTEs)**, occupies the receptionist desk in the Fairbanks Police Department building, providing call taking and other administrative support.

### **Minimal Staffing and Shifts**

The FECC configuration is based on a minimum staffing level of four dispatchers per shift. As in the 2011 and 2015 Business Plans, it is not the purpose of this section to review prior discussions of staffing at the FECC, but instead to continue highlighting the most sustainable staffing structure moving forward.

For a dispatch center with FECC's current 2019 workload, the ISO makes a recommendation of four dispatchers per shift, including a dedicated call taker. Others say five per shift, not including a separate call taker. There continues to be debate nationally about those numbers, and there are two sides to the discussion – does a center establish staffing levels for the worst-case scenario or the mid-case scenario? Most agencies try to strike a balance between the two – the FECC works to strike just that balance as well.

### **Better Leveraging People Resources**

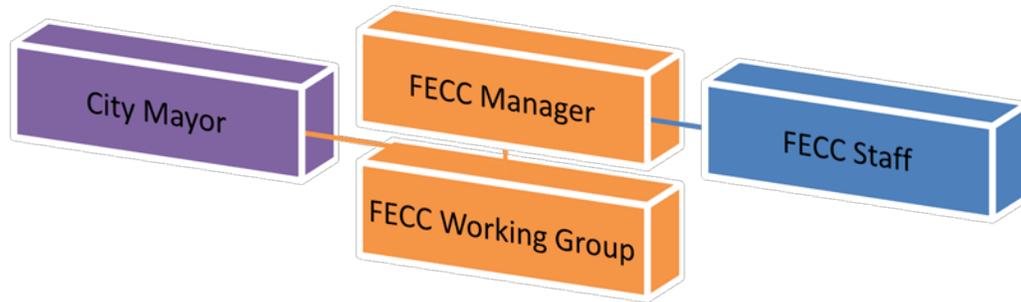
Overtime has been an ongoing problem in the eyes of city leaders since before the FECC began operations; the overtime situation has not changed significantly as of the writing of this 2020 Business Plan. On average it takes roughly eight months to fully train a new dispatcher, and only at the completion of the training is the new dispatcher considered part of the minimum staffing level. Until then, other dispatchers must fill holes in the schedule, which translates to overtime. In addition, during or often at the end of the training period, trainees decide that a dispatching job is not for them, and they leave city employment. Realistically, the entire burden for training a new dispatcher now rests with the City. On top of that, because there is not always a guarantee of a filled position at the end of the process, which translates to dispatch training costing a great deal in overtime for current staff.

## **VII. FECC Governance and Leadership**

The initial structure of the Fairbanks Emergency Communications Center was as a division within the Fairbanks Police Department, with day-to-day operations being the responsibility of a Deputy Police Chief. While the structure was effective for a start-up operation, it became clear there should be greater “insulation” between the Police Department and dispatching responsibilities. It was felt that neither the Fairbanks Police Department nor the Fairbanks Fire Department should have direct control over dispatch operations.

Today, the FECC is a separate department within the City of Fairbanks, reporting to the City Mayor, through the Chief of Staff, who is responsible for all executive-level operations and leadership staff. The Center Manager exists at the same level as the Police and Fire Chiefs, Public Works Director and IT Director. The figure below illustrates the span of control for the FECC, and placement of the FECC within the overall City of Fairbanks' infrastructure.

**FIGURE: FECC Placement within City of Fairbanks Infrastructure**



Under the current structure, decision-making regarding FECC operation rests with the FECC Manager, who solicits advice on day-to-day operations from user agencies through an FECC Working Group. The FECC Manager reports to the City Mayor, through the Chief of Staff. The current structure also lends itself to significant overlap between the FECC and other components of the City infrastructure, including the Mayor's Office, Chief of Staff, Police and Fire Departments, Finance Department, IT Department, the City Attorney, and the City Clerk's Office.

#### **Current Key Management Decision Makers**

Kristi Merideth, FECC Manager, has over 16 years of experience in the field of emergency dispatching. After being hired as an Emergency Dispatcher in 2003, and then being promoted to Dispatch Lead in 2006, Kristi took on a very important role in 2018 as FECC Manager. Kristi holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice. During her career, Kristi has participated in several special assignments, many related to educating other public safety employees. These assignments included Alaska Public Safety Information Network (APSIN) instructor for the UAF CTC Law Enforcement Academy, Emergency Communicator Training Officer for FECC, APSIN Terminal Agency Coordinator for the Fairbanks Police Department, and representative on the City of Fairbanks Public Safety Commission. Kristi has also been involved in many volunteer activities in the community and has been the coordinator for the Run from the Cops 5k charity run for several years.

#### **The FECC Working Group**

Based on a recommendation in the 2015 FECC Business Plan, the ad-hoc (temporary and sporadic) FECC User Council was replaced with a formalized FECC Working Group, operating under a set of Operating Principles. The FECC Working Group is composed of one member appointed by each user agency; members must be in a leadership capacity within their agencies. Unlike the User Council, the structure and function of the Working Group is more formal, with a leadership structure based on having a Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary; members have specifically articulated roles and responsibilities, as well as a decision-making process. Operating Principles for the FECC Working Group appear in Appendix A of this document. Like the original User Council from the 2011 Business Plan, the Working Group retains its advisory role, but with a more robust decision-making process and mechanism for meaningful and productive interaction with FECC management.

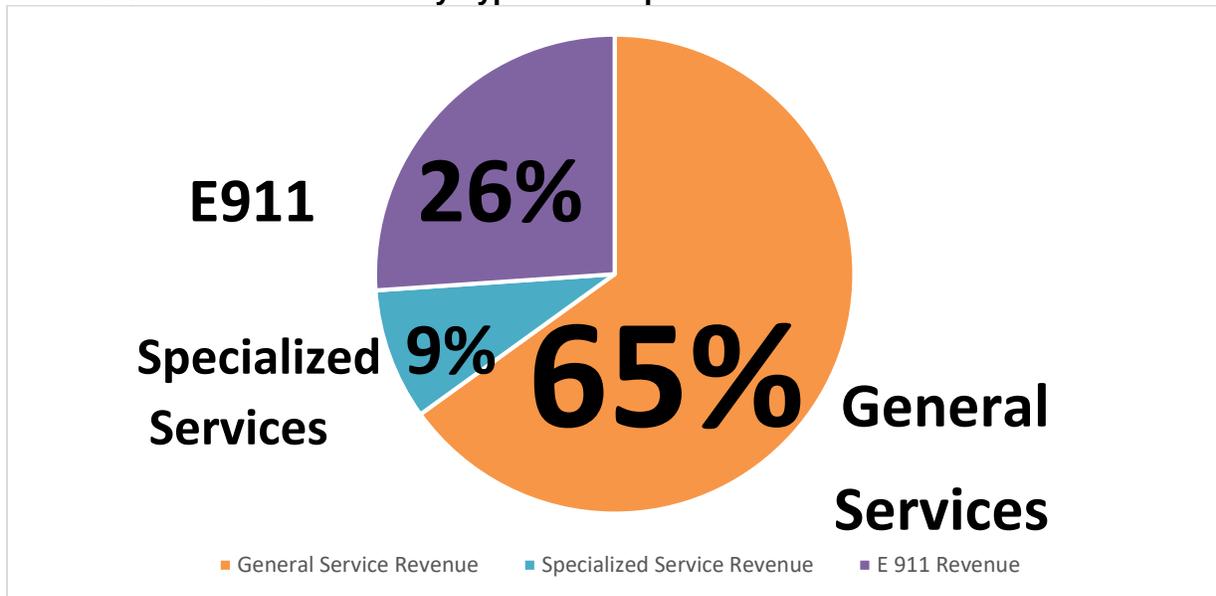
**Other Structural Considerations and Annual FECC Review**

Within this Business Plan it is important to note that over the course of the FECC’s life, a number of user agencies have inquired about the efficacy of pursuing a different organizational structure, one that provides greater independence and autonomy for the center. While the 2015 Business Plan identified a number of potential structural options for a different FECC, through this 2020 Business Plan city leadership is not interested in pursuing any other structural options. In lieu of any such long-term change, the city will complete an annual review of FECC operations, and share with user agencies, in addition to continuing utilization of FECC Working Group. This annual review process incorporates another “check and balance” to ensure users have a meaningful advisory role in FECC management and leadership.

**VII. The FECC Budget and Sustainable Revenue**

FECC management and city leadership remains committed to continuing development of a revenue stream that covers the unit’s operating expenses, including paying for the 22.5 FTEs required for full staffing, while at the same time growing a sustainable revenue base that does not require the City of Fairbanks to subsidize FECC operations. The current projected budget for Fiscal Year 2020 FECC operations (January 1 – December 31) is \$2,956,888, with revenue coming from three sources, presented in the figure below by the proportion of total revenue:

**FIGURE: FECC Revenue by Type and Proportion of Total**

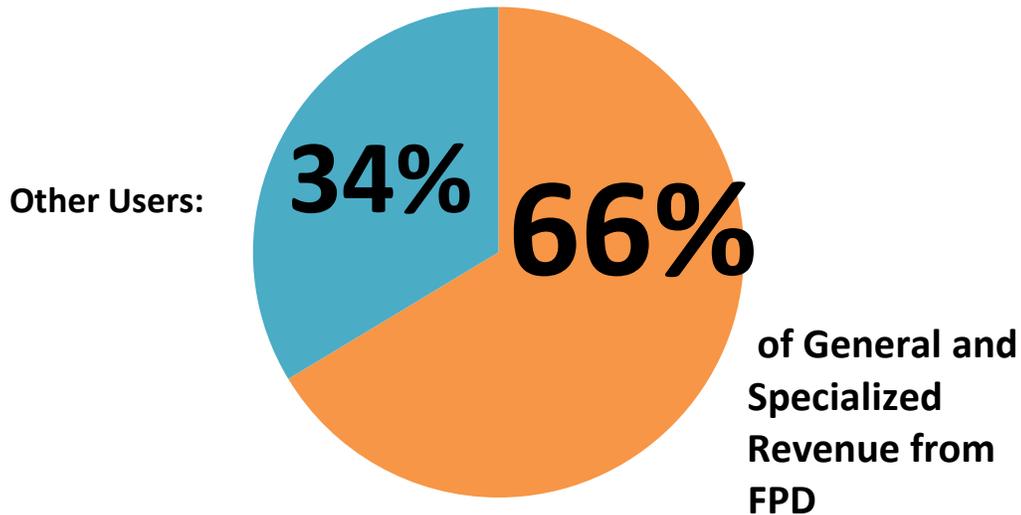


**General and Specialized Service Revenue**

Nearly three-quarters of revenue for the FECC is generated by services offered to user agencies. Of the revenue coming from General and Specialized Service Fees, roughly two thirds, or 66%, is paid for by the Fairbanks Police Department, which makes it by far the FECC’s primary user. Combined, including the Fairbanks City Fire Department, all other

users make up the remaining 34% of General and Specialized Service Revenue. The City of Fairbanks Fire Department generates close to 12% of total revenue.

**FIGURE: FECC General/Specialized Service Revenue – Fairbanks City Police Proportion**



**VII. Conclusion**

Sustainable, consolidated, effective public safety communications is not a luxury – it is a necessity. There is little question - nationally and locally – that the need for comprehensive 911 call-taking and dispatching is growing. The reasons for that growth are many, but in our communities, as the population in Fairbanks and surrounding areas continues to grow and to age, coupled with extensive military build-up over the next five years, so too does the demand for expanded police, fire and EMS services. There is no “one size fits all” approach to emergency communications, just as there is no “silver bullet” for deciding what the perfect public safety communications infrastructure looks like. But it is clear that continuing to build a more sustainable emergency communications infrastructure through the FECC remains essential to meeting the expanding public safety needs of our communities. With the recommendations of this document in hand, the City of Fairbanks has a solid plan for maintaining a sustainable emergency communications infrastructure – with the right mix of services, a diversity of user agencies, appropriate human resources structure, a mechanism for seeking advice from user agencies through the FECC Working Group, as well as a solid, tested process for applying a fair and equitable pricing structure for all users, utilizing a reasonable and defensible cost allocation methodology.

## **Appendix A: FECC Working Group Operating Principles**

### **Article I. Name**

The name of this entity shall be the Fairbanks Emergency Communications Center Working Group (the “Working Group”).

### **Article II. Purpose and Duties**

**1. Core Purpose.** The purpose of the Working Group is to reflect and communicate the needs and interests of the FECC’s many user agencies to FECC Management and City Leadership.

**2. Duties.** In order to meet the Working Group’s Core Purpose, the duties of the Working Group are to:

- a) Inform themselves with regard to public safety communication issues and policies, especially as they relate to FECC operations;
- b) Bring the concerns and issues of FECC user agencies to FECC management;
- c) Become aware of FECC operations and the interest of its many user agencies.
- d) Advise FECC management with regard to operational goals and service delivery;
- e) Participate in FECC Strategic Plan and Business Plan development.

**3. Manner of Acting.** Providing advice to FECC Management can take the form of simple resolutions or other informal guidance, based on a Consensus Model of Decision-Making.

**4. Responsibility of FECC Management.** While FECC Management is not bound by recommendations and guidance coming from the Working Group, in situations where FECC Management does not fully follow the Working Group’s other direction, FECC Management must fully inform the Working Group about the reasons behind such action.

### **Article III. Membership**

**1. Number.** The Working Group shall be composed of one member for each of the FECC’s user agencies. Working Group members are to be in positions of leadership within each user agency.

**2. Designated Seat.** The FECC Manager will serve as a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Working Group and will not be part of the Working Group voting membership.

**5. Appointment of Working Group Members:** Each user agency will have sole responsibility for appointing new and any replacement Working Group members.

### **Article IV. Officers**

There shall be a Chairperson, Vice-Chair and Secretary of the Working Group, elected annually by a majority vote of the full Working Group. If necessary and appropriate, a Nominating Committee shall submit a Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary slate for nomination and election at the final meeting of the year.

The duties of the officers will be as follows:

- The Chair will be responsible (when present) for presiding over Working Group meetings, appointing committees, determining “Chair Rules,” and other duties as determined by the Working Group.
- The Vice-Chair shall serve as Chair in the Chair's absence.
- The Secretary shall be responsible for submitting meeting minutes to the Working Group.

**Article V. Meetings**

**1. Number.** There shall be at least four meetings of the Working Group held each year.

**2. Quorum.** More than **50%** of the members of the Working Group shall constitute a quorum.

**3. Attendance.** Each Working Group member is expected to attend all regular meetings.

**Article VI. Conducting Meetings**

The initial meeting of the Working will be conducted according to an informal interpretation of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised. Upon appointment of a Chair, the Chair will establish ground rules about appropriate decorum for meetings and have them stand as “Chair Rules.” A simple majority of council members may override any standard or procedure established by the Chair for the conduct of the meeting.

**Article VII. Open Process**

The Working Group will operate in a manner that is open and informative, in accordance with City of Fairbanks ordinances, regulations and policies.