

Information Item

Date: January 14, 2022

To: Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

From: Patrice Toney, Assistant City Manager

Subject:
Information on City/County Fire 911 Merger and 911 Center Co-Location

Strategic Focus Area: Safe and Secure Community
Strategic Objective: Improve Public Safety Service Quality
Strategic Plan Action Item: No
Key Work Item: No



The City has been working with Forsyth County on a project to co-locate the personnel and equipment resources that receive and process 911 calls for the two jurisdictions in a space at the County's Public Safety Center. Currently, 911 calls for Fire and Police in the City are received, processed, and dispatched by WSPD telecommunicators. Emergency medical requests for service are received by WSPD telecommunicators, transferred to Forsyth County Emergency Services for processing, and transferred back to the City for dispatching. This results in a delayed notification of fire resources responding to medical emergencies in the City. The current arrangement also delays the notification of automatic and mutual aid resources during multi-agency fire responses.

In addition to the challenges created when 911 calls are received at two Emergency Communications Centers (ECC), the City's ECC does not comply with Category IV of the North Carolina Building Code or with recommendations contained in National Fire Protection Association 1221 Standard for the Installation, Maintenance, and Use of Emergency Services Communications Systems. These requirements and recommendations include wind and seismic resistance, snow load capacity, plumbing robustness, vibration tolerance, lightening protection, and staff support amenities. The Forsyth County Public Safety Center meets these requirements.

Co-location is planned to occur in two phases. Phase 1, expected to take place during the first quarter of 2022, will be to transfer City Fire communications to Forsyth County Emergency Services. This will reduce the transfer of medical calls by half and will eliminate the notification delay for automatic and mutual aid fire resources.

Phase 2, likely to occur in 18 to 24 months, will involve remodeling and upfit of space in the County's Public Safety Center and moving WSPD telecommunicators to that location.

When this project is completed, the City's telecommunicators will be located in a safe, compliant facility, and customers in both the City and the County will realize the benefits of efficiencies in how 911 calls are received, processed, and dispatched.

Processing times for 911 calls will be shortened and response times will be reduced, which will result in quicker intervention by Fire and Police responders at emergencies.

Staff will keep the City Council updated as the project progresses, and a request to consider approval of an interlocal agreement and lease agreement with Forsyth County will be brought forward at an appropriate time.