



Broward County Chiefs of Police Association

*Lauderhill Police Department
6279 W. Oakland Park Blvd.
Lauderhill, FL 33313*



May 29, 2019

Board of County Commissioners
Broward County Government
115 S. Andrews Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

Re: Position Statement of the Broward County Chiefs of Police Association, Consolidated E911 Communications System

Dear Honorable Mayor and County Commissioners:

This Position Statement has been adopted by the Broward County Chiefs of Police Association (BCCPA) as part of our continuing effort to provide the best Regional Communications Services to Broward County. Our statement is presented to ensure the long-term stability of the Regional Communications System and so all of its components remain intact with the highest levels of service to our community.

In summary, for more than two years we have raised concerns related to the County Administration's interference in operational decisions, negatively impacting public safety and the lack of public safety experience dedicated to the County Administration's role in the consolidated emergency communications system. Therefore, the BCCPA is recommending that the County Administration's technology functions be transferred to the Broward County Sheriff's Office. This would serve to reduce the friction between public safety professionals and County Administration, improve the efficiency of decisions impacting public safety emergency communications, and ensuring long term stability of the consolidated system. Continued cooperation with County Government will remain a necessity on some matters; however, the technology decisions that impact public safety communications must rest in the hands of those public safety professionals tasked with protecting our residents, businesses and visitors.

System Governance

The Broward County Consolidated Communications System is currently managed by County Government, through the Office of Regional Communications and Technology (ORCAT). The system is further operated by the Broward County Sheriff (BSO) through a contract with Broward County Government. All municipalities within Broward County participate in the system with the exception of the City of Coral Springs and the City of Plantation.

It is the opinion of the BCCPA that this system of governance is not effective as long as the County Administration involves itself in operational decisions impacting public safety while the Sheriff has actual operational control. County Administration has no operational expertise. Equally concerning, the County Administration has not collaborated with the operational stakeholders in a meaningful and effective manner. Both the affirmative interference and lack of responsiveness to our operational needs causes excessive public safety staffing resources to be expended in what seems to be a consistently confrontational relationship.

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The implementation of the Operational Review Team (ORT), made up of representative public safety professionals tasked with protecting this community was designed to, but has not alleviated the problems. ORT was intended to finally migrate leadership on the most important decisions involving the system to the public safety professionals. This is a common governance model in consolidation of emergency 911 communication functions. However, the County Administration's ORCAT either is not responsive to the ORT or continues to frustrate the efforts of the ORT.

During the most recent Broward County Charter Review discussion in 2017, the police chiefs advocated for the creation of a Director of Public Safety Communications to report directly to the County Commission. We also advocated for the creation of a Public Safety Communications Advisory Council. During a sub-committee meeting where this issue was being discussed, the County Administrator apparently announced that she was prepared to hire a Director of ORCAT with public safety experience. Due to this public commitment by the County Administrator the police chiefs discontinued direct advocacy for the creation of these positions. It was the hope of the police chiefs that the new director of ORCAT would be able to bridge the gap and create an understanding within Broward County that the purpose of technology is to support, and not run an operational system.

Unfortunately, the hire resembles a bait and switch tactic; the new director of ORCAT is actually responsible for ORCAT and the Broward County Emergency Management Division, both previously having been separate, full time positions. This consolidation of responsibilities for the newly hired director appears to have been made for cost savings while simultaneously quieting the cry for help by the chiefs, when in reality the responsibilities of each position require dedicated and focused full-time leadership. From our observation, little has changed since this hire and the engagement of the Director with the ORT stakeholders has not been adequate. In fact, the Director rarely attends the ORT meetings.

Operations

The predecessor to ORCAT was actually a joint operation of County Administration and the Broward County Sheriff's office. As a result, public safety operational consulting with Broward County had been in existence since the early discussions related to consolidating the regional public safety applications, even prior to the technological component of the system moving from the Broward County Sheriff to Broward County Government. This consulting was primarily done by the Sheriff's Office employees' direct engagement with the public safety professionals within Broward County.

Once ORCAT moved from the Sheriff's Office to county government the level of operational consultation dropped drastically. The public safety professionals, who best know operations were regulated to being recipients of whatever service the County intended to provide. Many of us were told that since the county "owns" the system, the county will make the decisions. This sentiment remains in effect today.

As a result of the distrust between all stakeholders and in an effort to improve service, Broward County hired an outside consultant to analyze the regional system. This consultant provided three public reports that identified many areas needing improvement. One of the recommendations was to form operational review teams due to the recognition by the consultant that the county was interfering with operational decisions best left to public safety professionals; the consultant concluded that the police chiefs had allowed this interference to continue. In an effort to regain control of the operations of the system, the BCCPA coordinated the creation of the current Operational Review Team (ORT). ORT is comprised of three police executives from the BCCPA and three fire executives from the Fire Chiefs Association of Broward County (FCABC). The ORT also includes one city manager from the Broward County City Managers Association (BCCMA).

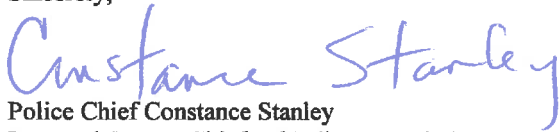
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Broward County has been a roadblock to progress at all steps of the development and progress of the ORT. County administration disputed the joint nature of the ORT, has disagreed and refused to accept the workflow process that the ORT has developed, and currently does not provide meaningful interactions with the group through ORCAT, or its director, as evidenced by his attendance at only one (1) meeting of the ORT since his hire.

The Broward County Chiefs of Police Association recognizes that the Broward County Consolidated Communications System is not working collaboratively with the public safety professionals, nor is it as efficient and effective as it can be. This will only happen when one entity, with public safety expertise, is responsible for the leadership and management of the system.

The Broward County Chiefs of Police Association supports the Broward County Consolidated Communications System and all of its components, properly funded and in its entirety, be placed with the Office of the Broward County Sheriff. The police chiefs stand ready to assist with facilitating this change in the most expeditious manner and in the best interest of public safety within Broward County.

Sincerely,



Police Chief Constance Stanley
Broward County Chiefs of Police Association

Cc: Ms. Bertha Henry
Broward County Administrator

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