



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 21-500, **Version:** 1

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### **ITEM TITLE:**

Consider authorizing the City Manager to reorganize the Emergency Communications Department to include the reclassification of department positions with necessary pay adjustments, the installation of a new shift schedule, adding a Deputy Director position, and the implementation of new policies and procedures specific to the Emergency Communications Department.

**INITIATOR:** Dewayne Burk, Deputy City Manager

**STAFF INFORMATION SOURCE:** Dewayne Burk, Deputy City Manager and Jessica Carter, Emergency Communications Director

**BACKGROUND:** The City of Lawton's Emergency Communications Department has been struggling to recruit and retain employees. Recently, due to an already depleted staff and coupled with the fact that several dispatchers were either ill or exposed to COVID19, we were forced to utilize employees across several city departments to help staff our 911 Center. The City's staffing issues are further complicated by our current compensation package, the employee's shift schedule which limits employee time off, employees forced to work overtime due to depleted staffing numbers, and a lack of sufficient internal policies. These issues have not only affected employee recruitment and retention but have also affected employee morale.

Staff has compared our Emergency Communications Department's compensation package to several similarly sized municipalities as well as our neighboring Ft. Sill community and found that our compensation package was one of the lowest paid. Coupled with the fact that we are a standalone community not located in a metro area, we are limited to a smaller pool of available applicants.

To combat these ongoing issues, staff recommends reorganizing our Emergency Communications Department by reclassifying positions to include pay adjustments that would move our dispatchers into the top tier of cities within the state of Oklahoma. This increase would allow Lawton to compete with the salaries of similarly sized areas, bringing the starting annual salaries of employees to just over \$19 per hour. In addition, a 2-2-3 12-hour work schedule consisting of four teams of employees will be implemented, giving a more favorable schedule that allows for more employee time off. A Deputy Director position would be created to provide additional leadership and assist in much needed quality control for the center. Finally, a set of policies and procedures specific to our Emergency Communications Department will be implemented to provide direction to employees and create greater consistency of service.

**EXHIBIT:** Excerpt from The Novak Report

**KEY ISSUES:** N/A

**FUNDING SOURCE:** City of Lawton Cellular Service Fee, with Comanche County taking responsibility for 20% of the salaries of E911 employees.

**STAFF RECOMMENDED COUNCIL ACTION:** Authorize the City Manager to reorganize the Emergency

Communications Department to include the reclassification of department positions with necessary pay adjustments, the installation of a new shift schedule, adding a Deputy Director position, and the implementation of new policies and procedures specific to the Emergency Communications Department to assist with employee retention and better serve the Lawton community.