



CITY OF ATLANTA


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TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Leslie Ward 

DATE: October 6, 2014

SUBJECT: Implementation of Audit Recommendations: Atlanta Fire Rescue Department and Atlanta Police Department

We follow up on previous audits to assess the extent to which responsible officials have taken timely, appropriate corrective action in response to audit findings and recommendations. The city charter requires my office to report on completed audits, major findings, management's corrective actions, and significant findings that have not been fully addressed.

We followed up on three recommendations issued to the Atlanta Fire Rescue Department and four recommendations issued to the Atlanta Police Department from two audits: *Atlanta Fire Rescue Staffing* (October 2011) and *E911 Communications Center* (April 2013). The recommendations range in age from 17 to 35 months old. Management agreed with all recommendations and planned to implement them in six months to five years; for two of the recommendations management stated implementation was under way. We conducted this follow-up in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Our methods included:

- obtaining and reviewing departments' responses and data submissions to understand how management addressed each audit recommendation
- reviewing prior follow-up work related to recommendations

The Atlanta Police Department implemented all four recommendations we assessed. The Atlanta Fire Rescue Department implemented two recommendations and is working on the

other recommendation we assessed from these reports. As a result of our follow up, we are closing six recommendations and leaving one recommendation open for future follow up. Appendices A and B summarize our assessment of each recommendation.

Generally accepted government auditing standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

We appreciate the courtesy and cooperation of city staff throughout the audit. The team for this project was Brad Garvey and Jamie Amos.

Cc:

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Tangela Williams, Director, Council Staff
Dexter Chambers, Director, City Council Office of Communications
Bernard Thomas, Policy Analyst, Public Safety Committee
Reggie Grant, Policy Analyst, Finance/Executive Committee
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Attachment A:

Audit Recommendations Remaining Open

	Report Title and Date	Recommendation	City Auditor Analysis	Implementation Status
1	<i>Atlanta Fire Rescue Staffing</i> (October 2011) Management Agreed Expected Implementation Date: 1 to 5 years	The fire chief should target additional resources – personnel and equipment to underserved areas and to stations with more out-of-area responses.	The Atlanta Fire Rescue Department opened Station 22 in fiscal year 2013 in an area we identified in the audit as underserved. The department's strategic plan proposes additional new stations and facility renovations that are also consistent with our recommendation. The plan continues, however, to identify increasing apparatus staffing levels to a minimum of four to a truck, which is not consistent with our recommendation. The department has added personnel since the audit; we have not yet assessed how the additional personnel are deployed.	In Progress

Attachment B: Audit Recommendations Closed

	Report Title and Date	Recommendation	City Auditor Analysis	Implementation Status
1	<p>Atlanta Fire Rescue Staffing (October 2011)</p> <p>Management Agreed</p> <p>Expected Implementation Date: 1 to 1.5 years</p>	<p>The fire chief should reduce turnout time through training, and measuring and reporting fire company performance.</p>	<p>The fire department is measuring and reviewing individual components of response time by station, shift, and battalion at meetings held every two weeks. While units are not meeting the NFPA benchmarks for turnout time, the department's analysis shows that turnout time has improved. Turnout time in Battalion 3, for example, decreased from 90% within 1:46 on shift A in fiscal year 2013 to 90% within 1:30 in fiscal year 2014. The department revised its internal benchmark to 90% within 1:50. The NFPA benchmark calls for 90% of EMS responses to turn out within 60 seconds and 90% of fire and special operations responses to turn out within 80 seconds.</p>	Implemented
2	<p>Atlanta Fire Rescue Staffing (October 2011)</p> <p>Management Agreed</p> <p>Expected Implementation Date: Under way</p>	<p>The fire chief should reiterate and enforce procedures to ensure that unit reports entered into the reporting system are completed promptly and accurately.</p>	<p>The department's revised policy on fire incident reporting continues to identify responsibilities to ensure prompt completion of unit and incident reports. All reports are required to be completed within the same work shift as the incident and all units that arrive on scene of an incident are required to complete a unit report.</p>	Implemented

	Report Title and Date	Recommendation	City Auditor Analysis	Implementation Status
3	<i>E911 Communications Center</i> (April 2013) Management Agreed Expected Implementation Date: 6 months to 1 year	The chief of police should direct the E911 Communications Center to purchase scheduling software that will allow the center to develop shift schedules that optimize staff resources.	According to the E911 director, the police department has decided to partner with the fire department to obtain the Kronos Workforce TeleStaff System, public safety scheduling software. The City Council authorized the purchase in resolution 14-R-3277 in March 2014.	Implemented
4	<i>E911 Communications Center</i> (April 2013) Management Agreed Expected Implementation Date: 6 months to 1 year	The chief of police should direct the E911 Communications Center to develop and implement shift schedules for communications staff that align staff with call workload. The center director should create staggered breaks.	According to the E911 director, the center has implemented a 10-hour power shift from 3 PM to 1 AM on the four busiest days of the week with six call takers currently assigned, and plans to implement a second power shift from 11 AM to 9 PM.	Implemented
5	<i>E911 Communications Center</i> (April 2013) Management Agreed Expected Implementation Date: Within 6 months	The chief of police should direct the E911 Communications Center to require communications staff to properly record their status in the Positron system, eliminating any un-coded time.	According to the E911 director, center supervisors are monitoring the status of call takers to ensure that their status is properly recorded in Positron. The director told us that the center has requested additional status parameters be incorporated in the next 911 telephone system upgrade, planned for September 2014.	Implemented
6	<i>E911 Communications Center</i> (April 2013) Management Agreed Expected Implementation Date: Under way	The chief of police should direct the E911 Communications Center to continue to reinforce the existing call dispatching procedures and monitor dispatch times to ensure that call takers continue to transfer information to dispatchers as quickly as possible. Examine individual staff performance times and use the results to target training.	According to the E911 director, the center continues to reinforce its revised dispatch procedures through coaching, supervision, and training. Performance metrics as of March 2014 showed that 53% of priority 1 fire calls were processed within 60 seconds, which is a significant improvement from the original audit. As of February 2013, the center dispatched about 8% of priority 1 fire calls within 60 seconds. The NFPA benchmark is to dispatch 90% of calls within 60 seconds. The center director said that	Implemented

	Report Title and Date	Recommendation	City Auditor Analysis	Implementation Status
			the center is also exploring technology enhancements such as pre-alerting to further improve call processing times.	