FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE: THE MERGER OF PATERSON EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

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AGENCY

- Roughly 200,000 population

- Overall 442 Staff

- Fire Department oversees with Command Staff

- OEM Central Dispatch is comprised of 52 personnel with a Director as the Head.

- Handles 250,000 calls annually for police, fire and EMS.

- The EMS individual Units are within the top 3 busiest in the country.

- The Fire Department Engine Companies fall in the top 10 in the nation.

- The Police Department crime rate is ranked in the top 50 most crime riddled Cities in America

THE PURPOSE OF THIS CAPSTONE IS TO MERGE THE FRACTURED EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS FOR THE CITY OF PATERSON POLICE, FIRE/EMS AND DPW TO REDUCE DELAYS IN DISPATCHING EMERGENCY UNITS AND END DUPLICATION OF EFFORTS AS IT PERTAINS TO CALL TAKING RESPONSIBILITIES.

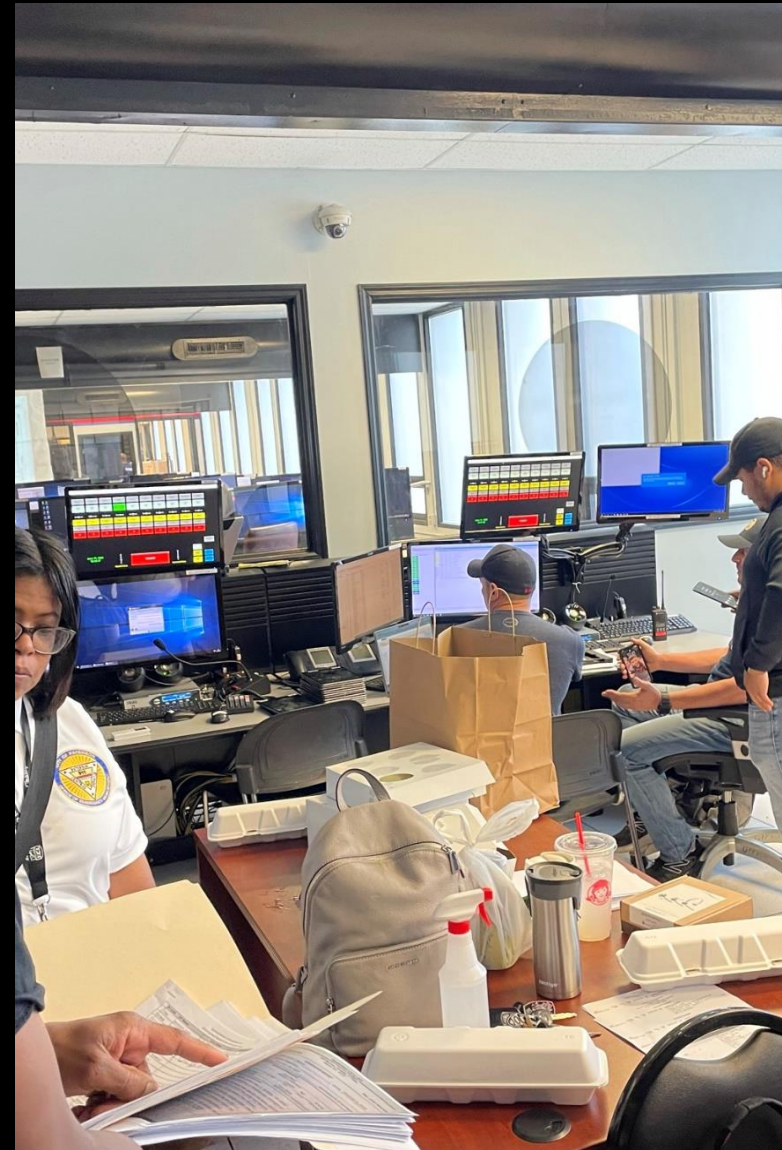# Failure to Communicate: The Merger of Emergency Communications for the City of Paterson

Task Name	Start	End	Duration (days)
Proposal	1/14/2021	1/20/2021	6
Ordinance	1/20/2021	2/20/2021	31
Merge Budget	2/20/2021	3/1/2021	9
Restructure	2/20/2021	3/14/2021	22
CAD Upgrade	1/14/2021	6/15/2021	152
Gap Facility	1/14/2021	10/1/2021	260
Construct Buidling	1/14/2021	10/1/2021	260
Merge FD/PD	6/15/2021	6/19/2021	4
CBA Negotiation	2/20/2021	7/1/2021	131
IT Staff Merge	2/20/2021	6/15/2021	115
MDT Upgrade	1/14/2021	6/15/2021	152
Contract Renewals	1/14/2021	6/10/2021	147
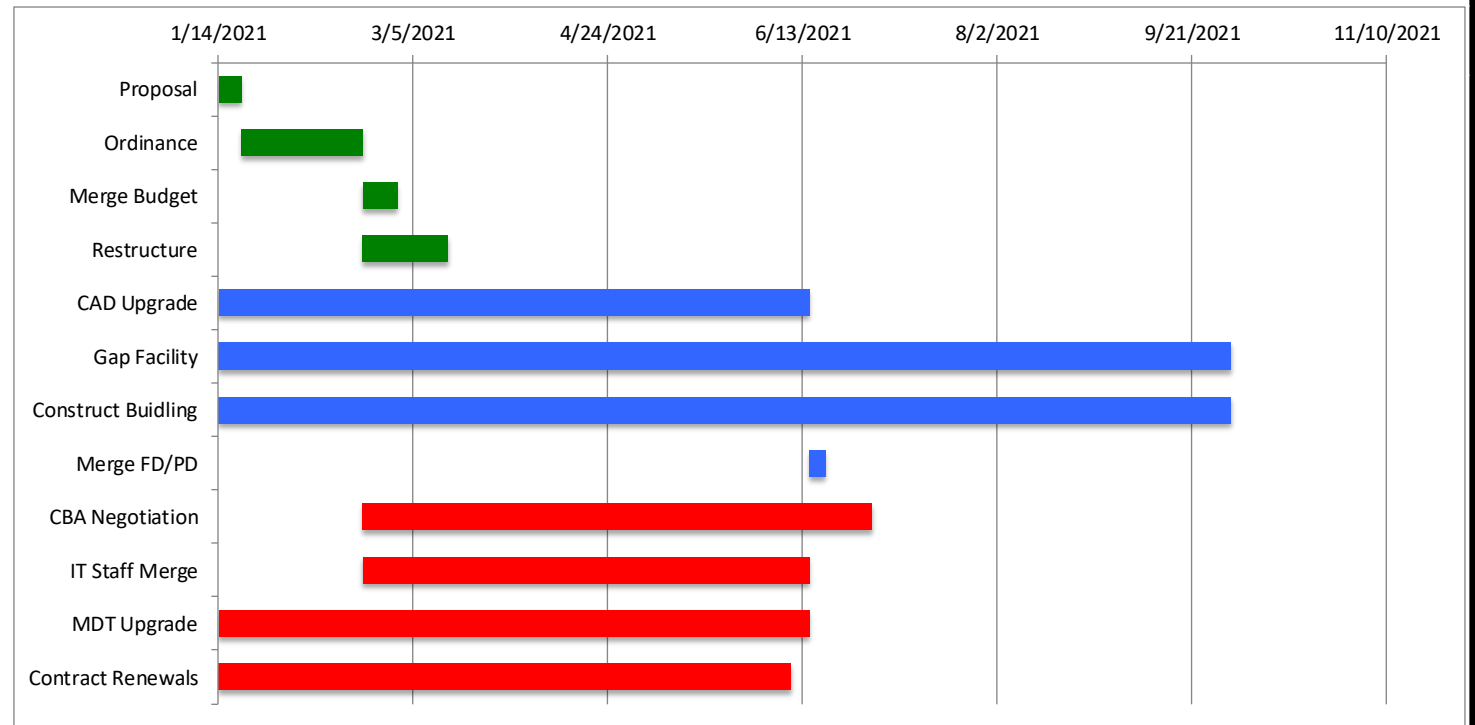
LITERATURE

- City of Paterson Ordinance

- City of Paterson Budget

- Office of Emergency Telecommunications Services for the State of New Jersey

- Association for Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO)

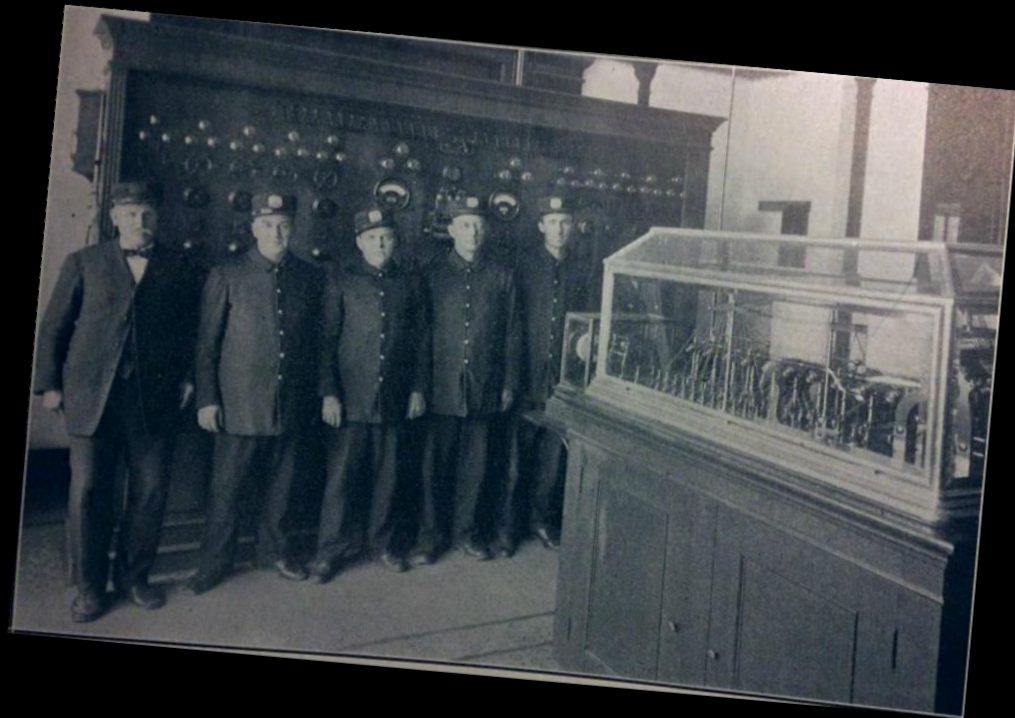- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

https://www.nj.gov/911/
City Budget PDF
https://www.apcointl.org/
https://www.nfpa.org/codes-and-standards/all-codes-and-standards/list-of-codes-and-standards/detail?code=1225

PROJECT INSTRUMENTS

- Interviews
- Google Forms to 60 Members

https://www.patersonfirehistory.com/communications--fa.html

RESULTS OF INTERVIEWS:
1. ALL STAFF FELT UNDERPAID.
2. STAFF FELT OVERWHELMED BY THE NEW CAD AND DESIRED MORE TRAINING.

3. STAFF FELT UNDERAPPRECIATED AND WANTED MORE INPUT IN SCHEDULING

RESULTS

Condensed Payroll & Costs

- Pared down from 70 staff to 52 via attrition and Police Officer transfer

- Hired 20 Per Diem to increase shift coverage

- Reduced cost for Salary from $2.1 million to $1.2 Million

- Reduced duplication costs

- Able to merge lease of portable radios for Police & Fire; $2.1 Mill.

Efficient Resource Management

- Defined career path created proper supervision of staff

- Move to new CAD System utilizing GPS ensures rapid response of units

- Police & Fire/EMS Dispatching now back to back in the communications room. Better cross information

- Better defined police resources in CAD led to more specific deployment of specialty resources

- Ida was first real test; A+

Facility Upgrade

- New Center brought the Division into PEOSH Compliance

- Upgraded chairs and consoles make daily work more comfortable

- Hi Tech server with fiber optic lines sped up services

- Personal headsets add to hands free communications

- Increased cleanliness in time for COVID

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Short Term
- Merge Staff
- Combine Costs
- Reduce response times
- Increase resource awareness

Long Term
- Move to separate facility
- Gain accreditation
- Regionalize

Cost Savings
- Reduced budget by over $1 million

https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/careers/soft-skills/communication/
https://www.istockphoto.com/photos/long-term-goals
https://www.istockphoto.com/photo/1000-dollars-in-100-bills-in-a-mans-hand-close-up-on-a-dark-background-hands-holding-gm1227594879-362119193?utm_source=unsplash&utm_medium=affiliate&utm_campaign=category_photos_top&utm_content=https%3A%2F%2Funsplash.com%2Fimages%2Fthings%2Fmoney&utm_term=money%3A%3Alanding-pages-aggressive-affiliates-v1%3Aexperiment

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Scan all 911 calls and radio transmissions

- Review response times and adjust CAD and policy for same

- Perform evaluations and corrective action plans

- Read public commentary

- Add CISD for our staff subsequent to hi stress calls

- Add stress tool to interviews

MEASURED SUCCESS

- Cost reductions will be monitored in budget

- Response time reduction will be monitored on a virtual dashboard and monthly, quarterly and annual reviews to improve service.

- Increased morale will be witnessed through reduced attrition and sick time use.

- With better metrics through merged systems, focus areas will be watched.
  - Shooting heat map
  - Building Fire patterns
  - Narcan high use mapping

https://nj1015.com/car-of-missing-paterson-woman-found-with-body-in-backseat-cops-say/

LESSONS LEARNED

People

- What you think is good for people might not meet their needs. Beta test policies and purchases that directly affect people.
- Must pay better
- Accepting a prior Organizations way of doing things must be anticipated better.
  - Use of Sick Time
  - Contract interpretation
  - Loose management
  - Wild west attitutde

Places

- A significant focus must be on layout and flow of a Comms Center.
- Moving into someone else's building really becomes encroachment. Even though this is a stopgap move, be more open to their suggestions.
- New surroundings, even within the same structure, is extremely stressful. Get more morale boosters in place for staff to reduce stress.

Things

- Technology is beyond my understanding and a greater trust of IT professionals is key.
- People do not work at your expected speed. Whatever deadlines you set, triple them.
- People do not read anything anymore. Must read it to them and reinforce through training.
- Anticipate major budget impacts to occur and fully budget for them. If you think you covered it all, you're wrong. Keep digging.