

item # 7

**Carson City  
Agenda Report**

**Date Submitted:** March 11, 2008

**Agenda Date Requested:** March 20, 2008

**Time Requested:** 10 minutes

**To:** Mayor and Supervisors

**From:** City Manager

**Subject Title:** Presentation, discussion and action to accept the findings of the City Manager's Citizen Ad Hoc Committee formed to address the Board of Supervisor's Goal on Public Safety Services and to direct the City Manager to bring an action to the Board for the placement of a ballot question to increase ad valorem taxes for Public Safety funding.

**Staff Summary:** In 2007, the Board of Supervisors adopted a goal to "Establish a citizens committee to discuss and review current public safety related operations and develop recommendations for ensuring quality public safety services can be provided in the future within the City's current and/or future revenue structure." An Executive Summary of the findings of the committee regarding current operations, findings, and needs for both the Fire Department and the Sheriff's Office are attached for your information. Based on the findings of the committee, it is the City Manager's recommendation that the Board of Supervisors consider placing a question on the next general election to increase the ad valorem tax to provide additional needed funding for the Fire Department and the Sheriff's Office.

**Type of Action Requested:** (check one)

Resolution

Ordinance

Formal Action/Motion

Other (Specify)

**Does This Action Require A Business Impact Statement:**  Yes  No

**Recommended Board Action:** I move to accept the findings of the City Manager's Citizen Ad Hoc Committee formed to address the Board of Supervisor's Goal on Public Safety Services and to direct the City Manager to bring an action to the Board for the placement of a ballot question to increase ad valorem taxes for Public Safety funding.

**Explanation for Recommended Board Action:** The findings of the committee, based on weeks of testimony from the Fire Department and the Sheriff's Office, indicate that the current service levels will decrease to unacceptable levels unless steps are taken to secure additional funding for both agencies. The findings indicate that an additional \$2 Million plus is needed by the Fire Department to augment staffing, an additional \$4 Million plus is needed for Fire Department equipment and facilities, and an additional \$2 Million plus is needed to augment the Sheriff's Office staffing. It is the City Manager's recommendation that the Board consider asking the citizens for a voter override of the ad valorem taxes to provide the additional funding.

**Applicable Statue, Code, Policy, Rule or Regulation:** None

**Fiscal Impact:** None with this action.

**Explanation of Impact:** This action would not have a fiscal impact but would set the groundwork for potential future actions that would have fiscal impacts.

**Funding Source:** N/A

**Alternatives:** Do not accept the findings of the City Manager's committee.

**Supporting Material:** Executive Summary of the Report of Findings of the City Manager's Ad Hoc Committee to Study Public Safety Services.

**Prepared By:** Lawrence A. Werner, P.E., P.L.S., City Manager

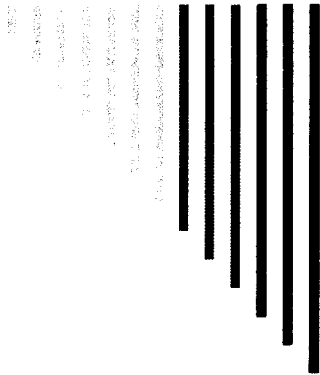
**Reviewed By:** Melanie Boukotta Date: 3-11-08  
(District Attorney)

Will Proudent Date: 3-11-08  
(Finance Director)

**Board Action Taken:**

Motion: \_\_\_\_\_ 1) \_\_\_\_\_ Aye/Nay  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Vote Recorded By)



## Executive Summary

# Citizens Ad Hoc Committee to Study Public Safety Services

# Report of Findings

March 10, 2008

### Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Areas of Study and Associated Findings	1
Fire Department Current State	2
Fire Department Findings / Needs / Fiscal Impact	2
Sheriffs Office Current State	3
Sheriffs Office Findings / Needs / Fiscal Impact	4

## Introduction

In January of 2007, the Carson City Board of Supervisors adopted the following goal:

*Establish a citizens committee to discuss and review current public safety related operations and develop recommendations for ensuring quality public safety services can be provided in the future within the City's current and/or future revenue structure.*

The Committee was formed by the Sheriff, Fire Chief and City Manager. Meetings took place over a 6 month period, beginning in October, 2007. During these meetings, the Sheriff and Fire Chief provided in-depth information related to their operations. The Committee was asked to review this information and provide feedback as to efficiency and effectiveness of current service levels and service delivery methods. This Executive Summary will highlight observations and findings of the Committee

### Committee Members:

- Ernie Adler
- Tom Baker
- Mary Burgoon
- Bob Crowell
- Donna Curtis
- Ronni Hannaman
- Bruce Kanoff
- Anne Keast, PhD
- Glen Martel
- Bonnie Parnell
- Don Quilici, Sr.
- Mike Torvinen
- Ed Smith

### Not the first study...

The Board of Supervisors commissioned a study of Public Safety Services in 2000. That study, prepared by the Abbey Group, was completed in October, 2001 and provided many recommendations regarding public safety services. Many of the findings of this Committee are consistent with those recommendations made by the Abbey Group that were not implemented.

## Areas of Study and Associated Findings

### Fire Department

- Workload
- Ambulance
- Staffing
- Overtime
- Emergency Preparedness
- Emergency Response Equipment

### Sheriff

- Operations
- Detention
- Public Safety Communications
- Administrative Services
- Administration
- Coroner
- Substance Abuse Program



## Fire Department Current State and Findings

### Carson City Fire Department Calls for Service

Calls for Service	2003	2005	2007
Fire	830	1,038	1,177
% Change		+25%	+13%
Medical	5,347	6,048	6,604
% Change		+13%	+9%
Total	6,177	7,086	7,781
% Change		+15%	+10%

### Current State

Emergency calls for service have risen 26% over the past 5 years. During this time period, there have been no additions in ambulance units or engine companies. As a result, call volumes often exceed available resources. This has brought about a dependency on mutual aid agreements. We can not continue to rely on neighboring counties to provide these services.

Removing this revenue would have a negative fiscal impact on the General Fund.

Federal resources available to combat wildfires have been reduced in recent years. In 1998, federal firefighting resources included a total of 26 apparatus. In 2007, that number has been reduced to 19. This reduction places greater pressure on the Carson City Fire Department to quickly respond to any wild-land fire.

Overtime in the Fire Department has been managed very well. Compared to other Fire Departments in the region, the Carson City Fire Department has the lowest overtime as a percentage of budget and the lowest overtime per staff person in the region.

Emergency preparedness services are critical to the future of Carson City. The Citizen Emergency Response Team (CERT) program trains Carson City residents to play important support roles during times of emergency. This has effectively allowed Carson City to stretch its resources at a time when resources can be extremely thin.

Emergency response equipment has been effectively and timely replaced in the past. Keeping up with the replacement schedule is important.

The National Fire Protection Association has reported that the benchmark for ambulance units is 1 unit for every 1,700 calls. Based upon that calculation, Carson City should have 4.3 ambulances. Carson City currently operates 3 ambulances. To meet the Association benchmarks for Engine Companies and Fire Stations, Carson City needs 2 additional Fire Stations and Engine Companies.

Privatization of ambulance services in Carson City has been discussed. Moving ambulance services to the private sector does not remove the Fire Department's responsibility to respond to all 911 calls. A private ambulance service simply provides transport of a patient, stabilized by the Fire Department, to the Hospital. Ambulance services are provided through a levy of fees. These fees help pay for the administration and overhead of the Fire Department.

### Findings / Needs

1. An additional full time ambulance.
2. A 40 hour per week ambulance to handle transport services.
3. An additional Engine Company.
4. A Community Education Coordinator to continue the Citizens Emergency Response Team Program and provide other fire prevention education programs.
5. A new fire station in the northwest quadrant of Carson City.

### National Fire Protection Association Benchmarks

	Current Carson City	NFPA Benchmark
Advanced Life Support Ambulances	3	4.3
Engine Companies	3	5
Fire Stations	3	5

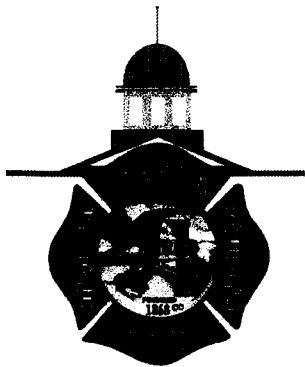
### Fiscal Impact

#### Operating

24 hr Ambulance Staffing—	\$740,000
40 hr Ambulance Staffing—	\$250,000
24 hr Engine Co.—	\$980,000
Education Coordinator—	\$71,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,041,000</b>

#### Capital

Fire Station—	\$3.5 million
Ambulance—	\$180,000
Ambulance—	\$180,000
Structure Engine—	\$405,000



## Sheriff's Office Current State and Findings

### Current State

The Carson City Sheriff's Office provides both Sheriff's and Police functions. Many of the functions of the Sheriff's office are dictated by the Nevada Revised Statutes.

The staffing level in the Sheriff's Office, in comparison with other law enforcement agencies in the region, has one of the lowest staff per 1,000 residents. In terms of Sheriff's services, Carson City has 1.69 officers per 1,000 residents, whereas, Washoe County has 3.91 and Douglas County has 2.01. In terms of Police services, Sparks has 1.26 officers per 1,000 residents, Reno has 1.70 and Carson City has 1.16.

An area of future impact to the Sheriff's Office is the addition of State highways to the City's transportation network. Carson Street is scheduled to be relinquished to Carson City upon completion of the Carson Freeway. Other streets have already been relinquished, and most likely, all streets other than the Carson Freeway and Highway 50 will be relinquished in the future. As a result, resources for traffic enforcements will have to be increased.

The Special Enforcement Team (SET) has been extremely effective in providing proactive prevention of

crime. Rather than responding to 911 calls, SET seeks out problems before they occur. There are currently two full time deputies assigned to SET.

Gang activity in Carson City has dramatically increased over the past 4 years. The incidents of Graffiti has increased from 210 report in 2003 to 779 reports in 2007. Currently, there is no designated full-time "gang unit" within the Sheriff's Office.

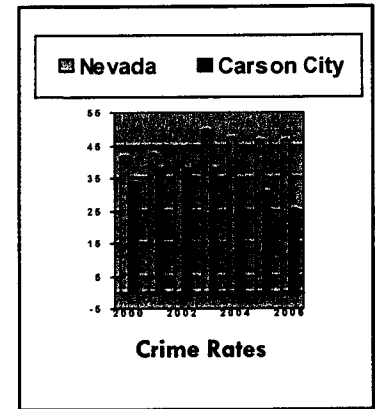
An important part of law enforcement is the crime reporting function. Official reports are required to go through extensive review and processes in order to become official records. Currently, those activities only take place during week days. Therefore, if a person is arrested Friday through Sunday during the weekend, a crime report is not available until the following Monday, which means no action by attorneys or the courts can take place until that time.

Information from crime reports is collected, documented and filed. Today, there are no personnel available to study this data and develop trends and patterns. The availability of this type of information would be of great value to law enforcement, businesses and citizens.

The Property Vault is currently staffed by one position. The Vault is a critical law enforcement function and is required to have extremely stringent control. When the one position assigned to the vault is away from work, there are no designated staff to fill in.

The Sheriff's Office operates a School Resource Officer Program. Only one officer is dedicated to this function, thus, only Carson High School is served. Statistics consistently demonstrate that children of middle school age are the primary age to experiment with drugs and alcohol. It's also the age at which violence beyond tradition "bullying" starts.

The average population in the jail has not risen over the past 4 years, however, the number of incidents in the jail have increased 51% over the same time period. Through the effective use of the services of the Department of Alternative Sentencing, prisoners that do not pose a threat to public health and safety are allowed to use other means such as house arrest, rather than serving time in the jail. As a result, the prisoners in the jail are more prone to violence and aggression. Adequate control of these inmates is crucial. The Department of Justice has recommended staffing levels for jails of the size of Carson City. Their recommendation



### SET Team Activity, July—December, 2007

#### Reports and Investigations

Trafficking	12
Drugs	26
Information	15
Warrants	13
Miscellaneous	44

### Gang Activity in Carson City

Gang Activity	Reports	Arrests	Cited
2005	756	115	0
2006	371	207	20
2007	326	327	105

### Jail Staffing

Position	Dept. of Justice Recommendation	Current Staffing
Lieutenants	1.38	1
Sergeants	7.23	6
Deputies	30.24	21

## Sheriff's Office Current State and Findings

includes a total of 39 sworn officers, while current staffing equals 28. This low level of staffing equates to there being only one "rove" or "patrol" deputy available at any one time to handle issues that arise in the prisoner areas.

Nevada Revised Statutes require that the Sheriff's office provides Court security services. Court activities have increased rapidly over the last several years. Transports of prisoners of medical and other reasons also takes sworn staff out of the jail.

Volunteers are used extensively by the Sheriff's Office. Currently, they fully staff and operate the Jail Visitation program as well as others.

Public Safety Communications is a critical service that is at the core of emergency response. With the operation of an Ambulance Service, emergency medical dispatch services are also required. These services are more intensive and take more time per call. The National Fire Protection Association sets standards for dispatch staffing. A total of 3 operators and 1 supervisor should be on staff at all times. Current staffing levels do not

allow for this level of staffing at all times.

The Sheriff's Office is required to provide process serving services. The demand for these services call for an average of 55 documents to be served each day. One full time and one half time employee currently handle this volume.

Grants have become extremely important to law enforcement operations. The volume of grants have increased by 41% in the past 4 years. At the same time, the Business Office staff was reduced from 3 to 2.

The Sheriff provides substance abuse programs to the Community. The most widely known program is the DARE program. Currently, this growing youth education effort is staffed by one half-time position only.

*It is clear to the Committee that the Sheriff and Fire Departments have done an exceptional job of prioritizing, reducing and streamlining to accomplish the necessary activities within a challenging budget environment. Thank you for reading this Executive Summary.*

<u>Findings / Needs</u>	<u>Fiscal Impact</u>
1. Expand Traffic Unit	<b>Operating</b>
2. Add additional shift to SET	Traffic Unit - \$258,000
3. Create a Gang Unit	Special Enforcement Team \$158,000
4. Add one position to the Property Vault	Gang Unit \$574,000
5. Provide for crime report services 7 days per week.	Vault staff \$46,000
6. Provide a Crime Analyst to analyze crime data.	Records operations to 7 days/week \$44,000
7. Add 1 School Resource Officer.	Crime Analyst \$44,000
8. Add sworn staffing to the Jail to provide additional control over inmates, adequate security for courts and adequate staffing for transports.	School Resource Officer \$79,000
9. Provide regular staff to manage Visitation Program.	Rove / Patrol Deputies for the Jail \$791,000
10. Provide the recommended minimum staffing for the Dispatch.	Support Specialist for Visitation Program \$46,000
11. Move 1/2 time civil process server to F/T.	Operators for Public Safety Communications Center \$250,000
12. Replace the position in the Business Office that was recently reduced.	Civil Process Server to full time \$23,000
13. Move 1/2 time Sub-	Accounting Technician for Business Office \$46,000
	Substance Abuse Counselor to full time \$43,000
	<b>Total \$2,402,000</b>
	<b>Capital</b>
	6 vehicles \$150,000
	<b>Total \$150,000</b>

