

**Review of Public Safety Services  
Indian River Shores, Florida  
June 2014  
DRAFT**



**POLICE AND FIRE/EMS OPERATIONS**

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C E N T E R F O R P U B L I C S A F E T Y M A N A G E M E N T

**Submitted by:**

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# The Association



## **International City/County Management Association (ICMA)**

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) is a 100 year old, non-profit professional association of local government administrators and managers, with approximately 9,000 members located in 32 countries.

Since its inception in 1914, ICMA has been dedicated to assisting local governments in providing services to its citizens in an efficient and effective manner. Our work spans all of the activities of local government – parks, libraries, recreation, public works, economic development, code enforcement, Brownfield's, public safety, etc.

ICMA advances the knowledge of local government best practices across a wide range of platforms including publications, research, training, and technical assistance. Our work includes both domestic and international activities in partnership with local, state and federal governments as well as private foundations. For example, we are involved in a major library research project funded by the Bill and Linda Gates Foundation and we are providing community policing training in Panama working with the U.S. State Department. We have personnel in Afghanistan assisting with building wastewater treatment plants and have teams in Central America providing training in disaster relief working with SOUTHCOM.

The **ICMA Center for Public Safety Management (ICMA/CPSM)** is one of four Centers within the US Programs Division of ICMA providing support to local governments in the areas of police, fire, EMS, Emergency Management and Homeland Security. In addition to providing technical assistance in these areas we also represent local governments at the federal level and are involved in numerous projects with the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security.

ICMA/CPSM is also involved in police and fire chief selection; assisting local governments in identifying these critical managers thru original research we have conducted identifying the core competencies of police and fire managers and providing assessment center resources.

Our local government technical assistance includes workload and deployment analysis, using our unique methodology and subject matter experts to examine department organizational structure and culture, identify workload and staffing needs as well as industry best practices. We have conducted over 175 such studies in 32 states and 135 communities ranging in size from 8,000 population Boone, IA to 800,000 population Indianapolis, IN.

# The Project



The Center for Public Safety Management (CPSM) was retained by the Town of Indian River Shores to conduct a review of the Town's public safety department. Specifically the town was interested in understanding the implications and effects of a budgetary decision made several years prior to utilize part-time firefighter/paramedics and part-time police officers (called "per diem" employees) to supplement the core of triple trained (police, fire, medic) full-time personnel.

This decision by the then sitting town Council was designed to reduce the cost of the public safety department. The Town of Indian River Shores, prior to this staffing change had been a model for the "public safety concept" operating successfully a fully consolidated agency where all personnel were triple trained. In addition to being trained as firefighters, Indian River public safety officers all were trained as driver/engineers who allowed each of them to operate and maintain the Department's apparatus. In fact, the Indian River Shores Public Safety Department was routinely visited by other communities seeking to pursue a consolidation of their emergency services. The Department's motto "one call does it all" summed up the capabilities of the agency quite well in that any member of the Department was trained and equipped to respond to whatever emergency a citizen faced the it law enforcement, medical or fire. The agency is accredited by the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation.

The Department recently purchased and took delivery of a new fire engine and a new "Quint" with a 75 foot ladder.

In conducting our analysis we reviewed in detail numerous documents and budgets provided to us by the Town Manager, conducted two site visits an interviewed the town manager, the director of public safety and the public safety Lieutenant. We also spoke several times with representatives of ISO concerning the town's current and future ISO rating. Additionally, we met in person with members of the Town Council and also conducted telephone interviews with the Council members.

This review produced the following observations.

- The adoption of the part-time program reduced the budget of the public safety department by \$

- Initially the program was implemented fairly successfully in that there was adequate interest on the part of County firefighter/paramedics to work the part-time jobs. The Department had little difficulty in filling the part-time positions. This resulted in a fairly constant core of individuals working on a part-time basis to staff the Department.
- As the program entered its second and third year it became increasingly more difficult to maintain a core of part-time firefighter paramedics. This required the department to expand the number of part-timers working at the public safety department in order to ensure full staffing. This resulted in a different group of individuals working on any particular day affecting both the value of public safety officers working as a team and also the ability to train adequately. (See further discussion on training below).
- It also became apparent that in the event of a countywide or regional emergency (such as a hurricane) it would be difficult if not impossible to staff the department fully since the part-time personnel would be required to report to their full-time jobs on an extended assignment.
- In reviewing the staffing of the Department with particular attention to the uniform patrol/fire/EMS function we found that only 10 members of the department assigned to that function were full-time town employees. These individuals are assigned to three platoons working 24-hour shifts. Thus the balance of staffing is provided by 24 part-time or "per diem" staff members.
- The Town currently has an Insurance Services Office (ISO) Public Protection Classification (PPC) number of four based upon in October of 2007 review. Some insurance companies utilize the PPC number as a basis for underwriting property insurance policies. The PPC number ranges from 1 to 10 with 10 being the worst. Indian River Shores is scheduled to have a review conducted in the fall of 2010.
- While Indian River Shores currently has a mutual aid agreement with the Indian River County fire District it does not have an "Auto – Aid" agreement. The differences are sizable. In a mutual aid agreement the County would respond when requested, typically after firefighters have arrived on scene and sized up the situation. In an Auto-Aid situation, the

county would respond immediately without being requested, in the same manner it would respond to a call within its jurisdiction.

## **DISCUSSION**

We believe that the current situation is untenable and that absent a reconfiguration of staffing and/or service provision agreements the Indian River Shores public safety department is unable to provide the level of service to its residents and visitors that it previously did prior to the adoption of the "per-diem" approach.

The problems with the current system fall into three specific categories.

- Training
- ISO PPC Number
- Staffing

### **Training**

As discussed previously the staffing of the fire suppression function changes constantly due to the use of the per diem employees. A critical component of firefighting is that of the concept of training as a team. This becomes even more important in environment with low calls for service, which fortunately is the case in Indian River Shores. Thus, the department is not meeting commonly accepted company training which is critical for success in an actual fire suppression response. Further, due to the lack of funding to support overtime the agency is not conducting training at a qualified training facility, although there are two within Indian River County.

Given that the Department has recently acquired new apparatus, including a 75 foot Quint this training becomes even more critical in that proper use of the Quint requires a significant skill level without which could lead to serious difficulties in utilizing this equipment when needed.

### **ISO PPC Number**

This lack of training ties directly into the problems with the ISO rating. Specifically since the Department does not meet the minimum training requirements of the ISO it would appear that at the next scheduled review by ISO there could be a significant reduction in the score received. This obviously could impact insurance rates in the community.

### **Staffing**

Since the Department is responsible to respond to all types of emergencies there must be appropriate staffing to respond to simultaneous events. This would seem to indicate that at least two officers should be available on patrol at one time. And, the department should be able to respond to a fire event with not only an appropriate complement of firefighters but also emergency medical response capabilities. When the Department was staffed with fully cross trained public safety officers this was not a problem. However given that many of the employees are now only trained in either fire/EMS or law enforcement meeting these staffing requirements is problematic.

## **RECOMENDATIONS**

Is our opinion that the current model is unsustainable if the community wishes to provide the high level of service that it has in past years. Simply put, the town should either fix the current problems or get out of the business of delivering public safety services. Accordingly we have identified various options which the town may wish to explore. However, each one of these options comes with a negative impact which will be described as we review each one.

### **Eliminate the Fire/EMS service and join the Indian River County Fire District.**

This would reduce the cost of operating the Indian River Shores public safety department dramatically thus, reducing the overall town budget. However, residents would be then taxed by the fire district which has an ad valorem rate of 1.9799 which is higher than the Town's millage rate for all services of 1.4731. Accordingly although town taxes could be reduced, the actual out-of-pocket expenses for residents would increase and the town would no longer have control over its fire and EMS system.

### **Eliminate the entire public safety department, join the Indian River County fire District and contract for law enforcement services from the Sheriff's office.**

In addition to the complications described above there would be an additional cost to the town for the contract with the Sheriff's office. Further not only would the community lose control of the delivery of fire/EMS services but the law enforcement function as well. We do not know if the Sheriff's office would be interested in such an agreement or what the cost of it may be.

### **Contract with the Indian River County Fire District for fire services but continue to provide emergency medical services and law enforcement services.**

Essentially the public safety department would be reduced by some number of employees and the town would appreciate some savings. However those savings could be offset by the cost for such a contract with the County, if the County were amenable to entering into such an agreement.

**Enter into an auto aid agreement with the Indian River County fire District.**

The county has advised the town manager that they will not enter into an auto aid agreement since doing so requires reciprocity. That is, the county would expect the public safety department to respond to similar calls in the County. The public safety department is currently not staffed at a level that the County finds acceptable to enter into such an agreement. One alternative may be to purchase a one-way auto aid agreement with the County, whereby Indian River Shores is not responsible for responding to calls in the county but the county would be responsible for responding to Indian River Shores. We note that there are considerably more calls for service in the county than there are within the town and accordingly, entering into a full auto aid agreement would create a situation where the Indian River Shores public safety department was responding to calls outside of the community far more frequently than they were receiving assistance from the County.

**Restore the Indian River Shores Public Safety Department to a fully consolidated agency, appropriately staffed with necessary funding to ensure proper training at regional fire training facilities.**

Doing so would require additional funding for the public safety department to retain cross trained public safety officers to replace the current per diem personnel. Town staff has calculated the cost to do so both in this fiscal year and going forward in his shared them with town Council. We believe that the appropriate staffing would be a minimum of seven cross trained public safety officers on duty at a time. This would provide appropriate staffing for law enforcement as well as fire/EMS.

**SUMMARY**

Whichever of these alternatives the Town Council decides to implement, we believe that it is critical that the town seek a delay in the ISO review. This will provide the town with an opportunity to implement the changes so that it can be graded on how the Department will operate in the future rather than holiday has operated over the past several years.