

# A Report on the Operations and Staffing of the Jupiter Island Public Safety Department

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PUBLIC SAFETY OPERATIONS

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I C M A C O N S U L T I N G S E R V I C E S

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**ICMA**

*Leaders at the Core of Better Communities*

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

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) is the premier local government leadership and management organization. Since 1914, ICMA's mission has been to create excellence in local governance by developing and fostering professional local government management worldwide. Toward this end, ICMA provides an information clearinghouse, technical assistance, and training and professional development to more than 9,100 chief appointed administrators, assistant administrators, and other individuals throughout the world. The organization's resources and services reach thousands of local, state, and federal government personnel, academics, private sector professionals, citizens, and other individuals with an interest in effective management at the local government level.

ICMA's members represent the administrative center of professional municipal, county, and regional services that affect millions of urban and rural citizens on a daily basis and are responsible for the leadership that ensures strategic economic growth and management of public services and infrastructure planning, investment, and development. Every day, local government managers determine policy, programming, funding, and strategic decisions that impact the ability of local resources to deal with situations of all types, including the management and operations of public safety and legal departments. Local government managers serve as the "hub of the wheel," coordinating efforts and implementing strategies for maximum effectiveness and efficiency.

### ***ICMA Consulting Services / Public Safety Services***

The ICMA *Consulting Services* team helps communities solve critical problems by providing management consulting support to local governments. One of ICMA *Consulting Services*' areas of expertise is public safety services, which includes the following: organizational development, leadership and ethics, training, assessments of calls for service workload, staffing requirements analysis, designing standards and hiring guidelines for police and fire chief recruitment, police/fire consolidation, community oriented policing, and city/county/regional mergers.

## **Executive Summary**

The Town of Jupiter Island contracted with the International City / County Management Association to conduct an analysis and review of the Town's Public Safety Department (JIPSD) specifically to determine appropriate staffing and deployment levels to provide the most efficient and effective means for Providing Police, Fire and EMS Services to the community.

The department is a fully consolidated public safety agency with each member of service trained as a police officer, fire fighter and Emergency Medical Technician. After review of the list of documents requested by ICMA and a two person, two day on-site evaluation it is the reviewers recommendation that the department continue operating in this configuration since by doing so the agency can deliver the most effective first responder services. However, the agency, given its limited size and calls for service volume, must recognize that its role is that of a first responder agency and cannot, and should not, attempt to tactical operations much beyond the first responder service level.

### **Emergency Medical Services**

The Department contracts with the Martin County Fire Rescue Department to provide a 24/7 on-site Paramedic supplemented JIPSD public safety officers. All medical calls are then backed by response by a second MCFR ambulance unit. We believe that this arrangement provides outstanding EMS services to the community at a cost far less than participation in the fire district and it should be continued. We commend the JIPSD for negotiating this excellent provision of medical services.

### **Police Services**

The reviewers concluded that the department is far too specialized for such a small agency and that this specialization wastes resources and contributes to

overtime costs while at the same time making the department less flexible in responding to calls for service.

Further we conclude that the department does not fully utilize the resources of the Martin County Sheriff's Office, particularly in the areas of investigative services and the department should not attempt to operate its own detective unit since the very limited investigative workload does not warrant this expense and this limited workload prohibits the department from developing the experience necessary to conduct successful, complex follow-up investigations.

We recommend that the department be re-organized and downsized by one sworn position and that a civilian position be added. The reviewers believe that such re-organization will provide better first responder service and potentially reduce overtime significantly.

### **Fire Services**

Given the size of the agency and the extremely, limited number fire suppression calls the reviewers concluded that additional personnel to meet the "2 in, 2 out" recommendation would not be cost effective. Rather, the Department should focus its efforts on quick attack of fires utilizing newer technologies and continue to rely on mutual aid assistance from Martin County.

### **Accreditation**

The agency previously held accreditation by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. However the accreditation as allowed to lapse for apparently no good reason. We note that the department continues to display at headquarters the accreditation emblem which we believe should be removed. We further recommend that the department seek re-accreditation as quickly as possible.

## **Introduction**

After contracting with ICMA for this project a list of documents was requested by the Association to assist in the analysis of the Public Safety Department. Chief Gonzales and his staff supplied all of the requested information in a very timely and professional manner. This documentation, and the information provided by the department during the site visits permitted us to successfully complete this review of the operations of the Public Safety Department. We thank Chief Gonzalez for his assistance and cooperation.

## **Police Services**

### **Staffing**

The special relationship between the residents of the Town and the police department requires sufficient staffing to handle a wide range of duties. These duties include traditional law enforcement responsibilities such as criminal complaints, traffic crashes, traffic enforcement, directed patrol, and crime prevention. The department also handles the special needs of its residents when requested providing a very high level of service. This could include special patrols on vacant properties, welfare checks, personal contacts to assist in providing a sense of safety and security for the town's residents.

### **Review of Specialization**

The primary purpose of the Jupiter Island Public Safety Department is provision of first responder emergency services. In order to respond in a timely and efficient manner to these calls for service, sufficient manpower must always be available. The assignment of personnel to specialized units such as marine patrol and detective assignments negatively impact the department's ability to properly staff the patrol shifts in order to provide

adequate and rapid response. Further, this specialization limits opportunities for all officers to gain experience beyond just basic patrol and contributes to overtime expenses.

The department was previously on a four squad, 12 hour shift schedule with all personnel assigned to one of these squads. We recommend that the department return to that schedule and eliminate the special assignments currently in place. Each squad should be supervised by a sergeant and staffed with two public safety officers with two squads assigned to the night platoon and two assigned to day platoon. Day / night assignments can be rotated but not more frequently than 90 day tours. One additional officer should be assigned to the night shift and a second to the day shift to provide coverage in the case of vacations, sick leave, etc. This individual could receive some additional compensation for this assignment. Each sergeant would hold staff responsibilities in addition to his line duties (training, weapons, etc.). One Sergeant can be designated as a master sergeant – or the position could be elevated to Lieutenant but still performing as a squad leader – this will provide a second in command when needed for the Chief’s vacation, training, etc. There currently are several corporal positions. We believe that rank is unnecessary given the size of the agency and should be eliminated by attrition.

We believe that every PSO needs to be trained to operate the patrol boats and that assignment should be rotated, even on a daily basis, so that all personnel have the experience to perform marine patrol duties. The boats should be in the water, ready for immediate response (facing out, quick release, etc.) and should be started at the beginning of each shift). Both vessels should be on Jupiter Island – not based at a marina. Ideally they could be located at opposite ends of the island. Marine patrol can be intermittent. It is not necessary to patrol for full 12 hour shifts but always ready to respond.

Each Public Safety Officer should have appropriate training to handle follow up investigations and other special operations. Mutual Aid agreements with the Sheriff's Department could provide assistance with serious crimes or those involving protracted investigations. This relationship would provide better service to the town residents and undoubtedly would increase the numbers of cases that are solved successfully. This should not reflect negatively on the abilities of the Jupiter Island police officers. Experience indicates that the serious and complex cases are committed by persons living outside the corporate town limits. Because of limited manpower and limited investigative resources, Jupiter Island officers do not have the far-reaching investigative assets that the Sheriff's Department possesses. Serious consideration should be given to an agreement with the Sheriff to include all crime scene services.

### **Police Accreditation**

The department was accredited until 2005. The department did not seek reaccreditation at that time. Accreditation through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's Law Enforcement Accreditation program is very important to all Florida law enforcement agencies. It is particularly important to the smaller agencies in that it requires reviews of all operations and conformity to accepted police practices that will make the department better able to perform its duties. Of particular interest is the emphasis placed on high liability operations that include high speed pursuit and use of force. Strong consideration should again become accredited. The Chief is very familiar with the process and has great interest in reaccreditation. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement can be of great assistance in obtaining accreditation. ICMA would also be available to assist in the process if needed.

### **Fire Services**

Part of this study was to determine whether the department should staff to meet the "2 in, 2 out" recommendation for firefighting. That is, should there be enough personnel on duty at all times to permit an interior attack on a structure fire which would allow for two public safety officers to conduct the attack while two officers remained outside the structure to provide a rapid response to rescue the initial attacking PSOs? In addition to the four PSO's required to meet the 2 in, 2 out recommendation a fifth member would be required to man the engine's pump. This function is now being performed by the Martin County firefighter/paramedic assigned to the Town. (Another example of the outstanding agreement between the Town and the County). Thus, the minimum staffing would be approximately 4.5 personnel per shift which would require employment of approximately 19 total personnel (including the Chief) to accommodate leave time. We can see no cost / benefit basis for incurring this additional expense.

Structure fires are extremely rare occurring only once every many years. Any working fire that would require such an interior attack would be beyond the capabilities of the JIPSD – the department would need the mutual aid assistance of the Martin County Fire Department, which automatically responds to every fire call in the Town. A structure fire of this nature would require size up and hose lay which can be accomplished by the first arriving PSOs so that upon arrival of the Martin County personnel a full interior attack can begin which would include ventilation, far beyond the capabilities of the JIPSD even with the additional staffing.

We believe a far better approach would be to enhance the existing first responder fire suppression capabilities through the use of technology; specifically compressed air form systems (CAFS) and Fire Interruption Technologies (FIT). We have previously discussed these technologies with the Chief during our on-site visit and provide the following websites for

follow-up information. While outside the scope of this project, ICMA can assist in further discussions concerning these technologies.

<http://www.cafsinfo.com/>

<http://www.arasafety.com/products/arasafetypro.htm>

### **Emergency Medical Services**

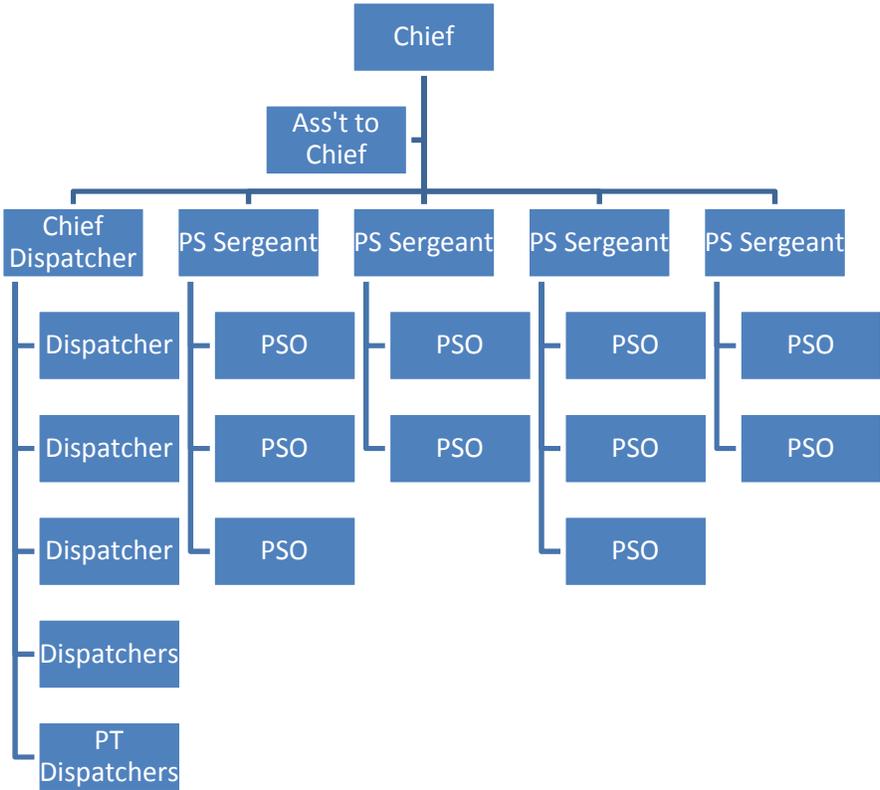
While the department provides all emergency services, certainly the most critical is EMS response. A resident of the Town has a far greater probability of requiring medical assistance than a law enforcement or fire suppression response. We have previously commented on the outstanding arrangement that the Town has with Martin County. It is our understanding that this is largely due to the diligence of the Chief and he is to be congratulated for the design, negotiation and implementation of this approach. We strongly urge the Town to continue with this arrangement which can serve as a model to other small communities throughout the state.

## **Organizational Structure**

Information gathered during the site visit would suggest that the Captain's position was created to assist the new Chief Police/Public Safety Director when he was initially appointed. As the Chief has become more experienced in his position the second in command role of the Captain position has become less critical. Further it appears that this position places an unnecessary additional level of supervision between the Chief and the first line supervisors. We believe that this position should be eliminated as an unnecessary expense and an operational impediment. This recommendation should not be considered as being critical of the Captain currently holding this position. By all accounts he has added much to the department in his long service to the town. However upon his retirement strong consideration should be given to eliminating the position, having the sergeants within the organization to report directly to the Chief. This would be a very manageable span of control.

We also believe that the department needs administrative support and recommend the creation of a civilian position "Assistant to the Chief". Ideally this would be staffed with an individual with a college degree in public or business administration or criminal justice. In addition to providing administrative assistance they would be charged with supervision of the re-accreditation effort and would handle many of the administrative tasks formerly conducted by sworn personnel, including the Captain. This is a far better alternative than funding a sworn position to handle these functions. (See Proposed Table of Organization)

**Proposed Table of Organization – Jupiter Island Public Safety Department**



## **Leadership Issues**

Leadership within any organization starts at the top. The leadership team of the town's Manager and Chief of Police appear to work well with one another. Both men are decidedly motivated and experienced. The Chief is highly regarded by the community and has an excellent knowledge of both police and fire operations. However, we believe that the Chief should interact more closely with the individuals within the department. It is our understanding that in the past the Chief was criticized for "micro-managing" the agency. Such criticism borders on silliness. The very role of a Chief in a department this size is to be closely involved in virtually every aspect of the department's operations. The Town is fortunate to have as its chief a person whose entire career has been of service to the community. He fully understands every aspect of the organization and should be imparting that knowledge on a regular basis to the members of the agency.

## **Facility and Equipment**

Refurbishing of the current facility should be given serious consideration as budget constraints ease. There are issues of space requirements that could be addressed with reconfiguring the workspace to better fit the needs of the department.

The officer's firearms, vehicles, uniforms, computers and other related equipment is in good condition and good working order. The deployment of AED's was noted as a very important factor in enhancing the response to sudden cardiac arrest further promoting the safety of the town's residents and visitors.

## **Training**

The in-service training program used by the police is accomplished while the officers are on duty. The officers use the time when they are not busy to

obtain training in the public safety building by the use of computers. All officers are current with their required Florida Department of Law Enforcement training. We believe this to be an excellent approach to the training issue.

### **Dispatch Center**

The public safety dispatch center is a very important part of the department. Even though the center is not a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) it serves a vital role in the community. The Center is staffed twenty-four hours a day. The Center's direct call number is published and is frequently used by the residents for information purposes. The Center's operators receive calls from the Martin County Sheriff's Department and then dispatch the officers to fire, police and EMS calls. It was noted that the equipment used in the center was up to date and that the operators interviewed had great pride in the job that they were assigned. The utilization of part time dispatchers employed by the Sheriff's Department is an excellent way to fill vacant dispatch positions on a temporary basis with seasoned professional personnel. In fact we recommend that this approach be expanded. Currently there are five full time dispatchers (including the chief dispatcher). A review of the staffing requirements for the center shows that the needed coverage can occur with only four full time dispatchers supplemented by part time employees. We recommend that thru attrition the full time staffing be reduced to four. A recently purchased Computer Aided Dispatch System has updated the system's reliability and efficiency.

### **Emergency Operations Plans & General Orders**

The Police Department has operational plans in place for Hurricanes and other disaster situations. These plans are current and address the needs Jupiter Island. A review of the General Orders Manual revealed no deficiencies. The manual has been updated in May of 2009.

## Summary

The Jupiter Island Public Safety Department is a well trained, well equipped and well led department. The public safety officers function very well, they are highly visible and well liked by the residents. Even though many of the officer's functions are somewhat removed from the traditional policing model their work as police officers is essential to the preserving the lifestyle and quality of life that the residents and visitors have come to expect. All of the officers interviewed have great pride in the department and in the service they provide. We believe that by implementing our recommendations, summarized below, the Department can improve those services levels even further.

- Continue with the contract for services with Martin County Fire Rescue
- Eliminate specialization with the Department.
- Contract with the Martin County Sheriff's Office for investigations and crime scene services.
- Return to 12 hour shifts in four squads.
- Eliminate the Captain position.
- Create a civilian Assistant to the Chief Position.
- Eliminate the Corporal rank.
- Insure that Marine units are always capable of immediate response and station both vessels on the island.
- Investigate the use of additional fire fighting technologies.
- Obtain police accreditation.
- Have the Chief of Public Safety work more directly with staff members.
- Refurbish the department's headquarters.
- Reduce the full time dispatcher positions to four.