

**OPERATION AND
MANAGEMENT STUDY
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF
VAN BUREN
PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT**

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I. Acknowledgements

Our work with the Charter Township of Van Buren to perform this Study of the Department of Public Safety was one of the most rewarding consulting projects we have undertaken. We were impressed with how many sincere, dedicated and genuinely nice people we encountered. Overwhelmingly, the leadership and staff of the Township worked with us in a way that was pleasant and cooperative. Our appreciation goes first to Supervisor Cindy King because of her extreme openness, energy, dedication, and commitment to the success of this Study. From the very beginning we sensed her dedication and willingness to address problem areas and confidence that they would be effectively resolved. It is easy for leaders to want to focus solely on aspects of the Township that are sources of pride, but Supervisor King and the other elected officials are to be commended for their willingness to recognize problem areas and take quick, decisive action to rectify the problems.

Similarly, it was always a pleasure working with Treasurer Sharry Budd and Township Clerk Joannie Payne, the other two full-time elected officials. Both exhibited an incredible work ethic and the courage to identify problems and then confront them.

Although our contact with the Trustees was somewhat limited, we wish to thank them for the cooperation we repeatedly received from them, and the insights and observations they willingly gave us as we conducted one-on-one interviews with them. Obviously much of the success of Van Buren Township, and especially its ability to face and resolve problems, is due to the outstanding leadership of its elected officials, as well as the dedication of its employees.

Much of our contact with Van Buren Township was through Supervisor King's staff. We especially want to thank Susan Ireland and Vicki Franzoi, both of whom gave us tremendous assistance and were a pleasure with which to work.

We received assistance from too many people to acknowledge individually, but we feel it appropriate to send a special thanks to Bryce Kelley, the Township Planning Officer; Solicitor Patrick McCauley; and Lianne Clair, the Chairperson of the Public Safety Committee.

One of our greatest pleasures in this undertaking was working with the many dedicated and professional leaders and personnel in the Charter Township of Van Buren Department of Public Safety. Between the two of us, we have over sixty-five years of experience working with law enforcement and public safety agencies. We were both extremely impressed with the personnel of the Public Safety Department, and either of us would be proud to lead the men and women of this organization. However, we believe that some of their potential is still unrealized.

As for the Police Department, we first want to thank and commend Lieutenant Kenneth Brooks. Lieutenant Brooks is experienced, well respected in his community, and one of the most willing and responsive police leaders with whom we have ever worked. Unlike some of our previous consulting projects where we encountered resistance and "foot dragging", we were repeatedly impressed by Lieutenant Brooks' actions to expeditiously implement all recommended changes he felt would benefit the organization. We were not only impressed with his willingness to implement changes but also with the effectiveness and efficiency with which he did it. It is obvious to us that Lieutenant Brooks is an asset to the Department and the community, as well as one of the "building blocks" for future success. In addition, we were generally impressed with

the efforts made by the Police Department Sergeants to quickly and cooperatively implement many of the changes they identified with Lieutenant Brooks as necessary to improve the Police Department.

We would like to thank the entire staff of the Public Safety Department, sworn and civilian, for their cooperation and hospitality. We would like to acknowledge Officer Long's talent for retrieving computer data and analyzing the information. This information had never before been available to the Department of Public Safety, and it will be the cornerstone for future analysis and program development by the leaders of the Department.

We also want to express our appreciation to the Deputy Director of Public Safety Allen M. Smolen, who endeavored to cooperate at every turn. Although he has the task of trying to run the Department of Public Safety while serving as Fire Chief and one of the two full-time paid members of the Fire Department, Deputy Director Smolen always provided time to cooperate and assist us. We also wish to extend our appreciation to the Township's Fire Inspector, Lieutenant Anthony Karver, whose energy and enthusiasm was obvious to us. We would like to express our appreciation to all of the men and women of the Fire Department who graciously gave their time to meet with us and offer their observations and opinions. Dramatic change is occurring in the Fire Department, and their observations and suggestions have played a major role in achieving this transformation.

Finally, we want to thank the citizens of the Charter Township of Van Buren, especially those who made the effort to meet with us and offer their insights and opinions. You certainly have every right to be proud of your Township, its leadership and public safety professionals - not because everything is perfect in the Department of

Public Safety but because the elected officials for the Township and the professionals in the Department of Public Safety have taken dramatic steps to correct problems within the Department, increase safety within the Township, and ensure that the Department's performance is not only professional but also effective and efficient.

II. Methodology

The methodology used in this review of the Department of Public Safety for Van Buren Township was radically different than our usual approach. In most of our previous operation and management studies, we spent most of our time researching and then preparing a report, including numerous recommendations for future implementation. We would normally spend significant amounts of time interviewing stakeholders, observing operations, and reviewing and analyzing organizational statistics, written plans, policies and procedures, employee evaluations, etc. During these other studies, few changes were implemented while we were working in the municipality, and the reports were predominantly a compilation of recommendations that could be implemented after submission of our reports.

Our experience in Van Buren was very different. First, there were a number of “fires” that needed to be addressed immediately. We quickly became immersed in analysis and resolution of several urgent problems. Because some of the problems were serious, we were pressed into helping to find solutions and implement resolutions rather than merely listing them in a report for later implementation. In many respects, we spent a significant amount of time serving as the “part time Directors of Public Safety” for Van Buren, making decisions, offering direction, and helping to implement change.

Secondly, our approach to this Study was very different because part of our charge was to assess whether the current structure, i.e. Director of Public Safety, Chief Fire Official, and Chief Police Official, was optimal for Van Buren Township, or whether Van Buren should eliminate the position of the Director of Public Safety and allow the Chief Fire Official and Chief Police Official to administer their separate departments. To

properly assess this issue, we had to determine the abilities of the top leaders and the supervisors currently leading these organizations. Part of our mission was to determine whether current personnel were capable of running the day-to-day operations, so that the new Director of Public Safety could focus most of his or her attention on being a liaison with the public, interacting with Township officials, instituting management controls, and implementing a long-term vision and plan, while providing only generalized oversight of day-to-day operations of the Police and Fire Departments. If Department supervisors currently in place were not capable of providing day-to-day management of the Departments, then a new leader of both the Police and Fire Departments would be needed. Therefore, it was imperative for us to work side by side with the leadership in the Police and Fire Departments. Watching them identify, analyze, and resolve problems enabled us to determine if they could provide the day-to-day leadership and direction that is the heart of any organization.

The third reason this Study was, by necessity, different from our usual approach was the fact that there was very little information or statistical data available for analysis in the Department of Public Safety. There were virtually no written plans to review. Policies and procedures were outdated, at best, and provided no direction to the Department employees or to us. Employee evaluations were non-existent. Normal management controls that we would routinely review, analyze, and evaluate were mostly unavailable or unrepresentative of the current state of affairs. Instead of simply analyzing past data and statistics, our job became one of helping the Department develop the data and statistics for the first time so analysis and evaluation could be done in the future. As a result, our work for Van Buren Township has created a report that is more than just recommendations for future implementation. While

recommendations for future implementation are included, this Report also includes some of the dramatic changes that have already been put in place and that, we believe, have already increased the effectiveness and efficiency of the Police and Fire Departments, and the safety of the citizens of Van Buren Township.

III. Department of Public Safety of the Charter Township of Van Buren

A. Overview of the Department of Public Safety

The Department of Public Safety in Van Buren Township consists of four sections: the Police Department, the Fire Department, Communications, and Animal Control. The highest-ranking member in the Department is the Director of Public Safety. Reporting to the Director of Public Safety are the ranking officer of the full-time paid Police Department and the ranking officer of the “paid on call” Fire Department. The ranking fire official is Al Smolen who has the title of Deputy Director / Fire Service and Deputy Director of Public Safety. During the last two periods when there was no Director of Public Safety, Deputy Director Smolen assumed the responsibilities of the Director. Deputy Director Smolen and Lieutenant Anthony Karver, who also serves as the Fire Inspector, are the only two full-time paid members of the Fire Department. At the operational level, there are two Battalion Chiefs who report to Deputy Director Smolen, although they are part-time “paid on call” members of the Fire Department.

When a call requiring response from the Fire Department is received, members of the Fire Department are paged. They respond to the fire station, obtain the appropriate fire apparatus, and then respond to the fire scene. This approach obviously provides fire service for the Township at a greatly reduced cost compared to a full-time Fire Department. More will be written regarding the fire service in Section V.

The highest-ranking member of the Police Department is Lieutenant Kenneth Brooks. Reporting directly to him are five Sergeants and twenty-seven full-time police officers. The Van Buren Police Department is a full service, 24 hours a day Police Department, having its own Communications Center and holding facility.

Also part of the Department of Public Safety is the Animal Control Unit. The Unit consists of one full-time and one part-time Animal Control Officer, and they operate the Township kennel located on Township property.

When we were hired on October 6, 2003 to conduct an operation and management study of the Department of Public Safety, many people believed that the Department was “at its lowest point in modern history”. Once again the Department was operating without a Director of Public Safety. In July of 2003 the Director, Christopher Elg, resigned after only eighteen months on the job. The position of Director of Public Safety had been vacant for seven months prior to Elg’s arrival in November of 2002.

Many people described the morale of the police officers and the firefighters as “low” and some described it “at an all time low”. This problem was undoubtedly exacerbated by the fact that the contracts for both the police and firefighters were due to expire and, by most accounts, the negotiations were not progressing very well. As we began this Study, there was certainly no question in our minds that the leaders of the Charter Township of Van Buren correctly assessed the situation when they determined that outside professional consultants were necessary and needed to be employed as soon as possible.

At the same time, there were a number of “positives” and bright spots in Van Buren’s Department of Public Safety. The vehicles and police equipment were outstanding and virtually beyond improvement. The Police Department supervisors seemed to feel somewhat frustrated and stagnant, but the supervisory staff was experienced and seemed to have a real commitment to the Police Department and the

Township. The majority of the officers were exceptionally well trained and, despite the assertions of low morale, seemed dedicated and hard working.

The situation with the fire service was both surprising and contradictory. When we were hired for the review of the Public Safety Department, very little was said about fire service, and it seemed to have been implied that little, if anything, needed to be done. Very early on we learned that, in many respects, the Fire Department was in crisis: the equipment was in serious need of upgrading, the fire stations were deplorable, and staffing for fire calls was erratic and sometimes dangerous. A number of members of the fire service described the situation as “a tragedy waiting to happen”. But in the fire service there were some bright spots, as well. Generally, the firefighters seemed to be well trained and dedicated. Also, the leadership and members of the Fire Department had worked together to develop a plan that appeared to be both effective and reasonably efficient to address the staffing crisis. For a variety of reasons, this plan was not moving towards consideration, much less adoption, but the bulk of the research and plan development had been completed.

The final, and possibly most important “bright spot” that we observed as we began our work with Charter Township of Van Buren Department of Public Safety was the obvious commitment by the Township leaders to begin addressing these problems immediately. Early in the process we met with Supervisor Cindy King, Treasurer Sharry Budd and Township Clerk Joannie Payne, as well as each of the Township Trustees. We were immediately impressed with their overall dedication to the Township, their commitment to addressing the various concerns and problems, and their general conviction that the issues would be resolved. While we detected some skepticism by a

small number of the Trustees, the vast majority seemed ready to “roll up their sleeves and get to work”.

And so that’s exactly what we did.

B. Leadership and Management within the Department of Public Safety

At the beginning of this project some Department of Public Safety personnel expressed a degree of skepticism, but we were surprised that most were willing and ready to sit down with us and offer their perspectives, opinions, and suggestions. We were also impressed by the employees’ openness and general enthusiasm. They not only seemed to care about the organization but also shared opinions and suggestions that could improve the organization, if implemented. It was apparent to us that the “raw materials” necessary for effective and efficient police and fire service were present in Van Buren Township. In addition, the elected officials seemed committed to providing excellent services for the citizens and seemed anxious to receive suggestions and input, help to fix problems, and provide whatever changes or resources necessary for the success of the Department of Public Safety.

So the obvious question was “What went wrong in the Department of Public Safety in the Charter Township of Van Buren?” Early in our work, we realized there were many contributing factors but only one major problem in the Department of Public Safety – there was literally and figuratively “**a void of leadership at the top**”. Part of the void was created because the position of Director of Public Safety has been vacant approximately seventeen months out of the last thirty-five (as of the submission date of this report 5/18/2004). As a result, there literally has been a void at the top for much of the recent period of time. We also determined that even when there was a full-time Director of Public Safety in place in Van Buren Township, little was being done to (i)

establish organizational direction and procedures, (ii) analyze organizational and individual performance, or (iii) provide general oversight and leadership to the men and women of the organization.

We believe the leadership methods and management controls that need to be present in a successful organization and that were incredibly lacking in the leadership of the Department of Public Safety for Van Buren Township are:

1. **Mission Statement.** Although it may seem insignificant, the lack of a Mission Statement for the Department of Public Safety is symbolic of the overall lack of direction provided for the Department. An effective Mission Statement, created with the help of the organization's personnel, establishes a general direction for the organization and provides general guidance for employees at all levels of the organization.

Recommendation III.B.1.1: The new Director of Public Safety should work with a cross section of personnel from the Department of Public Safety to establish a **meaningful** Mission Statement that is relevant for the employees and provides generalized direction and inspiration.

2. **Goals and Objectives.** Successful organizations provide direction to their employees and set the evaluation standards for organizational performance primarily through goals and objectives. Appropriately established goals and objectives not only position the direction for the organization but also provide necessary interaction between the leadership and personnel at various levels of the organization. It provides a built-in evaluation process to determine where the organization needs to go and whether it is successful at getting there.

There was no evidence that the Department of Public Safety in Van Buren Township ever established goals and objectives. This failure, along with the lack of management controls described below, began to “paint a picture” of why the “raw materials” and potential present in the Department of Public Safety were not being realized.

Recommendation III.B.2.1: The leadership and supervision in both the Fire and Police Departments should participant in leadership training that explains the role and importance of goals and objectives, including how they are established and used to enhance organizational performance.

Recommendation III.B.2.2: The supervisors and managers in both the Police and Fire Departments, after training, should develop reasonable goals and objectives for their respective work units that are realistic, yet inspiring to the members of that work unit. The personnel of each work unit should be included in the formulation of the goals and objectives. Going forward, the goals and objectives should be reviewed at least annually and modified when needed. Special attention should be focused on whether specific objectives were reached and, if not, why not.

Recommendation III.B.2.3: When the new Director of Public Safety is appointed, he or she should meet with the unit supervisors in the Police and Fire Departments and review the goals and objectives established for those units. By doing this, he or she will become familiar with the direction of each unit within the Public Safety Department, the goals and objectives that they hope to reach, and the challenges they have encountered or expect to encounter in striving to reach those goals and objectives. This

process will provide an outstanding vehicle for the new Director to become familiar with the units within the Police and Fire Departments, as well as its key supervisory personnel.

Recommendation III.B.2.4: After the new Director of Public Safety becomes thoroughly familiar with the goals and objectives of the various units within the Police and Fire Departments, he or she should work with the ranking officers of the Fire and Police Departments to develop goals and objectives for the Department of Public Safety.

Recommendation III.B.2.5: Once goals and objectives have been established by the new Director of Public Safety, he or she should meet with the Township Supervisor to finalize goals and objectives for the Department of Public Safety. This will not only ensure that the goals and objectives for the Department are implemented but, more importantly, will also establish performance-oriented communication between the Director and the Township Supervisor. In addition, it will go a long way to ensure that the Director and the Township Supervisor agree on priorities, direction, and performance goals – something that evidently was not occurring in the past.

Recommendation III.B.2.6: Once the Director and the Township Supervisor have agreed on the goals and objectives, the goals and objectives should be posted at locations within the Department or otherwise promulgated to the members of the Department.

Recommendation III.B.2.7: A date for an annual meeting between the Director and the Township Supervisor should be chosen well in advance

of the Township's annual budget process. At that meeting, the previous year's goals and objectives should be reviewed and goals and objectives established for the upcoming year. In addition, the Township Supervisor should provide the Director with a performance appraisal based, in part, on the accomplishment, or failure, of attaining the goals and objectives set for the previous year.

3. Statistics and Performance Data. One of the most glaring “voids” in the former leadership of the Department of Public Safety was the total lack of available statistics and data to help assess workloads, organizational performance, personnel and equipment needs, trends, and future concerns and requirements. For example, when we interviewed Former Director of Public Safety Christopher Elg, we were stunned to hear him say he had no idea how many calls for service the Police Department responded to in a year. As Director of Public Safety, Elg undoubtedly was expected to spearhead the Public Safety Bond Issue that went before the voters of Van Buren Township. We couldn't help wonder how he could do that job effectively without knowing the “call volume” in the Police and Fire Departments. Director Elg stated that in spite of numerous attempts on his part to obtain the data, the computer was unable to provide the necessary numbers. We mention this point not as a criticism of Director Elg but as a poignant example of the lack of vital statistics and data for the Department of Public Safety of Van Buren Township. Other important statistics and performance data were also totally unavailable to the leaders of the Police and Fire Departments and the Director of Public Safety. These statistics, such as “response times” in the Police and Fire Departments, are routinely

available in most public safety organizations and are absolutely essential for leaders to determine organizational performance and needed changes. To attempt to lead and manage the Department of Public Safety without these critical statistics and data is like trying to pilot a 747 airplane from Boston to Los Angeles without having the benefit of instruments or gauges. In short, it probably can be done but certainly cannot be done effectively, efficiently or safely.

SPECIAL NOTE: Prior to our beginning work in Van Buren Township, Lieutenant Ken Brooks assigned Officer Mike Long oversight responsibility for the computer system that should provide these statistics and data. Since then, some of this essential data has started to become available to the leadership of the Public Safety Department.

NOTE: When we started this project, it seemed to us that in the absence of a full-time Director of Public Safety, Deputy Director Smolen and Police Lieutenant Brooks were reluctant to take steps to correct problems that they observed or that we brought to their attention. However, after working with them for a relatively short period of time, we saw them take on more and more responsibilities. The number of problems that were resolved and the number of positive changes that have occurred within the last six months should be encouraging to the citizens and Trustees of Van Buren Township.

Recommendation III.B.3.1: Deputy Director Smolen and Lieutenant Brooks should check with other Fire and Police Departments in the area to determine what statistics and data they compile on a monthly and annual basis. They should then determine (preferably with the assistance of other professionals in the public safety field) what statistics and data are

necessary to effectively monitor the performance of the Police and Fire Departments, to determine trends, and to establish future needs and resources. At a minimum, the following are needed: call volumes and breakdowns; crime data and analysis; fire run data; accident information; response times; repeated threats to the public's safety; trends; etc.

Recommendation III.B.3.2: After determining what statistics and data are needed to properly lead and manage their respective Departments, Deputy Director Smolen and Lieutenant Brooks should determine if the necessary statistics and data can be obtained using the current computer systems.

Recommendation III.B.3.3: Once the two above-mentioned steps have been completed, Deputy Director Smolen and Lieutenant Brooks should meet with Supervisor King to advise her of the availability or lack of availability of necessary statistics and data and to determine what changes, if any, are needed to ensure that the required information is available.

4. **Analysis of Statistics and Performance Data.** Since the necessary data and statistics have not been available in the past, there has been little or no statistical analysis performed in the Department of Public Safety in Van Buren Township. Once data is finally available to the leadership in the Police and Fire Departments, it is imperative that the data be periodically analyzed to determine trends, problem areas, performance breakdowns, needed changes, and future requirements.

Recommendation III.B.4.1: Once the needed data and statistics are available through the computer system, monthly and annual reports should be produced by the Police Department and by the Fire Department, providing comparisons with the same time period for the previous year or years.

Recommendation III.B.4.2: The Director of Public Safety and the ranking officers of the Police and Fire Departments should regularly review statistics and performance data to become familiar with the information, particularly relating to trends or changes in the data. On occasion, Supervisor King should meet with the Director of Public Safety and/or the ranking officers of the Police and Fire Departments to discuss current situations and review any statistical trends, changes, or problems.

5. Policies and Procedures. In a separate section of this report, we provide an in-depth commentary concerning the lack of current and relevant policies and procedures within the Department of Public Safety. However, in this section we wish to point out that this failure, along with the other failures noted, greatly contributed to the breakdown within the Department of Public Safety and the lack of direction for the employees. Failure of the leadership of the Public Safety Department to attempt to develop current and relevant policies and procedures emphasizes not only a major failure of the Department's leadership but also the lack of understanding of the importance of these basic leadership tools. **NOTE:** Since beginning our work in Van Buren Township, the leadership in the Police Department has taken steps to begin the arduous process of developing or revamping policies and procedures for the Department.

Further information and recommendations regarding policies and procedures can be found in Section IV-B of this Report.

6. Employee Performance Appraisals. In successful organizations across America, the annual performance appraisal is a simple and basic step to evaluate employees and to improve their performance. However, in the Public Safety Department of Van Buren Township there are none. While simplified employee performance appraisals can be implemented by any supervisor in an organization, it is normally prescribed and implemented from the top. By doing so, there becomes a uniform method for (1) assessing performance across the organization, (2) comparing the performance of employees in various assignments, (3) providing rewards and recognition for outstanding performers, and (4) prescribing remedial action for substandard performers. Again, the fact that the leadership of the Department of Public Safety either did not appreciate the importance of this basic management tool or did not take the time to implement it, speaks volumes about their failure to establish the basic management controls present in all excellent organizations. But then again, when no goals or objectives are present, it becomes very difficult to evaluate the performance of individual employees.

Recommendation III.B.6.1: After the new Director of Public Safety is appointed, he or she should work with ranking officials from the Police and Fire Departments, as well as personnel from each of those Departments, to develop a meaningful and relevant performance appraisal for all employees. The appraisal format need not be lengthy or complicated but should be a vehicle by which supervisors in all units can annually meet

with employees, discuss the previous year's performance, and set personal goals for the upcoming year.

Recommendation III.B.6.2: Once an employee performance appraisal has been established for the Department of Public Safety, the Director of Public Safety must ensure that each employee in the Department is evaluated on an annual basis and that the evaluation form is placed in the employee's official personnel record. The Director should also ensure that each supervisor not only fills out the performance appraisal but also sits down with the employee and discusses the significant points of the performance appraisal. Regardless of the employee's rank or assignment, there should be a small section in the evaluation format for supervisors to note areas that need correction or improvement or where new goals can be established for the individual employee. Similarly, exceptional performance should be noted in this section.

Recommendation III.B.6.3: Many of the truly meaningful and successful employee performance appraisal programs have a self-evaluation component. In this process, the employee fills out the self-evaluation form prior to the supervisor filling out the actual evaluation. This provides employees an opportunity to "make their case" regarding their performance during the previous year, pointing out areas of success, as well as noting any deficiencies. In this self-appraisal, the employee should be encouraged to establish new goals for the upcoming year. There should be a section available for employees to comment on how

supervisors can help them improve their performance in the upcoming year.

7. **Meeting with Department Heads/Supervisors.** While leadership in any organization sets the organization's direction through the various methods described in Section III-B, one of the best ways to provide supervision and leadership on an on-going basis is through regular meetings with Department Heads and Department Supervisors. In the Police Department, for example, that would include the Director of Public Safety, the Lieutenant of Police, and the Police Sergeants. In the Fire Department, the Public Safety Director, the two full-time members of the Fire Department, and the Battalion Chiefs would be included, at a minimum. During these regular meetings, communications occur from all aspects of the Department. Problems are identified, potential solutions are suggested, and a coordinated plan is established. This is especially true in businesses such as police service and fire service where employees are working 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Where there is a certain degree of volatility and certainly issues that expose the municipality to significant levels of liability, it is imperative that management teams meet on a regular basis to evaluate what has happened in the recent past, explore future challenges and opportunities, and discuss leadership and management issues like the ones we are discussing in this section. When a leader meets with supervisors in the organization and asks the simple question "What can we do to improve the effectiveness or efficiency of our organization?", then potential solutions like performance appraisals, updated policies and procedures, etc. often develop from those discussions. According to the supervisors in the Police and Fire Departments, meetings of this type were

sporadic, at best. Needless to say, if the Director of Public Safety is not meeting with and communicating with the various supervisors in the Departments on a regular basis, there is little likelihood that his or her concerns are reaching the members of the organization, and visa versa. **NOTE:** Since beginning to work with the leadership in the Police Department, great strides have been made to institute regular meetings to discuss relevant issues. Not only should the Police command staff be commended for beginning this process but also for the new ideas they have generated and the organizational changes they have implemented. According to some of the Department Sergeants with whom we spoke, there seems to be a greater cohesiveness, cooperation, and esprit-de-corps among the supervisors on the Police Department and, generally speaking, the supervisors feel more involved and empowered in the Police Department and its operation. All command members of the Police Department should be congratulated for their work in this area. We observed their ability to identify and resolve problems, and this fact alone leads us to believe that the Department is on the right track and has a realistic expectation for a brighter future.

Unfortunately, according to some supervisors in the Fire Department, they have not been consulted and involved on a regular basis, even recently. During this time period when so many changes were being implemented in the Fire Department (November of 2003 to May of 2004), there were long periods of time without meetings between Deputy Director Smolen and the supervisors of the Fire Department. This is unfortunate, especially during a period of such significant change within the Department. We hope this issue will be addressed in the Fire Department as effectively as it seems to have been in the Police Department.

Recommendation III.B.7.1: Regular meetings involving all supervisors must be established and maintained in both the Police and Fire Departments. The frequency of those meetings will be determined by a number of conditions, including the number of issues requiring discussion and resolution, and other issues affecting the practicality of these meetings. At a minimum, the meetings should be held once a month and, during this period of great change, at least twice a month. It is imperative that the meetings be scheduled to allow almost every member of the command staff to be present. This may require some communication between the ranking officers of the Departments and their Departments' supervisors, but this effort is absolutely essential.

Recommendation III.B.7.2: Each Department supervisor should be required to submit agenda items in advance of the upcoming meeting. The agenda should include standing topics that are of such universal importance they require mention at every meeting. Standing agenda items might include: recent events / incidents / problems, upcoming events, or personnel issues.

Recommendation III.B.7.3: When the new Director of Public Safety is appointed, he or she should make every effort to attend most of the supervisory meetings in the Police and Fire Departments. In addition, he or she should meet with the ranking official in the Police Department and in the Fire Department at least once a week to review operational, management, and personnel issues; as well as any significant incidents;

and situations that have created extraordinary exposure to liability for the Township.

Recommendation III.B.7.4: One meeting each year of the Department Heads and Department Supervisors should be devoted exclusively to a review of the previous year's goals and objectives to evaluate how well the Department performed in achieving those goals and objectives. A second meeting each year should be reserved exclusively for developing goals and objectives for the upcoming year.

8. Supervisory Overview. Historically, one of the ways for leaders to provide supervision and correct performance problems in any organization is by observing the performance of the employees. Trendy phrases such as "M.B.W.A." or "management by wandering around" describe this leadership technique. While not wanting to be overly critical, we question how much of this form of observation and general oversight was previously performed in the Department of Public Safety. In our brief visits to Van Buren, we often observed glaring problems that needed to be addressed. For example, we noticed a tendency for officers to congregate in the roll call room, spending significant amounts of time talking, working on reports, etc. Initially we did not know the personnel or who belonged on what shift, but it quickly became obvious that a number of these officers were on-duty, coming off the road up to an hour before the end of their tour to "turn in reports". In a number of cases, there were more officers from the on-duty shift standing in the roll call room than were out on the street protecting the thirty-five square miles of Van Buren Township. At first we thought this might just be an unusual occurrence or something that happened

only when a large number of reports came in late in the shift. Frankly, it seemed incredible to us that the supervisors were not insistent that the officers remain on patrol and available to respond to calls as much as possible, allowing only one officer at a time to come off the road to complete reports and/or turn in reports. We quickly determined that what we observed had become somewhat of an accepted practice. On some occasions, it seemed like the officers came in off of the street during the last hour just to spend time with their Sergeant and fellow members on their shift, even if they didn't have reports to complete or turn in. This unacceptable practice doesn't develop "overnight". Obviously, this had been going on for quite some time, unchecked by either the leadership of the Public Safety Department or the Police Department. This is an example of where routine oversight and management by walking around should have observed this problem and "nipped it in the bud". **NOTE:** When this problem was brought to the attention of Lieutenant Brooks and the supervisors of the Police Department, they initially offered some denial, stating that it was their understanding that officers only came into the roll call room when they were required to finish reports, etc. However, to their credit, when we pointed out several examples and when the command staff was able to scrutinize the situation themselves, they realized this was a practice that could not be allowed to continue and took steps to resolve it immediately. In this case, the credit for fixing the problem is somewhat abated because the command staff knew, or should have known, about this practice and allowed it to continue for quite some time before we brought it to their attention. But in the atmosphere where "no one was calling

anyone on anything”, it is only natural to allow the practice to continue until it was brought to their attention.

Another example of an obvious problem related to the dispatch personnel watching television in the Communications Center. Working in a Communications Center like Van Buren’s can be very difficult because there are times when the dispatchers are overwhelmed with important calls and duties and other times when there is absolutely nothing to do and their biggest challenge is overcoming boredom. And, in fact, it is not uncommon to have televisions inside Communication Centers. However, in most professional and progressive Departments across the country, it is acknowledged that the work of Communications personnel is too important and the consequences of their decisions too critical to take the chance of inattention or distraction caused by a television. In Van Buren, like in many other places around the country, the dispatchers have additional responsibilities beyond receiving citizen complaints and dispatching police cars and fire apparatus. For example, in Van Buren Township, dispatchers are required to monitor numerous mini-television screens that survey security points at Township properties, including the Township Building itself. Even more critical is their responsibility to monitor the Department’s temporary holding facility (jail) - one of the areas of greatest exposure to civil liability within the Public Safety Department. When prisoners are detained in a municipality’s holding facility, anything that happens to the prisoners, even if self-inflicted, becomes a major liability for the municipality. As a result, proper and frequent monitoring of prisoners is essential. From our observations of the operation of the Communications Center, we noticed

dispatchers watching commercial television in the room rather than paying attention to the security monitors or the monitors in the holding facility. In fact, on some occasions, the dispatchers had maneuvered the monitor controls in such a way that prisoners were not even visible. Again, this did not appear uncommon nor did it appear that dispatch personnel were aware of the serious consequences that might result because of their decisions. We believe that if the leadership of the Public Safety Department had occasionally walked through the Department, including the Communications Center, these problems would have been detected and resolved sooner. In addition, **we believe that if the Police Department supervisors had been empowered and encouraged to identify and resolve issues in the Police Department, and particularly in the Public Safety Department's Communication Center, this type of breakdown would have been addressed much sooner.**

However, administrative responsibility was not clearly established in the Department of Public Safety. At one time the Deputy Director was responsible for the Communications Center. At another time Lieutenant Brooks had responsibility for the Center. In addition, since neither the Deputy Director nor the Police Lieutenant were able to work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, part of the supervision should have fallen to the on-duty Sergeants in the Patrol Division. But again, the Sergeants indicated they were not clear whether they were empowered to address problems in the Communications Center, especially when a television had been placed in the Communications Center with the full knowledge and approval of the Director of Public Safety. **NOTE:** During one of our visits to Van Buren, we attended a meeting of the Police Department

supervisors and this issue was discussed. We were impressed with the passion and conviction with which the Sergeants addressed the issue and their commitment to reach a reasonable and fair decision. It seemed as if by merely reminding them that it was within their authority and responsibility to consider issues like this, and make decisions in the best interest of the Police Department, the Department of Public Safety, and the entire Township of Van Buren that they readily started accepting the responsibility that was theirs all along. Since then, we have observed the command staff of the Police Department assume more responsibility for identifying problem areas and addressing them. More information about the Communications Center is contained in Section VI of this Report.

9. Police Department Roll Calls. In most police departments across America, one of the most important activities during the day is the roll call at the beginning of each shift. This is a critical activity in the management of a police department because it is the only time in the entire day when the police supervisor meets with all of his subordinates at one time. In some cases the police supervisor won't see certain officers again until they come in at the end of the shift. Roll call is a time when the supervisor makes sure that everyone understands their assignments, is properly prepared to go out and perform their duties on the road, and is prepared with the necessary information and equipment to deal with the ever-changing conditions in a municipality the size of Van Buren Township. Unlike most businesses where employees return to the same situation that existed when they left work the day before, an entire day's activities have taken place between the time a police officer leaves work and

then returns the next day. As a result, there is important information to provide to officers about things that occurred, problems that arose, suspects that were wanted, etc. The information gap is further exacerbated because police work is a seven-day a week proposition and business goes on as usual even when the officers are off-duty. To explain to non-police personnel the significance of this information gap, they should imagine missing three out of every four days at work. Obviously a tremendous amount of things would happen and an incredible amount of information would be missed during the intervening three days that the person was off. This information gap is supposed to be handled at the roll calls, where all pertinent information from previous shifts is passed along to the oncoming officers. In many departments the roll call is initiated by the shift supervisor, assignments are given to the police officers, and the officers are instructed to get out their pads and pens to write down information necessary for the police officers to be adequately prepared to perform their duties on the road. We were quite astounded to see Van Buren Township's version of the roll call.

Instead of the orderly, disciplined process we were accustomed to seeing, the roll calls we observed in Van Buren more closely resembled a "flea market". It seemed like people were constantly coming and going in the roll call room. Since there was no official beginning of roll call, it was difficult to determine when the roll call had started. In many cases there were several discussions going on at the same time in the room. Instead of everyone paying attention to the supervisor in charge of the oncoming shift as is normal, Detectives were stopping in to pass information on to officers, officers from the oncoming shift were exchanging information with officers from the shift going off duty, etc., etc. In

addition, people were moving equipment around to sign out their appropriate tapes for the in-car cameras, weapons for their police cars, etc. At no time were all of the members of the shift seated at the table ready to take notes and, most disturbingly, little if any information was passed on to them by the Shift Sergeant. In fact, upon inquiry we determined that there was no formal method for passing information from shift to shift. Out of all of the things that we observed in the Van Buren Township Police Department, this may have been one of the most unprofessional aspects of the Department, especially when compared to other police departments. **NOTE:** Once again, when we brought this problem to the attention of the leadership of the Police Department, they did an outstanding job addressing it immediately. We quickly saw changes in the procedures at roll call and in a very short period of time one could actually describe the conduct at the roll calls as professional. Every member of the oncoming shift was seated at a table in front of the Sergeant. If anyone on the oncoming shift was still standing, the Sergeant announced the beginning of roll call. Roll calls were begun on time. There was no movement and no chatter in the roll call room and, as appropriate, all members of the shift seemed to be paying attention to the shift supervisor. In addition, to ensure that the Sergeants had the necessary information to pass on to the officers of the oncoming shift, a book was established in which one shift would put pertinent information to be passed on to subsequent shifts. The command staff of the Police Department is to be commended for taking one of the least professional aspects of the Police Department and improving it.

SPECIAL NOTE: In recent weeks, we have observed some “backslide” in areas where improvements were implemented. Two areas where this was

obvious to us are the command meetings and the roll calls. This is a natural phenomenon as long as the leadership vacuum continues. Continuity will only begin to occur when this important position (Director of Public Safety) is filled by someone who understands the role and possesses the leadership ability to fulfill that role.

10. Liaison with the Township Administration. Early on in our work in Van Buren Township it became apparent that communication between the Department of Public Safety and the Township administration was poor, at best, and had been that way for some time. The Township administration, in particular Supervisor King, felt that the leadership was not providing information that was needed for her to properly perform her responsibilities as Supervisor of the Township. There was a lot of evidence that she was right. The very dangerous situation that we describe in the section regarding the fire service was not only known to the rank-and-file members and first-line supervisors of the Fire Department, but they had generated a plan to address that dangerous situation. It is a plan that the Board of Trustees very quickly implemented after we brought the situation to the attention of Supervisor King. However, the dangerous situation was allowed to continue for an extensive period of time because the information was not transmitted from the members of the fire service to the Township administration. The leaders of the Department of Public Safety are primarily accountable for this failure.

This is just one example of the ineffective communication between the Department of Public Safety and the Township administration, a breakdown that is truly responsible for many of the problems observed in the Department of

Public Safety. We joked with members of the staff about how often we heard people say, "Somebody oughta . . ." They were keenly aware of the problems and even had solutions at hand, but there was no communication to make sure the problems and solutions were passed on from those who were aware of them to those who could correct them. After a while, we added to the saying, "Somebody oughta, but nobody is". This is unfortunate because the problems and the potential solutions had been identified. It was the failure to communicate the problems or implement the proposed solutions that created so many of the problems in the Department of Public Safety. Serving as a conduit and liaison between the Department of Public Safety and the Township administration should be a key responsibility of the new Director of Public Safety. He or she must make certain that they not only notify the Township Supervisor and Board of Trustees when a major event occurs that requires notification but also provide a constant stream of information that updates the elected officials on the many changing circumstances related to public safety in the Township.

Another example of this lack of communication and failure to act as the "ombudsman" for the Department of Public Safety can be seen as you walk through the Township and Police building. The only way to describe the Township building is "spacious". The hallways are large and the offices have extra space that can be used if future expansion is necessary. Each employee has a substantial area in which to work. However, when one walks into the designated area for the Department of Public Safety, the word that immediately comes to mind is "cramped". By our estimate, employees in the Township area of the building have three to four times the square footage per employee than

can be found in the Police Department and Public Safety area. In addition, the layout of the Public Safety area of the building creates difficulties and operational inefficiencies. Although no one we talked with remembers how this disparity came about between the facilities designated for the Public Safety Department and for the Township administration, it is obvious that the Department's leadership was unable or unwilling to obtain the same type of working environment and office space for their employees that is prevalent throughout the rest of the Township building. As we have commented in other sections of this Report, the vehicles and police equipment are outstanding, which makes it even more difficult to understand how the Department ended up with a working facility that is **inadequate** and **inefficient**.

Recommendation III.B.10.1: The new Director of Public Safety must have at least one scheduled meeting each week with the Township Supervisor to discuss ongoing issues, problems, and plans. When these meetings must be rearranged, every effort should be made to reschedule during the same week to ensure that there is the on-going expectation of a constant flow of communication.

Recommendation III.B.10.2: The new Director of Public Safety must meet with the leaders of the Police and Fire Departments each year to determine the next year's needs before the preparation of the annual budget. There must be a formal process in which goals, objectives, and priorities are determined, resources are set, and budgetary impact is evaluated and clearly defined.

Recommendation III.B.10.3: The new Director of Public Safety must ensure that the necessary statistics and data are available to present to the Township administration and the Board of Trustees to communicate the current and projected needs of the Department of Public Safety and to ensure that the appropriate resources are obtained to meet those needs.

11. Formalized Recognition Program for the Department of Public Safety. It is important that members of the Public Safety Department be recognized for outstanding performance. The Department of Public Safety does not have a recognition program in place for its personnel. Officers have received letters thanking them for their performance in a particular situation, which should be forwarded to the employee and a copy placed in the personnel file. However, a formal process should also be developed to recognize employees, both sworn and civilian, for outstanding performance.

Members of the Public Safety Department discussed a recognition system during our interviews and felt it would be very beneficial. They pointed out that neighboring agencies have formal recognition practices in place such as official letters of commendation and indicators of excellent performance that can be worn on a uniform.

Recommendation III.B.11.1: The new Director of Public Safety should authorize the employees to develop a formal recognition program for his or her review that will be meaningful and motivational.

Recommendation III.B.11.2: The new Director of Public Safety should make a special effort to recognize outstanding performance of employees both in person and by means of more official communications.

C. Organizational Structure of the Department of Public Safety

Because of the perceived problems and failures in the Department of Public Safety, and because the Township had two Directors of Public Safety in a relatively short period of time (the second Director appointed after a rather exhaustive search and after hopes were raised to an extremely high level), some leaders in Van Buren Township have questioned whether the structure of the Department of Public Safety should be changed. In fact, one of our specific mandates in this Study of the Department was to make a recommendation as to whether the Township should continue to have a Director of Public Safety, as in the past, or whether the Department of Public Safety should be broken apart - a Police Department with a Police Chief and a Fire Department with a Fire Chief. This is a reasonable question because structure sometimes makes a difference, depending on circumstances, available personnel, etc. One structure may be better in one instance, while the other structure is preferable with different circumstances. For example, in situations where departments have had extraordinary growth, excessive turnover in its top supervisory ranks, or very little experience in their supervisory ranks, it may be preferable to bring in two new department heads, one to head up the Police Department and one to head up the Fire Department because of the level of attention required. Another example would be where neither department is successfully handling day-to-day operations and new executives are needed to run, and revise, the routine operations in each of the departments. Then, it may be preferable to bring in a new Police Chief and a new Fire Chief and, for economy reasons, eliminate the position of Director of Public Safety.

Other more sophisticated or theoretical arguments can be thrown into this issue. But, from our pragmatic perspective, we believe **there is no compelling reason to**

change the structure, and, in fact, the current situation and current personnel in place lead us to believe that Van Buren Township would best be served by maintaining the current structure and focusing its energies upon hiring the right person for the position of Director of Public Safety, filling the vacancy that has existed since July of 2003. This conclusion is especially true when we consider the Police Department's supervisory staff. Each of the members of the command staff is an experienced police officer and supervisor. During our work with the Department, we saw clear indications that they were capable of pulling together and performing the day-to-day management functions necessary for the operation of the Police Department. It was clear to us that there were times when they needed **guidance**, other times they needed **encouragement**, instances when they needed to be "**empowered**" to do their duties and, yes, on occasion, they needed us to **motivate** them. However, the level of involvement needed to accomplish these things certainly would not be too great for a properly trained and experienced Public Safety Director. In fact, one of the problems in the Police Department has been a lack of mobility among the Department's supervisors because the Lieutenant and most of the Sergeants have been in their positions for a long period of time with no opportunity for promotion or variation in assignment. We feel that bringing in a new Chief of Police would only compound this problem, and we do not recommend this move.

The situation with the Fire Department is a little less clear because only two members of the Fire Department are full-time employees – the Deputy Director of Public Safety / Fire Chief (Al Smolen) and the Fire Inspector / Fire Lieutenant (Anthony Karver). As stated in Section V, the remaining members of the Fire Department, including the Battalion Chiefs, are pay-call volunteers. As the Township implements its

new plan to staff the Fire Stations twenty hours a day, the Township may determine that additional supervisory or staff positions are needed, or that restructuring within the Fire Department is necessary. However, since this plan is just being implemented as of the writing of this Report, it is impossible at this point to determine future needs. In fact, a qualified Director of Public Safety would be able to assess those needs and make objective recommendations to the Board of Trustees as needed. While the future structure within the Fire Department may not be as clear as in the Police Department, it is our opinion that a well-versed Director of Public Safety will be able to determine the Department's needs and appropriate structure.

D. Selection of the new Director of Public Safety

So, if there is nothing wrong with the management structure within the Department of Public Safety, then what can be done to prevent the problems that have occurred in the past? First and foremost, the right type of person must be selected for the position of Director of Public Safety. That may seem obvious and simplistic, but there are many myths and misunderstandings about what is needed for positions of this nature and, in fact, many organizations suffer from a selection process that seems good on paper but that does not take the sometimes subtle nuances of the profession into consideration.

In our opinion, the most important aspect of the new Director of Public Safety is that the person must have **outstanding executive and leadership skills**. Training and experience in police work, the fire service, and public safety are obviously necessary. However, the problems in the Department of Public Safety exist not because they do not have people with those basic skills but because, in the past, there was a lack of leadership skills and executive abilities to provide the direction, leadership, oversight,

and motivation for the members of the respective departments. What is needed is a person who has the ability and interest to create a plan that will specifically address the failures we have discussed at length in Section III-B of this report.

The second most important aspect of the successful candidate is that he or she **understands their role as a Director of Public Safety**. The candidate must be willing to **focus his or her time and energy on those executive responsibilities and limit the time they spend on other functions that can be delegated to other members of the Police Department or the Fire Department**. **Van Buren Township does not need another person who runs out of the office and responds to calls, patrols the streets, issues traffic citations, or responds to house fires**. They need someone who is going to put management controls in place and build management systems that will overcome the shortcomings discussed in Section III-B. The candidate must understand he or she will be spending a great deal of time, especially initially, completing rather mundane tasks on things like: mission statements, goals and objectives, policies and procedures, written plans, personnel evaluations, etc. **Another important role of the new Director is to be the Department's liaison to the Township administration, the elected officials, and the community**.

The third characteristic that we believe is important for the successful candidate is the ability to analyze and use statistics to **perform the crucial planning function for the Department of Public Safety in this growing Township**. The Director of Public Safety needs to be the one that determines the current and future needs of the Police Department and the Fire Department based on current and projected information. After he or she has determined what is needed, they must be able to "sell" those needs to the elected officials and to the community. The Director will need to work hand-in-hand with

both the elected officials and the citizens to develop a fiscally responsible plan that meets those needs.

And finally, the Director will need to **put the “systems” and management controls into place** to allow them to evaluate whether the Township’s public safety goals are being met to an acceptable level and to know, in a timely fashion, when breakdowns have occurred, etc.

Needless to say, the usual desirable characteristics also needed are excellent communication skills, “people” skills, command presence, and experience in the broad spectrum of public safety issues in a municipal suburban setting. **It is imperative that the problems of the past are not repeated and that the person possessing the right talents and interests is selected for this position.**

IV. Van Buren Township Police Department

A. Overview of Police

The equipment provided to the Police Department is some of the best equipment available and adequately meet the needs of a Township the size of Van Buren. The equipment is modern, up to date, and well maintained.

The Charter Township of Van Buren Police Department is comprised of the Director of Public Safety, one Lieutenant, five Sergeants, and twenty-seven police officers. The Records Section is comprised of two records clerks. There is one administrative assistant and one maintenance person. One full-time person and one part-time person are assigned to the Animal Control Unit. In addition, there are eight reserve police officers. The Police Department personnel are extremely dedicated and enthusiastic. They approach their jobs with pride, evidenced by the small number of complaints received relating to job performance. It appears that the level of enthusiasm has increased significantly in recent months.

However, we found through our interviews with many members of the Police Department that they felt there had been a “total lack of leadership” within the Police/Public Safety Departments in the past. Many told us that given the choice between the latest modern police equipment and leadership within the Police Department, leadership would win “hands down”. Police Department personnel overwhelmingly want structure and discipline within the Department, and most are enthusiastic about its return. Officers told us that, in the past, discipline was a rare occurrence in the Van Buren Police Department. Without discipline and leadership any organization tends to erode. If each person is allowed to operate independently, there is no direction and the “ship” cannot remain on course.

Recommendation IV.A.1: The Police Department should continue on the course it has undertaken in the past few months and empower its employees to be a part of the decision-making process, whenever feasible. Employees should be encouraged to participate in the development of a Policies and Procedures Manual, an awards program, etc. It is important that employees are given the opportunity to be an essential part of the organization and to contribute to its success.

We noticed that since we first visited Van Buren in October of 2003 there has been an improvement in the way the police personnel are approaching their difficult tasks. Not only the police personnel but also the elected officials are talking about the “**rebirth**” of the Van Buren Police Department. This is an exciting development.

The sworn officers of the Police Department are professionals, and they certainly do not need to have anyone micro-manage the police operation. They are capable of carrying out their job responsibilities and assignments. They will, however, continue to need clear direction as new policies and procedures are implemented.

Recommendation IV.A.2: Police Department personnel should become involved in the decision-making process and their suggestions should be implemented where feasible.

The civilian support staff of the Police Department is also extremely motivated and dedicated to the successful operation of the Police Department. They approach their responsibilities with pride, also more evident in recent months. The civilian support staff has also expressed their desire for the Police Department to become more structured and for them to receive more direction from the leaders of the Department.

Recommendation IV.A.3: Whenever feasible, the Police Department should allow civilian personnel to participate in educational opportunities related to their particular disciplines to enhance their knowledge and skills and provide an opportunity to network with colleagues.

Recommendation IV.A.4: Civilian support staff should be included in staff meetings periodically to interact with sworn personnel of the Department. This will not only build a more cohesive Police Department team but will also empower the civilian employees.

B. Policies and Procedures Manual

When the operation and management study began, one of the first items we reviewed was the Police Department's Policies and Procedures Manual ("Manual"). The Manual's appearance is impressive - several inches thick, professionally printed, and bound. The Manual, which was provided to each member of the Police Department, includes many of the topics appropriate for such a guide, and all high liability police activity seems to be covered in great deal. However, it was obvious to us that the Police Department acquired the policies and procedures from a "boiler plate outline".

When we examined the Manual in more detail, we learned that it was compiled by the former Director of Public Safety, Mark Perkins. The Manual was signed by former Director Perkins but does not include the date that it took effect. We were extremely disappointed that little work has been done to customize the boiler plate language into an appropriate Manual for the Van Buren Township Police Department. As we proceeded through the Manual we found many examples of "Modern Procedures" that had not been adapted for the Police Department. Procedures that

could have been shortened to better fit the needs of the Police Department were long, rambling, and complicated - appropriate only for police departments of a different size and complexity.

We were told by the command staff of the Police Department that the Manual had been done some time ago. Although a review of some of the policies and procedures was done years ago, no one remembers there ever being a thorough review of the Manual or any training ever being conducted. Former Director Perkins served from March of 1990 to March of 2000, but no one in the present command structure remembers when the Manual was reproduced and distributed to members of the Police Department. No files or correspondence have been located pertaining to the Manual.

A policies and procedures manual for a Police Department is an essential and useful tool that should be user friendly. The purpose of the Manual is two-fold: to provide guidance and information to members of the Police Department, both sworn and civilian, and to reduce the Police Department's and Township's exposure to civil liability. There is so much extraneous verbiage in portions of the Manual that no one takes the time necessary to search for relevant information. In addition, much of the information is outdated because the Manual has not been reviewed and revised.

We believe the current Manual contains many errors which would have been corrected if the Manual had been periodically reviewed and updated. This could create a serious problem for the Police Department and the Township if issues regarding policies and procedures were raised in litigation. It is ironic that the Manual initially created to minimize the Police Department's and Township's exposure to civil liability could be used against them and realistically increases their exposure. We want to emphasize that we are not talking about a few errors in a couple of policies and

procedures. Virtually every policy and procedure should have been revised over the years since the Manual was produced to assure that they are current, accepted police procedure and comply with all applicable laws and Court decisions.

We find this situation extremely troubling. We were disappointed that no one in the Police Department's leadership took it upon themselves to maintain the Manual in its proper form. It would not have taken an extremely experienced police officer to make needed modifications to the "boiler plate outline" and customize the Manual for the Van Buren Township Police Department. From our contact with members of the Police Department we feel there are certainly capable people in place who have the areas of expertise needed to accomplish this process had they been given clear direction from the appropriate leadership of the department. Until the Manual has been thoroughly reviewed and revised, it is a complete failure at providing guidance for the police officers and in reducing potential civil liability for the Police Department and the Township.

Recommendation IV.B.1: The command staff of the Police Department should immediately begin the process of reviewing and revising the Policies and Procedures Manual to assure that it is up to date and appropriate for the Charter Township of Van Buren Police Department. When the new Director of Public Safety is employed, one of his or her mandates by the elected officials must be a time frame within which to review and update the Manual to assure that its rules, regulations and procedures are in compliance with all local, state and federal laws and ordinances.

Recommendation IV.B.2: The Director of Public Safety should develop a schedule to assure that the Manual is continuously reviewed and updated as needed.

Recommendation IV.B.3: All employees should be given access to the Manual, either by “hard copy” manuals strategically placed throughout the Department, or available on the Department’s intranet.

Recommendation IV.B.4: Department supervisors should provide periodic training on policies and procedures, especially those that relate to high liability issues or those that have been changed.

The Manual should be easy to use and understand, providing guidance for the police officers of the Charter Township of Van Buren Police Department. Policies and procedures relating to high liability issues, i.e.: handling of prisoners, pursuits, arrests, etc., should be reviewed first.

Once the revisions are completed, the new Manual should be distributed to each member of the Police Department. Each recipient should be required to sign a form acknowledging that he or she has received, read, and understands the policies and procedures.

C. Internal Investigations

To maintain the integrity of the Police Department, it is extremely important that internal investigations be conducted in a thorough and timely manner. If violations of the Police Department’s policies and procedures are substantiated, disciplinary action should be recommended and implemented. There are currently no policies and procedures in place in Police Department for conducting an internal investigation.

The public, elected officials and members of the Police Department demand that all police personnel exhibit the highest ethics and integrity. A complete and proper internal investigation ensures that ethics and integrity are maintained by all members of the Police Department. Having appropriate policies and procedures in place to conduct an internal investigation and training personnel to carry out these tasks assures that an internal investigation will be handled appropriately and reduces questions and criticism from external sources. A thorough internal investigation will erase questions in the minds of elected officials and the public regarding circumstances and allegations under investigation. We believe that some situations were not handled properly in the past because of a lack of direction from the leadership of the Public Safety Department regarding internal investigations.

Recommendation IV.C.1: The Police Department should establish policies and procedures for conducting internal investigations regarding allegations made against members of the Police Department.

Recommendation IV.C.2: The Police Department should maintain a separate file for each internal investigation.

Recommendation IV.C.3: All witnesses should be interviewed in a timely manner to determine the validity of their complaint and properly memorialize all statements. Complete the internal investigation, make a determination on the allegations, and take appropriate actions, if warranted, in a timely manner.

Recommendation IV.C.4: The Police Department should consult with the prosecuting attorney's office and Township attorneys immediately, if the situation warrants, regarding any possible criminal charges or other actions to be taken.

The Director of Public Safety should insist on a timely disposition of internal complaints to maintain the integrity of the Police Department and its personnel.

D. Citizen Complaint Procedures

In most situations, citizen complaints are not serious in nature, dealing mainly with procedural actions. However, some citizens' complaints are serious, requiring an internal investigation and possible disciplinary action.

Procedures for handling citizens' complaints are necessary and should be part of every Police Department's Policies and Procedures Manual. The purpose of these procedures is to address complaints made by citizens against police personnel and maintain the credibility of the Police Department and its employees, both sworn and civilian. The citizen complaint procedures should provide a fair and equitable avenue for citizens to voice concerns regarding their perceived mistreatment by department personnel. Citizens expect the Police Department to conduct an investigation into their complaint and reach an impartial conclusion.

Recommendation IV.D.1: The Director of Public Safety should immediately implement a formal citizens' complaint procedure for the Charter Township of Van Buren Police Department.

Recommendation IV.D.2: A separate file should be maintained for each complaint that documents the actions taken by the Police Department. The Police Department should maintain complete records of actions taken and the disposition of each complaint. These records should be maintained separate and apart from criminal investigations which are handled within the Detective Division.

Recommendation IV.D.3: The Police Department should train personnel in the handling of internal investigations. The laws governing internal investigations are different from those of criminal investigations. Personnel assigned to conduct an internal investigation should have a thorough knowledge of case law governing internal investigations.

Recommendation IV.D.4: The ranking police official should assign a senior supervisor to receive special training and be the lead investigator in Citizen Complaint / Internal Affairs cases.

Recommendation IV.D.5: The Police Department should maintain a bound book in which each complaint is logged, as well as the disposition of the complaint when the investigation has been concluded.

E. Records Section

Maintenance of police records is an important part of any police department. The records memorialize events that have taken place and should accurately document who, what, when, where, why and how police respond to incidents in the community. It is essential that report writing and records maintenance be high priorities for the leadership of both the Police Department and the Public Safety Department.

Currently, the Records Section of the Police Department is maintained by two full-time employees. As we began our operation and management study, it was immediately obvious that the Records Section of the Police Department had no security and that anyone in the Police Department could have access to the Records Section. We immediately informed the Police Department's command staff that this situation had to be corrected, limiting access to the Records Section and controlling access to the

records. Lieutenant Brooks completed this task immediately, implementing proper security procedures in the Records Section to maintain its records.

We found the following additional deficiencies in the Records Section:

- Reports were sent to the Records Section that were incomplete and missing basic information such as name, gender, date of birth, etc. Case numbers were not complete, and reports were fragmented. Spelling and grammar were atrocious and reflected badly not only on the supervisor who approved the reports but also on the professionalism of the Police Department.
- Report logging into the bound book was not complete. There was no policy or format as to how things should be done.
- From our observation, the personnel in the Records Section receive little or no operational direction and seem unclear as to who they report to in the chain of command.
- The storage of confidential police records in the attic of the Township building is deplorable and does not meet security requirements for maintaining arrest and criminal records and case reports. This total lack of security jeopardizes the integrity of the records. There is no control over who has access to the records and what happens to the records once they are placed in the attic. We have been told that Records Section personnel repeatedly advised the leadership of the Public Safety Department of this situation, and it was ignored.
- In addition to their responsibilities in the Records Section, the records clerks performed the duties of “switchboard operator” for other departments outside the Police Department when the incoming call volume was too great to be handled by other support personnel in the Township.

We were impressed by the efforts of the personnel in the Records Section to do the best job they could to maintain the integrity of the police records, especially in light of the deficiencies listed above. Their independent actions to preserve the records without direction from leadership of the Police Department certainly speak well for the employees.

Recommendation IV.E.1: The Police Department command staff should immediately implement a policy whereby any incomplete reports sent to the Records Section are flagged and returned to the Supervisor, with a copy sent to Lieutenant Brooks. **NOTE:** The command staff implemented this new procedure effective January 16, 2004. Since that time we have monitored the process and have been told that there has been a marked improvement in the quality of reports submitted to the Records Section.

Recommendation IV.E.2: A policy should be implemented immediately that provides direction regarding the handling of bond money and accountability of employees handling bond money. The policy would assure that the bond fee of Ten Dollars (\$10.00) is collected each time a bond was written.

Recommendation IV.E.3: Personnel in the Records Section should receive training on the current State of Michigan mandates for retention of criminal and juvenile arrest records, as well as all other police records sent to the Records Section for retention.

Recommendation IV.E.4: The Supervisor's Office should immediately remove "switchboard" responsibilities from personnel in the Records Section of the Police Department.

Recommendation IV.E.5: The Report Log Book must be properly maintained to ensure the integrity of the system (or revise the procedure to eliminate the Log Book if it is not necessary).

Recommendation IV.E.6: All records stored in the attic should be immediately removed to a secure storage location accessible only to authorized Police Department personnel. In addition, the Township should take whatever measures are necessary to ensure the security of Police Department records in the future. The Township should consider this a high priority.

Recommendation IV.E.7: A direct line of supervision and chain of command should be implemented for the Records Section. The lack of a chain of command also exists with other civilian areas of the Police Department and will be addressed in Section IV-F of this Report.

F. Supervisor for Support Services

Within the Charter Township of Van Buren Police Department there are a number of civilian support personnel essential to the Department's operation. These include Communications personnel, Records personnel, the administrative assistant and Animal Control personnel. These positions are important and need supervision to successfully perform their assigned responsibilities. We were able to identify a loose organizational structure for these positions, i.e. the individual each person reported to and received direction from on a shift-by-shift basis. There was not one individual in the Police Department directly responsible for handling these activities, concerns, and requests. Without this chain of command, the employees receive mixed signals and do not have defined expectations. Under the current structure, operational supervisors change with each shift, and there is no continuity in expectations for performance and

job duties. While we realize that the Police Department shift commander is responsible for the operation on his or her particular watch, especially when there is no higher ranking authority at the facility, we feel that there should be a more direct line of supervision for the civilian support staff. We found that much of the police supervisor's time is focused on matters concerning the civilian support staff in the Police Department. For example, we observed sworn police officers sitting at a desk each day for approximately one and one-half hours erasing videotapes. This is an unacceptable use of a sworn police officer's time and training. It is difficult to understand how this practice began and why it was allowed to continue. **NOTE:** Once this was mentioned to the Police Department command staff, they immediately transferred the task to the Communications Center to be handled by civilian employees. This is a small thing but accounts for more than 500 hours of police service annually. It is a reflection on prior leadership of the Police Department and the lack of foresight and management.

The Township should establish a position for a Support Services Supervisor to supervise civilian personnel. The candidate should have a background in computers and the technical skills to maintain the Police Department's computer aided dispatch. Not only would this allow the police officer currently handling computer and technology responsibilities to return to law enforcement activities, but it would also provide oversight for personnel in the Communications Section, Records Section, Animal Control, and administrative staff. The Support Services Supervisor could handle problems if and when they occur and be an advocate for change when needed. The police supervisors currently providing supervision in these areas would be available to spend more time with sworn personnel and focus on the duties and responsibilities of

their patrol shifts that directly impact the citizens and business owners within the Township.

Recommendation IV.F.1: The Township should establish a position for a Support Services Supervisor who has the educational background and ability to supervise personnel. The candidate should have a background in computers and the technical skills to maintain the Police Department's computer rated dispatch.

G. Recruitment of Police Personnel

Recruitment of police personnel should be a high priority for the Police Department to ensure that personnel serving the citizens of the Township are the very best available and, to the extent possible, should reflect the community that they serve. To accomplish this goal, we believe the Township should work in concert not only with the Police Department but also with other sections of the Public Safety Department to ensure that there is proper recruitment of minority candidates for available positions. While we realize that the job market for public safety personnel is highly competitive, the Township's recruitment program should reflect the makeup of its community. The recruitment program could utilize churches, community colleges, and other appropriate sources to ensure adequate advertising and recruiting for minority candidates throughout the recruitment area.

Recommendation IV.G.1: The Township Supervisor and the Public Safety Committee should establish a Public Safety Department recruitment policy for minority candidates.

H. Probationary Employees

The Charter Township of Van Buren Police Department has no policies or procedures in place to evaluate probationary employees upon completion of the one-year probationary period. When a police officer is initially hired, they are placed on probation for one year, during which time they are expected to complete the field officer training program. After the one-year program has been completed, the officer is granted permanent status. There are no procedures established to certify to the Director of Public Safety that the probationary employee has met any of the criteria. Therefore, an employee who has performed marginally during probation may be granted permanent status.

Recommendation IV.H.1: The Police Department should establish policies and criteria immediately for all employees, both sworn and civilian, to ensure that they can successfully perform the duties and responsibilities of their positions before becoming a permanent employee with the Police Department. This should include, but not be limited to, requiring field training officers and/or supervisors to continue to monitor an employee and prepare periodic reports based on the employees' progress.

Recommendation IV.H.2: Procedures should be established to ensure that reports on all probationary employees prepared by field training officers are reviewed and approved by Sergeants and the Lieutenant, as well as the Director of Public Safety, if appropriate. The reports should become a permanent part of the employee's personnel file.

It should be noted that the Van Buren Fire Department has previously established procedures requiring field training officers to submit written confirmation that

a probationary employee has completed all required criteria. The Police Department could benefit from the Fire Department's initiative.

I. Training

The Police Department currently offers a comprehensive training program to enable officers to become more proficient in their duties. Sergeant Dennis Brooks oversees the Training Unit and is supported by eight training officers. The training provided by the Police Department exceeds the State of Michigan requirements and is a tribute to the commitment for training made by Van Buren Township. All Sergeants in the Police Department have completed the Staff and Command College, a comprehensive program provided by Eastern Michigan University.

The training records maintained by the Police Department are not complete. We found that documentation of attendance at various training opportunities had not reached the training office files. It is essential to maintain current and accurate training records on all personnel.

Recommendation IV.I.1: A policy should be established to ensure that training records are maintained accurately and kept up to date. As soon as an officer has completed a particular training event, the documentation should be placed in his or her training and personnel files.

Recommendation IV.I.2: All training files should be reviewed and updated with pertinent documentation to support training received.

We would also encourage the Police Department to seek additional specialized training for its personnel that is relevant to the Department's mission. Once an officer has completed a specialized training program, he or she should prepare a synopsis of

the program for presentation as roll call training. An extra benefit of specialized training is the opportunity to share that knowledge with colleagues.

Recommendation IV.I.3: Personnel who attend specialized training should be required to prepare a synopsis of the program and present the information as roll call training.

Roll call training should be provided by the shift Sergeants. Roll call training should be continuous – it is an excellent opportunity to share with colleagues the latest policies, procedures, and practices in law enforcement. However, the Van Buren Township Police Department does not have a formal policy for roll call training.

Recommendation IV.I.4: The Police Department should establish a formal policy on roll call training, including guidelines for how and when the training should be presented. This training should be documented.

Recommendation IV.I.5: The training officer should be responsible for selecting topics for roll call training and for providing appropriate materials to the Supervisors.

Recommendation IV.I.6: The Township should ensure that the Supervisors enhance their proficiency in the areas of leadership and management by participating in additional training opportunities.

Most progressive organizations believe it is important for senior management to attend conferences in their particular disciplines. This would include the Public Safety Director, Senior Police Official, Senior Fire Official, and possibly Assistant Directors. This should be done when economically feasible for them to participate. It is valuable for senior management to have an opportunity to network with colleagues, learn the latest administrative techniques, and see first-hand the most advanced equipment and

technology. We will be glad to supply a list of appropriate training conferences, if requested.

Recommendation IV.I.7: Senior management officials of the Public Safety Department should attend training conferences in their disciplines.

J. Personnel Files

The personnel files for the Public Safety Department are maintained in a filing cabinet in the Deputy Clerk's office. The filing cabinet was unlocked when we visited the Deputy Clerk's office, and personnel files for Public Safety Department personnel were co-mingled with files of other Township employees. We randomly selected personnel files for Public Safety Department employees and have the following observations: Records were maintained in various colored folders – manila, green, and red. The records in the folders were not in any particular order. In some of the files, psychological and medical reports were filed with applications and other materials. Disciplinary reports were co-mingled with other documents, and field training officer reports were placed with general personnel information.

Recommendation IV.J.1: The personnel files for the Van Buren Public Safety Department should be organized and maintained with consistency. Documents should be kept in chronological order, and medical information, disciplinary information, and personnel information should be filed separately.

Recommendation IV.J.2: The area in which the personnel files are maintained should be secure and the filing cabinet should remain locked at all times.

The Police and Fire Departments do not maintain additional files for their employees. Everything pertaining to an employee is sent to the Deputy Clerk's office for filing in the central file. This includes all training records.

Recommendation IV.J.3: The Director of Public Safety should maintain a limited personnel file on each employee in the Police and Fire Departments, including emergency contact sheets, photograph, and other pertinent data necessary should that employee be hurt or killed in line of duty.

Recommendation IV.J.4: A current photograph of each Police and Fire Department employee should be maintained not only in the personnel file in the Deputy Clerk's office but also in the limited personnel file maintained by the Director of Public Safety.

Some of the personnel files we examined contained extensive field training officer reports and other data concerning training. While it is important to keep these documents, there should be one central repository for the Police Department's training records.

Recommendation IV.J.5: An area should be designated for storage of training records. They should be organized and easily accessible to command personnel.

K. Property Room

The proper handling and storage of property and evidence is extremely critical to any police operation. The Property Room of the Van Buren Township Police Department is secure, requiring a card key and punch code for entry. In addition, the time of each entry and exit is recorded. We understand that only three people have access to the Property Room: (1) the property custodial (a Sergeant overseeing the Detective Division), (2) the Lieutenant of Police, and (3) a Police Detective. We examined the Property Room and found it to be clean, neat, and orderly.

Recommendation IV.K.1: Duplicate and triplicate documentation should be kept to assure there is always a written record of evidence secured in the Property Room. It is very important to be able to find evidence when it is needed without expending tremendous time searching for the item and/or documentation.

We noted that there was a large amount of ammunition and other tactical equipment being stored in the Property Room. The explanation given was that the Property Room was the only storage area available in the Police Department. The Property Room should be used exclusively for storage of evidence.

Recommendation IV.K.2: The Police Department should immediately find another secure area for ammunition and tactical equipment.

We also noted that evidence stored in the Property Room is only audited every two years, causing a backlog of evidence. Property should be inventoried annually to identify items that can be disposed of according to the laws of the State of Michigan.

Recommendation IV.K.3: Policies and procedures should be established to ensure that Property Room audits are conducted annually and that evidence is properly disposed of when appropriate.

L. Holding Facility

The current holding facility at Van Buren Township is extremely active. Not only does it house prisoners from Van Buren Township but also prisoners from I.N.S., Michigan State Police, Huron Township Police Department, and other local police departments from time to time. Each of the five cells has two cots. However, we observed cells holding multiple prisoners far in excess of capacity. The prisoners are supposed to be monitored every thirty minutes by Communications personnel and the

information noted on a record sheet. We found that this procedure is not always followed in a timely fashion.

Everyone bringing prisoners to the holding facility in Van Buren enters the Sally Port, proceeds to the holding facility, places the prisoner in a cell, and takes the paperwork to the Desk Officer or a dispatcher. There are no policies or procedures in place to determine how a prisoner is assigned a cell or to assure that a prisoner is examined for possible injury before being placed in a cell.

Recommendation IV.L.1: Policies and procedures should be established for cell assignment, limiting the number of prisoners that can be placed in each cell and providing guidelines when cells are filled to capacity.

Recommendation IV.L.2: Policies and procedures should be established to assure that each prisoner placed in a cell in Van Buren's facility has been examined by someone from Van Buren to document that there were no visible injuries prior to being placed in the cell.

Any type of holding facility is an area of extreme potential liability for the government entity responsible for its operation. Therefore, rules, regulations, policies and procedures should be established and strictly enforced regarding this area of potential liability. The policies and procedures should be reviewed periodically and updated as needed.

We were happy to see that monitors were recently placed so that the Desk Officer could also view the prisoners. However, we were disappointed to see that the dispatchers were not looking at the monitors as frequently as they should. Affected Public Safety employees should be made aware of the tremendous liability associated with housing prisoners and should be held accountable for complying with procedures.

Recommendation IV.L.3: Policies and procedures should be immediately reviewed regarding the responsibilities of Communications personnel, desk personnel, etc., who monitor prisoners in the holding cells. A system of checks and balances should be initiated to ensure that the monitoring of prisoners is continual.

Recommendation IV.L.4: The Van Buren Township holding facility houses prisoners from other agencies, but they were only aware of one contractual arrangement for housing prisoners with I.N.S. We feel it is important to have a written agreement with any agency that houses prisoners in the holding facility for Van Buren Township, including the parameters for housing the prisoners and the rules and regulations once the prisoners are in Van Buren's custody.

There are no specific booking policies and procedures enforced by Van Buren Township. It is important to standardize the booking procedure and assure that all necessary steps are taken for the safety and welfare of everyone.

Recommendation IV.L.5: Policies and procedures should be immediately established detailing the booking process and training implemented to assure that all affected employees are completely familiar with and understand their duties and responsibilities.

Recommendation IV.L.6: If Van Buren Township continues to increase the number of prisoners housed in its holding facility, they should explore the possibility of adding additional civilian personnel to assist with arraignments of prisoners, meals, etc.

There have been times when as many as six people have been detained in one cell. We feel this is totally unacceptable and increases the chance for injury, sexual assault, and other serious incidents.

Recommendation IV.L.7: Strict policies and procedures should be developed defining the number of prisoners that can be housed in each cell at the holding facility.

M. Detective Division

The Detective Division of the Van Buren Police Department is currently staffed with one Sergeant and four Detectives. The Detective Division is responsible for investigating criminal activities in Van Buren Township and assisting in other criminal justice matters. The current staffing level became effective January 12, 2004 when Lieutenant Brooks appointed Sergeant Laurain to be in charge of the Detective Division. For approximately one and one-half years prior to January 12, 2004, the Detective Division operated without direct supervision. As a result, the Detectives frequently did not receive proper instructions for handling investigations and related matters. This could have had disastrous results and caused major conflicts had the personnel assigned to the Detective Division not operated appropriately. A Police Department the size of Van Buren's must have a supervisor to oversee the four detectives in the Detective Division, not only for accountability but also to monitor, advise, and direct the Detectives in the cases they are investigating.

Recommendation IV.M.1: The Detective Division of the Van Buren Police Department should not operate without proper supervision. It must continue to have a supervisor to administer the operation of the Detective Division.

The Detective Division operates on twelve-hour shifts, seven days each week, and the Detectives are on call at other times. The types of assignments the Detectives receive are varied in nature, and, therefore, the Detectives must have a broad base of knowledge to handle all types of criminal cases. They must also be skilled in evidence collection, crime scene preservation, interview, and interrogation, as well as handling special narcotics investigations and other sensitive investigations. They also assist in filing criminal complaints generated by the Patrol Division and assist with arraignments. Although the caseload for the Detective Division is not immense and there are few serious crimes committed within the Township, the Detectives are responsible for investigating other matters. According to Detective Division records, the majority of their cases involve fraud, Internet crimes, and identification thefts.

Since Sergeant Laurain assumed supervision of the Detective Division on January 12, 2004, a meeting of all Detectives has been held every Tuesday to discuss all open cases and matters that have taken place during the past week. This allows the Detectives to know what each is doing and assist with information on open cases and other matters of interest. Furthermore, Detectives are now required to attend roll call, when feasible, to exchange information and update the officers on investigations.

Recommendation IV.M.2: The current weekly meetings of the Detectives should be continued to enhance the sharing of information.

Recommendation IV.M.3: The Detectives should continue to participate in roll call briefings during their duty shift to enhance information sharing between the two divisions, unless investigative responsibilities require otherwise.

Sergeant Laurain provided us with his personal observations of conditions in the Detective Division prior to his assuming command on January 12, 2004:

- No defined chain of command
- No dress code
- No assignment of cases by supervisors
- No review of cases by supervisors
- No supervisor available to address inadequate or incorrect reports generated by the Patrol Division
- Detectives unaware of cases being handled by others
- No “team concept” for handling major cases
- Poor relations between Detective Division and Patrol Division

After making the above personal observations, Sergeant Laurain made the following changes in the Detective Division.

- Established a clear chain of command within and outside the Detective Division. All Detectives report directly to a supervisor or, in his absence, to a Patrol Sergeant
- Established a dress code to promote a more professional appearance
- Established a review procedure whereby all cases will be reviewed by the Detective Division Commander
- Established weekly Detective meetings to discuss active cases, brainstorm, and share information
- Assured that Detectives are utilized to their fullest on all cases and that all members work as a team
- Worked to establish a better rapport and enhance communications between Detective Division and Patrol Division

We believe these are positive changes that will enhance not only the image of the Detective Division but also the overall working relationship between the Detective Division and Patrol Division. This will lead to better police service for the citizens of the Charter Township of Van Buren and a higher closure rate for matters investigated by the Police Department.

We were extremely pleased with the improvements and new direction the Detective Division has taken. We feel, however, that the members of this Division need additional specialized training. The Department should send Detectives, whenever feasible, to specialized schools for computer crimes, evidence collection, and forensics, as well as any other pertinent schools to enhance the Detective Division's ability to better investigate and prosecute cases.

N. Reserve Police Officers

The Police Department in Van Buren has a Reserve Police Unit that currently has eight reserve police officers. At one time the Unit had up to twenty officers and was used as a "feeder system" for part-time and then regular police officers on the Van Buren Township Police Department.

The eight reserve officers report to Sergeant Yono, who is their direct supervisor. Sergeant Yono is assisted by two police officers on the Department. The reserve officers are not compensated for their time performing police duties for Van Buren Township. However, when they perform special details such as ballgames, fairs, etc. they receive compensation. They are required to work twenty-four hours per month and are subject to the same rules and regulations as the regular police officers, with two exceptions:

- they are not allowed to carry a wallet badge off duty
- they cannot carry a firearm off duty

The command staff believes that these officers provide a valuable service and would like to see an aggressive initiative to attract more reserve police officers to augment the full-time staff.

Recommendation IV.N.1: A recruitment program should be initiated by the Police Department to attract more qualified applicants as reserve police officers to assist the Van Buren Township Police Department.

While the full-time police officers are in a better position to justify their actions because of continued training mandated by the State, the reserve officers are operating without clearly defined guidelines or policies and procedures that the Department should have in place. It not only places them in a precarious situation but also could increase liability to Van Buren Township.

Recommendation IV.N.2: The new Director of Public Safety, and in his or her absence, the entire command staff, needs to closely supervise and monitor the Reserve Police Officer Unit.

Recommendation IV.N.3: Policies and procedures should be established for the Reserve Police Officer Unit.

O. Levels of Police Service in the Police Department

What level of police service is appropriate for Van Buren Township? And, more importantly, how many officers are needed to achieve that level?

This issue has been argued in Van Buren Township, as in most communities across America. When former Director Elg dramatically reduced the overtime for officers, he presented a plan to the Trustees to use some of the money saved by

reduced overtime to hire additional officers. According to some of the Trustees with whom we spoke, they felt that Director Elg never justified the need for the additional officers or the additional costs.

One simplified method for a community like Van Buren Township to answer the question “How many officers do we need?” would be to perform a Response Time Analysis. A Response Time Analysis takes information that is entered into the Computer Aided Dispatch (“C.A.D.”) to determine how long it takes for officers to respond to various types of calls. If those average response times seem reasonable and acceptable to the community they serve and its leaders, then this would be one indicator that the number of officers patrolling the streets is “in the ballpark” of the correct number. On the other hand, if those response times are unacceptable, even for priority calls, then police leaders must determine what changes can be made with current staffing to reduce response times. If, after careful analysis, it is determined that the response times cannot be reduced to reasonable levels without additional personnel, then they must present a plan to the leaders of the community to hire additional officers. In the case of Van Buren Township, it has been difficult to assess this situation properly because, in the past, they have been unable to obtain the needed statistics and data from the computer. As noted earlier in this report, the failure to ensure that necessary statistics are available for management decisions has hampered the effectiveness and decision making of the leadership of the Van Buren Department of Public Safety. During our work with the Public Safety Department, we explained what was needed to the administrative staff. Much to everyone’s surprise, after several days of work the staff was able to provide the Department with the first statistics they ever had related to response times.

However, the enthusiasm for this achievement quickly dimmed when leaders in the Department saw the statistics provided by the computer. According to the initial data for the first eleven months of 2003, the **average response time for Priority One calls** (the most serious police calls) was **over eight and one-half minutes!** Needless to say, a response time of this length is unacceptable in most communities across America and was far worse than the expectations and predictions of members of the Police Department. As would be expected, the average response time for the less serious calls was even longer. We asked the Department administration to attempt to determine the validity of the numbers and why there seemed to be some inconsistencies in the response times. After the staff did some additional work, we were provided with an answer. Apparently when the C.A.D. was first created and each call for service was “coded” with a priority level, many lower priority police calls were included in the Priority One category. This mistake dramatically distorted the calculations for Priority One responses. To correct this, the administration undertook the tremendous task of recoding each call for the entire year of 2003, and the month of December 2002. This recalculation reduced the average response time for Priority One calls by more than a minute, bringing response time down to a little over seven minutes. We worked with the administration to further reduce response times.

With our assistance, they performed an experiment in December of 2003. During that month, officers were assigned to four “beats”, essentially covering the four corners of the Township. To the extent possible, they also assigned a fifth officer to work in the densely populated areas in the center of the Township. The fifth officer would also be able to respond reasonably quickly to any other sectors or “beats”. By having this additional staffing, and by adhering to more rigid “beat” assignment procedures, the Van

Buren Police Department reduced its average response time in December of 2003 by nearly two minutes over the response time in December 2002, a reduction in average response time to below six minutes.

This experiment was rudimentary, at best, and inconclusive because of the short duration of the experiment. Also, some inconsistencies remained in the response time statistics being generated by the computer. However, it provided a beginning and example for the leadership of the Police Department and the Department of Public Safety to perform a more sophisticated response time analysis in the future. This analysis will determine the actual response times to various levels of police emergencies so that Department's leaders and community leaders can determine whether the actual response times are acceptable or not.

Recommendation IV.O.1: The Department of Public Safety must make the ability to retrieve complete and accurate statistics and performance data an absolute priority. Effectiveness of the Department, its future needs, and the safety of the community cannot be accurately determined without this data.

The work by the current command staff is an excellent step in the right direction, but it needs to be followed up with an organizational commitment to ensure that these statistics are accurate, thorough, and available for analysis.

Recommendation IV.O.2: Once the administration is satisfied that the response time statistics being generated by the computer are accurate, and once those accurate statistics have been compiled over a reasonable period of time, a complete response time analysis must be performed to determine police response times to Priority One calls and then to the other levels of police service. It is imperative that this information then be shared with the Township Supervisor

and the Township Trustees to determine if changes need to be made in the available level of police service in Van Buren Township and whether additional police officers are needed.

P. Levels of Police Supervision in the Police Department

Currently, the Van Buren Police Department has one Lieutenant and five police Sergeants. The Lieutenant essentially serves in a capacity similar to a Chief of Police in most other police departments. He is responsible for all management and administrative duties in the Police Department and its overall operation. Four of the Police Sergeants are assigned to supervise the four platoons in the Patrol Division. The fifth Sergeant was recently reassigned from the Patrol Division to oversee the Detective Division of the Police Department. While we agreed with the need to have a supervisor in charge of the entire investigative function of the Police Department, this reassignment caused a serious supervisory shortage in the Patrol Division. With only four Sergeants in the Patrol Division, it means that any time a Sergeant wants to take a day off other than a regularly scheduled day off (for example vacation, sick time, etc.), another Sergeant has to come in on overtime to cover that shift. This practice is not only unreasonably costly to the Township (because Sergeants are routinely working overtime which is paid at time and a half) but also problematic because of the stress, exhaustion, and “burn out” affecting the Police Sergeants. This situation causes Sergeants to work numerous consecutive twelve-hour shifts or, in some cases, work a sixteen hour shift, be off for eight hours, and come back to work a twelve hour shift. In this situation the Sergeant works twenty-eight out of thirty-six consecutive hours! This situation is **unsafe** and **unreasonable**.

There are many changes that can be implemented to provide sufficient supervisory coverage for the Patrol Division. The command of the Police Department prepared a proposal to address this issue, and it is included in this report as Addendum A. Many other plans could also be feasible. Ideally, we feel this situation needs to be evaluated and acted upon by the new Director of Public Safety in consultation with the Police command staff, the Township Supervisor and the Board of Trustees. However, it is clear to us that at least two additional Police Sergeants are needed to provide proper supervisory coverage for the Van Buren Township Police Department. There is no reason to prevent the Township from beginning the promotional process to develop an eligibility list of candidates for promotion to the rank of Sergeant. The new Director of Public Safety, in consultation as suggested above, can determine at a later date the exact number to be promoted, the manner in which the Department will be structured, and how supervisors will be assigned. But the process will advance more quickly if the promotional process has been completed before the new Director of Public Safety arrives.

Recommendation IV.P.1: The Van Buren Township should proceed to perform a competitive examination for promotion of at least two officers in the Police Department to the rank of Sergeant.

Recommendation IV.P.2: Lieutenant Brooks and the command staff of the Police Department should develop a plan for effectively and efficiently utilizing two additional police Sergeants and present that proposal to the Township Supervisor and Board of Trustees for their approval.

Recommendation IV.P.3: The new Director of Public Safety should make it a priority to analyze the command structure of the Police Department and work

with the command staff within the Department to develop a long-term staffing proposal for the Township Supervisor and the Board of Trustees.

V. Van Buren Township Fire Department

As stated previously, few comments or concerns were expressed about the Fire Department when we initially contracted to complete a study of the Public Safety Department of Van Buren Township. It appeared that the elected officials had few, if any, fears or concerns about the fire service being provided to the residents and businesses of Van Buren. As a result, we assumed that we would have few issues to address related to fire service and would be spending a relatively short amount of time working with the Fire Department. Were we in for a big surprise!

To better understand the perceptions of members of the Fire Department, we asked Deputy Director Al Smolen to arrange a meeting for us with any leaders and members of the Fire Department who wished to attend. Although the meeting was somewhat last minute and some members could not attend because of scheduling, we were impressed by the number of officers and firefighters who attended. After spending the evening listening to observations and concerns of the dedicated men and women of the Van Buren Fire Department, we drove back to our hotel convinced that the problems relating to fire service in Van Buren were far more urgent, far more critical, and a far greater threat to public safety than all of the perceived problems in the Police Department.

As we expected, we were told about the inadequate fire apparatus and the deplorable condition of both Fire Department buildings – Fire Station 1 and Fire Station 2. However, we were shocked to hear their concerns about how the positioning of the (old) fire stations, when combined with the physical barriers within the Township (i.e. railroad tracks, Belleville Lake, etc.), sometimes caused unreasonably long response

times to fire locations. But most shocking was the erratic method by which personnel were provided to respond to calls for fire service.

To synopsize their concerns:

- First, it was evident that no one could anticipate how many firefighters would respond to any given fire call.
- Secondly, there were fire calls where far more firefighters responded than were needed. We were told that sometimes seven or more firefighters would respond to a call when only two or three were required.
- **Thirdly, there were other times when a dramatically inadequate number of firefighters responded, sometimes making it impossible to put a fire truck out on the road!**

Although these incidents were somewhat rare, and the firefighters had developed innovative, informal methods to minimize the craziness of the “over response” or “under response” of fire personnel, it was obvious that this issue was a grave concern to the men and women of the Fire Department and would be a similar concern for the elected officials of Van Buren Township. It was also apparent that, for whatever reason, the elected officials of Van Buren Township had not been adequately informed of this on-going crisis. We will never forget the shock and disbelief we felt that night after learning about this dangerous condition in the Township.

NOTE: We are happy to report that within the last five months (since December of 2003), the Trustees have implemented dramatic changes affecting the fire service that have or will soon eliminate each of these serious concerns. This was accomplished by:

- A. Purchasing new pumpers for the fire service.

- B. Moving forward with replacement of the two out-moded, dilapidated fire stations, and positioning them in a way that overcomes some of the firefighters' concerns.
- C. Implementing a plan that will ensure that appropriate staffing levels (and no more) will always be available for fire response in Van Buren Township (by staffing twenty out of twenty-four hours per day).

The leadership of the Township, especially Supervisor King, and the members of the Board of Trustees truly deserve commendation for their quick and effective response to these previously unsafe conditions. In an incredibly short period of time they have implemented solutions that are not only effective but also efficient. We believe it is safe to say that the fire coverage in Van Buren Township has dramatically improved and the safety of the citizens in Van Buren Township has been significantly increased.

See Addendum B, a report from Deputy Director Smolen comparing conditions in the Van Buren Township Fire Department before and after the December 16, 2003 meeting of the Township Trustees, at which meeting many of the current changes were implemented.

However, safeguards must be put in place to ensure that this type of "breakdown" does not occur in the future. In addition, proper procedures must be implemented to ensure that Supervisor King, as well as the other members of the Board of Trustees, are kept abreast of current situations within the Fire Department and, most importantly, are notified when the effectiveness or efficiency of the fire service has been reduced or public safety has been compromised. To ensure that, we offer the following recommendations:

Recommendation V.1: As soon as practicable, Deputy Director Smolen should be relieved of as many non-fire responsibilities as possible so that he can focus the majority of his attention on the effective, efficient, and professional operation of the Fire Department. It is our opinion that his involvement in Police Department meetings, etc. is often draining his time, is non-productive, and prevents him from focusing on the needs of the Fire Department.

Recommendation V.2: As the full-time head of the fire service, Deputy Director Smolen should be visible and involved at the fire stations and at the scene of as many fire responses as possible. Deputy Director Smolen should be current in all certifications required for members of the Van Buren Fire Department.

Recommendation V.3: To better fulfill his role as the Fire Chief, we recommend that Deputy Director Smolen regularly wear the fire uniform and have “bunker gear” with him in a marked Township vehicle at all times.

Recommendation V.4: Deputy Director Smolen must be assigned the responsibility by the Township Supervisor and the Board of Trustees to develop sufficient reports and systems to monitor, on a daily basis, the staffing at the Fire Department.

Recommendation V.5: Deputy Director Smolen should be given the responsibility to ensure that all personnel files and training records for all firefighter personnel are thoroughly maintained.

Recommendation V.6: Deputy Director Smolen and the Battalion Chiefs should be assigned the responsibility of establishing minimum training criteria for all firefighter personnel and ensuring that proper training records are maintained and filed.

Recommendation V.7: Deputy Director Smolen and the Battalion Chiefs should be tasked with developing policies and procedures for the personnel of the Fire Department in a timely fashion. The policies and procedures should then be disseminated amongst the firefighters. The firefighters should be required to sign for the policies and procedures, acknowledging their responsibility to read and follow them.

Recommendation V.8: If not already accomplished, a form should be created and implemented that allows all fire supervisors and personnel to provide information to Deputy Director Smolen and/or to Supervisor King regarding any condition or situation that they believe jeopardizes the safety of the citizenry or exposes the Township to undue liability.

Recommendation V.9: No less than three times a year the Township Supervisor and selected member(s) of the Board of Trustees and Public Safety Committee should conduct an evening meeting with the Deputy Director, the Fire Inspector, the two Battalion Chiefs, and any fire supervisors or firefighters who wish to attend. At those meetings, the “state” of the fire service should be reviewed and all in attendance should be encouraged to advise the elected officials regarding any possible inefficiency in the system, concerns regarding the fire service, threats to the safety of the citizens, or aspects that may be exposing the Township to undue liability.

Recommendation V.10: The Township Supervisor, a selected member of the Board of Trustees, and the above-mentioned members of the Fire Department should hold an annual planning meeting prior to submission of the annual

Township budget. At that meeting, the following items, at a minimum, should be discussed:

- Next year's budget
- Long term capital purchases
- Capital purchases for the upcoming year
- Safety equipment needed by fire personnel
- Fire apparatus
- Fire Department buildings and maintenance

Recommendation V.11: At the first annual meeting, it should be established what statistics and performance data will be required to be captured and how often that data and statistics will be reported to the Township Supervisor and the Board of Trustees. The statistics should be kept on a monthly and annual basis, and a report should compare those statistics to the same time period from previous years. Some items that would likely be included amongst the data are: response times, number of runs, runs broken down by the various categories and types of runs, number of false alarms, the number of times sufficient personnel were not available to respond (if any), etc.

Recommendation V.12: Because these public safety issues are so important to the welfare of the citizens and for the protection of the Township from unnecessary exposure to liability, the Deputy Director of Public Safety / Fire Chief should be required to submit a written monthly report to the Township Supervisor and the Board of Trustees containing the above-mentioned statistics and the comparable statistics from the same time period in previous years. The

report should also include a short executive summary listing any major concerns, problems, changes or developments in fire service.

During our interviews with several Van Buren pay-call firefighters, we learned that continuity in the promotion process was lacking in the two Fire Stations. To be more specific, one firefighter had been serving as Acting Lieutenant in excess of one year. When we inquired as to why positions were unfilled, especially command positions, we were told that the former Director did not test for or fill the positions and offered no explanation to the Deputy Director of Public Safety. When the Deputy Director of Public Safety was asked why he did not fill the positions when he assumed responsibility in July of 2003, he gave no plausible explanation.

Recommendation V.13: The Deputy Director of Public Safety should take the necessary steps and follow established procedure to promote people within the fire service to fill vacant command positions. This is important not only from an operational standpoint but also from a standpoint of morale for the members of the Van Buren Township Fire Department.

NOTE: In March 2004, the Deputy Director gave indications that he was considering the promotional process and asked us to recommend someone to assist the Township with testing for fire command positions.

In May of 2004, the Township initiated a program to staff the fire stations twenty hours per day, seven days a week with pay-call firefighters. This is a tremendous step forward and everyone involved in the process deserves the congratulations of the residents and business owners of the Charter Township of Van Buren for adding this extra layer of protection. However, this extra layer of protection brings with it extra

responsibility for personnel management. The Township must have appropriate supervision to provide leadership to the personnel during the full twenty hours worked by the pay-call firefighters. The Deputy Director has established a plan for his staff officers to rotate and supervise the pay-call firefighters. We think this is certainly moving in the right direction. However, in the operation of pay-call service of twenty hours a day, there are other operational factors that must be considered in addition to putting out fires and answering rescue calls, and the supervisors must be versed in management and leadership skills for handling personnel and personnel matters. While everything initially seems to be going extremely well, future personnel problems can arise where discipline, grievances and other matters must be resolved. Of course, the initial persons handling the situation will be the supervisors selected by the Deputy Director to manage and lead this program.

Recommendation V.14: In light of the fact that the Township has pay-call firefighters twenty hours a day that are managed by officers from the Fire Department, we strongly believe that the officers should be afforded basic training in handling personnel matters, policies and procedures regarding worker's compensation, and other personnel rules and regulations in effect in the Township. The supervisors should also receive training in conflict resolution and have basic familiarity with the grievance procedures.

We realize we are recommending that additional responsibilities be placed upon the officers in the Fire Department, but we feel it is necessary because of the additional responsibilities that have been created by the increased staffing.

VI. Communications

The Van Buren Public Safety Department's Communications Center is housed within the police facility. The 9-1-1 Center has three operating positions and state-of-the-art equipment. There are currently eight full-time and two part-time Communications personnel. The employees appear motivated and take their duties and obligations as Communications Operators very seriously. The staffing for the unit consists of two operators on duty at all times, except in rare instances. The Communications staff operates under a union contract, which provides for shift bidding by seniority. This presents a serious problem in that the most senior dispatchers bid for the day shift, leaving the less experienced dispatchers to work the busier evening and midnight shifts. We feel that the inexperience may cause confusion and may place officers in jeopardy during times when the call volume is high and the types of calls require more experienced handling.

Recommendation VI.1: The Township and the Union should come to an agreement to staff the Communications Center through a procedure other than seniority-based bidding.

There are no formal policies and procedures in place regarding operation of the Communications Center. This was disturbing because of the important role and responsibilities of the Communications operators. In addition to dispatch duties, the Communications operators monitor the jail cells that sometimes house an excess of fifteen prisoners. We learned through visits to the Communications Center and interviews with the Communications operators that the prisoners are not checked on a regular basis to ensure their safety and reduce liability for the Township.

Recommendation VI.2: The Township should immediately prepare policies and procedures regarding operation of the Communications Center.

Recommendation VI.3: The Township should immediately prepare policies and procedures regarding the visual monitoring of prisoners, which will ensure prisoner and officer safety and reduce liability concerns.

Recommendation VI.4: The Township should insist that a standardized training program be implemented to certify new Communication operators that not only meet the Township guidelines but also meet guidelines for certification by the State of Michigan, federal government, etc.

The Communications personnel report to the Sergeant on duty, and the Sergeant provides operational supervision for handling calls. However, since no one person supervises all of the Communications personnel or the Communications function, policies, etc., the Communications operators are put in a difficult situation with no continuity or consistency of supervision from shift to shift, possibly leading to misunderstanding and confusion.

During our visits to the Communications Center, we observed that the communications responsibilities for the dispatchers, although extremely busy at times, leave periods of inactivity for the two dispatchers on duty. The dispatchers indicated during our interviews that they would welcome additional responsibilities that could be handled during periods of inactivity, communications remaining their primary function and taking precedent over all other assigned duties. It is quite obvious to us that there are many duties that the Communications operators could perform which are now being handled by sworn personnel, including but not limited to monitoring the window, taking walk-in complaints, carrying food to the prisoners, etc. We feel this would be an

effective and efficient use of civilian personnel and free the sworn officers to return to patrol duties.

Recommendation VI.5: The Township should take the necessary steps to reassign extra duties to the Communications operators now being handled by sworn personnel, as appropriate. The Communications operators would not assume responsibilities that necessitate the training of a sworn police officer but would perform only ancillary duties that could be handled as efficiently by the dispatchers as they could a sworn officer. Again, Communications responsibilities take precedent over any other assigned duties.

The command staff collectively agreed in recent meetings that the Communications Center needs enhanced direction and strict adherence to the rules and responsibilities of Communications personnel. The command staff needs to continue to monitor the operation to ensure that this vital function of public safety remains efficient and effective.

VII. Animal Control

The Animal Control Unit is staffed by one full-time and one part-time officer. In most instances this ensures daily coverage by an Animal Control Officer, although the hours are limited. The Officers receive certification through the Michigan Department of Agriculture. Their duties include but are not limited to impounding stray animals, investigating animal cruelty complaints, investigating dog fighting complaints, assisting homeowners on animal-related matters, and quarantining animals. They are responsible for the care of animals housed at the Animal Control facility and maintenance of the facility located in Van Buren Township behind what is commonly referred to as "Fire Station 3". In addition, they assist the Public Safety Department with road closures and traffic control.

We inspected the Animal Control facility and found it to be clean, orderly, and well maintained. We reviewed the reporting forms maintained by the Animal Control Officers and the animal shelter records for 2003 and found them to be in order.

The Animal Control Officers report to the Lieutenant of Police. In addition, Sergeants also have supervisory responsibility during their shifts. There are no clear, defined lines of supervisory authority over Animal Control personnel. The Deputy Director of Public Safety and the Lieutenant of Police report that the Animal Control Officer has a genuine interest in the job, and they are pleased with his job performance. They suggested that closer supervision of the responsibilities is warranted.

Recommendation VII.1: Establish clearly defined reporting guidelines for the Animal Control Officer function within the Public Safety Department.

Recommendation VII.2: Develop a system for close supervision of Animal Control personnel and their duties. This is important to maintain control of this operation.

Recommendation VII.3: Ensure within the next six months that operational policies and procedures are in place that set out the duties of the Animal Control Officer function.

VIII. Conclusion

This operation and management study was intended to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the Van Buren Department of Public Safety. It has demonstrated how current problems were caused by past leadership failures and how the Department has recently taken major strides to address some of those problems. But most importantly, this Report is intended to be a step-by-step roadmap for future changes. If these recommendations are implemented in a timely manner, we believe that descriptions like “unrealized potential” will be replaced by “incredible success” and the complaint that “somebody oughta . . .” will become praise that “somebody is . . .”!

Some of these recommendations can and should be implemented as soon as possible and certainly before the arrival of the new Director of Public Safety. Some of this analysis can be used to ensure that the new Director of Public Safety will be successful in filling the “leadership void at the top”. And finally, some of the recommendations contained in this report will give the new Director the opportunity to “hit the ground running” and build upon the recent “rebirth” of the Department.

We believe that this lofty goal is a realistic one for the Charter Township of Van Buren and its deserving citizens, community leaders, and public safety professionals.

IX. Summary of Recommendations

III. Department of Public Safety of the Charter Township of Van Buren

B. Leadership and Management within the Department of Public Safety

1. Mission Statement.

Recommendation III.B.1.1: The new Director of Public Safety should work with a cross section of personnel from the Department of Public Safety to establish a meaningful Mission Statement that is relevant for the employees and provides generalized direction and inspiration.

2. Goals and Objectives.

Recommendation III.B.2.1: The leadership and supervision in both the Fire and Police Departments should participant in leadership training that explains the role and importance of goals and objectives, including how they are established and used to enhance organizational performance.

Recommendation III.B.2.2: The supervisors and managers in both the Police and Fire Departments, after training, should develop reasonable goals and objectives for their respective work units that are realistic, yet inspiring to the members of that work unit. The personnel of each work unit should be included in the formulation of the goals and objectives. Going forward, the goals and objectives should be reviewed at least annually and modified when needed. Special attention should be focused on whether specific objectives were reached and, if not, why not.

Recommendation III.B.2.3: When the new Director of Public Safety is appointed, he or she should meet with the unit supervisors in the Police and Fire Departments and review the goals and objectives established for those units. By doing this, he or she will become familiar with the direction of each unit within the Public Safety Department, the goals and objectives that they hope to reach, and the challenges they have encountered or expect to encounter in attempting to reach those goals and objectives. This process will provide an outstanding vehicle for the new Director to become familiar with the units within the Police and Fire Departments, as well as its key supervisory personnel.

Recommendation III.B.2.4: After the new Director of Public Safety becomes thoroughly familiar with the goals and objectives of the various units within the Police and Fire Departments, he or she should work with the ranking officers of the Fire and Police Departments to develop goals and objectives for the Department of Public Safety.

Recommendation III.B.2.5: Once goals and objectives have been established by the new Director of Public Safety, he or she should meet with the Township Supervisor to finalize goals and objectives for the Department of Public Safety.

This will not only ensure that the goals and objectives for the Department are implemented but, more importantly, will also establish performance-oriented communication between the Director and the Township Supervisor. In addition, it will go a long way to ensure that the Director and the Township Supervisor agree on priorities, direction, and performance goals – something that evidently was not occurring in the past.

Recommendation III.B.2.6: Once the Director and the Township Supervisor have agreed on the goals and objectives, the goals and objectives should be posted at locations within the Department or otherwise promulgated to the members of the Department.

Recommendation III.B.2.7: A date for an annual meeting between the Director and the Township Supervisor should be chosen well in advance of the Township's annual budget process. At that meeting, the previous year's goals and objectives should be reviewed and goals and objectives established for the coming year. In addition, the Township Supervisor should provide the Director with a performance appraisal based, in part, on the accomplishment, or failure, of attaining the goals and objectives set for the previous year.

3. Statistics and Performance Data.

Recommendation III.B.3.1: Deputy Director Smolen and Lieutenant Brooks should check with other Fire and Police Departments in the area to determine what statistics and data they compile on a monthly and annual basis. They should then determine (preferably with the assistance of other professionals in the public safety field) what statistics and data are necessary to effectively monitor the performance of the Police and Fire Departments, to determine trends, and to establish future needs and resources. At a minimum, the following are needed: call volumes and breakdowns; crime data and analysis; fire run data; accident information; response times; repeated threats to the public safety; trends; etc.

Recommendation III.B.3.2: After determining what statistics and data are needed to properly lead and manage their respective Departments, Deputy Director Smolen and Lieutenant Brooks should determine if the necessary statistics and data can be obtained using the current computer systems.

Recommendation III.B.3.3: Once the two above-mentioned steps have been completed, Deputy Director Smolen and Lieutenant Brooks should meet with Supervisor King to advise her of the availability or lack of availability of necessary statistics and data and to determine what changes, if any, are needed to ensure that the required information is available.

4. Analysis of Statistics and Performance Data.

Recommendation III.B.4.1: Once the needed data and statistics are available through the computer system, monthly and annual reports should be produced

by the Police Department and by the Fire Department, providing comparisons with the same time period for the previous year or years.

Recommendation III.B.4.2: The Director of Public Safety and the ranking officers of the Police and Fire Departments should regularly review statistics and performance data to become familiar with the information, particularly relating to trends or changes in the data. On occasion, Supervisor King should meet with the Director of Public Safety and/or the ranking officers of the Police and Fire Departments to discuss current situations and review any statistical trends, changes, or problems.

6. Employee Performance Appraisals.

Recommendation III.B.6.1: After the new Director of Public Safety is appointed, he or she should work with ranking officials from the Police and Fire Departments, as well as personnel from each of those Departments, to develop a meaningful and relevant performance appraisal for all employees. The appraisal format need not be lengthy or complicated but should be a vehicle by which supervisors in all units can annually meet with employees, discuss performance the previous year, and set personal goals for the upcoming year.

Recommendation III.B.6.2: Once an employee performance appraisal has been established for the Department of Public Safety, the Director of Public Safety must ensure that each employee in the Department is evaluated on an annual basis and that the evaluation form is placed in the employee's official personnel record. The Director should also ensure that each supervisor not only fills out the performance appraisal but also sits down with the employee and discusses the significant points of the performance appraisal. Regardless of the employee's rank or assignment, there should be a small section in the evaluation format for supervisors to note areas that need correction or improvement or where new goals can be established for the individual employee. Similarly, exceptional performance should be noted in this section.

Recommendation III.B.6.3: Many of the truly meaningful and successful employee performance appraisal programs have a self-evaluation component. In this process, the employee fills out the self-evaluation form prior to the supervisor filling out the actual evaluation. This provides employees an opportunity to "make their case" regarding their performance during the previous year, pointing out areas of success, as well as noting any deficiencies. In this self-appraisal, the employee should be encouraged to establish new goals for the upcoming year. There should be a section available for employees to comment on how supervisors can help them improve their performance in the upcoming year.

7. Meeting with Department Heads/Supervisors.

Recommendation III.B.7.1: Regular meetings involving all supervisors must be established and maintained in both the Police and Fire Departments. The frequency of those meetings will be determined by a number of conditions,

including the number of issues requiring discussion and resolution, and other issues affecting the practicality of these meetings. At a minimum, the meetings should be held once a month and, during this period of great change, at least twice a month. It is imperative that the meetings be scheduled to allow almost every member of the command staff to be present. This may require some communication between the ranking officers of the Departments and their Departments' supervisors, but this effort is absolutely essential.

Recommendation III.B.7.2: Each Department supervisor should be required to submit agenda items in advance of the upcoming meeting. The agenda should include standing topics that are of such universal importance they require mention at every meeting. Standing agenda items might include: recent events / incidents / problems, upcoming events, or personnel issues.

Recommendation III.B.7.3: When the new Director of Public Safety is appointed, he or she should make every effort to attend most of the supervisory meetings in the Police and Fire Departments. In addition, he or she should meet with the ranking official in the Police Department and in the Fire Department at least once a week to review operational management and personnel issues, as well as any significant incidents that may expose the municipality to undue exposure to liability.

Recommendation III.B.7.4: One meeting each year of the Department Heads and Department Supervisors should be devoted exclusively to a review of the previous year's goals and objectives to evaluate how well the Department performed in achieving those goals and objectives. A second meeting each year should be reserved exclusively for developing goals and objectives for the upcoming year.

10. Liaison with the Township Administration.

Recommendation III.B.10.1: The new Director of Public Safety must have at least one scheduled meeting each week with the Township Supervisor to discuss ongoing issues, problems, and plans. When these meetings must be rearranged, every effort should be made to reschedule during the same week to ensure that there is the on-going expectation of a constant flow of communication.

Recommendation III.B.10.2: The new Director of Public Safety must meet with the leaders of the Police and Fire Departments each year to determine the next year's needs before the preparation of the annual budget. There must be a formal process in which goals, objectives, and priorities are determined, resources are set, and budgetary impact is evaluated and clearly defined.

Recommendation III.B.10.3: The new Director of Public Safety must ensure that the necessary statistics and data are available to present to the Township administration and the Board of Trustees to communicate the current and

projected needs of the Department of Public Safety and to ensure that the appropriate resources are obtained to meet those needs.

11. Formalized Recognition Program for Public Safety Department.

Recommendation III.B.11.1: The Director should authorize the employees to develop a formal recognition program for his or her review that will be meaningful and motivational.

Recommendation III.B.11.2: The Director should make a special effort to recognize outstanding performance of employees both in person and by means of more official communications.

IV. Van Buren Township Police Department

A. Overview of Police

Recommendation IV.A.1: The Police Department should continue on the course it has undertaken in the past few months and empower its employees to be a part of the decision-making process, whenever feasible. Employees should be encouraged to participate in the development of a Policies and Procedures Manual, an awards program, etc. It is important that employees are given the opportunity to be an essential part of the organization and to contribute to its success.

Recommendation IV.A.2: Police Department personnel should become involved in the decision-making process and their suggestions should be implemented where feasible.

Recommendation IV.A.3: Whenever feasible, the Police Department should allow civilian personnel to participate in educational opportunities related to their particular disciplines to enhance their knowledge and operating skills and provide an opportunity to network with colleagues.

Recommendation IV.A.4: Civilian support staff should be included in staff meetings periodically to interact with sworn personnel of the Department. This will not only build a more cohesive Police Department team but will also empower the civilian employees.

B. Policies and Procedures Manual

Recommendation IV.B.1: The command staff of the Police Department should immediately begin the process of reviewing and revising the Policies and Procedures Manual to assure that it is up to date and appropriate for the Charter Township of Van Buren Police Department. When the new Director of Public Safety is employed, one of his or her mandates by the elected officials must be a time frame within which to review and update the Manual to assure that its rules,

regulations and procedures are in compliance with all local, state and federal laws and ordinances.

Recommendation IV.B.2: The Director of Public Safety should develop a schedule to assure that the Manual is continuously reviewed and updated as needed.

Recommendation IV.B.3: All employees should be given access to the Manual, either by “hard copy” manuals strategically placed throughout the Department, or available on the Department’s intranet.

Recommendation IV.B.4: Department supervisors should provide periodic training on policies and procedures, especially those that relate to high liability issues or those that have been changed.

C. Internal Investigations

Recommendation IV.C.1: The Police Department should establish policies and procedures for conducting internal investigations regarding allegations made against members of the Police Department.

Recommendation IV.C.2: The Police Department should maintain a separate file for each internal investigation.

Recommendation IV.C.3: All witnesses should be interviewed in a timely manner to determine the validity of their complaint and properly memorialize all statements. Complete the internal investigation, make a determination on the allegations, and take appropriate actions, if warranted, in a timely manner.

Recommendation IV.C.4: The Police Department should consult with the prosecuting attorney’s office and Township attorneys immediately, if the situation warrants, regarding any possible criminal charges or other actions to be taken. The Director of Public Safety should insist on a timely disposition of internal complaints to maintain the integrity of the Police Department and its personnel.

D. Citizen Complaint Procedures

Recommendation IV.D.1: The Director of Public Safety should immediately implement a formal citizens’ complaint procedure for the Charter Township of Van Buren Police Department.

Recommendation IV.D.2: A separate file should be maintained for each complaint that documents the actions taken by the Police Department. The Police Department should maintain complete records of actions taken and the disposition of each complaint. These records should be maintained separate and apart from criminal investigations which are handled within the Detective Division.

Recommendation IV.D.3: The Charter Township of Van Buren Police Department should train personnel in the handling of internal investigations. The laws governing internal investigations are different from those of criminal investigations. Personnel assigned to conduct an internal investigation should have a thorough knowledge of case law governing internal investigations.

Recommendation IV.D.4: The ranking police official should assign a senior supervisor to receive special training and be the lead investigator in Citizen Complaint / Internal Affairs cases.

Recommendation IV.D.5: The Police Department should maintain a bound book in which each complaint is logged, as well as the disposition of the complaint when the investigation has been concluded.

E. Records Section

Recommendation IV.E.1: The Police Department command staff should immediately implement a policy whereby any incomplete reports sent to the Records Section are flagged and returned to the Supervisor, with a copy sent to Lieutenant Brooks. **NOTE:** The command staff implemented this new procedure effective January 16, 2004. Since that time we have monitored the process and have been told that there has been a marked improvement in the quality of reports submitted to the Records Section.

Recommendation IV.E.2: A policy should be implemented immediately that provides direction regarding the handling of bond money and accountability of employees handling bond money. The policy would assure that the bond fee of Ten Dollars (\$10.00) is collected each time a bond was written.

Recommendation IV.E.3: Personnel in the Records Section should receive training on the current State of Michigan mandates for retention of criminal and juvenile arrest records, as well as all other police records sent to the Records Section for retention.

Recommendation IV.E.4: The Supervisor's Office should immediately remove "switchboard" responsibilities from personnel in the Records Section of the Police Department.

Recommendation IV.E.5: The Report Log Book must be properly maintained to ensure the integrity of the system (or revise the procedure to eliminate the Log Book if it is not necessary).

Recommendation IV.E.6: All records stored in the attic should be immediately removed to a secure storage location accessible only to authorized Police Department personnel. In addition, the Township should take whatever measures are necessary to ensure the security of Police Department records in the future. The Township should consider this a high priority.

Recommendation IV.E.7: A direct line of supervision and chain of command should be implemented for the Records Section. The lack of a chain of command also exists with other civilian areas of the Police Department and will be addressed in Section IV-F of this Report.

F. Supervisor for Support Services

Recommendation IV.F.1: The Township should establish a position for a Support Services Supervisor who has the educational background and ability to supervise personnel. The candidate should have a background in computers and the technical skills to maintain the Police Department's computer rated dispatch.

G. Recruitment of Police Personnel

Recommendation IV.G.1: The Township Supervisor and the Public Safety Committee should establish a Public Safety Department recruitment policy for minority candidates.

H. Probationary Employees

Recommendation IV.H.1: The Police Department should establish policies and criteria immediately for all employees, both sworn and civilian, to ensure that they can successfully perform the duties and responsibilities of their positions before becoming a permanent employee with the Police Department. This should include, but not be limited to, requiring field training officers and/or supervisors to continue to monitor an employee and prepare periodic reports based on the employees' progress.

Recommendation IV.H.2: Procedures should be established to ensure that reports on all probationary employees prepared by field training officers are reviewed and approved by Sergeants and the Lieutenant, as well as the Director of Public Safety, if appropriate. The reports should become a permanent part of the employee's personnel file.

I. Training

Recommendation IV.I.1: A policy should be established to ensure that training records are maintained accurately and kept up to date. As soon as an officer has completed a particular training event, the documentation should be placed in his or her training and personnel files.

Recommendation IV.I.2: All training files should be reviewed and updated with pertinent documentation to support training received.

Recommendation IV.I.3: Personnel who attend specialized training should be required to prepare a synopsis of the program and present the information as roll call training.

Recommendation IV.I.4: The Police Department should establish a formal policy on roll call training, including guidelines for how and when the training should be presented. This training should be documented.

Recommendation IV.I.5: The training officer should be responsible for selecting topics for roll call training and for providing appropriate materials to the Supervisors.

Recommendation IV.I.6: The Township should ensure that the Supervisors enhance their proficiency in the areas of leadership and management by participating in additional training opportunities.

Recommendation IV.I.7: Senior management officials of the Public Safety Department should attend training conferences in their disciplines.

J. Personnel Files

Recommendation IV.J.1: The personnel files for the Van Buren Public Safety Department should be organized and maintained with consistency. Documents should be kept in chronological order, and medical information, disciplinary information, and personnel information should be filed separately.

Recommendation IV.J.2: The area in which the personnel files are maintained should be secure and the filing cabinet should remain locked at all times.

Recommendation IV.J.3: The Director of Public Safety should maintain a limited personnel file on each employee in the Police and Fire Departments, including emergency contact sheets, photograph, and other pertinent data necessary should that employee be hurt or killed in line of duty.

Recommendation IV.J.4: A current photograph of each Police and Fire Department employee should be maintained not only in the personnel file in the Deputy Clerk's office but also in the limited personnel file maintained by the Director of Public Safety.

Recommendation IV.J.5: An area should be designated for storage of training records. They should be organized and easily accessible to command personnel.

K. Property Room

Recommendation IV.K.1: Duplicate and triplicate documentation should be kept to assure there is always a written record of evidence secured in the Property Room. It is very important to be able to find evidence when it is needed without expending tremendous time searching for the item and/or documentation.

Recommendation IV.K.2: The Police Department should immediately find another secure area for ammunition and tactical equipment.

Recommendation IV.K.3: Policies and procedures should be established to ensure that Property Room audits are conducted annually and that evidence is properly disposed of when appropriate.

L. Holding Facility

Recommendation IV.L.1: Policies and procedures should be established for cell assignment, limiting the number of prisoners that can be placed in each cell and providing guidelines when cells are filled to capacity.

Recommendation IV.L.2: Policies and procedures should be established to assure that each prisoner placed in a cell in Van Buren's facility has been examined by someone from Van Buren to document that there were no visible injuries prior to being placed in the cell.

Recommendation IV.L.3: Policies and procedures should be immediately reviewed regarding the responsibilities of Communications personnel, desk personnel, etc., who monitor prisoners in the holding cells. A system of checks and balances should be initiated to ensure that the monitoring of prisoners is continual.

Recommendation IV.L.4: The Van Buren Township holding facility houses prisoners from other agencies, but they were only aware of one contractual arrangement for housing prisoners with I.N.S. We feel it is important to have a written agreement with any agency that houses prisoners in the holding facility for Van Buren Township, including the parameters for housing the prisoners and the rules and regulations once the prisoners are in Van Buren's custody.

Recommendation IV.L.5: Policies and procedures should be immediately established detailing the booking process and training implemented to assure that all affected employees are completely familiar with and understand their duties and responsibilities.

Recommendation IV.L.6: If Van Buren Township continues to increase the number of prisoners housed in its holding facility, they should explore the possibility of adding additional civilian personnel to assist with arraignments of prisoners, meals, etc.

Recommendation IV.L.7: Strict policies and procedures should be developed defining the number of prisoners that can be housed in each cell at the holding facility.

M. Detective Division

Recommendation IV.M.1: The Detective Division of the Van Buren Police Department should not operate without proper supervision. It must continue to have a supervisor to administer the operation of the Detective Division.

Recommendation IV.M.2: The current weekly meetings of the Detectives should be continued to enhance the sharing of information.

Recommendation IV.M.3: The Detectives should continue to participate in roll call briefings during their duty shift to enhance information sharing between the two divisions, unless investigative responsibilities require otherwise.

N. Reserve Police Officers.

Recommendation IV.N.1: A recruitment program should be initiated by the Police Department to attract more qualified applicants as reserve police officers to assist the Van Buren Township Police Department.

Recommendation IV.N.2: The new Director of Public Safety, and in his or her absence, the entire command staff, needs to closely supervise and monitor the Reserve Police Officer Unit.

Recommendation IV.N.3: Policies and procedures should be established for the Reserve Police Officer Unit.

O. Levels of Police Service in the Police Department

Recommendation IV.O.1: The Department of Public Safety must make the ability to retrieve complete and accurate statistics and performance data an absolute priority. Effectiveness of the Department, its future needs, and the safety of the community cannot be accurately determined without this data.

Recommendation IV.O.2: Once the administration is satisfied that the response time statistics being generated by the computer are accurate, and once those accurate statistics have been compiled over a reasonable period of time, a complete response time analysis must be performed to determine police response times to Priority One calls and then to the other levels of police service. It is imperative that this information then be shared with the Township Supervisor and the Township Trustees to determine if changes need to be made in the available level of police service in Van Buren Township and whether additional police officers are needed.

P. Levels of Police Supervision in the Police Department

Recommendation IV.P.1: The Van Buren Township should proceed to perform a competitive examination for promotion of at least two officers in the Police Department to the rank of Sergeant.

Recommendation IV.P.2: Lieutenant Brooks and the command staff of the Police Department should develop a plan for effectively and efficiently utilizing two additional police Sergeants and present that proposal to the Township Supervisor and Board of Trustees for their approval.

Recommendation IV.P.3: The new Director of Public Safety should make it a priority to analyze the command structure of the Police Department and work with the command staff within the Department to develop a long-term staffing proposal for the Township Supervisor and the Board of Trustees.

V. Van Buren Township Fire Department

Recommendation V.1: As soon as practicable, Deputy Director Smolen should be relieved of as many non-fire responsibilities as possible so that he can focus the majority of his attention on the effective, efficient, and professional operation of the Fire Department. It is our opinion that his involvement in Police Department meetings, etc. is often draining his time, is non-productive, and prevents him from focusing on the needs of the Fire Department.

Recommendation V.2: As the full-time head of the fire service, Deputy Director Smolen should be visible and involved at the fire stations and at the scene of as many fire responses as possible. Deputy Director Smolen should be current in all certifications required for members of the Van Buren Fire Department.

Recommendation V.3: To better fulfill his role as the Fire Chief, we recommend that Deputy Director Smolen regularly wear the fire uniform and have “bunker gear” with him in a marked Township vehicle at all times.

Recommendation V.4: Deputy Director Smolen must be assigned the responsibility by the Township Supervisor and the Board of Trustees to develop sufficient reports and systems to monitor, on a daily basis, the staffing at the Fire Department.

Recommendation V.5: Deputy Director Smolen should be given the responsibility to ensure that all personnel files and training records for all firefighter personnel are thoroughly maintained.

Recommendation V.6: Deputy Director Smolen and the Battalion Chiefs should be assigned the responsibility of establishing minimum training criteria for all firefighter personnel and ensuring that proper training records are maintained and filed.

Recommendation V.7: Deputy Director Smolen and the Battalion Chiefs should be tasked with developing policies and procedures for the personnel of the Fire Department in a timely fashion. The policies and procedures should then be disseminated amongst the firefighters. The firefighters should be required to sign

for the policies and procedures, acknowledging their responsibility to read and follow them.

Recommendation V.8: If not already accomplished, a form should be created and implemented that allows all fire supervisors and personnel to provide information to Deputy Director Smolen and/or to Supervisor King regarding any condition or situation that they believe jeopardizes the safety of the citizenry or exposes the Township to undue liability.

Recommendation V.9: No less than three times a year the Township Supervisor and selected member(s) of the Board of Trustees and Public Safety Committee should conduct an evening meeting with the Deputy Director, the Fire Inspector, the two Battalion Chiefs, and any fire supervisors or firefighters who wish to attend. At those meetings, the “state” of the fire service should be reviewed and all in attendance should be encouraged to advise the elected officials regarding any possible inefficiency in the system, concerns regarding the fire service, threats to the safety of the citizens, or aspects that may be exposing the Township to undue liability.

Recommendation V.10: The Township Supervisor, a selected member of the Board of Trustees, and the above-mentioned members of the Fire Department should hold an annual planning meeting prior to submission of the annual Township budget. At that meeting, the following items, at a minimum, should be discussed:

- Next year’s budget
- Long term capital purchases
- Capital purchases for the upcoming year
- Safety equipment needed by fire personnel
- Fire apparatus
- Fire Department buildings and maintenance

Recommendation V.11: At the first annual meeting, it should be established what statistics and performance data will be required to be captured and how often that data and statistics will be reported to the Township Supervisor and the Board of Trustees. The statistics should be kept on a monthly and annual basis, and a report should compare those statistics to the same time period from previous years. Some items that would likely be included amongst the data are: response times, number of runs, runs broken down by the various categories and types of runs, number of false alarms, the number of times sufficient personnel were not available to respond (if any), etc.

Recommendation V.12: Because these public safety issues are so important to the welfare of the citizens and for the protection of the Township from unnecessary exposure to liability, the Deputy Director of Public Safety / Fire Chief should be required to submit a written monthly report to the Township Supervisor and the Board of Trustees containing the above-mentioned statistics and the comparable statistics from the same time period in previous years. The

report should also include a short executive summary listing any major concerns, problems, changes or developments in fire service.

Recommendation V.13: The Deputy Director of Public Safety should take the necessary steps and follow established procedure to promote people within the fire service to fill vacant command positions. This is important not only from an operational standpoint but also from a standpoint of morale for the members of the Van Buren Township Fire Department.

Recommendation V.14: In light of the fact that the Township has pay-call firefighters twenty hours a day that are managed by officers from the Fire Department, we strongly believe that the officers should be afforded basic training in handling personnel matters, policies and procedures regarding worker's compensation, and other personnel rules and regulations in effect in the Township. The supervisors should also receive training in conflict resolution and have basic familiarity with the grievance procedures.

VI. Communications

Recommendation VI.1: The Township and the Union should come to an agreement to staff the Communications Center through a procedure other than seniority-based bidding.

Recommendation VI.2: The Township should immediately prepare policies and procedures regarding operation of the Communications Center.

Recommendation VI.3: The Township should immediately prepare policies and procedures regarding the visual monitoring of prisoners, which will ensure prisoner and officer safety and reduce liability concerns.

Recommendation VI.4: The Township should insist that a standardized training program be implemented to certify new Communication operators that not only meet the Township guidelines but also meet guidelines for certification by the State of Michigan, federal government, etc.

Recommendation VI.5: The Township should take the necessary steps to reassign extra duties to the Communications operators now being handled by sworn personnel, as appropriate. The Communications operators would not assume responsibilities that necessitate the training of a sworn police officer but would perform only ancillary duties that could be handled as efficiently by the dispatchers as they could a sworn officer. Again, Communications responsibilities take precedent over any other assigned duties.

VII. Animal Control

Recommendation VII.1: Establish clearly defined reporting guidelines for the Animal Control Officer function within the Public Safety Department.

Recommendation VII.2: Develop a system for close supervision of Animal Control personnel and their duties. This is important to maintain control of this operation.

Recommendation VII.3: Ensure within the next six months that operational policies and procedures are in place that set out the duties of the Animal Control Officer function.

Addendum A
Van Buren Twp. Police Department
Command Staff

~ Proposal~

April 24, 2004

OVERVIEW

Our current command structure consists of: (1) Lieutenant, (1) Detective Bureau Sergeant and (4) Patrol Sergeants. The duties of each sergeant are similar but also vary with additional responsibilities. Some of the responsibilities include: training, property room, SWAT, Detective Bureau, reserves, auctions, scheduling, calibration of PBT's and breathalyzer instruments. The sergeants are also assigned to a shift that is consistent with most of the patrol officers (same type of shift – days & hours).

The Administrative Lieutenant, in addition to their own responsibilities provides some shift coverage and support for the daytime Patrol Sergeant. However, it is limited for those working nights.

With the Patrol Sergeants having these responsibilities, sometimes limits their ability to focus on the necessary tasks: support to patrol officers, policies and procedures, liability issues, public relations, training, overall fine tuning of general operations within the department and handling of complaints in a timely, professional manner.

With the limited command staff and ensuring that all supervisory shifts are covered appropriately create an unnecessary financial burden to the township due to sick time, personal time, vacations, training, etc. With our current command staff model, there are concerns with the sergeants who are forced to cover open supervisory shifts (sometimes working 7 days or more in a row), excessive overtime, fatigue and moral issues which impact the entire department as a whole.

Our current command staff model does not allow the department to provide the necessary support to the people of the community and to our own personnel within the police department. The recommendation of this proposal is to increase our current command staff model. The additional command staff positions would promote stability and consistency within the organization, which in turn would build moral and professionalism among officers and command personnel. From a financial stand point this staffing increase would reduce costs associated with sick, personal, vacation and training time. It would greatly reduce the risk of fatigue & job burnout, increase morale and offer new talent and ideas within the organization.

PROPOSAL

- Promote (1) Lieutenant to Captain or Commander

- Promote (5) Sergeants to Lieutenant
- Promote (4) Patrol Officers to Sergeant

Approval of these positions would provide one Lieutenant and Sergeant per shift. One would be assigned to the station, while the other would be on the road to handles calls and to support officers. Adding a command officer to the station would free up a patrol officer back to the road, provide assistance to dispatchers, handling of complainants, in-station reporting and prisoners. This proposal provides a reduction in financial expenses related to sick time and training as shifts would not be replaced, only on rare occasions, still allowing one command personnel on duty at all times.

The following information provides a break down of current/proposed positions and salaries including casts to cover sick time, vacations, etc.

2004 Current Salaries / Staffing (Command Personnel)

- Sergeants (5 positions) - \$26.86 per hr.
- Lieutenant (1 position) - \$29.21 per hr.

Formula

- 2184 hours per year (7 shifts per 2 week pay period)
- Hourly wage, per 2004 contract
- Captain/Command positions is not currently established with a salary schedule

<u>Cost to promote – One Lieutenant to Captain / Commander</u> <i>(estimated)</i>	<u>Cost</u>
\$31.56 (\$2.35 increase per hr.)	\$4,888.00
 <u>Cost to promote – Five Sergeants to Lieutenant</u> <i>(estimated)</i>	 <u>Cost</u>
\$29.21 (\$2.35 increase per hr.)	\$25,662.00
 <u>Cost to promote – Four Patrol Officers to Sergeants</u>	 <u>Cost</u>
\$24.35 per hr. (probationary period – 180 days) (0.49 increase per hr.)	\$2,140.00
\$25.46 per hr. (after probationary period up to one year) (\$1.11 increase per hr.)	\$4,848.00
<hr/> Total Cost (annually)	\$37538.00

Current – Budgeted Expenses

Costs

Vacation Time

200 Hours per Captain/Commander – per year	\$6,312.00
200 Hours per Lieutenant – per year	\$5,842.00
200 Hours per Sergeant – per year	\$5,372.00

Personal Days

24 Hours per Captain/Commander – per year	\$ 757.00
36 Hours per Lieutenant – per year	\$1,052.00
36 Hours per Sergeant – per year	\$ 967.00

<i>(Multiplied by 1 Captain/Commander position)</i>	Total Cost	\$ 7,069.00
<i>(Multiplied by 5 Lt. Positions)</i>	Total Cost	\$34,470.00
<i>(Multiplied by 4 Sgt. Positions)</i>	Total Cost	\$25,356.00
	Total Cost (annually)	\$66,895.00

Estimated Savings

This savings is based on time and half; figures could be higher based on contract and double times rates, which could make the savings even greater.

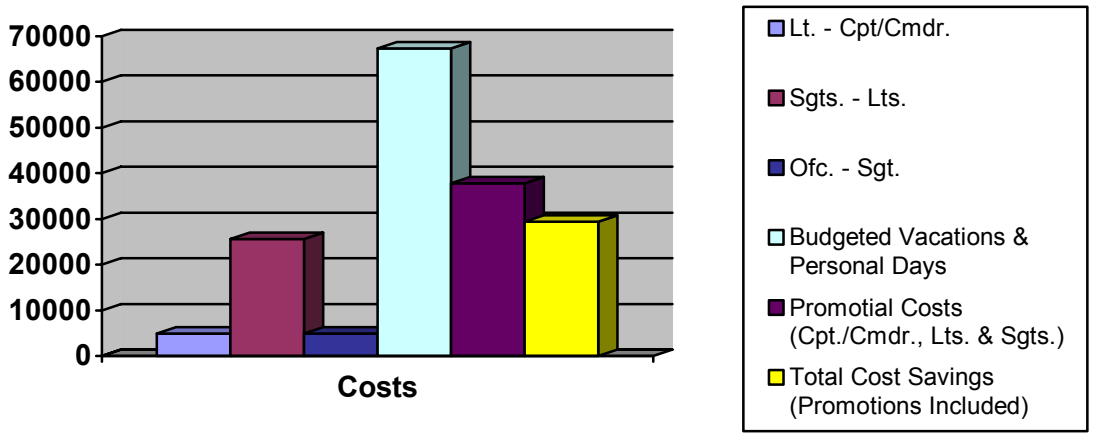
Estimated Total Savings (annually) \$29,357.00

SUMMARY

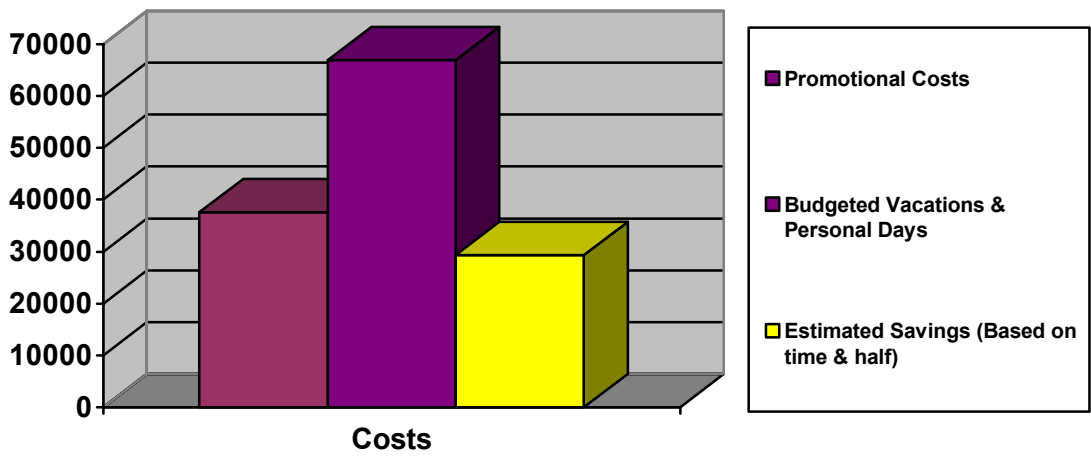
Based on the information supported above, with this approval of the recommended proposal, this would enable the department to establish the necessary positions. Through promotions, this would allow command personnel to create a cohesive and structured department. Furthermore, this will build moral, implement consistency, promote professionalism and provide quality customer service, not only to the general public but also to our own employees. Finally, from a financial perspective, there is **no increase in costs** or wages to implement this proposal and there is an estimated savings of over \$19,000.00 annually

Cost Chart Graphs on next page

Itemized Costs



Grouped Costs



Addendum B

VAN BUREN FIRE DEPARTMENT

PRE-DECEMBER 16, 2003

By _____

PERSONNEL

The Fire Department had thirty-two personnel (thirty were on-call). It was difficult to recruit new on-call fire fighters until late in 2003. As Michigan's economy continued at a slow pace, more and more people began looking for a part time position in our Department. In the last quarter of 2003, we began to get more applications for on-call fire fighters. The hiring process was begun on those qualified.

The primary problem with operating an on-call emergency service was the lack of personnel available for daytime (Monday – Friday) response. Even though we tried to hire individuals that worked their fulltime jobs at night and were available for emergencies during the day, most of them switched their fulltime employment to a day shift as soon as they were able.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Dispatchers notified fire fighters of emergencies by using special pagers that sound an alarm when activated, and then allow a message from the dispatcher. Fire Department personnel would then respond from home (or the store, restaurant, or wherever they were) to the fire station. They would gather their equipment and mount the appropriate apparatus for response to the call.

Because of the lack of available personnel for daytime response Monday thru Friday, both fire stations were dispatched to any/all calls for service from 6:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. During the evenings (Monday – Friday from 6:00 p.m. until 6:00 a.m.) and on weekends, only the jurisdictional fire station is dispatched to standard runs. Both stations are dispatched to structure fires and other large-scale emergencies at any time. Whenever one fire station was dispatched to a call for service and there was no response from personnel at that station for five (5) minutes, the second station was also dispatched to the same alarm. This sometime resulted in a five-minute delay before a secondary crew was notified and able to respond.

Because of the time needed for on-call personnel to drive to their respective fire station to get their gear and an apparatus, the average response time was about 11 ½ minutes (including approximately two minutes spent by dispatchers notifying fire department personnel and the ambulance company (HVA) of the emergency). The average time for fire fighters to go to their fire station, get equipment and an apparatus, and then get to the scene of an emergency was about an average of 8 ½ minutes. The response times

were poorest late at night (when fire fighters had gone to bed) and when the weather/driving conditions were bad (winter, rains, rush hour, etc.).

TRAINING

Because of availability to meet training needs, each member of the Fire Department had to devote one evening (Monday nights from 6:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m.) and one Sunday morning (from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon) each month for in-house training. These training sessions added to time away from families and other duties and responsibilities.

FACILITIES

The Fire Department facilities consist of:

Headquarters being housed within the Police Department.

Fire Station One is located at 130 Fourth Street, within the city of Belleville. Although it is not known the exact year that Fire Station One was built, it can easily be assumed that the building is at least seventy years old. It has four small single apparatus bays, one small room that is used as the meeting room, office, lounge, lunchroom, and computer/records room. There is also one small unisex bathroom with outdated plumbing. Each of the apparatus bays is occupied (engine, ladder truck, squad, and dive trailer). There is no room inside for the four-wheel drive pickup truck assigned to Station One. It sits outside all year long. Fire Fighters responding to Station One must either park on the street or in a municipal parking lot adjoining the Station. If there are events in downtown Belleville, the parking lot may not be available for our fire fighters. With a very small building and no exterior areas available, all training activities have to be held at alternate locations.

Fire Station Two is located at 45581 Ecorse Road (just West of Belleville Road). The structure is at least forty years old. Like Station One, Station Two was built with four small apparatus bays and a fifth small bay suitable only for a small passenger-sized vehicle. There is only one room in the building that is used as the office, training room, kitchen, meeting area, and computer/records room. There is also one small unisex bathroom. The parking area is limited to about 14 cars. The Station's drive opens to the Ecorse Road Service Drive that is in very poor condition. The numerous potholes in the road take a toll on the heavy fire trucks that must travel over it. Following rainy weather, the potholes become small ponds.

FIRE DEPARTMENT VEHICLE FLEET

The Fire Department's fleet of vehicles was as follows:

Headquarters: Staff Vehicle (#400) – 2002 Ford Explorer

Fire Station One: Inspector Vehicle (#437) – 2000 Ford Explorer (parked outside)

Squad 413 – 1996 E-One Rescue Truck
Utility 417 – 2002 Ford-4wd Pickup Truck (parked outside)
Engine 411 – 1990 Pierce Engine
Ladder 412 – 1986 Pierce 75' Ladder Truck
Dive Trailer (with equipment for the Public Safety Dive Team)

Fire Station Two: Utility 424 – 2001 Pierce/Ford Mini-Pumper/Rescue Vehicle
Squad 423 – 1996 E-One Rescue Truck
Engine 431 – 1990 Pierce/Ford Midi-Pumper
Engine 421 – 1986 Pierce Engine

The Department's fleet of emergency response vehicles is beginning to show signs of aging. The vehicle maintenance and repair costs have risen dramatically in recent years. A vehicle replacement plan of \$80,000 each year has been recognized as being insufficient to replace the expensive vehicles in a reasonable timeframe.

SINCE DECEMBER 16, 2003

PERSONNEL

Today, the Fire Department has thirty-eight members (thirty-seven on-call). Recruitment has been easier, primarily because of the area's economic condition. Fire Station Two has a full roster of 20 people while Fire Station One has 17. Applications are submitted at a rate of about one every other week. Since many of the fire fighters assigned to Station One are probationary (less than one year employment), only fire fighters that are certified will currently be accepted. There are still a limited number of daytime personnel available.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

When implemented, the new Fire Department staffing plan will provide a highly enhanced delivery of services to the residents. The plan is for one of the Fire Stations to be staffed with two fire fighters from 6:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. and from 8:00 p.m. until 6:00 a.m. each day. This twenty-hour staffing will allow fire fighters to reduce the response time to an average of about 4 minutes, ½ the current response time average. During the hours of 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m., the on-call fire fighters will be dispatched as they currently are. This time period is historically when the fire department has its fewest calls for service and when the personnel availability is highest.

Although the initial fire department response will be the two-person "duty crew", additional fire fighters will be automatically dispatched for large-scale emergencies. If, upon arrival, the duty crew realizes that they need additional support personnel, they will have the ability to request them through the dispatch center.

In addition to emergency response, having fire fighters in-station for twenty hours each day will allow for greater department participation in public education, public relations,

training, vehicle maintenance, building maintenance, and some of the department's day-to-day activities.

Implementation of the duty crew will necessitate an increase in the fire department's operating budget of approximately \$92,000 for the first year of operation. Subsequent years will cost as few as \$80,000, accordingly to preliminary estimates.

The Fire Inspector now takes his vehicle home. By doing so, he is able to respond from home with medical equipment and his fire gear. This change has improved response times.

TRAINING

With the staffing plan in place, it will be easier to schedule training for the fire fighters. A training program will be developed where a training subject will be available during a daytime period and the same subject will be taught again on an evening schedule.

The wage costs for training will be reduced since most of our fire fighters will be trained (at least to some extent) while already working on the duty crew.

FACILITIES

With the Downtown Development Authority's announcement that the building of a fire station on the North end of our township being their next major priority, the township's elected officials announced their plan to utilize general fund dollars and landfill revenue to build a fire station on township-owned land in the Southern part of the township. These two new facilities will replace the outdated buildings with modern buildings conducive to operating a modern fire service. Both stations will be designed and built to handle today's needs, and the needs far into the future.

The northern fire station is planned to be the larger of the two. Being on a larger piece of property, it will have a larger training room and more area for future growth than the southern fire station. While the site has yet to be determined, rules of DDA improvements to municipal facilities dictate that it must be placed within the DDA boundaries.

The southern fire station is planned for a piece of property owned by the township on the corner of Sumpter and Hulls Roads. The size of the property will limit the size of the fire station, yet provide adequate room for a quality facility in a desirable location.

FIRE DEPARTMENT VEHICLE FLEET

At the December 16th meeting of the Board of Trustees, the purchase of two new Pierce Class A Pumping Engines was approved at an approximate cost of \$400,000 each. These new engines will be used to replace two current engines as front-line apparatus and enable our department to place two current engines into "reserve" status. The addition of new and larger fire stations will allow room to house reserve engines for the first time in our department's history. With reserve engines, the fire department will

always have apparatus available when one is out-of-service for maintenance or repairs. Reserve engine can also be used in training situations, thus extending the life of front-line apparatus. One engine (the midi-pumper) will be traded-in or sold outright.

The new fire engines will be equipped with large pumps and water tanks for superior firefighting capabilities. In addition, each will have built-in class "A" foam systems that result in a faster "knockdown" of burning materials. Faster knockdowns result in a safer environment for the fire fighters and less property loss for the residents. Each of the new engines will also be equipped with independent front suspension for superior handling, braking, and turning abilities. They are also equipped with a computer-activated safety system in the passenger compartment that will inflate interior air bags and secure seated occupants when the computer senses the vehicle has reached an angle where it is possible that the truck may flip onto its side.

As part of a plan that had been adopted earlier, these engines are only part of a vehicle replacement plan that has been projected to the year 2029. Funded through capital improvement dollars, the plan calls for scheduled replacement of apparatus as they age. The plan includes ordering a new aerial platform (100') and a new rescue squad in 2004 with delivery expected in 2005.