

CITY OF ROCHESTER HILLS



DATE: January 13, 2006

TO: City Council Members

RE: 911 Study

James D. Rosen, City Council President

The recommendation from the Public Safety Committee that the City Council expedite a study of the City's 911 dispatch operations is timely and appropriate.

Over the last few years, we have had a major revolution in technology relating to land-line telephones and associated computer mapping, cell phones with 911 GPS locating capability, vehicle computer linkage along with GPS location information, and improvements in inter-group communications among police, fire, EMS and other responders. What used to be rare is now common and what used to be normal is no longer the predominate way to communicate. We need to step back a little, and in light of the changes in technology and the way people use that technology review how we operate today and get some advice on how we should operate in the future to respond to all the changes.

We do not need a year long, expensive study of all the minute details of the dispatch operations at the Fire Department and the Oakland County Sheriff's Department. What we probably need is a consultation with a recognized firm that has recognized expertise on 911 operations and strategy. That consultation should consist of:

- A review of the operations of both Rochester Hills 911 dispatch and the Oakland County Sheriff's Department 911 dispatch as performed for Rochester Hills
- A review of how and how well both dispatch operations integrate and function together;
- An analysis of any major strategic operational alternatives are available to the City and or County that would improve the effectiveness of the 911 service to the community as well as a description of the improvements;
- An analysis of any significant technological or technology shortcomings, any procedural deficiencies, or missed opportunities with the 911 systems and services, that if remedied would improve the effectiveness or efficiency of the overall 911 service to the community.

I think a consultation such as this should not be very expensive, perhaps in the order thousands not hundreds of thousands of dollars. Given the importance to the community of having an effective, efficient and reliable 911 dispatch system, funding for such a study should be made available through a budget amendment, no later than the first quarter of this year.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.