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City Manager
City of Unalaska
PO Box 610
Unalaska, AK 99685

Mike Holman, Director of Public Safety
Unalaska Department of Public Safety
29 Safety Way
Unalaska, AK 99685

Re: Unalaska Department of Public Safety Assessment, March 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Unalaska Department of Public Safety desired to have a management audit / assessment of its public safety department and asked that Russell Consulting, LLC to perform it. By specific direction of the Unalaska City Manager and the Director of Public Safety, the scope of the audit included the daily routine operations of the Unalaska Department of Public Safety, along with any personnel and performance considerations that may be identified.

Russell Consulting, LLC observed the daily operations of the Unalaska Department of Public Safety (February 27 – March 3, 2017); reviewed its existing Policy & Procedures Manual; audited its property and evidence room; observed its dispatch/call center operations; observed its fire and EMS capabilities and operation; observed its contract jail facility and operation; examined its records management system; interviewed departmental personnel (including the Director of Public Safety); inspected the existing public safety building (including jail, fire, EMS, corrections, DMV, and animal control); inspected public safety vehicles currently in service; and gathered data. Time was also spent talking with allied agencies, departments, services, elected officials, and random members of the community.

Included in the report will be a suggested hierarchy of actions to improve the efficiency

of the Unalaska Department of Public Safety, intended to reduce the risk of liability exposures, improve the professionalism of the department, and subsequently increase the public support for this public safety organization.

INTRODUCTION:

Efficient and effective public safety departments do not just happen. They need a great deal of planning and professional management. Competent public safety administrators must possess the management “know how” to build strong departments to ensure the uninterrupted delivery and continuous improvement of police/public safety services to the communities they serve. They draw on a wealth of skills to get that job done. The job includes:

Administration of personnel—providing direction and leadership to department personnel.

Management of public funds—ensuring the cost-effectiveness of programs, balancing budgets, and securing the financial health of the agency.

Implementation of programs and policies—working with elected officials and community leaders to achieve common goals and objectives for the community.

Coordination of service delivery—anticipating future needs, organizing work operations, and establishing timetables to meet community needs.

Above all else, today's professional public safety administrator brings to the communities they serve a commitment to maintaining the public trust and confidence in the local public safety department, achieving equity and social justice, affirming human dignity, and improving the quality of life for all residents and visitors. To accomplish this, the administrator must:

- Work with elected officials as they develop policies. The administrator will often be called upon to discuss problems and recommendations, propose new plans, or discuss issues that affect the community and its residents.
- Ensure that laws and policies approved by elected officials are equitably enforced throughout the city.
- Seek feedback from residents and members of the business community to address and solve problems.

- Prepare the annual budget, submit it to elected officials for approval, and implement it once approved.
- Supervise administrative personnel, other employees, and all volunteers associated with the department.
- As directed by City Hall, solicit bids from contractors and select or recommend the appropriate individual(s) or organization(s) to perform the work.
- Investigate citizen complaints and problems concerning the department of public safety and recommend changes to elected officials.
- Manage the day-to-day operations of the department.

NARRATIVE:

The Unalaska Department of Public Safety serves the City of Unalaska and has approximately 212.3 square miles within its jurisdiction. In 2014 the state census indicated a population base of 4,516 residents. There is a seasonal population increase of approximately 6-8 thousand residents during busy commercial fishing seasons. The City of Unalaska is the 12th largest incorporated city in the Alaska, located approximately 800 miles southwest of Anchorage. Unalaska is an island that is accessible by a 2-hour plane ride or a boat trip that can last several days depending upon weather. The community is connected by 40 miles of roads linking the port, harbors and private docks with local businesses and residential community. The City is located on the coast of Unalaska and Amaknak islands and is home to one of the most prosperous stretches of coastline in Alaska.

For the last 30+ years, Unalaska's economy has been based primarily on commercial fishing, seafood processing, fleet services and marine transportation. Annually, more than 1.7 billion pounds of frozen seafood is shipped to domestic and export markets in North America, Europe, and Asia, making the Port of Dutch Harbor first in the nation in the quantity of catch landed and first or second in the nation in value of the catch for more than 20 years.

The remoteness of Unalaska requires that the agency be self-sufficient, as any assistance from other agencies is many hours, and sometimes even days away. Officers are regularly asked to investigate incidents on behalf of other agencies, whose personnel are located hundreds of miles away. With the large transient population, officers often encounter criminal behavior that is more often associated with larger, more urban areas. The remote location and the need for

unskilled, manual labor create an impression that a person can leave their past behind and reinvent themselves in Unalaska. This frequently attracts people who want to hide from law enforcement, and the organization frequently interacts with illegal aliens, individuals with outstanding arrest warrants, and people “flagged” by law enforcement for various reasons.¹

ASSESSMENT PROCESS:

The requested assessment process included on-site inspections; document, records, and policy review; comparisons to state and national standards as well as best practices for this type of agency; interviews with personnel, support staff and volunteers, elected officials, members of the public, and support or allied agencies; personal observations; and community and agency surveys.

JAIL FACILITY:

The Unalaska Jail is operated by the Unalaska Police Department and is one of fifteen (15) contract jail facilities in the state. It was last inspected on October 6, 2016 by Brann Wade, DOC Contract Jail Administrator. The audit tool consisted of twelve chapters and identified two policy compliance issues that needed attention. At the time of this onsite audit those compliance issues had been corrected.

The Unalaska Jail was clean, well lit, and unoccupied by persons in custody. It is an adult prisoner facility. Prisoner rules were posted in the common area and hallway outside the holding cells. Prisoners had access to phones and showers, and each holding cell, hallway, entrance, and area was monitored by CCTV. Each holding cell had adequate lighting, ventilation, bunk, and toilet, all compliant with suicide prevention guidelines. Smoke and CO detectors were present and operational. Prisoners were classified (special needs, medical, suicide watch, and violent) during the booking process. Suicide blankets and clothing were available as needed.

The kitchen was adjacent to the corrections officers’ work area. It was clean and orderly. Prisoner meals were stored as appropriate. Frozen meals were kept in the freezer. Dried foods (cup-a-soup) were kept in cabinets. A refrigerator was designated for prisoner meal preparation and for keeping meals cold. Prisoner meals were kept separate from Unalaska Department of

¹ Community Data from 2013 ALEAAC application

Public Safety personnel foods. Weekly menus (including special or unique dietary considerations) were posted and available for jail personnel preparation and service.

The corrections officers' work area was clean, free from excessive clutter, and provided an observation ability of both direct line of sight and CCTV monitoring. Dispatch communications personnel also had the ability for direct line of sight observations into the booking room. Officer and prisoner safety, as well as building security, is enhanced by building design and existing security measures. Policy manuals, schedules, and postings normally associated with municipal corrections operations were immediately available to jail personnel. On-duty personnel were familiar with day-to-day operations of the jail and their role in jail security and prisoner safety.

Prisoners were brought into the jail via a locked door monitored by CCTV. The booking room also facilitated DUI processing. This room is monitored by CCTV in the correction officers' work area.

The jail has an operations policy and procedures manual. It is being reviewed and updated as part of Unalaska Department of Public Safety' ongoing policy manual review. Corrections personnel have access to a hard copy in their office and an online version on the department's server. A preliminary review of the jail's policy manual identified it as relatively current and compliant with state statutes and existing best practices. Suggestions for adoption of specific PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act) requirements were discussed and subsequently immediately implemented by Director Holman. Policies related to PREA were already in place; however, were not identified as such. This was corrected.

Municipal Corrections Officers (MCO) attend the state MCO academy and receive regular training on control and de-escalation tactics, use of restraint, and use of force. Training records are kept and were made available for review.

DISPATCH:

Visitors to the Unalaska Department of Public Safety enter the foyer from the front of the building and generally interact initially with the on-duty dispatcher. Public notices and a large metal, bright green drop-off box for outdated or unused prescriptions is just inside the main door to the building.

A positive first impression is likely to be made due to the foyer's cleanliness, adequate lighting, overall orderliness, and welcoming décor. Building security is controlled by doors with electronic locks, security cameras, and a large window similar to those in banks. This shared foyer provides public access to DMV. A small table with two bench seats facilitates those guests requiring seating or small work area.

Dispatch services are provided 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Dispatchers are trained in the handling of routine and emergency calls for service and considered to be on the front line of public perception. They multi-task with the general public and public safety personnel with the reception and dissemination of information via phone, radio, computer, written directive, and verbal instruction. Unalaska Department of Public Safety dispatchers are vetted to insure compliance with APSIN² access protocols and guidelines. Their policy and procedures manual is in the process of update and review. They are trained in Emergency Medical Dispatch protocols and are able to provide meaningful information to callers prior to the arrival of emergency medical personnel.

POLICE:

The Unalaska Department of Public Safety consists of a Director of Public Safety who holds the rank of Chief of Police and who directly supervises the Fire Chief (vacant at the time of onsite visit), Deputy Chief of Police, an Office Manager, and Animal Control. The Office Manager supervises DMV. The Deputy Police Chief supervises three (3) sergeants who supervise nine (9) police officers (2 vacancies). The Fire Chief supervises a Sr. Fire Captain who supervises two (3) Fire Captains (all paid personnel). The Fire Chief and Deputy Police Chief are of equal rank within the organization and could conceivably function as Acting Director of Public Safety in the absence of the Director.

All police personnel fully cooperated with the on-site assessment and participated with interviews and anonymous online surveys. All of the police officers spoke with candor and expressed personal and professional satisfaction with their employment, equipment, training opportunities, and general working conditions. Each officer expressed general support for police administration and supervision. Each officer was aware of ongoing discussions pertaining to the restructuring the department by removing the Fire Department from it. None thought such

² Alaska Public Safety Information Network (APSIN)

restructuring was a good idea but admitted they did not know all of the concerns or issues.

The police department is continually recruiting to fill vacancies and/or approved positions, utilizing technology and multimedia effectively. Hiring and retention of police personnel is in accordance with state statute and Alaska Police Standards Council criteria. Though the community has many desirable amenities and services, it is considered remote and competes with larger, more easily accessible communities when it comes to recruitment and retention of the work force. The challenge of recruiting, hiring, and retaining qualified and motivated personnel is not unique to Unalaska or this administration. The challenge has been around for a very long time, and will be around for the foreseeable future.

The department encourages professional development and training, enhancing the agency's ability to deliver services to citizens and guests of the city. A positive esprit de corps was evident within the police department, suggesting healthy interaction and support within the rank and file. This observation was supported by the employee survey results, too.

The police department seems to be meeting the general expectations of the community it serves. Survey results indicate that despite a general sense that criminal activity is on the rise, community members feels safer here than elsewhere in the state.

DMV:

The local DMV office is accessed via the lobby foyer of the Unalaska Department of Public Safety building. Regular office hours facilitate delivery of traditional DMV services, including road tests on Friday when needed. The current employee has been with DMV "for a long time" and a second person was recently trained. State required documents and records are filed electronically with the state. Local records are hard copied and filed. The office is orderly and efficient in appearance and makes a positive and professional first impression. The helpful and knowledgeable staff person is friendly and approachable, unlikely to generate citizen complaints.

ANIMAL CONTROL:

Animal Control is accessed via the rear of the Unalaska Department of Public Safety building; however, no signage identifies the main door to its office. The door to the shelter is kept locked and is not open to the public without escort. Indoor animal kennels were clean and

unoccupied at the time of this visit. A deep sink, retractable hose, and cleaning supplies and instruments were readily accessible for regular cleaning of the shelter. The shelter was well lit and ventilated. Animal Control Fees for animal impounds, kennel fees, licensing, and pet release are posted. Adoption of stray or impounded animals is a preference, including the off-island adoption of animals; however, when required, animal euthanasia is performed by specially trained and certified Unalaska Department of Public Safety personnel. Animal euthanasia training and certification records were provided and found to be current.

FIRE / EMS:

Staff and volunteer access to the Fire Department is primarily through a side door of the building. Building security is maintained by means of an access card issued to staff. Paid staff has their offices on the second floor adjacent to a large conference room which functions as the primary incident control room during a crisis or disaster (Emergency Operations Center). Two paid staff work regular day shift hours (0800 – 1600) and share duties as battalion captains, alternating on-call responsibilities each week. The Fire Chief and Sr. Fire Captain positions were vacant at the time of the onsite visit; however, the Unalaska Department of Public Safety was actively recruiting to fill these vacancies.

There was little to no administrative supervision of paid staff or volunteers observed or described during this visit, and both paid staff denied meaningful contact with agency administration. Neither of the paid staff was knowledgeable of Unalaska Department of Public Safety fire department policies or procedures and performed work and equipment checks according to their understanding of industry standards.

A tour of the fire department (including the substation near the airport) was conducted by fire staff. Unalaska Department of Public Safety fire department is capable of delivering fire response, EMS response, and rescue response (including water rescue and search and rescue). All equipment was well maintained and in a perpetual state of readiness. Daily inspections of the equipment insure apparatus operation and preparation. The majority of emergency calls for service to the fire department are medical; hence the ambulance receives the most hours of operation. An exercise area with free weights and cardio equipment is available for Unalaska Department of Public Safety paid staff and volunteer firefighters. The paid staff is very knowledgeable in the operation of their assigned equipment and appropriately proud of their area

of responsibility.

Several areas of recommended improvement include:

- Building, equipment, inventory control – portable radios, access keys, etc. previously issued are unaccounted for and should be retrieved
- Locate and review fire and EMS policy and procedures manual
- Establish and follow standards for volunteer selection and utilization
- Provide command / staffing support by assigning Deputy Chief Shockley to temporarily oversee Fire / EMS until arrival of new Fire Chief, to make preparation for his/her arrival, and adhere to specified checklist of things that need to be accomplished in the interim. This suggestion was immediately implemented by Director Holman.

POLICE / FIRE / EMS / DMV / DISPATCH / CORRECTIONS / PROPERTY & EVIDENCE / ANIMAL CONTROL POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL:

Typically, police agencies have volumes of policies covering every conceivable task. Exposure to liability is generally limited to a few recurring tasks in law enforcement. Proactive risk management in law enforcement includes addressing several universally recognized and accepted police functions. Those areas include: use of force; pursuit and emergency operation of vehicles; search and seizure (arrest); care, custody, restraints, and transportation of prisoners; domestic violence (including agency employee involved DV); property and evidence; off-duty conduct; sexual harassment or external sexual misconduct by officers; selection and hiring; complaints and internal affairs investigations; special operations; and dealing with mentally ill, emotionally disturbed persons, and persons with diminished capacity. Unalaska Department of Public Safety employees have access to an appropriate hard copy and online version of their respective manuals. Copies of existing policy and procedures manuals were obtained and reviewed. The Unalaska Department of Public Safety policy and procedures reviewed address each of those high-risk categories. The ongoing review and updating process of existing policies was also reviewed. The review and implementation of Unalaska Department of Public Safety policies is deliberate, thoughtful, and time consuming. Utilization of computer technology and individual online access provides timeline detail and documentation. Progress is being made toward the completion of the current stage of input, update, review, adoption, and

implementation of Unalaska Department of Public Safety policy manuals.

Existing Unalaska Department of Public Safety policies and procedures were compared to Oregon Accreditation Standards (ORAA) and generally found to be compatible, compliant, potentially compliant, or not applicable with those standards. The Oregon Accreditation Alliance exists to improve the quality of law enforcement and 911 agencies in both Oregon and Alaska, including those agencies with jail functions. Accreditation takes considerable effort, time (generally 18-24 months), and documentation. It begins with a self-assessment phase after application and involves the entire agency. Most agencies do not have sufficient resources to assign someone full-time as an accreditation manager and the majority of accreditation managers already have other full-time responsibilities. Obtaining accreditation is a valuable tool to the law enforcement administrator and local policy makers seeking a bonafide method of measuring the performance and accountability of police agencies. Agency accreditation is highly recommended

DEPARTMENTAL INVENTORY:

Unalaska Department of Public Safety maintains large item accountability (computers, cameras, weapons, ammo, vehicles, specialty items, laboratory items, portable radios, expensive office equipment) and follows city established purchasing procedure. Regular audits reduce the potential for misuse or personal conversion (such as unauthorized internet access, weapons, or off-duty utilization of issued equipment). The threshold for city directed inventory control is \$3,000; however, Unalaska Department of Public Safety accounts for the responsible and lawful use of lesser value issued items. Access keys are issued to all personnel; however, access to some portions of the building is restricted to authorized personnel only (such as the Evidence Room or the FRED (Forensic Recovery of Electronic Device) room).

EVIDENCE:

At the time of this visit an Evidence Room audit was underway. A recent change of Evidence Custodian responsibilities within the department required an extensive and detailed review of all evidence under the control of the Unalaska Department of Public Safety. The audit was being performed in accordance with departmental procedures and policies and complied with industry established best practices.

A random checking of “shelf to report” and “report to shelf” evidence and paperwork disclosed no irregularities. Evidence custodians were well trained and fully understood their roles. Evidence drop boxes are keyed, maintained, and regularly emptied by the evidence custodian. All evidence is properly labeled and prepared for storage in accordance with departmental policy and procedures as well as industry standards.

Temporary evidence lockers for the investigator handling the Forensic Recovery of Electronic Devices (FRED) are in the investigator’s office and are secured by the investigator until submission to the evidence room. The investigator clearly documents the evidence chain of control while the property is under his/her control and processing, all in accordance with departmental policy and procedures as well as industry standards.

TRAINING:

The Unalaska Department of Public Safety maintains its personnel training records, all stored at City Hall inside the Human Resources office. Access to individual personnel records is restricted and logged. A review of randomly selected Unalaska Department of Public Safety personnel training records was monitored. No personnel records were removed or copied from the Human Resources office. All reviewed files were well organized and in order, providing detailed employee information, including performance reviews and related documentation. All city-required personnel-related documentation was present in the random Unalaska Department of Public Safety personnel files examined.

Employees obtaining training independent of their agency are required to provide documentation of completion or certification. The Unalaska Department of Public Safety incentivizes its employees to obtain continuing education and training, allowing online access to training at the department.

VEHICLES:

All Unalaska Department of Public Safety emergency response vehicles are clearly marked and comply with state regulations pertaining to emergency vehicles. Unalaska Department of Public Safety personnel (including volunteers) are familiar with state requirements for emergency vehicle operations. Departmental policy pertaining to emergency vehicle operations is compliant with statutory requirements. Fire and EMS vehicles were clean,

orderly, well maintained, and in a state of immediate readiness for deployment. Police patrol vehicles bore customized door decals and are immediately recognizable as police vehicles. Depending on weather and road conditions, all patrol vehicles were relatively clean and serviceable. Specialized equipment is installed in each patrol vehicle to facilitate safe prisoner transport and enhance officer safety. Individual officers are responsible for the cleanliness of their vehicle as well as insuring that it contains operational inventory normally associated with their assigned duties or response to calls. Vehicle maintenance is provided by the City.

BUILDING:

The Unalaska Department of Public Safety building is in a prominent and centralized location in the City. It provides adequate parking for employees, volunteers, and the general public. Access to the building is controlled by electronic door locks and access cards. The footprint of the main building includes operational housing for police, fire, EMS, jail, dispatch, DMV, emergency operations, and animal control functions. A fire substation near the airport houses fire apparatus intended for use at the municipal airport. Access to various offices or divisions within the main building is restricted by operational necessity and security protocols. CCTV cameras outside and throughout the building are monitored in dispatch or jail and enhance building security as well as officer safety. Individual offices or shared work areas were clean, organized, well lit and ventilated, and looked to provide a safe and comfortable work area typical of a department of public safety. No building maintenance issues were noted during the onsite visit.

ADMINISTRATION / BUDGET:

The administration of the Unalaska Department of Public Safety consists of a Director of Public Safety with a span of control inclusive of police, fire, office management, and animal control functions. A Deputy Police Chief and Fire Chief are on equal operational levels and are of equal rank within the department. The Office Manager supervises DMV. The Fire Chief oversees communications (dispatch) and the Deputy Police Chief oversees police and jail services. A review of the Unalaska Department of Public Safety organizational structure, its current level of staffing and calls for service, and a review of existing and proposed budget indicate the department is soundly organized but understaffed (2 new police officer positions

requested and needed). Current and anticipated vacancies in supervisory positions have added to the workload of others. The department engages in ongoing recruitment, utilizing available marketing technology and promotions. Employee retention strategies are being implemented to reduce attrition. Anonymous surveys of Unalaska Department of Public Safety employees and volunteers indicate high job satisfaction and an overall desire to remain within the department. Existing and proposed budgets adequately provide for current and anticipated operational needs of the department as well as reflect responsiveness to the public safety expectations of the community.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

The Unalaska Department of Public Safety is actively engaged with its community and supports allied agencies, businesses, schools, and other service providers. Unalaska Department of Public Safety public and employee perceptions, community expectations, and general information were sought by individual interview and public / customer survey. Overall, the community is receiving the level of public safety services desired and generally find the department responsive to its needs. Unalaska Department of Public Safety employees and volunteers expressed satisfaction with opportunities for professional growth, inspiration to meet goals, good communication within the department, enjoy a good working relationship with their supervisors, receive appropriate recognition within the workplace, are satisfied with the culture within the workplace, feel safe, and have a good working relationship with their coworkers. Employees and volunteers alike feel their work positively impacts people's lives and feel that employees treat each other with respect. Employees believe their supervisors are reliable and listen to them, offering easily obtained and effective training and supervision that improves their individual performance. About 85% of employees and volunteers expressed satisfaction with their job. 80% of the employees and volunteers surveyed indicated they are unlikely to search for a new job within 30 days of the survey.

Schools can be a challenge when it comes to positive relationships with public safety. The Unalaska Department of Public Safety has an excellent relationship with the school district and interacts positively with school administration, teachers, and students alike. The school district supports the Unalaska Department of Public Safety and believes it is receiving the desired level of support and school event participation from the agency.

Allied agencies, such as the Alaska Court, Department of Law, and Alaska State Troopers consider the Unalaska Department of Public Safety a consistently professional police agency. The local domestic violence shelter relies on the support of the Unalaska Department of Public Safety and considers it a valuable ally. The local homeless and stranded shelter describe the Unalaska Department of Public Safety as responsive and supportive. Local media outlets find the Unalaska Department of Public Safety open and available with timely notices and useful public information, though the majority of the community members surveyed disagree that the Unalaska Department of Public Safety is providing adequate community education and outreach. Local residents who responded to the community survey expressed appreciation for the Unalaska Department of Public Safety and felt their community was much safer than other Alaska communities though most believe crime has gone up or remained nearly the same over the past 5 years.

COMMENDATIONS:

Director Holman and members of Unalaska Department of Public Safety fully cooperated with all aspects of this requested assessment and immediately provided access to all areas within their department. Unalaska Department of Public Safety personnel were aware of the nature and gravity of the assessment and participated without reservation and with useful candor. The City Manager, members of City Council, the Mayor, the IT Department and HR Department supported the assessment and fully cooperated with it. Members of local industry and the community were approachable and also spoke with candor and clarity.

CONCLUSION:

This information contained in this report is provided in good faith and every reasonable effort is made to ensure that it is accurate and up to date. The report is based upon one on-site visit, online anonymous surveys, and interviews obtained to date. It is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather indicative of the state of the department when visited. All personal opinions presented in this report are based upon my specialized experience, training, and knowledge of professional police practices.

I am familiar with criminal and civil litigation and know the normal phases of discovery. With this in mind, I recognize that there may be additional documentation and/or testimony.

However, it is my understanding that no additional materials are in the process of being produced or requested. Accordingly, I request that this be considered a final report.

Should any subsequent information be produced that materially affects or alters any of these opinions, I will either submit a supplemental response or be prepared to discuss them with you.

In the event that the City of Unalaska or the Unalaska Department of Public Safety considers any personnel or disciplinary actions based on the opinions expressed in this report, I strongly recommend that the City of Unalaska or the Unalaska Department of Public Safety seek legal counsel before taking such actions, and that any actions taken are consistent with its personnel policies and guidelines.