

HB

230

(7)

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

Date Referred to Committee: May 7, 1999

FURTHER REFERRALS:

Finance

Date of Committee Action: 2/3/00

The STATE AFFAIRS Committee considered:

HB 230

HOUSE BILL NO. 230

PERS BENEFITS FOR POLICE/FIRE DISPATCHERS

"An Act granting certain dispatchers in police or fire departments or for the state troopers status as peace officers under the public employees' retirement system; and providing for an effective date."

recommends it be replaced
with the following committee substitute

CS HB 230 (STA)

the same title
 a new title

additional referral to _____ Committee
 attached amendment(s)

ADOPTS: _____ Letter of Intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(S): (Dept)

APPROVES PREVIOUS: (Dept/Date)

fiscal note(s) Admin.

fiscal note(s) _____

zero fiscal note(s) _____

zero fiscal note(s) _____

| SIGNING WITH RECOMMENDATIONS | DP | DNP | NR | AM |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <u>Jennette James</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| <u>Mal. Snelley</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| <u>Don Hendricks</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| <u>Joseph P. ...</u> | | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <u>Bill Huds</u> | | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <u>...</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| <u>...</u> | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
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CHAIR'S SIGNATURE Jennette James

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 230()

**IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION**

BY

**Offered:
Referred:**

Sponsor(s): HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 "An Act granting certain dispatchers in police or fire departments or for the
2 state troopers status as peace officers under the public employees' retirement
3 system; and providing for an effective date."

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

5 * **Section 1.** AS 39.35.680(28) is amended to read:

6 (28) "peace officer" or "fire fighter" means an employee occupying a
7 position as a peace officer, chief of police, dispatcher in a police or fire department
8 or in a state trooper office, correctional officer, correctional superintendent, fire
9 fighter, fire chief, or probation officer;

10 * **Sec. 2.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section
11 to read:

12 **OPTIONAL CONVERSION OF EXISTING CREDITED SERVICE.** An employee
13 who was employed as a dispatcher in a state trooper office or in a police or fire department
14 in the public employees' retirement system before the effective date of this Act may convert

1 the credited service for that position to credited service as a peace officer by claiming the
2 service as peace officer service before the member is appointed to retirement. When the
3 member claims this retroactive credited service, an indebtedness of the member to the system
4 shall be established. The indebtedness is equal to the full actuarial cost of the conversion of
5 the credited service to treatment as peace officer service. Interest as prescribed by regulation
6 accrues on this indebtedness beginning July 1, 2000. Any outstanding indebtedness that exists
7 at the time the member is appointed to retirement will require an actuarial adjustment to the
8 benefits payable based upon the conversion of the credited service.

9 * **Sec. 3.** This Act takes effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).

Sponsor Statement HB 230

HB 230 will require all dispatchers under the PERS retirement system, who elect to change from a thirty year retirement to a twenty year retirement, to pay the employees and the employers contribution of the costs to that twenty year retirement conversion.

Approximately 263 employees of PERS employers would be affected by this legislation. Of that number, approximately 45 are state employees. The cost to each employee for the employee contribution would be approximately \$450 per year of service under the PERS system. The cost for each employee for the employer contribution would be approximately an additional \$450 per year of service under the PERS system. That would mean a total cost of approximately \$900 per year for year of service under the PERS system for each employee that elects to change retirement terms. Under this legislation, there would be no cost to the employer and all costs would be paid by the employee when he or she voluntarily elects to make this change in their own retirement system.



STATE OF ALASKA

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY

DIVISION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

RECEIVED BY

FEB - 8 2000

Rep. Joannette James

DATE: 2/2/00

Please accept the enclosed original(s) of written testimony for the House State Affairs teleconference hearing that was scheduled on 2/3/00.

A copy of this testimony was transmitted to your committee via fax on 2/2/00.

Thank you,

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY
Sitka Legislative Office
210 Lake Street
Sitka, Alaska 99835
747-8275



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the STATE AFFAIRS OFFICE
 committee name
 committee on H.B. 230, dated 2-3-00
 bill/subject

As a police dispatcher and 9-1-1 operator, I urge passage of H.B. 230. This bill will allow police and fire dispatchers to retire 10 years early, after serving 20 years.

Diabetes and high blood pressure have been found to be common among dispatchers. This is a result of several factors directly attributable to our jobs. They are; poor diet (forced to eat fast food, snacks and leftovers because we cannot leave our consoles or have no decent opportunities or facilities to prepare healthy food); lack of exercise (again, being forced to remain at my console for 90% of my work period, whether 8, 10, 12 or more hours); and high stress (answering calls for service, including life and death emergencies, medical calls, suicidal callers, etc, and having little or no physical outlet to relieve stress, unlike our police/fire brothers.

All of this results in stress, taking a terrible toll on our bodies. Allowing us to retire at 20 years, instead of 30 years will bring several benefits immediately to mind.

First - An incentive to remain at my chosen work field. Most dispatch centers around the country are operating at 30 to 50% of full staff. This is a result of low pay, low retirement incentives, stress, and the working hours. Being able to retire early will hopefully increase the potential work force.

Second - The reduced levels of stress from medical conditions will allow a better quality of life, especially after retirement (when we need it the most!). I recently read a comment from a large dispatch center. The commentator, a senior level supervisor, made the comment in regards to a proposed similar change in that state's retirement for their dispatchers. He said "What difference does it make, because none of the dispatchers here have ever close to retiring anyway." I believe it results from a combination of the above mentioned factors.

To conclude, with a combination of physical illness and stress taking their toll on our police and fire dispatchers to the extent that few make it to retirement age, I urge passage of this bill to provide some incentive to retain qualified, seasoned dispatchers to continue the everyday, life and property saving work that they have been.

Thank you for your attention.

Signed: *Eric Carter*

Testifier

Sitka Police Department

Representing (Optional)

P.O. Box 2606 Sitka AK 99835

Address

747-2606

Phone No.



STATE OF ALASKA
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY
DIVISION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

RECEIVED BY

FEB - 8 2000

Rep. Jeannette James

DATE: 2/3/00

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for the House State Affairs teleconference hearing that was
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fax on 2/3/00.

Thank you,

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY
Sitka Legislative Office
210 Lake Street
Sitka, Alaska 99835
747-5275

WRITTEN REQUEST FOR TESTIMONY
ON HB 230 PERS BENEFIT FOR POLICE & FIRE DISPATCHERS

My name is Judy A. Puckett, Traffic Officer for the Sitka Police Department. I have been employed with the City of Sitka, Sitka Police Department for 15 ½ years. My position now as a Traffic Officer and prior as a dispatch/jailer, is a non-sworn position. This is my testimony;

I feel any uniform position with law enforcement that are responsible for meeting the personal needs, health and welfare of the public should be eligible for this proposed benefit. When answering the telephone, **we are the first responders.** We need to be able to relate the needs of the victim in a calm manner to police and fire personnel while being able to remain calm, understanding and sympathetic to the needs of the victim. It is essential the correct information is obtained and delivered to the **responding officer/fire personnel.** We often assist the caller in medical situations on how to help a choking victim, heart or diabetic patient, etc. By performing these duties, we are the life line for the caller as well as for the **responding officer.**

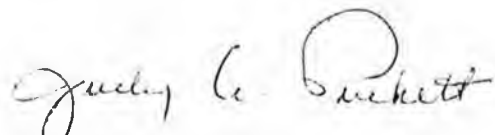
I have had to listen to a caller who was alone in his home having a heart attack, trying to advise him on what to do until the ambulance arrives, **only to hear that person draw his last breath.** I've been the **first responder on the phone to suicide attempts,** to those people finding a loved one dead by a gunshot to the head or other means. **How about when a suspect walks ups to you and tells you he had just shot his wife.** The stress level you go through can not be explained. In a small community like Sitka, many of these tragic incidents are of people who we know very well. Imagine a friend or family member calling you; threaten suicide or finding their parent with a gun shot to the head. For many, many years, my co-workers often asked which dispatcher was on duty, since the majority of the death calls seem to be when I was answering the phone. You begin to feel like a black cloud is following you.

When working with law enforcement personnel, you are often a witness to internal investigations. Have any of you had to testify against a fellow worker? I have. It tears your guts out. It is like testifying against your own brother or sister. And all the while you can not vent to your spouse on anything that I have mentioned. I am happy to say that I have been married for over 20 years, but not without a lot of hard ship from law enforcement.

Do you know what it is like to be called everything but a human being? To have your life and home threatened? For your husband/wife and your children to be harassed or threaten? We all as police employees are subject to, and go through the same things a sworn officer does. There are many more situations I could point out over my 15 years on the department but won't.

I have yet to know someone who has put in more than 18 years of service as non-sworn police personnel have. As with sworn personnel, burn out after 15 years is a real factor and puts the community at risk

Thank you for your time,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judy A. Puckett". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Judy A. Puckett
Traffic Officer
Sitka Police Department

SUMMARY

House Bill 230 was introduced by Judiciary Committee on May 7, 1999 to include the classification of "dispatcher" in Alaska Statute AS39.35.680(28). The case for including dispatchers into the 20 year retirement provision is three part:

- Job related stress is not on par with clerical positions; our retirement considerations should not be either.
- 20 year retirement will motivate dispatchers to work toward a pension, allowing agencies to retain experienced dispatchers.
- There will likely be zero cost to the State of Alaska since employees will make up the PERS contributions for both the employee and the employer.

Two statewide phone surveys were conducted this past year in a joint effort by Anchorage area dispatchers from Anchorage Police, Anchorage Fire, Alaska State Troopers and Anchorage Airport Police. Some of the significant findings were;

- 253 full time dispatchers are in 30 year PERS
- 14 full time dispatchers are in 20 year PERS
- 92% of the surveyed dispatchers said they would remain employed in their respective Dispatch Centers for 20 years but not for 30 years.

The Anchorage Police Department has experienced ongoing workplace turbulence as demonstrated by the high turnover rate within the Communications Center. As of December, 1999 eight employees had retired from the Communications Center--three on medical and the other five on aged-based retirement. Of the five age-based retirees, only two maintained employment beyond 20 years in the Communications Center.

- 36% of all personnel assigned to the Communications Center either quit or transfer to less stressful positions within PERS
- 40% of all new hires in the Communications Center at APD do not successfully complete the training phase of employment
- Only 4% of those who leave the Communications Center do so with a PERS pension

The Alaska State Legislature appears responsive to the needs of the PERS membership; as evidenced by the retirement change granted to the Adult Correctional Officers in 1990. PERS was designed to provide a sound retirement plan to all its members, yet the current 30 year system fails to encourage employment longevity in the Communications Center. The criteria for retirement eligibility would appear to have undermined the PERS original intent. A revision to Alaska Statute AS39.35.680(28) to include all Communications Center personnel in 20 year PERS would further the likelihood of reversing the high turnover in the stress laden and highly complex work environment.

There are similar efforts being made in other states.

- Texas has a 20 year retirement for dispatchers, however, the individual public safety agency can opt out of that requirement.
- Utah for 25 year dispatcher retirement, however, agency participation is optional.
- California is attempting to gain access to a 20 year retirement, however, there are 3 distinct retirement systems operating on a statewide basis—unduly complicating the retirement issue.
- Arizona is currently drafting state certification for public safety dispatchers and plan to go forward with a 20 year retirement effort in the near future.

Public Safety Dispatching is a job like no other. The nature of the job requires technical, communication, multitasking and interpersonal skills, to name only a few. What separates this job from others requiring the same skills, is that a dispatcher must have the ability to disengage their emotions in order to do what needs to be done.

During my 15 years as a dispatcher, I have experienced many stressful and heartbreaking incidents. I recall grieving in a bathroom stall while on break, for a woman who found her baby drowned in her pool – hysterical and begging me to save her child over the phone. I recall pulling my car off the freeway on the way home, so that I could purge the scream that I had been holding in since that suicidal man died in my ear – I was unable to keep him talking “long enough”

On a daily basis, dispatchers deal with the worst of life's realities. They talk with people who are angry, scared, intoxicated, suicidal, mentally ill, victims of domestic violence and child abuse. Occasionally, the incomprehensible occurs – a call that “hits home”. I took the phone call when my brother in law committed suicide. Two years later, I was working the radio when my own husband shot and killed himself. I remained on the radio, conducting business as usual, until I could be relieved. The possibility of a dispatcher dealing with an emergency involving friends and family is highly probable in Alaska – which, with the exception of Anchorage, is made up of small communities.

True dispatchers are capable of doing this job because it satisfies something inside them. They do it for reasons that you can't understand until you help save a life, or catch a bad guy. In my 15 years of service as a dispatcher, I can count my “thank-yous” on one hand. But I didn't do it for the thank-yous. I did it because I was doing something that I loved. I was a lifeline to many people, and what I did mattered – and I didn't need a thank you to know it.

I am now the dispatch supervisor for the Juneau Police Department and no longer have the hands-on responsibility of a dispatcher. I have nothing to gain personally from Bill 230. Professionally, as the person responsible for hiring qualified people to do this difficult job, I stand to gain in my ability to attract quality dispatchers, and retain the experienced ones. Good dispatchers are difficult to replace, as it not only takes someone who is able to do the job, but willing to. 20 years of the cumulative stress involved with this job is long enough. Yet, 20 years is also short enough to make it attractive as a career choice and rewarding for those who have already dedicated many years of service.

With Bill 230, the State of Alaska has an opportunity to do the just and equal thing. Not to discount dispatchers as clerical help, but instead to recognize dispatchers as an integral member of the public safety and law enforcement team. Alaska now has the opportunity to show their support for these front-line workers. Remember, while you are spending the holidays with family or sleeping safe in your home – they are 3-digits away, and they are always there.

Karen B. Childers, Communications Supervisor
Juneau Police Department

| R01-AOP-1200 75 MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE | | REPORT SEQUENCE CODES SEMI-ANNUAL STATEMENTS = 1 | | AUTOMATED DISTRICT ALPHABETIC(NAME) | | AS OF DATE: 08/14/98 | |
|--|----------------|---|---------|--|-----------|----------------------|--|
| | | MEMBER BALANCE REPORT = 1 | | ALPHABETIC(NAME) | | | |
| | | MONTHLY CONTRIBUTIONS = 1 | | ALPHABETIC(NAME) | | | |
| CONTRIBUTION % HISTORY | EFFECTIVE DATE | POLICEMEN | FIREMEN | ELECTED | OFFICIALS | ALL OTHERS | |
| | 01/01/79 | 6.370 | 6.370 | 6.370 | 6.370 | | |
| | 07/01/79 | 7.830 | 7.830 | 7.830 | 7.830 | | |
| | 07/01/75 | 10.190 | 10.190 | 10.190 | 10.190 | | |
| | 07/01/76 | 11.180 | 11.180 | 11.180 | 11.180 | | |
| | 07/01/77 | 11.570 | 11.570 | 11.570 | 11.570 | | |
| | 07/01/78 | 12.340 | 12.340 | 12.340 | 12.340 | | |
| | 07/01/79 | 12.130 | 12.130 | 12.130 | 12.130 | | |
| | 07/01/80 | 13.750 | 13.750 | 13.750 | 13.750 | | |
| | 07/01/81 | 14.680 | 14.680 | 14.680 | 14.680 | | |
| | 07/01/83 | 14.830 | 14.830 | 14.830 | 14.830 | | |
| | 07/01/84 | 14.570 | 14.470 | 14.470 | 14.570 | | |
| | 07/01/85 | 14.490 | 14.490 | 14.490 | 14.490 | | |
| | 07/01/86 | 12.000 | 12.000 | 12.000 | 12.000 | | |
| | 07/01/87 | 10.600 | 10.600 | 10.600 | 10.600 | | |
| | 07/01/88 | 10.600 | 10.600 | 10.600 | 10.600 | | |
| | 07/01/89 | 9.590 | 9.590 | 9.590 | 9.590 | | |
| | 07/01/90 | 10.840 | 10.840 | 10.840 | 10.840 | | |
| | 07/01/91 | 12.670 | 12.670 | 12.670 | 12.670 | | |
| | 07/01/92 | 12.310 | 12.310 | 12.310 | 12.310 | | |
| | 07/01/93 | 12.330 | 12.330 | 12.330 | 12.330 | | |
| | 07/01/94 | 10.200 | 10.200 | 10.200 | 10.200 | | |
| | 07/01/95 | 11.290 | 11.290 | 11.290 | 11.290 | | |
| | 07/01/96 | 10.360 | 10.360 | 10.360 | 10.360 | | |
| | 07/01/97 | 7.160 | 7.160 | 7.050 | 7.050 | | |
| | 07/01/98 | 7.080 | 7.080 | 7.080 | 7.080 | | |

Pam Provost

786.8991

*MOA
74-98*

*More for 30yr
more for 30yr
More for 30yr
30yr gave less*

SAME

PERS Employee Rates

all but
"P" + "F"

Peace Officer "P"
Firefighter "F"

7/1/70 - 6/30/72

3.50%

5.0%

7/1/72 - 12/31/86

4.25%

5.0%

1/1/87 - present

6.75%

7.5%



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the STATE AFFAIRS OFFICE
 committee name
 committee on H.B. 230, dated 2-3-00
 bill/subject

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Thank you for your attention.

Signed: *Eric Carter*

Testifier

Sitka Police Department

Representing (Optional)

P.O. Box 2606 Sitka AK 99835

Address

747-2606

Phone No.



217 Second Street, Suite 200 ■ Juneau, Alaska 99801 ■ Tel (907)586-1325, Fax (907)-463-5480

February 2, 2000

Representative Jeannette James, Chair
House State Affairs Committee
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative James:

On behalf of the members of the Alaska Municipal League, we are writing in opposition to the unfunded state mandate contained in HB 230 PERS Benefits for Police/Fire Dispatchers. An unfunded mandate occurs when one level of government imposes a costly action on another level of government. The State of Alaska formally opposes federal unfunded mandates.

The 2000 AML Policy Statement adopted in November 1999, states:

E. Public Employees' Retirement and Benefits

1. Increase in Benefits: *The League opposes any legislation that increases the cost of the Public Employees' Retirement System or the Teachers' Retirement System due to increased benefits.*

While allowing dispatchers to retire ten years earlier may be warranted, this issue has not yet been presented to the impacted municipalities. Municipalities must be able to weigh the policy and equity issues against the increased costs.

Cities and boroughs have all been forced to raise taxes, spend reserves, and/or cut back on critical services due to state cuts to revenue sharing, other state shifts and mandates, and increased demands. According to the Alaska Conference of Mayors survey conducted in January, **over 50 percent of the respondents felt that their current level of fire and police protection is "inadequate to protect their community"** (see attached). Any increase to retirement benefits will further reduce the ability of municipalities to keep police and fire personnel on the streets.

Our understanding is the Division of Retirement and Benefits is working on estimates of the impact on municipalities. It would be unacceptable to proceed without knowing all the impacts and formally consulting with each effected municipality. If you need any further information on this or other municipal issues, please call me at 586-1325.

Sincerely,

Kevin C. Ritchie
Executive Director

Attachment: ACoM Survey Results

cc: AMI, Revenue & Finance Subcommittee
Guy Bell, Director, Division of Retirement and Benefits
c:\data\jk\veg2000\hb230pers

Alaska Conference of Mayors survey of Alaska's Communities Shows a Serious Decline in Critical Public Life and Safety Services

A survey conducted by the Alaska Conference of Mayors indicates that **State budget cuts to municipalities are overwhelming existing local revenue and taxing structures and causing serious declines in critical public safety services in communities.** The survey, completed January 22, 2000, was responded to by 53 cities and boroughs representing over three-quarters of the population of the state.

The survey and written responses indicate that **too many Alaskans are in increasing danger, and it appears that too many are being injured or dying that could have been helped by adequate basic police, fire, and EMS services. This is not what is intended when some Alaskans ask for cuts in state spending.**

Are state cuts to municipal revenue sharing and other state shifts hurting the public?
Absolutely yes!

- **Smaller communities are being forced to cut services to the point where needless deaths and injuries occur from a lack of the most basic public safety services. For example, a number of small municipalities no longer have 24 hour police coverage or have no public safety employees at all, due to cuts last year.**
- **Larger municipalities are being forced to cut services and raise taxes, while three-quarters postponed unacceptable major impacts by using one-time reserves.**

The two level of service questions were:

"Do you feel the current level of ___ service is adequate to protect your community?"

- **63% reported inadequate *Fire Protection***
- **48% reported inadequate *Police Protection***
- **45% reported inadequate *Emergency Medical Services***
- **75% reported inadequate *Road Maintenance and maintenance of other transportation facilities.***

"In the past five years the quality of ___ service in my community has: improved; stayed about the same; declined somewhat; declined significantly."

- **45% reported *fire protection* has "declined somewhat or declined significantly"**
- **37% reported *police protection* has "declined somewhat or declined significantly"**
- **27% reported *EMS* has "declined somewhat or declined significantly"**
- **67% reported *road and transportation systems maintenance* has "declined somewhat or declined significantly"**
- **47% reported "*overall quality of life, considering all public services*" has "declined somewhat or declined significantly"**

The survey also asked how municipalities are dealing with the cuts financially:

- **53% had to "raise taxes or other revenues or fees to cover the loss of State revenues."**
- **73% "used one time reserves in order to maintain an acceptable level of public services."**



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House State Affairs
 committee name
 committee on HB 230, dated 2/3/00
 bill/subject

Signed: _____
 Testifier

 Representing (Optional)

 Address

 Phone No.

**WRITTEN REQUEST FOR TESTIMONY
ON HB 230 PERS BENEFIT FOR POLICE & FIRE DISPATCHERS**

My name is Judy A. Puckett, Traffic Officer for the Sitka Police Department. I have been employed with the City of Sitka. Sitka Police Department for 15 ½ years. My position now as a Traffic Officer and prior as a dispatch/jailer, is a non-sworn position. This is my testimony;

I feel any uniform position with law enforcement that are responsible for meeting the personal needs, health and welfare of the public should be eligible for this proposed benefit. When answering the telephone, **we are the first responders.** We need to be able to relate the needs of the victim in a calm manner to police and fire personnel while being able to remain calm, understanding and sympathetic to the needs of the victim. It is essential the correct information is obtained and delivered to the **responding officer/fire personnel.** We often assist the caller in medical situations on how to help a choking victim, heart or diabetic patient, etc. By performing these duties, we are the life line for the caller as well as for the **responding officer.**

I have had to listen to a caller who was alone in his home having a heart attack, trying to advise him on what to do until the ambulance arrives, **only to hear that person draw his last breath.** I've been the **first responder on the phone to suicide attempts,** to those people finding a loved one dead by a gunshot to the head or other means. **How about when a suspect walks ups to you and tells you he had just shot his wife.** The stress level you go through can not be explained. In a small community like Sitka, many of these tragic incidents are of people who we know very well. Imagine a friend or family member calling you; threaten suicide or finding their parent with a gun shot to the head. For many, many years, my co-workers often asked which dispatcher was on duty, since the majority of the death calls seem to be when I was answering the phone. You begin to feel like a black cloud is following you.

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STATE OFFICE
ALASKA PEACE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 240106 Anchorage, Alaska 99524-0106 Phone (907) 277-0515 Fax (907) 272-5355

January 27, 2000

Business Manager

Joseph E. Young
Anchorage

Board of Directors

John Charbonneau, President
Anchorage

Robin Lown, Vice President
Juneau

Michael Corkill, Past President
Anchorage

Tod McGillivray, Member
Kenai
Pres. Kenai Chapter

Leo Brandlen, Member
Anchorage
Pres. Anchorage Chapter

Angella Long, Member
Palmer
Pres. Mat-Su Chapter

Tonya Barnes, Member
Fairbanks
Pres. Fairhast North Chapter

Robert Fletcher, Member
Juneau
Pres. Capitol City Chapter

Leroy Mestas, Member
Ketchikan
Pres. First City Chapter

Robert Claus, Member
Craig
Pres. Prince of Wales Chapter

John Lucking, Jr., Member
Unalaska
Pres. Aleutian Islands Chapter


Representative Jeanette James
Alaska State Legislature
State Capital
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Representative James

At a recent meeting of the APOA Board of Directors, we unanimously agreed to endorse HB 230 with the stipulation that dispatchers not be called peace officers.

Please contact us if there is anything we can do to assist you with this bill as it proceeds through the legislative process. You may contact us at the APOA office in Anchorage at 277-0515.

Sincerely,



John Charbonneau
State President

RECEIVED BY

FEB - 1 2000

Rep. Jeannette James

HB 230

Letters of Support

Alaska Association of Chiefs of Police



December 28, 1999

Representative Pete Kott
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 999801-1182

Dear Representative Kott:

This letter is written in support of House Bill 230, an Act granting certain dispatchers in police or fire departments or for the state troopers status as peace officers under the Public Employees' Retirement System.

More than 90 percent of the state's full-time emergency dispatchers are currently in the 30-year Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS). Few, if any, will make it to retirement. In fact, many quit early in their career. They are tasked with duties and responsibilities that often lead to "burnout" at a higher rate than that of police officers. Their job requires lengthy training, constant attention to detail, and frequent responsibility for citizens' and officers' lives. The level of stress is seldom matched in any other profession.

This Act will allow anyone in the 30-year plan to retire after 20 years of service, a more attainable goal. It will motivate others with valuable experience to stay on rather than seeking less demanding employment. It will also offer an opportunity to retire on a par with other law enforcement professionals. Further, the state will potentially bear no cost, since eligible employees would be responsible for making up PERS contributions for themselves and the state if they wished to take advantage of 20-year retirement program.

This issue received unanimous support at two business meetings of the Alaska Association of Chiefs of Police. We therefore strongly encourage your support of this bill in recognition of the demanding nature of the work required of our police and fire dispatchers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Duane S. Udland".

Duane S. Udland, President
Alaska Association of Chiefs of Police

SUMMARY

The Anchorage Police Department has experienced ongoing workplace turbulence as demonstrated by the high turnover rate within the Communications Center. As of March, 1999 nine employees had retired from the Communications Center—four on medical and the other five on aged-based retirement. Of the five age-based retirees, only two maintained employment beyond 20 years in the Communications Center. Historically, 76% of all personnel assigned to the Communications Center either quit, fail training, or transfer to less stressful positions within PERS. From position inception (1970) to date, 34% of all new hires do not successfully complete the training phase of employment. In essence, the Anchorage Police Department must hire 3 people to reasonably be assured of retaining two to journeyman level status.

The Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) provides an exclusive 20 year retirement to peace officers and fire fighters as defined by Alaska Statute. AS39.35.680(28) reads: "Peace Officer" or "Fire Fighter" means an employee occupying a position as peace officer, chief of police, correctional officer, correctional superintendent, fire fighter, fire chief or probation officer. By including the classifications of "dispatcher" in the statute, the ongoing trend of workplace turnover would likely be reversed through means of a 20 year retirement. The loss of expertise when seasoned employees terminate adversely affects all who rely on the highly specialized skills of Communications Center personnel.

As evidenced by the retirement change granted to the Adult Correctional Officers in 1990, the Alaska State Legislature appears responsive to the needs of the PERS membership. PERS was designed to provide a sound retirement plan to all its members, yet the current 30 year system fails to encourage employment longevity in the Communications Center. The criteria for retirement eligibility would appear to have undermined the PERS original intent. A revision to Alaska Statute AS39.35.680(28) to include all Communications Center personnel in 20 year PERS would further the likelihood of reversing the high turnover in the stress laden work environment.

Pam Provost
Connie Hettinga
Anchorage Police Department Communications Center
907-786-8900



Anchorage
Police
Department
Employees
Association

JAN 18 2000

Phone (907) 561-7500
P.O. Box 230330
Anchorage, Alaska 99523
500 West International Airport Road
Anchorage, Alaska

Representative Pete Kott
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

January 10, 2000

Dear Representative Kott:

The law enforcement professionals represented by the Anchorage Police Department Employees Association urge you to consider supporting House Bill 230, which modifies the present retirement system for police dispatchers from thirty years of service to twenty years of service. For well documented and otherwise common sense reasons, law enforcement officers in Alaska have enjoyed this consideration for years, and professional police dispatchers are no less deserving or in need of such a program.

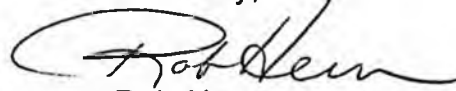
No one at the Anchorage Police Department can recall a dispatcher ever attaining retirement through time in service. Though there have been a few dispatchers who have retired for medical reasons or who have reached fifty-five years of age, the fact that the thirty year threshold has been unattainable for so long speaks volumes as to why it should be reconsidered.

Police dispatchers are tasked with not only answering 911 and obtaining pertinent information under the most stressful conditions, they must also effectively and efficiently deploy first responders by assessing and prioritizing all calls for service. The stressful work environment also consists of counseling despondent or suicidal callers, keeping distraught children on a phone line, and ensuring responding officers have as much information as possible before putting themselves in harm's way. Shift work and mandatory overtime add to the conditions that make this profession unfavorable to longevity. As a result, many dispatchers who would be motivated to work toward a twenty year career are ultimately discouraged by the specter of a thirty year commitment and leave while they are still young enough to pursue other opportunities. A recent survey has shown that the vast majority of police dispatchers hired under a thirty year retirement plan have no intention of working for thirty years as a dispatcher. This leaves a vacuum of experience and expertise that is cyclical and self-perpetuating.

ref HB230, Heun to Kott, p.2

I strongly encourage you and your fellow representatives to support House Bill 230 and modify the retirement threshold of police dispatchers from thirty years to twenty years. By all accounts, this would cost the state nothing and ensure a professional and experienced dispatcher pool for years to come. I would be glad to answer any questions that you might have on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rob Heun". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Rob Heun
President, APDEA

Subject: House Bill 230

Date: Tue, 11 Jan 2000 15:04:11 AKST

From: "Betty Conklin" <msboop@hotmail.com>

To: Representative_Alan_Austerman@legis.state.ak.us

CC: Representative_Ramona_Barnes@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Ethan_Berkowitz@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Tom_Brice@legis.state.ak.us, Representative_Con_Bundy@legis.ak.us,
Representative_Lisa_Murkowski@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Richard_Foster@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Jeannette_James@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Pete_Kott@legis.state.ak.us, Representative_Brian_Porter@legis.state.ak.us,
Senator_Johnny_Ellis@legis.state.ak.us, Senator_Jerry_Mackie@legis.state.ak.us,
Senator_Mike_Miller@legis.state.us, Senator_Drue_Pierce@legis.state.ak.us

Dear Representative,

I am a Certified Municipal Corrections Officer at the Sitka Police Department jail. I was hired in July '95 under the State contract with the City to provide "Jail Officers" for State inmates lodged in the City Jail. My retirement is currently a 30 year retirement. During the process of establishing the contract with the City of Sitka, the person filling in the blanks made "jail officers" equivalent to miscellaneous city staff, instead of the public safety officers we are proud to be.

I have read the State requirements for Corrections Officers and other law enforcement officers, who all have a 20 year retirement because of the risk they are exposed to. I believe we "Jail Officers", and all public safety personnel, should be included in the 20 year retirement as well. Therefore, I heartily support House Bill 230, and urge you to do the same for all of us in the front lines of public safety.

Sincerely,

Betty A. Conklin,
Municipal Corrections Officer
Sitka Police Department

Get Your Private, Free Email at <http://www.hotmail.com>

1-20-00

JAN 25 2000

Representative Pete Kott
State Capitol Building Rm. # 118
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Representative Kott;

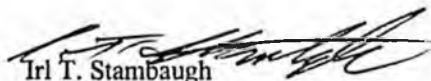
As a retired police officer I would like to take this opportunity to request your support of HB230.

During my career with the Anchorage Police Department (22 years) and my time with the Wasilla Police Department I have supervised and worked with the dispatchers from both large and small police agencies in the State of Alaska. The dispatchers I have worked with are exemplary employees who on a daily basis are exposed to many or more of the same stressors as the police officers.

In my opinion they are no less deserving of a 20-year retirement system and should have been included at the time the original PERS system was put into place.

If I can provide any further information or be of any assistance on this bill feel free to contact me at any time at 586-4753.

Sincerely;


Irl T. Stambaugh
1220 Glacier Ave. # 201
Juneau, Alaska 99801



Jermain Dunnagan & Owens, P.C.

LAW OFFICES

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WILLIAM K. JERMAIN
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HOWARD S. TRICKEY
GREGORY C. TAYLOR

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DIANE F. VALLENTINE
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W. MICHAEL STEPHENSON

ANDRENA L. STONE
EUGENIA G. RICHARDSON
MIKE L. DISHMAN
NATASHA M. SUMMIT
ERIC J. BROWN
JOHN A. BIOFF

January 19, 2000

Honorable Pete Kott
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 118
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

JAN 25 2000

Re: HB 230

Dear Pete:

In the over 30 years that I have practiced law in the state of Alaska, I have spent considerable time representing police and fire fighters on an individual basis and their respective unions when they organized. Many years ago, I concluded that there was a commonality of interest between the police officers, fire fighters, and the dispatchers.

The dispatchers perform an incredibly valuable public service function. It is one rarely recognized. Only when there is an error is the role of dispatcher discussed. Then it appears on "60 Minutes."

The dispatcher has common concerns and interests with the rank-and-file police officer and fire fighter. The dispatcher job probably is, on the average, more stressful than the rank-and-file public safety officers' jobs and can be compared to the position of air traffic controller.

Demands and stress of the job should place the dispatcher in the 20-year public safety officer retirement system. It is difficult for me to comprehend the requirement that a person perform this critical and most-stressful function for 30 years.

There are certain high-stress and dangerous occupations in our society that need to be awarded with shorter eligibility for retirement. The occupation of dispatcher is certainly one of those occupations.

I thank you for any consideration you may pay this statement. I would be glad to comment further or explain my comments to anyone at any time.

Very truly yours,

JERMAIN, DUNNAGAN & OWENS, P.C.


William K. Jermain

/jrg

cc: Honorable Brian Porter, Speaker

Subject: House Bill 230

Date: Tue, 11 Jan 2000 11:50:48 -0900

From: chief@cityofsitka.com (City of Sitka)

To: Ben Grussendorf <Representative_Ben_Grussendorf@legis.state.ak.us>, Alan Austerman <Representative_Alان_Austerman@legis.state.ak.us>, Albert Kookesh <Representative_Albert_Kookesh@legis.state.ak.us>, Allen Kemplen <Representative_Allen_Kemplen@legis.state.ak.us>, Andrew Halcro <Representative_Andrew_Halcro@legis.state.ak.us>, Beth Kerttula <Representative_Beth_Kerttula@legis.state.ak.us>, Beverly Masek <Representative_Beverly_Masek@legis.state.ak.us>, Bill Hudson <Representative_Bill_Hudson@legis.state.ak.us>, Bill Williams <Representative_Bill_Williams@legis.state.ak.us>, Brian Porter <Representative_Bryan_Porter@legis.state.ak.us>, Carl Morgan <Representative_Carl_Morgan@legis.state.ak.us>, Carl Moses <Representative_Carl_Moses@legis.state.ak.us>, Con Bunde <Representative_Con_Bunde@legis.state.ak.us>, Eldon Mulder <Representative_Eldon_Mulder@legis.state.ak.us>, Eric Croft <Representative_Eric_Croft@legis.state.ak.us>, Ethan Berkowitz <Representative_Ethan_Berkowitz@legis.state.ak.us>, Fred Dyson <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>, Gail Phillips <Representative_Gail_Phillips@legis.state.ak.us>, Gary Davis <Representative_Gary_Davis@legis.state.ak.us>, Gene Therriault <Representative_Gene_Therriault@legis.state.ak.us>, Harold Smalley <Representative_Harold_Smalley@legis.state.ak.us>, Jeannette James <Representative_Jeannette_James@legis.state.ak.us>, Jerry Sanders <Representative_Jerry_Sanders@legis.state.ak.us>, Jim Whitaker <Representative_Jim_Whitaker@legis.state.ak.us>, Joe Green <Representative_Joe_Green@legis.state.ak.us>, John Coghill <Representative_John_Coghill@legis.state.ak.us>, John Cowdery <Representative_John_Cowdery@legis.state.ak.us>, John Davies <Representative_John_Davies@legis.state.ak.us>, John Harris <Representative_John_Harris@legis.state.ak.us>, Lisa Murkowski <Representative_Lisa_Murkowski@legis.state.ak.us>, Mary Kapsner <Representative_Mary_Kapsner@legis.state.ak.us>, Norman Rokeberg <Representative_Norman_Rokeberg@legis.state.ak.us>, Pete Kott <Representative_Pete_Kott@legis.state.ak.us>, Ramona Barnes <Representative_Ramona_Barnes@legis.state.ak.us>, Reggie Joule <Representative_Reggie_Joule@legis.state.ak.us>, Richard Foster <Representative_Richard_Foster@legis.state.ak.us>, Scott Ogan <Representative_Scott_Ogan@legis.state.ak.us>, Sharon Cissna <Representative_Sharon_Cissna@legis.state.ak.us>, Tom Brice <Representative_Tom_Brice@legis.state.ak.us>, Vic Kohring <Representative_Vic_Kohring@legis.state.ak.us>

It is my understanding that this bill is still in the House State Affairs Committee and is soon to go to the House Finance Committee. My concern is that this bill amends AS 39.35.680(28) to add dispatcher in a police or fire department or in a state trooper office. This bill should be more inclusive and incorporate all **public safety employees** under the public employees retirement system eligible for 20 year retirement. While dispatchers certainly experience a high degree of stress by the mere nature of their job, surely those serving as Jailers as an example are exposed to a much higher degree of harm in addition to stress. Both

are of equal importance to any law enforcement entity... in different ways. I would rather see HB 230 be all-inclusive at this time rather than it be amended next session when Jailers make their lobby and Animal Control Officers the next, etc. This just makes logical sense and I appreciate your consideration in attaching this amendment to the bill. The arguments are the same as the Dispatchers had: 1) a 20 year retirement will motivate all public safety employees to work toward a pension and allow agencies to retain experienced personnel; 2) There is a **zero cost to the State of Alaska** since employees will make up the PERS contributions for both sides; and 3) most other states have either already, or are in the process of including all public safety employees in this plan anyhow. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Bill McLendon
Chief of Police
City and Borough of Sitka

Alaska State Legislature

House of Representatives

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JUDICIARY COMMITTEE, CHAIR
RULES
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UTILITY RESTRUCTURING
ETHICS



INTERIM:
10928 EAGLE RIVER RD., SUITE 141
EAGLE RIVER, AK 99577

SESSION:
ALASKA STATE CAPITOL
JUNEAU, AK 99801

Memorandum

TO: Representative Jennette James, Chairman
House State Affairs Committee

FROM: Representative Pete Kott

SUBJECT: Request for Hearing, HB 230

DATE: January 11, 2000

I request that HB 230, an Act granting certain dispatchers in police or fire departments or for the state troopers status as peace officers under the public employees' retirement system; and providing for an effective date, be heard as soon as possible. We are proposing a Committee Substitute that will implement a 20-year retirement for dispatchers, but not increase the fiscal liability of the State of Alaska. Some lead-time will be required to coordinate travel for witnesses who wish to testify in person. Enclosed with this request is the following:

- Current version of the bill
- Proposed Committee Substitute
- Sponsor Statement

Additional information background information and any teleconference requirements will be provided as it becomes available, and well before the hearing.



Representative Pete Kott

JUNEAU OFFICE (907) 465-3777 TOLL FREE 1-800-861-KOTT(5688) FAX (907) 465-2819
EAGLE RIVER OFFICE (907) 694-8944 FAX (907) 694-8945 E-MAIL: representativo_pete_kott@legis.state.ak.us



Subject: HB 230

Date: Tue, 25 Jan 2000 15:30:59 -0900

From: Pat Harman <Pat_Harman@legis.state.ak.us>

Organization: Alaska State Legislature

To: Barbara Cotting <Barbara_Cotting@legis.state.ak.us>

I have met with Pete and we are ready to go. Let me know when scheduled and I will provide additional information.

Pat Harman
x6841

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2000 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. CSHB230(STA)

| | |
|---|--|
| Revision Date <u>2/2/00</u> | Dept. Affected <u>Administration</u> |
| Title <u>An act granting dispatchers in police or fire departments or for the state troopers status as peace officers</u> | BRU <u>Centralized Administrative Services</u> |
| Sponsor <u>(H) JUD</u> | Component <u>Retirement and Benefits</u> |
| Requester <u>(H) STA</u> | Component No. <u>64</u> |

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

| OPERATING EXPENDITURES | FY 2001 | FY 2002 | FY 2003 | FY 2004 | FY 2005 | FY 2006 |
|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Personal Services | | | | | | |
| Travel | | | | | | |
| Contractual | | | | | | |
| Supplies | | | | | | |
| Equipment | | | | | | |
| Land & Structures | | | | | | |
| Grants & Claims | | | | | | |
| Miscellaneous | | | | | | |
| TOTAL OPERATING | * | * | * | * | * | * |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| CAPITAL EXPENDITURES | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| CHANGE IN REVENUES () | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1002 Federal Receipts | | | | | | |
| 1003 GF Match | | | | | | |
| 1004 GF | | | | | | |
| 1005 GF/Program Receipts | | | | | | |
| 1037 GF/Mental Health | | | | | | |
| Other (Specify Type) | | | | | | |
| TOTAL | * | * | * | * | * | * |

Estimate of any current year (FY2000) cost: 0.0

POSITIONS

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Full-time | | | | | | |
| Part-time | | | | | | |
| Temporary | | | | | | |

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

See attached analysis.

| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Prepared by: <u>Guy Bell</u> | Phone <u>465-4471</u> |
| Division <u>Retirement and Benefits</u> | Date/Time <u>2/2/00 2:20 PM</u> |
| Approved by Commissioner <u>Robert Poe Jr.</u> | Date <u>2/2/00</u> |
| Agency <u>Department of Administration</u> | |

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CS for House Bill 230 (State Affairs)

Under the proposed committee substitute for House Bill 230, the definition of "peace officer" or "fire fighter" is expanded to include dispatchers in a police or fire department or in a state trooper office. Current PERS members in these positions could convert their "Others" service to peace officer service by paying the full actuarial cost of this conversion. From the date of passage forward, these employees would pay the higher peace officer contribution rate (an increase from 6.75% of salary to 7.5% of salary).

Since the bill requires each affected member to pay the full actuarial cost there would be no measurable change in the System funded status or average employer contribution rate.

Approximately 274 PERS members would be affected by this bill. This would increase the Police/Fire membership by 10%. Also introduced this session are 2 other bills that would add other groups to the Police/Fire category. If all 3 groups were added, it is estimated that this occupational category will increase in membership by more than 20 percent.

Only two PERS employers have separate rates for Police/Fire versus Other employees: the State of Alaska and the Municipality of Anchorage. For FY 01 their rates are as follows:

| | <u>Police/Fire</u> | <u>Other</u> |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| State of Alaska | 7.69% | 8.09% |
| Municipality of Anchorage | 8.75% | 6.52% |

All other employers have combined employer rates for Police/Fire and Other employees. By shifting police dispatchers to the Police/Fire category, the State and the Municipality of Anchorage will see the above rate adjustments in FY 01 for the affected employees.

Historically, the Police/Fire employer contribution rate has been higher than the rate for all other employees. For any given employee the contribution necessary to fund Police/Fire benefits exceeds the contribution needed for Others benefits. This is due in particular to the ability of Police/Fire members to take normal retirement after 20 years in PERS versus the Other's requirement of 30 years.

Due to a set of extraordinary factors, the State of Alaska's Police/Fire rate has been lower than the Other's rate since FY-99. It is projected to remain lower for the next few years. However, our actuaries believe that eventually the employer rate will adjust and be higher, as it has been historically.

The lower Police/Fire rate is primarily a function of two factors: 1) the funded status of the system, and 2) current system demographics.

- Current accrued assets of the System exceed accrued liabilities. Since Police/Fire provisions are more generous than Others provisions, the Police/Fire accrued liability represents a larger percent of payroll than for Others. This means that a larger percentage of the system's assets accrue to the Police/Fire category, producing a lower past service rate.
- Under the current actuarial assumptions and with the current demographics, the consolidated rate for the Police/Fire membership is less than the consolidated rate for the "Others" membership. The consolidated rate is a function of the average age, average service, tier mix and many other items specific to each group.

As recently as June 30, 1995, the System was in an unfunded position. We expect the System to revert to this prior scenario at some point in the future, resulting in higher rates associated with the Police/Fire membership relative to the Others membership.

We must conclude that there is no way to accurately predict the future liabilities for this group and hence, the long-term fiscal impact of this legislation.

SUMMARY

House Bill 230 was introduced by Judiciary Committee on May 7, 1999 to include the classification of "dispatcher" in Alaska Statute AS39.35.680(28). The case for including dispatchers into the 20 year retirement provision is three part:

- Job related stress is not on par with clerical positions; our retirement considerations should not be either.
- 20 year retirement will motivate dispatchers to work toward a pension, allowing agencies to retain experienced dispatchers.
- There will likely be zero cost to the State of Alaska since employees will make up the PERS contributions for both the employee and the employer.

Two statewide phone surveys were conducted this past year in a joint effort by Anchorage area dispatchers from Anchorage Police, Anchorage Fire, Alaska State Troopers and Anchorage Airport Police. Some of the significant findings were;

- 253 full time dispatchers are in 30 year PERS
- 14 full time dispatchers are in 20 year PERS
- 92% of the surveyed dispatchers said they would remain employed in their respective Dispatch Centers for 20 years but not for 30 years.

The Anchorage Police Department has experienced ongoing workplace turbulence as demonstrated by the high turnover rate within the Communications Center. As of December, 1999 eight employees had retired from the Communications Center--three on medical and the other five on aged-based retirement. Of the five age-based retirees, only two maintained employment beyond 20 years in the Communications Center.

- 36% of all personnel assigned to the Communications Center either quit or transfer to less stressful positions within PERS
- 40% of all new hires in the Communications Center at APD do not successfully complete the training phase of employment
- Only 4% of those who leave the Communications Center do so with a PERS pension

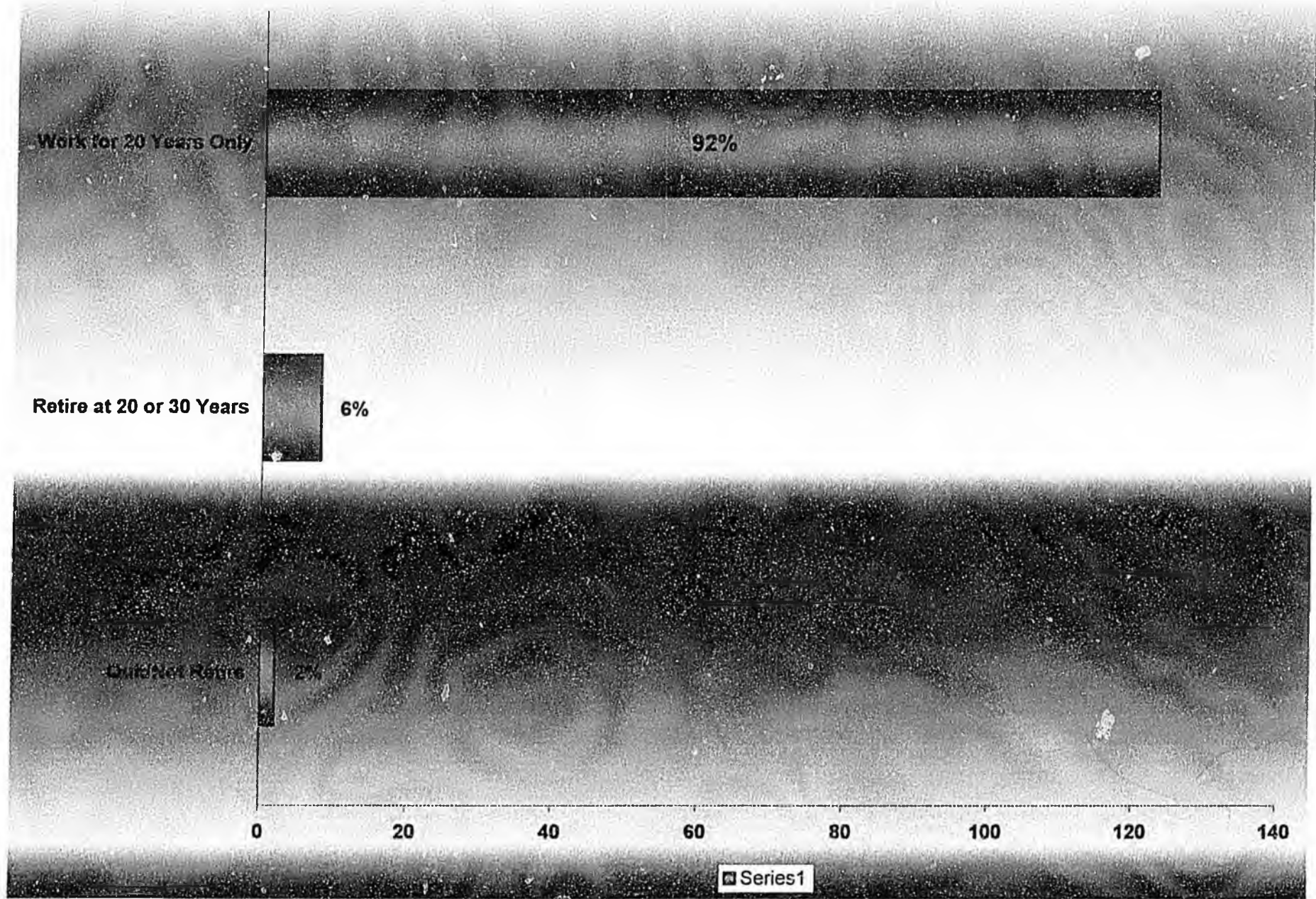
The Alaska State Legislature appears responsive to the needs of the PERS membership; as evidenced by the retirement change granted to the Adult Correctional Officers in 1990. PERS was designed to provide a sound retirement plan to all its members, yet the current 30 year system fails to encourage employment longevity in the Communications Center. The criteria for retirement eligibility would appear to have undermined the PERS original intent. A revision to Alaska Statute AS39.35.680(28) to include all Communications Center personnel in 20 year PERS would further the likelihood of reversing the high turnover in the stress laden and highly complex work environment.

There are similar efforts being made in other states.

- Texas has a 20 year retirement for dispatchers, however, the individual public safety agency can opt out of that requirement.
- Utah for 25 year dispatcher retirement, however, agency participation is optional.
- California is attempting to gain access to a 20 year retirement, however, there are 3 distinct retirement systems operating on a statewide basis—unduly complicating the retirement issue.
- Arizona is currently drafting state certification for public safety dispatchers and plan to go forward with a 20 year retirement effort in the near future.

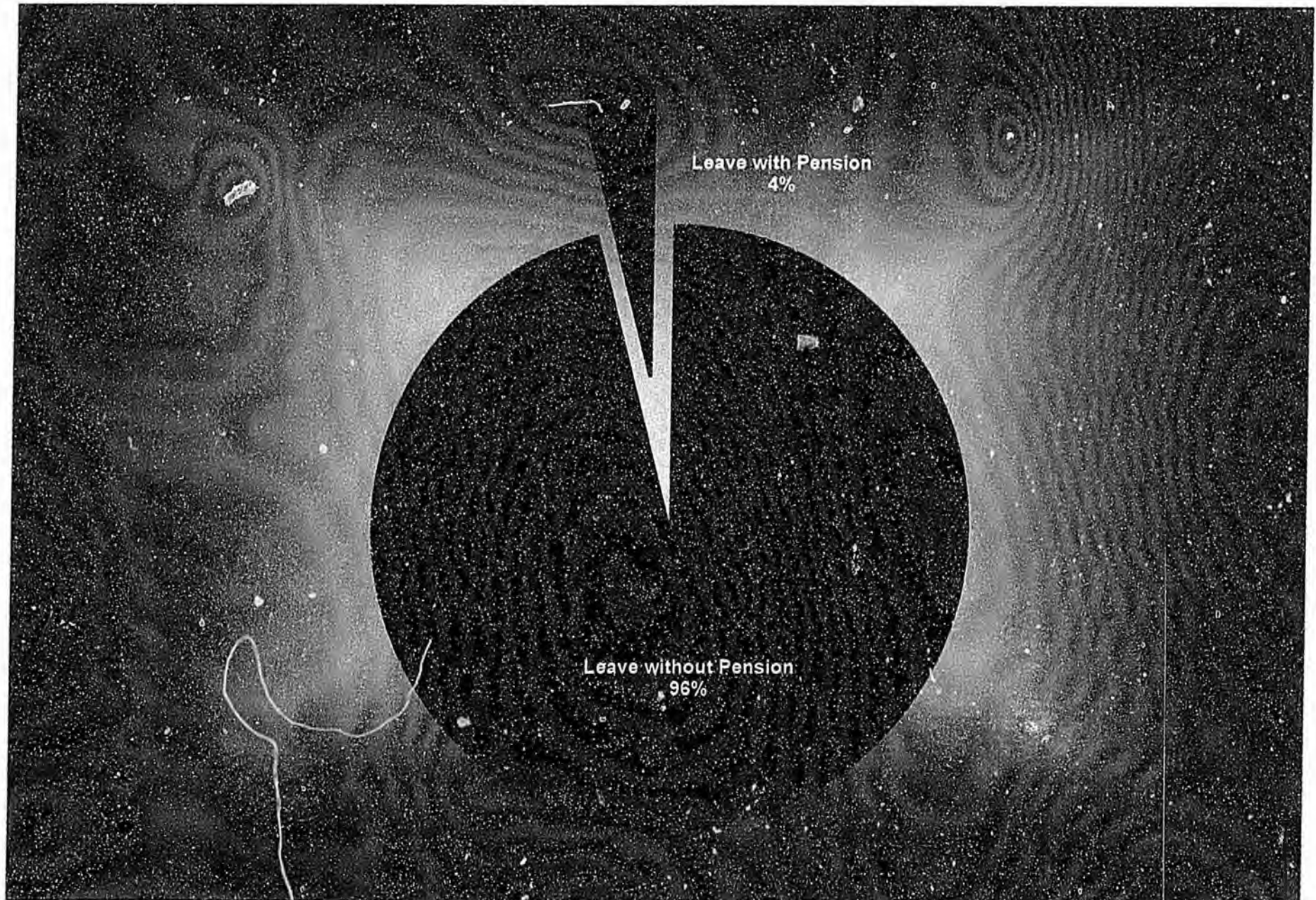
Pam Provost, pprovost@ci.anchorage.ak.us
Connie Hettinga, 907-786-8926
Anchorage Police Department Communications Center

Statewide Anticipated Dispatch Longevity



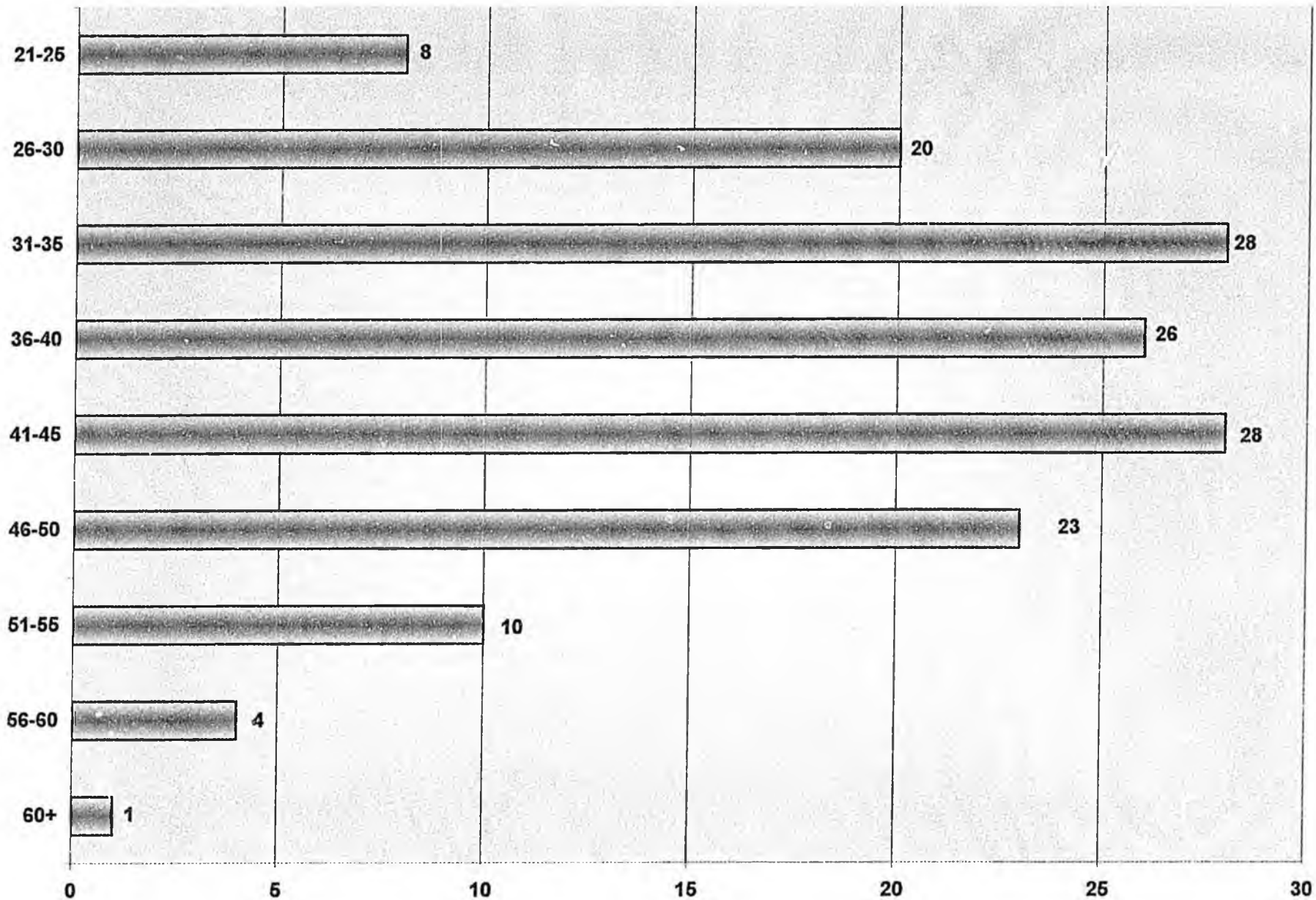
Survey Results, September 1999. Based on 133 Respondents

Employees Ending APD Dispatch Employment



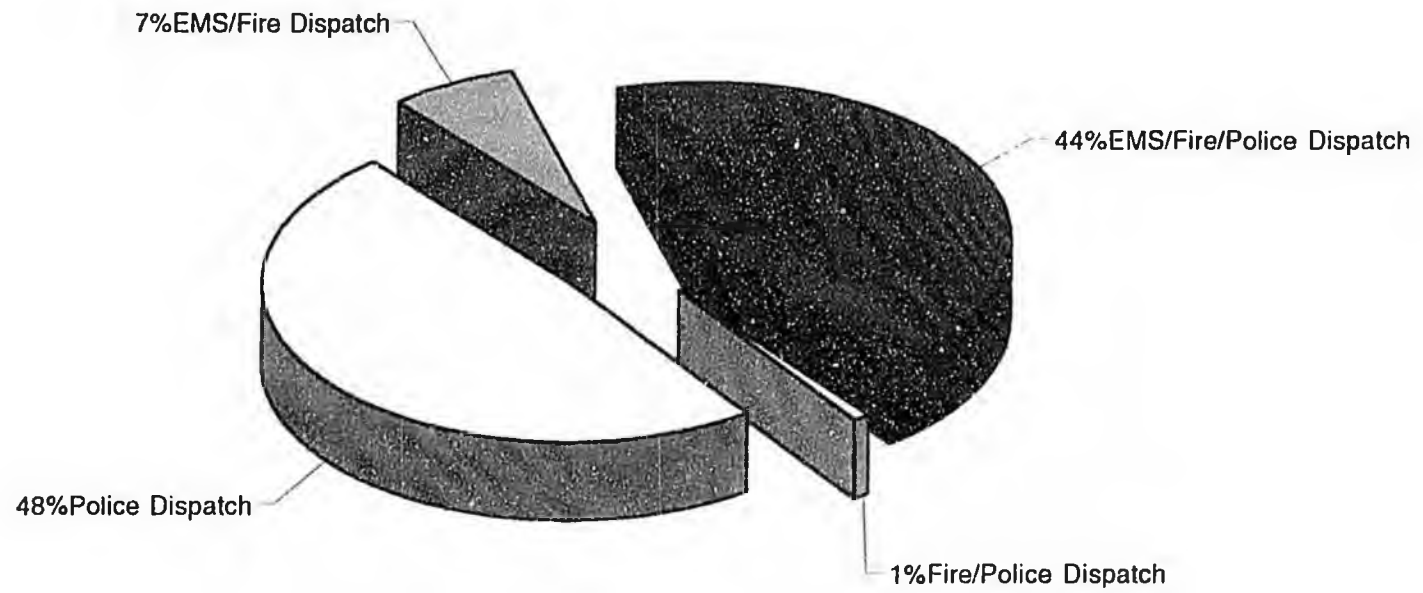
Circa 1970 through 1999

Statewide Dispatcher Age Breakdown



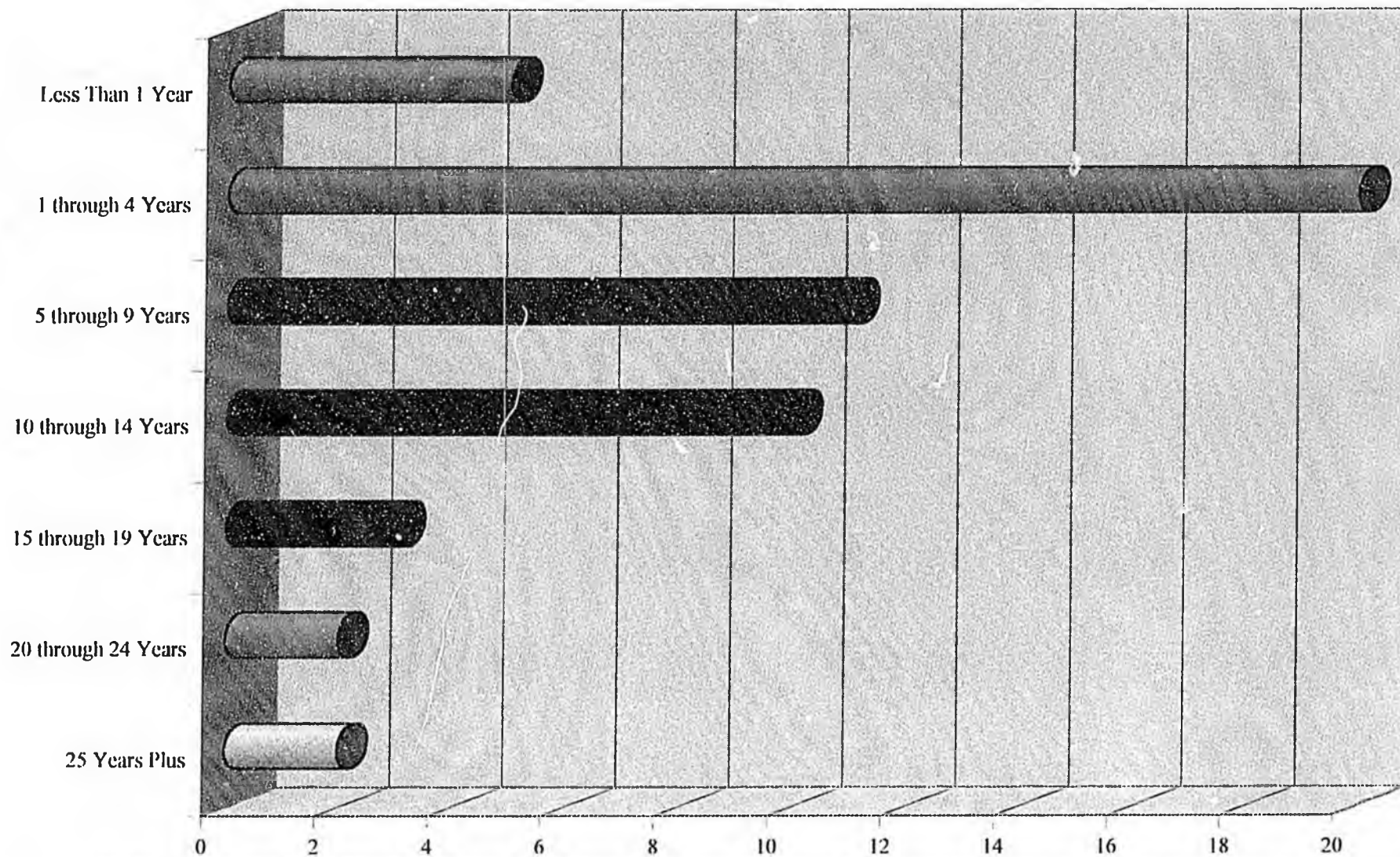
Survey Respondents September, 1999

Statewide Dispatch Duties



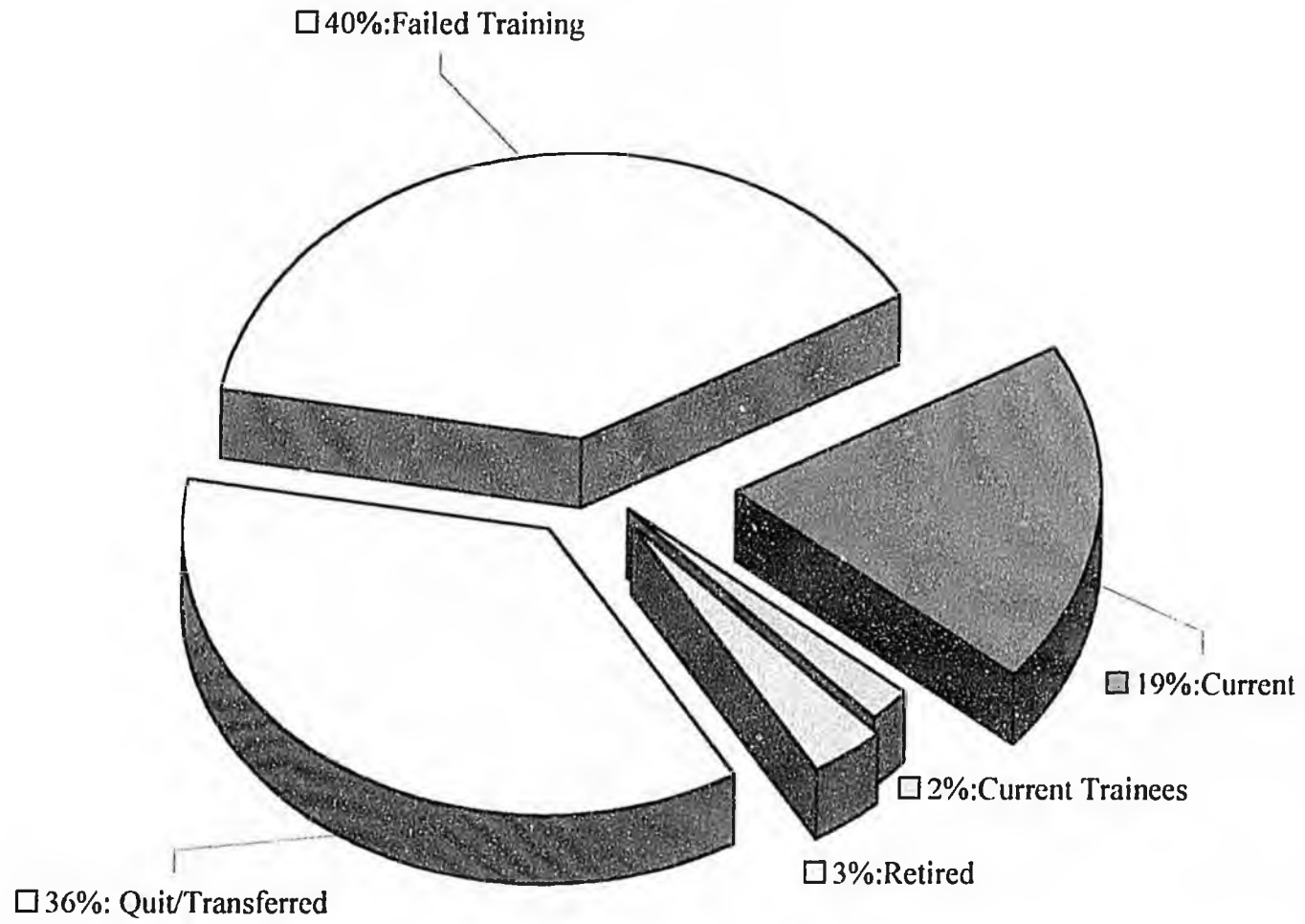
Survey Results, September 1999

December 1999 Longevity Rates Anchorage Police Department



| | 25 Years Plus | 20 through 24 Years | 15 through 19 Years | 10 through 14 Years | 5 through 9 Years | 1 through 4 Years | Less Than 1 Year |
|---------|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Series1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 10 | 11 | 20 | 5 |

**APD Communications Center
Circa 1970 through 1999**



■ Current □ Trainees □ Retired □ GOA □ Failed

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Would a change from the existing 30 year PERS (Public Employees Retirement System) retirement plan to a 20 year PERS retirement option increase the likelihood of employment longevity in the Anchorage Police Department Communications Center?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

- To measure the employee turnover rates in the Communications Center from position inception to date. While employee turnover rates are easily measured, they merely represent a symptom of a more ominous problem. There are several avenues of potentially disruptive or detrimental factors to explore to get a more holistic view of the factors contributing to high turnover that is endemic to the Communications Center.

SETTING

Present day Anchorage started out as a tent city along the banks of Ship Creek in what is now the industrial section of the city. At the time Alaska was a territory of the United States and the town of Anchorage was referred to as "Ship Creek Landing." The United States Marshals were tasked with the law enforcement responsibilities as sanctioned by the federal government (APOA Handbook, 1995).

The City of Anchorage became incorporated in 1920 and hired its first law enforcement officer in 1921. APD's jurisdictional responsibilities at that time were primarily along the Ship Creek "tent city" area. As the population of Anchorage grew so did the jurisdictional boundaries of the Anchorage Police Department. By the time Alaska achieved statehood in 1959, APD retained several full-time employees. Since that time the service area has increased substantially—both in terms of geographic area and population density.

When APD acquired its first set of police radios the groundwork was laid for modern police dispatching. The duties of operating the two-way radio from the police station fell primarily to those officers who were senior on the daily patrol shift. A lone

officer would answer all the incoming telephone calls, make citizen contacts with "walk-ins" at the front counter, and maintain a log of shift activities (A. Olson, 1995). When the senior officer on shift declined assignment to the Communications Center (referred to as Dispatch) a less senior officer assumed the responsibility.

By 1970, then police chief John Flanigan recognized the need to staff the Communications Center with full time civilian employees. The first sergeant promotions at the Anchorage Police Department for duties other than Patrol and Investigations were those assigned to the Communications Center (A. Olson, 1995). The Communications Center sergeant supervised the newly hired civilian Communications Center employees. Eventually one sergeant was tasked with overseeing three sworn personnel of corporal rank assigned to supervise each of the three shifts of civilian employees (K. Olson, 1995).

The transition from a Communications Center staffed exclusively by patrol officers to one operated exclusively by dispatchers was a gradual one. The first radio dispatcher was hired in 1970 yet the last full-time sworn personnel (of corporal rank) did not transfer out of the Communications Center until 1983 (K. Olson, 1995). At that time, three dispatchers were promoted to the position of shift supervisor in the Communications Center to replace each of the three outgoing corporals. The Communications Center sergeant position still exists today.

The Anchorage Police Department employs over 500 full-time employees in a service area of 190 square miles with a 1998 population of 270,000. The Anchorage Police Department currently serves most residents of the Municipality of Anchorage—with one notable exception. The communities south of Potter Marsh (Indian, Bird Creek, Girdwood, and Portage) fall within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Alaska State Troopers.

Currently, the Anchorage Police Department Communications Center is staffed by 54 full-time employees. The Communications sergeant is the only sworn employee assigned to the Communications Center. The employees have union representation

and are subject to the provisions of the bargaining agreement between the Municipality of Anchorage and the APDEA (Anchorage Police Department Employees Association). Of the 53 non sworn Communications Center employees, 5 are shift supervisors, 40 are radio dispatchers, 3 are call-takers, and the remaining 5 are trainees. For purposes of this report, all references to the Communications Center employees will refer to the 53 non sworn personnel.

Shift vacancies generated from vacation leave or illness are filled by off-duty personnel. If no off-duty personnel are available, employees are offered 4 hour blocks of overtime in conjunction with their 8 hour shift. If shift vacancies still exist, personnel are ordered to work overtime by reverse union seniority (Collective Bargaining Agreement). Shift scheduling is done quarterly in accordance with APDEA contract by a shift supervisor in cooperation with the command staff (Collective Bargaining Agreement, 1990). Shift and days off are assigned by seniority.

Communications Center personnel and Uniform Field Services (patrol) personnel are the only two work units within the APDEA bargaining unit that receive one hour of paid breaks per work shift (Collective Bargaining Agreement, 1990). Scheduling of the two paid 15 minute breaks and one paid 30 minute break is coordinated with the shift supervisor (APD Communications Procedure Manual, 1995).

The duties in the Communications Center fall into a pyramid shaped hierarchical distribution. At the top of the pyramid are the supervisors, followed by the dispatchers, below which are the call-takers, and finally on the entry level are the trainees. In descending order, each job classification can perform the job functions of all the classifications subsequent to it. The duties of FTI (Field Training Instructor) can be performed by journeyman personnel of any classification and, consequently, are listed separately.

- Communications Clerk III (shift supervisor)

- (1) Maintain a thorough knowledge of the Communications Center operations and department policies and procedures.
- (2) Monitor and inspect the quality and quantity of performance of subordinates, with particular emphasis on developing skills and abilities.
- (3) Ensure employees adhere to policies and procedures and demonstrate reasonable and professional behavior.
- (4) Improve, assist and train employees in response to needs.
- (5) Oversee normal and effective operation of the shift, by:
 - (a) Scheduling to include completion of overtime sign-up worksheets.
 - (b) Approving or denying leave requests.
 - (c) Updating and submitting the time sheets.
 - (d) Preparing performance evaluations on employees assigned to the shift.
- (6) Call-out specialized units as requested by a Patrol Supervisor in accordance with written procedure.
- (7) Immediately notify the Medical Examiner when a death has been confirmed by the Officer at a scene.
- (8) Refer media inquiries to on duty Crime Prevention Specialist. If there are none on duty, answer questions from the media in accordance with the Victims Rights Act of 1991.
- (9) Ensure that appropriate in-house computer bulletin entries/updates are maintained. This includes entry of all felony and serious misdemeanor locates that are broadcast during the shift. This also includes "approach with caution" warnings for known armed or violent offenders.

(10) Perform duties as outlined for Police Clerk (call-taker) and Communications Clerk II (radio dispatcher).

(11) Other duties as assigned.

- Communications Clerk II (radio dispatcher)

- (1) Use of two-way radio and in-house computers to actively monitor and keep current the status of assigned officers.
- (2) Being aware of citizens' requests for police response.
- (3) Dispatch calls to available and appropriate Officer(s) as soon as possible providing explicit yet concise response information.
- (4) Provide or arrange for requested support assistance for other law enforcement agencies.
- (5) Accurately enter data on report forms.
- (6) Make necessary notifications to appropriate chain of command for any serious or life threatening activity.
- (7) Enter and retrieve information from all computer systems in the Communications Center.
- (8) Provide training as assigned by the shift supervisor.
- (9) Perform duties of the Police Clerk (call-taker).
- (10) Other duties as assigned.

- Police Clerk (call-taker)

- (1) Answer telephone calls made to the police department on non-emergency (business) and emergency (911) lines.
- (2) Determine the nature of the call and take one of the following actions:

- (a) Obtain information for police response and enter that information into the in-house computer.
 - (b) Route the call to the appropriate agency.
 - (c) Refer or transfer the call to whom it is intended.
 - (d) Take necessary messages.
 - (e) Answer the caller's questions or otherwise resolve the call.
- (3) Take reports over the telephone for runaways, missing persons and stolen vehicles.
 - (4) Issue APD case numbers to the Magistrate for Domestic Violence Writs.
 - (5) Run warrant and vehicle registration inquiries in APSIN computer (Alaska Public Safety Information Network)
 - (6) Other duties as assigned.

- Field Training Instructor (FTI)

- (1) Trainers will complete daily performance evaluations using the standardized guidelines.
- (2) Training that addresses remedial needs will be documented.
- (3) Job performance that does not respond to remedial training efforts will be documented.
- (4) Monitor *all aspects* of the trainee's performance regardless of the trainee's competency on any particular job function until the trainee has completed the entire training program.
- (5) Familiarize the trainee with the contents of the Communications Center Procedural Manual.
- (6) Periodically test the trainee's job knowledge through the use of quizzes and checklists.

- (7) Coordinate training needs with other trainers.
- (8) Recommend the trainee be released from training when appropriate.

TRAINING COSTS

In 1995, the training costs associated with hiring replacement workers were conservatively measured. The pre-hire selection requires an average of 40 personnel hours to process each applicant (Hume, 1995). Pre-hire background investigations are currently handled by a senior patrol officer. The 40 personnel hours per applicant were calculated at the senior officer pay rate.

Current policy allots six months of training period per trainee, although that period can be extended at the discretion of the Training Coordinator and the Communications Center Sergeant. Few Communications Center trainees successfully complete their training period in less than six months. Although it is not uncommon for new hires to remain in training status for several months (with many exceeding one year of training) the six month training time span served as the basis for cost calculations.

Several journeyman level employees participate in classroom instruction during new-hire academy. The instructor must be replaced in the Communications Center while on temporary training assignment. Historically, the staffing shortage rarely allow for assigned personnel to be absent without having to replace that position with an off-duty employee at the overtime rate of pay.

A trainer currently receives a 5.5% pay incentive in addition to his/her hourly rate of pay for each hour spent training a new-hire. Even though they are drawing a salary, trainees do not factor in to the staffing levels and do not fill a position in the Communications Center. Any personnel shortages require overtime payments to journeyman level employees *regardless* of how many trainees are present for duty.

For purposes of calculating pre-hire costs, no allowance was made for the costs incurred by the Municipality of Anchorage in their role in the screening process. Likewise,

the prospective applicants that failed to pass scrutiny at the APD screening level were not factored into the costs. The only costs applied to the pre-hire screening were those incurred by APD for background checks on successful Communications Center candidates that were processed to start employment at APD.

For purposes of calculating the costs associated with classroom training the assigned C step of pay for the Training Coordinator (currently a Communications Clerk III) was set at 160 hours. The Training Coordinator conducts most of the in-class instruction during the academy. The salary expense for the Training Coordinator was added to the costs per new hire as follows:

From 1990-1995 the average size per group of new hires had been six employees. One/sixth of the Training Coordinator salary for 160 hours to include 5.5% pay incentive differential was added to the expense of each new hire. When measuring the in-room training costs, all FTI pay for Police Clerk and Communications Clerk II classifications were calculated at the C step. The 5.5% pay incentive was calculated at that rate. Since the new hire employees were required to work on all three shifts during their in-room training phase, a 3% shift differential cost was added to the new hire expense. The day shift trainers do not receive shift differential, the swing shift trainers receive 3%, and the mid shift trainers receive 6%. The average trainer shift differential cost was added to the trainee expense.

The FTIs must complete written performance evaluations and disseminate procedural information to the trainees on a daily basis. For costing purposes, one hour of FTI pay was factored into the cost of training in addition to the aforementioned pay incentive differential. No cost provisions were made for benefit packages such as vacation and sick accrual or health insurance.

Since the Anchorage Police Department no longer hires Police Clerks (call-takers) to work in the Communications Center, there exists no "fall back" position for failed dispatch trainees. Historically, the training expenditures that would have produced a journeyman level employee (albeit a non-dispatcher) will now be lost.

Those 1995 calculations for call-taker trainee costs will no longer apply so, consequently, have been discounted from the cost equation.

| | DISPATCHER TRAINEE |
|---------------------|---|
| \$15,523.20 | Salary: $\$16.17 \times 40 \text{ hr.} \times 24 \text{ wk.} = \$15,523.20.$ (Comm. Clerk I pay). |
| \$ 160.07 | Classroom: see above formula. |
| \$ 1,020.80 | Pre-hire Screening: see above formula. |
| \$ 2,207.00 | In-room Admin.: $\$22.07 \times 1 \text{ hr} \times 100 \text{ day} = \$2207.00.$ (CCII $\times 5.5\% \times 3\% \times 1 \text{ hr}$). |
| \$ 1,211.00 | FTI pay: $\$20.34 \times 5.5\% \times 3\% \times 7 \text{ hrs} \times 100 \text{ day} = \$1,211.00.$ See above formula. |
| \$ 20,122.07 | TOTAL PER HIRING EPISODE (1995) |

When calculating a 40% historical trainee failure rate at the Anchorage Police Department Communications Center, these conservative figures take on significant proportions.

PROJECT SIGNIFICANCE

The Communications Center of the Anchorage Police Department has experienced work place turbulence as evidenced by the high turnover rate. All employees hired into the PERS system after June 30, 1986 must work to the age of 55 for an early (reduced) pension and to the age of 60 for a full pension.

As of December, 1999 eight employees had retired from the Anchorage Police Department Communications Center, however not one of those employees received pensions based on the current requirement for 30 years PERS service. Three of the Communications Center retirees received medical disability and four of the remaining five retired on the "over 55 years of age" option. One retiree elected to take a reduced pension for an early retirement of "over 50 years of age." Of the five non-medical retirees, only two maintained employment beyond 20 years in the Communications Center.

No provisions can be made to measure the "inner turbulence" of turnover within the Communications Center. The work performance of novice employees may not be as speedy as journeyman level employees. It can be argued that the quality produced by a

novice in any profession, let alone an emergency communications center, is not on par with that of an experienced and seasoned worker.

The Anchorage Police Department, as a direct result of high turnover, has a relatively inexperienced work force. As of December, 1999 there were 4 employees who had passed their 20 year anniversary employed in the Communications Center. Three employees worked beyond their 15 year anniversary and another ten passed 10 years in the Communications Center. The remaining 36 workers (68%) had under 10 years longevity as dispatchers. A substantial number of Communications Center workers (47%) as of December, 1999 had less than 5 years experience--many of those having less than one year.

To receive a PERS pension the majority of the current Communications Center employees will be required to work for 30 years, take an early retirement at age 55, or receive a full pension at age 60. It should be emphasized that no one in the history of the APD Communications Center had reached the age of 60 while still actively employed (the closest was a retiree at age 59 with less than 20 years of service).

If the historical pattern of high turnover is any indication, relatively few employees should reasonably expect to work until retirement age in the Communications Center. The pay and benefits for the call-taker position (Police Clerk) are comparable with other less turbulent APD job assignments covered by the same PERS retirement (Collective Bargaining Agreement, 1990). Some employees exposed to high stress on a daily basis see little incentive to remain in the Communications Center for the requisite 30 years.

In order to present a thorough historical representation of Anchorage Police Department (APD) Communications Center employment turbulence, data were gathered on hiring and firing episodes since the inception of the position in 1970 to present day. All data represent the training disposition (failed or passed) and whether the employee terminated or retired.

Those employees assigned to the Communications Center during the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s witnessed many changes at APD. The administration merged the classification of two clerical positions into one (Fletcher, 1995). The management intent was to have a squad of "generic" clerks that could go to work in any position within the department as staffing demands dictated. The Police Clerk I and Police Clerk II became the same Police Clerk classification and many of their specialized duties were pooled together (Fletcher, 1995).

Many of the newly reclassified Police Clerks were assigned to the Communications Center after leaving behind such duties as typist or file clerk. These employees were provided minimal training and assigned the duties of answering the 911 emergency telephones and business (non emergency) telephones in the Communications Center (Fletcher, 1995).

By the spring of 1998, the APD administration determined that the "generic" police clerk was not viable in the highly specialized environment of the Communications Center. The position is being phased out through attrition. As of December, 1999 only three full time police clerks remain in the staffing.

There exists a myriad of people who benefit from low turnover rates or, conversely, suffer the consequences of wasted employment resources. Listed in ascending order are those affected, either directly or indirectly, by employment turnover in the Anchorage Police Department Communications Center.

- Taxpayers: Tax dollars that go toward the hiring and training of government employees are an expense of doing business. If the money spent does not yield effective results, more money has to come out of the taxpayers' coffers through Public Safety budgeting to continue the process until enough employees reach journeyman level. Since the Communications Center must be staffed at all times, there exists no option of "doing without" in order to save money and resources.

- General Public: Trainees acquire much of their job knowledge through means of on the job training (OJT) and are, therefore, exposed to the public long before they

are considered job proficient. Lower employee turnover would, in effect, substantially decrease citizen exposure to trainees.

- MOA and APD Administration: APD invests an average of 40 personnel-hours of pre-hire screening for each radio dispatcher applicant (Hume, 1995). The application process is costly—not only in dollars but also in personnel allocation. Lower turnover rates mitigate the number of hiring episodes needed to staff the Communications Center and the resulting associated costs.

- Fellow APD Employees: Employees that deal with serious situations or life threatening emergencies on a daily basis realize the need to handle each individual situation to the best of their ability. There exists little room for error. Even though an employee might expertly handle 99 out of 100 requests for assistance s/he may still face sanctions—both punitive and disciplinary—for the one call not properly handled.

Recognizing teamwork in the Communications Center as the cornerstone of effective job performance, many journeyman-level employees experience increased job stress while working with novice employees. That in itself is sufficient reason to seek a remedy to alleviate the high rate of job turnover.

- Trainers: If ever a situation requires the careful and deliberate allocation of limited resources, this is it. The trainers in the Communications Center face daunting challenges on a daily basis. They assume responsibility not only for their own actions but for the actions of their trainees as well. They must instruct trainees during time-critical situations and be ready to take over if the circumstances dictate. The trainers must constantly strive to balance the needs of the citizen with the instructional value afforded the trainees during "hands on" exposure. Add to this the constant threat of vicarious liability and the trainer position quickly loses its appeal.

The employees that take on the training responsibility generally do so not only out of a sense of job commitment but also because they realize better trained new-hires translate into more supportive workers in the future. The incentive to train is

greatly diminished; however, when trainers are required to direct their efforts toward trainees who eventually resign or transfer to less stressful positions.

Considering the ongoing trend toward a high trainee failure rate, new employees do not replace outgoing journeyman level employees at a constant "one for one" rate. Overall Communications Center trainee failure rates to date average 40%. Replacement training costs should be factored to reflect the employment trends. The turbulence factor accounts for lost expertise when seasoned employees terminate employment, resulting in increased performance demands on the novice employees.

All police employees can be subject to criminal and/or civil lawsuits and Communications Center employees are no exception. Employees are expected to perform in a manner based on a reasonable standard of care within the scope of their employment for the Municipality of Anchorage. As all telephone lines in the Communications Center are recorded, an employee can be held accountable for any statements made or action taken (APD Communications Procedure Manual, 1995). In order to lessen the risk of liability, both to the MOA and the individual, employees adhere to written procedure whenever possible.

Communications Center employees must have a working knowledge of Municipal Rules and Regulations, Department Procedure manual and Dispatch Procedure manual. Dispatchers are responsible for adhering to strict guidelines for computer entries and queries as outlined in Alaska Public Safety Information Network (APSIN) manual and the National Crime Information Computer (NCIC) manual. Any violation of the operating procedures expose the Communications Center employee not only to disciplinary action but also to criminal prosecution.

The Collective Bargaining Agreement (Union Contract) provides specifics on the pay and benefits as well as disciplinary proceedings and general working conditions.

PERS REQUIREMENTS

The Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) benefits and pensions are disseminated as per legislative requirements. The recipient classification is determined by the Alaska State Legislature and dictated by Alaska Statute.

For employees in PERS, the contribution rate is contingent upon the retirement classification. Those members in Peace Officers Retirement System for the 20 year plan must contribute 7.5% of their annual salary into the pension plan while actively employed (AK PERS Information Handbook, 1993). The 30 year PERS members contribute at 6.75% rate. Both plans base the retirement income level on a designated percentage of the three highest consecutive years of work based on total years of service.

For purposes of future cost calculation, PERS assumes 100% of the members who terminate employment prior to the age of 35 (both vested and not vested) will cash out the contributions made into the system (Church, 1995). Likewise, PERS calculates that 100% of the vested employees over age 35 will leave the contributions in the system in order to draw a pension and receive medical coverage at age 50, 55, or 60 depending on the option selected and date of hire. All PERS contributors, regardless of age, must cash out the contributions if they are not vested in the system. All contributors become vested after 5 years of service (AK PERS Information Handbook, 1993).

If a group is able to successfully petition the legislature to win a majority vote for a change from a 30 year to a 20 year retirement option, the contributors can retire at the 20 year anniversary. PERS allows employees to "catch up" in the payments from the 6.75% to the 7.5% contribution rate for each year of service prior to admittance into the 20 year plan. The "catch up" option is limited strictly to those employees who gain admittance into the 20 year plan for that specific job classification (Church, 1995). For example, a five year veteran of the Communications Center (30 year PERS) recently

transferred to patrol (20 year PERS). He must work a full 20 years in patrol to receive his PERS pension.

The Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) provides an exclusive 20 year retirement to peace officers and fire fighters as defined by Alaska Statute. AS39.35.680 (28) reads: "peace officer" or "fire fighter" means an employee occupying a position as a peace officer, chief of police, correctional officer, correctional superintendent, fire fighter, fire chief, or probation officer.

The most recent conversion to a 20 year retirement option in PERS were the adult correctional officers (ACO) and probation officers (PO). Prior to 1990, those (State of Alaska) employees were required to work a full 30 years in the PERS system or meet the age requirements as dictated by hire date into PERS. Employees hired prior to July 1, 1986 had to work until age 50 for early (reduced) retirement or age 55 for full retirement (AK PERS Information Handbook, 1993). The employees hired into PERS after June 30, 1986 had to work until age 55 for early (reduced) retirement or age 60 for full retirement. Although there was no perceptible change in job duties from 1989 to 1990, the adult correctional officers and probation officers were able to shave 10 years off their minimum requirement for retirement eligibility simply by winning majority legislative approval for such a change. The probation officers and adult correctional officers are required to be certified by APSC (Alaska Police Standards Council) as are all sworn law enforcement personnel in the Alaska.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of historical personnel data for the Anchorage Police Department Communications Center, it is a logical conclusion that a 20 year PERS retirement option for Communications Center personnel would have a positive influence on longevity rates. 92% of dispatchers responding to a statewide survey conducted in September, 1999 indicated they would stay employed in their respective

Communications Centers for 20 years however would not stay for the requisite 30 years.

As the duties in the Communications Center become more complex with the introduction of new technology, it will become increasingly crucial to retain qualified employees. High turnover in the workplace has a detrimental effect on training efforts, skill levels, and morale. Any reasonable efforts to mitigate the employment turnover should be actively pursued through the legislative process by management and employees alike. A 20 year retirement option for the workers of the Communications Center offers a practical solution to the journeyman level turnover rates endemic to the Communications Center.

The employees of the APD Communications Center are coordinating their efforts with other police and fire agencies statewide to pursue a legislative change in PERS. Since the process is a lengthy one requiring a high degree of commitment, the workload and resources will be coordinated in order to avoid duplication of efforts.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

AFD - Anchorage Fire Department.

Alaska State Pension Investment Board - The group of eight trustees responsible for managing and investing the PERS fund.

APOA - Alaska Peace Officers Association. A fraternal organization that provides training to the law enforcement community.

APSC - Alaska Police Standards Council. Administrative authority that certifies law enforcement trainers and law enforcement officers in the State of Alaska.

APSIN - Alaska Public Safety Information Network. The State of Alaska maintained computer system, this computer contains all criminal justice and motor vehicle information on a statewide level. The Alaska State Troopers (AST) utilize APSIN to issue case numbers and track case activity. All local and statewide warrants are entered into APSIN.

AST - Alaska State Troopers.

Call-taker - The call-taker is tasked with answering the 911 emergency telephones and business telephones and processing requests from citizens for police assistance in the APD Communications Center. This position is classified as a Police Clerk.

Communications Clerk I - Entry and training level position in the APD Communications Center in which employees learn to perform the duties of a Communications Clerk II (dispatcher).

Communications Clerk II - Radio dispatcher position in the Communications Center, this person is responsible for operating a two way radio and deploying police officers to citizens' requests for assistance. The Communications Clerk II also performs the duties of call-taker.

Communications Clerk III - Supervisory position in the Communications Center, this person oversees daily operations and supervises the duties of the Communications Clerk I (trainee), Communications Clerk II (dispatcher), and Police Clerk (call-taker).

DSN - Department Seniority Number. A individual number assigned in sequential order to departmental personnel to denote departmental seniority at APD. The DSN is also used as the badge number for all sworn APD personnel.

Dispatcher - See Communications Clerk II.

DMV - Department of Motor Vehicles (State).

DVW (or DV Writ) - Domestic Violence Writ. A restraining order obtained by a victim of domestic violence, these writs are issued by the Magistrate of the third judicial district and assigned case numbers by the APD Communications Center employees.

FTI - Field Training Instructor. A journeyman level Communications Center employee, the FTI trains new-hire Communications Center employees.

FTO - Field Training Officer. A sworn officer with the Anchorage Police Department, the FTO trains new-hire patrol officers.

NCIC/NLETS - National Crime Information Center/National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System. Restricted to law enforcement purposes, these computer networks provide national and international criminal justice information retrieval capability.

Non Sworn - Clerical and support personnel at the Anchorage Police Department that do not carry firearms in the scope of their duties or process prisoners. The Communications Center employees and Records employees are non sworn.

OJT (On the job training) - As applied to APD Communications Center, the training policy for new-hire personnel where they work one on one with a FTI. The OJT phase usually follows one to two months of classroom instruction.

PERS - Public Employees Retirement System. A State of Alaska managed retirement fund which covers most employees of state and local governmental agencies.

Police Clerk - see Call-taker.

Police Officer - see Sworn.

PSAP - Public Safety Answering Point. The agency tasked with answering 911 in the community. Anchorage Police Department is the PSAP for the Municipality of Anchorage. Anchorage Fire Department and the Alaska State Troopers are secondary PSAPs in the Anchorage area in that those agencies receive 911 calls only when transferred from the Anchorage Police Department.

Public Employees Retirement System - see PERS.

Radio Dispatcher - see Communications Clerk II.

Sworn - Law enforcement personnel certified by the State of Alaska as peace officers. Sworn personnel must qualify to carry firearms and are empowered to enforce city, state, and federal law.