



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
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TO: Rolland Sizemore
Chair, Board of Commissioners

FROM: Robert E. Guenzel
County Administrator

CC: Jerry L. Clayton, Sheriff
Marc Breckenridge, Director of Emergency Management

DATE: July 8, 2009

SUBJECT: Transfer of Oversight of Emergency Management to the Office of Sheriff

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

It is requested that the Board of Commissioners transfer the administrative responsibility of Emergency Management functions to the Office of the Sheriff.

BACKGROUND:

The mission of Emergency Management is to protect the health and safety of the community by coordinating disaster preparedness planning, risk mitigation, response, emergency communications systems, and incident recovery activities. Emergency Management, under the direction of Marc Breckenridge since 1993, has done an exemplary job of performing these functions. All required response plans are updated regularly and the number of volunteers trained exceeds 400.

Historically, one of the strengths of Emergency Management has been the leadership provided within the Emergency Preparedness Community of Interest. Emergency Management also staffs several committees including the Emergency Medical Services Commission, the Emergency Telephone District Board, the Hazardous Materials Response Team Authority Board, the Local Emergency Planning Committee, the Medical Control Authority Board, and the Homeland Security Task Force. Each of these committees addresses an important facet of emergency preparedness and each also has broad membership from throughout the community.

Earlier this year, the Sheriff and County Administrator discussed the role of Emergency Management within the community and whether coordination of various committees and alignment of goals might be better achieved by shifting the oversight of Emergency Management from the County Administrator to the Office of the Sheriff. The Sheriff expressed an interest in this realignment. Discussions with Emergency Management ensued and Director Breckenridge expressed support for this realignment.

DISCUSSION:

Some counties (Kent, Ingham, Calhoun, etc.) have Emergency Management as a division of the Sheriff; others (Macomb, Oakland, Livingston, etc.) have Emergency Management as a department, reporting to the county administrator/ controller or elected executive. Regardless of how the office is managed, the statute (MCLA 30.409(1)) is clear that it is the responsibility of the Board of Commissioners to appoint an emergency management coordinator and that the coordinator acts at the direction of the Chair of the Board in completing his/ her coordination duties.

The decision about how Emergency Management functions are managed is a local decision. As Homeland Security and other grant opportunities continue to require the involvement of multiple stakeholders, it is becoming increasingly important that the strategic vision of emergency preparedness be aligned at an operational level. Simplifying the lines of reporting by combining the administrative responsibilities of Emergency Management within the Office of Sheriff should help ensure that this occurs.

To ensure a smooth transition, no change in personnel is recommended and the Sheriff has expressed a strong desire that existing staff continue in their current positions as structured. Future decisions about work assignments, workplans, hiring, and other administrative functions would be completed by the Office of Sheriff.

Budget oversight would also fall under the purview of the Sheriff. No change in budget is recommended as a result of this transfer. While future operational and service efficiencies may occur, none are projected at this time.

IMPACT ON HUMAN RESOURCES:

None.

IMPACT ON BUDGET:

None.

IMPACT ON INDIRECT COSTS:

None.

IMPACT ON OTHER COUNTY DEPARTMENTS OR OUTSIDE AGENCIES:

None.

CONFORMITY TO COUNTY POLICIES:

The requested Board action is in conformity with County policies.

ATTACHMENTS/APPENDICES:

None.

A RESOLUTION TRANSFERRING ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY OF
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TO THE OFFICE OF SHERIFF

WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

July 9, 2009

WHEREAS, Emergency Management is a County department reporting to the County Administrator; and

WHEREAS, Emergency Management plays a pivotal role in the Emergency Preparedness Community of Interest; and

WHEREAS, the elected Sheriff also plays a pivotal role in the Emergency Preparedness Community of Interest; and

WHEREAS, Emergency Management staff, as currently defined, are recognized and respected in the community for their successes; and

WHEREAS, oversight of Emergency Management functions by the Sheriff will ensure a shared strategic vision for the Emergency Preparedness Community of Interest; and

WHEREAS, MCLA 30.409(1) requires a county board of commissioners to appoint an emergency management coordinator and that such a coordinator shall act for, and at the direction of, the chairperson of the county board of commissioners,

WHEREAS, transferring administrative responsibility of Emergency Management to the Office of the Sheriff may also result in operational and service efficiencies.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Department of Emergency Management become a Division of the Office of Sheriff;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Sheriff shall have administrative responsibility of Emergency Management programming, including emergency preparedness, emergency communications, and emergency medical services;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that existing staff will continue in their current positions as structured and funded;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners reaffirms the appointment of Marc Breckenridge as its emergency management coordinator;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the duties and responsibilities currently performed by Director Breckenridge and his existing staff will continue as currently structured and funded.