

FORT LEE POLICE DEPARTMENT PRESS RELEASE

Date: 3/10/2014

Authority: Chief Keith M. Bendul

Type of Incident: Renovation of Communications Center

In December of 2013 the Fort Lee Police Department had completed a renovation project of the Communications Center, which is located inside the Fort Lee Police Department. The renovated Communication Center was officially re-opened in January.

The project took almost 2 years to complete, and was managed by Dispatcher Stephen Mackenzie and the Communications Center Supervisor Lt. Camille Milo. After her retirement the project was supervised by Lt. Stephen Gallagher. Stephen Mackenzie has been a Dispatcher with Fort Lee for the past 13 years, and he previously was a Dispatcher for the Bergen County Police and is currently a volunteer fire fighter for the Borough of Leonia. Given Mackenzie's extensive experience with the emergency services, he came up with a design that incorporated modern technology with ergonomic furniture designs that assist dispatchers when working long shifts. This can be especially crucial when dispatchers are required to work extended hours such as during recent blizzards or other debilitating weather disturbances such as Super Storm Sandy. The new work stations manufactured by Xybix Systems are adjustable in height, so that a dispatcher can choose to sit, stand or change back and forth as needed. Previously numerous software programs were running on four computer monitors which required them to change screens while trying to handle an emergency call. Now each work station consists of 10 computer screens which always displays the needed 9-1-1 telephone system, Computer Aided Dispatch system, the numerous traffic cameras, and the DMV terminal.

An additional benefit of the project involves the future upgrade of the 9-1-1 systems. The State of New Jersey is expecting a transition to the next generation of 9-1-1 in the next few years. The computer and

infrastructure upgrades were necessary to facilitate the transition when mandated. The renovation also involved new flooring and improved wiring placed under the floor so when future improvements are necessary the floors won't have to be re-opened and the transition to new equipment will be almost seamless without disrupting the operations of the dispatch center. Technical upgrades also included redundant backup power for each dispatching position. Another upgrade to the infrastructure includes the ability to network together other camera systems in the borough for future integration which greatly enhance a dispatcher's ability to provide real time information to emergency responders.

The project involved most of the work being performed by workers from the Borough's General Services Department, under the supervision of Michael Maresca and the Communications Department under the supervision of Don Sauvageot. Detective Thomas Porto of the Fort Lee Police Department Computer Unit integrated the various computer systems and programs required to coordinate the communications and radio software. The majority of the labor was performed by the borough employees rather than hiring outside contractors to perform the work at an estimated cost of approximately \$70,000. The project in total cost \$150,000. This included new consoles, chairs, monitors & computers, a new floor, upgrades to electrical wiring, new lighting and labor performed by borough employees and minimal outside specialized labor.

The completion of this project highlights the ability of numerous departments within the borough to efficiently work together to reduce costs while at the same time enhancing the effectiveness of public safety by thus resulting in a highly improved level of service and public safety.



From left to right: Michael Maresca DPW, Councilman Harvey Sohmer, Mayor Mark Sokolich, Dispatcher Stephen Mackenzie, Lt. Stephen Gallagher, Chief Keith Bendul and Deputy Chief Timothy Ford.



From left to right: Dispatcher Stephen Mackenzie and Lt. Stephen Gallagher.



From left to right: Dispatcher Stephen Mackenzie, Mayor Mark Sokolich, Chief Keith Bendul and Councilman Harvey Sohmer.



From left to right: Councilman Harvey Sohmer and Dispatcher Stephen Mackenzie.