

LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

A STUDY OF

CENTRALIZING THE COMMUNICATIONS

FUNCTIONS OF

EMERGENCY SERVICES IN ERATH COUNTY

A RESEARCH PAPER

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

THE LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

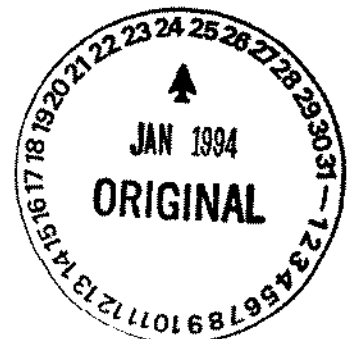
BY

TRAVIS W. CALDER

STEPHENVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

STEPHENVILLE, TEXAS

JANUARY 7, 1994



#33

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.INTRODUCTION.....	1
II.REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	2
A.Cost	
B.Efficiency	
C.Other Factors	
III.DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE.....	12
IV.LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES.....	13
V.FIRE DEPARTMENT AGENCIES.....	14
VI.EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES.....	14
VII.PRESENT COMMUNICATIONS STRUCTURES.....	15
VIII.PROPOSED COMMUNICATION STRUCTURE.....	17
IX. FEASIBILITY.....	18
X. IMPLEMENTATION.....	24
XI. CONCLUSIONS.....	28
XII.BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	31

INTRODUCTION

In the government sector many have suggested consolidation of services, but it has been carried out in only selected areas. (Colby 1982,34) (Hillman and Peterson 1980,5) (Horgan 1980,3-4) (Koepsell and Girard 1979,IX) Consolidation can involve the merging of two or more complete agencies or it can be the sharing of functions between two or more different agencies. Financial shortages and increasing technology have caused many to reconsider consolidation. Many advocates of consolidation feel that it will be more efficient and will save money. (Horgan 1980,4) The money issue is what seems to drive many governmental units to initially investigate consolidation of services.

However, the installation of emergency 9-1-1 telephone equipment in Erath county has caused refocusing on the concept of centralized communications. The 9-1-1 system is a function that is shared by several different agencies. This produces a sharing of technology without any formal agreement. Having a system that is shared without formal consolidation leads to problems in operation.

This paper will be an investigation into the concept of consolidation in general. Then the focus will shift to areas that administration needs to consider in the plan for consolidation in Erath County.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There are many different ways to consolidate. Consolidation can be full or partial or it can be between different law enforcement agencies, and it often involves different public safety services (such as police, fire or emergency medical services). This can include the consolidation of police and fire departments into public safety agencies where employees share fire and police duties, such as the approach taken in St. Petersburg, Florida. (Rubin 1984,221) It can include the merging of two or more law enforcement agencies into one larger agency, such as the merging of the Bloomington and Normal police departments in Illinois. (McAninch and Sanders 1988,95) Another approach might be the providing of law enforcement duties on a county wide basis as in Quanah, Hardeman county, Texas; where the police department was combined with the county sheriff's office. (Myers and Tees 1978,20-21) Consolidation can also include the sharing of services such as communications. Examples of this include the sharing of a communications system by the cities of Universal City, Converse, Live Oak, and Selma in Texas. (Miller 1976,1)

Police service consolidation has been discussed for some time. The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice devoted an entire chapter to the subject in the report Task Force Report: The Police. There is a discussion of different types of consolidation. These include consolidation of staff services, consolidation of auxiliary services, consolidation of selected field services, and jurisdictional consolidation. Staff services include recruitment, selection, and training of personnel. Auxiliary services include records and communication, crime laboratory services, and detention. Consolidation of selected field services includes joint criminal investigations, and task force operations. Jurisdictional consolidation includes joining law enforcement agencies with overlapping jurisdictions into one agency. (Katzenbach 1967, 86-87)

The consolidation issue has continued through the 1990's. The F.B.I. Law Enforcement Bulletin in an article titled "Public Service Consolidation" (1991), says there are five levels of consolidation. These include full, partial, selected area, functional, and nominal. Full consolidation is when police and fire duties are combined under a single agency. Partial consolidation exists when the two public service functions remain separate, except for a designated cadre of public safety officers who perform both fire and police duties.

Selected consolidation occurs when only a certain portion of a community is serviced by public service officers.

Functional consolidation is practiced when separate departments are maintained, but some duties usually performed by one department are assigned to another. Nominal consolidation involves police and fire departments operating under the administration of a single director, though the two departments remain completely separate. (Sobba 1991,6-7)

In the book Local Government Police Management there are three types of consolidation or unification of police service:

1. A merger of governmental units into a single larger unit covering a broad jurisdiction (or creation of a new unit to serve the jurisdiction);
2. An arrangement by which one jurisdiction contracts with another for services;
3. A cooperative provision of selected functions but maintenance of the separate agencies serving the local jurisdiction. (Arnold 1982,36)

When governmental units consider consolidation of police service, they must analyze the proposal in terms of cost and financing, impact on labor agreements, impact on perceived and actual neighborhood responsiveness, and method of political control responsive to a community's own priorities. (Arnold 1982,36)

Advocates state several positive reasons for consolidation. Some of these reasons are discussed in articles by Koepsell, Sobba and McDonnell. Koepsell notes the following advantages:

- reduction of interjurisdictional overlapping;
- provides uniform practices;
- better training, supervision, organization, and working conditions;
- higher salaries, benefits, and advancement opportunities which tends to attract better qualified individuals;
- more service can be provided for the same dollar;
- greater utilization of expensive equipment with costs spread over several agencies. (Koepsell and Girard 1979, IX) These issues will be discussed in a later part of the paper.

Sobba examines the topics of efficiency, productivity, and saving money. (Sobba 1991, 7-10) McDonnell discusses cost related areas such as economies of scale and cost savings in personnel. (McDonnell 1975, 47-50)

Costs

Much of the emphasis for public service consolidation deals with cost issues. Agency expenditures are a major concern for administrators of public agencies. The amount of cost saving from consolidation is a question that must be answered by administration. The amount of consolidation that exists seems to suggest that cost reduction might be an important by-product of consolidation.

In a report by Elinor Ostrom dealing with police service in general, several statements are made about costs and consolidation. The author found that there was a positive relationship between city size and per capita costs. This held true even when quality levels were controlled. This would seem to suggest that smaller is more cost effective. It was also found that a few studies have been undertaken and they showed that per capita costs rose after consolidation. These include "Urban Political Systems" by Kaplan in 1967 and "Impact of City - County Consolidation of the Rural - Urban Fringe" by McArthur in 1971. The author is also critical of the reports that have recommended sweeping reforms as having no or little evidence on the effects of the suggested reforms. She says that most studies or task force recommendations for consolidation have very little if any hard evidence to support the recommendation. The author also examined a task force report in California which found that consolidation would be less likely to provide the quality of

service at a cost that will suit the citizens. The task force examined per capita expenditures and economies of scale. It conducted studies on the relationship of size to cost for the following services: County Assessor's Services, County Tax Collection, County Elections, Municipal Fire Protection, County Road Maintenance, Municipal Street Maintenance, Sewage Treatment, Education, County Welfare, County Medical Assistance ... Research suggested that public agencies and particularly large ones may not capture economies of scale. (Ostrom 1976,19-20)

Other authors have also brought up the question of cost savings. These include Mastrofski in "Police Practice in the 90's", and Sobba's article, "Public Services Consolidation". (Mastrofski 1989,12) (Sobba 1991,7)

In an article in Police, the author discusses a consolidation in Nevada between Clark County Sheriffs office and the Las Vegas Police Department. The agencies consolidated in 1973, and almost immediately had problems. The City and County were spending a combined total of \$13 million for the police and sheriff's departments in fiscal 1972 - 73, the year before consolidation. The budget for Metro had increased to \$29 million by 1977 - 78. Administration needs to determine if this increase was due to consolidation or some other factor. The author also found a growing body of research that has been building up in the past few years that indicates that one large agency is not

necessarily cheaper or better than several small ones. He also found that other consolidated departments have found their budgets growing rapidly for similar reasons. Economies of scale achieved through consolidated auxiliary operations and larger bulk purchases have a limited effect, since salaries usually comprise 80 percent of a police budget. Salaries, and the number of people receiving them, almost never go down as a result of consolidation. (Krajick 1979, 53) Perhaps the number of personnel should go down after consolidation. This can only be answered by a complete pre-consolidation study.

Efficiency

Consolidation advocates tend to say that the larger agency will be more efficient than the smaller agency, citing economy of scale. There is some debate about whether the larger consolidated departments are more efficient.

Ostrom, in an article titled "On Righteous, Evidence, And Reform: The Police Story," is very critical of the studies that currently exist. Ostrom cites statements from the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals document published in 1973. This includes a consolidation between the City of Lexington and Fayette County, Kentucky, where the advisory commission states " the result has been greater overall efficiency". According to the

author there is little evidence on which to base the pro consolidation studies of greater efficiency. In fact some of the studies with supporting evidence tend to contradict some of the pro consolidation studies. The author found that given similar levels of performance, the great disparity in costs would indicate that the small, part-time departments were more efficient. In a study of 2,000 respondents residing in 109 cities of more than 10,000 population the author found consistent but weak inverse relationship between size of jurisdiction and evaluations of police services. All significant relationships run counter to those which would support the assumption that large - sized departments are more effective. Feelings of safety decrease with size; fear of break-in and attack increase with size; and the rating of police honesty decreases with size. The author is critical of a statement of The National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, in a study dealing with a consolidation of a police and sheriff's office in Kentucky. The author found there was no citation or evidence presented to support these claims of improved effectiveness and increased efficiency. (Ostrom 1976,15-20)

Krajick and Parks also address the pro and con of consolidation. Krajick in his article says that some academics and police professionals say that large scale consolidation is the only way to establish effective and efficient policing. While on the other side some academics

say that large consolidations swell bureaucracies, only occasionally save money, and often made the police less responsive to neighborhood problems. (Krajick 1979,48)

Parks says that several different but related research groups in a number of diverse sites had common findings. In no case were large agencies found to be outperforming small and medium sized agencies. The findings held true, according to the author, if the agencies served white, middle-class neighborhoods in the Indianapolis, Grand Rapids, and St. Louis metropolitan areas; bluecollar white neighborhoods in the Nashville area; or black, poor or middle-class neighborhoods in the Chicago and St Louis areas. Citizens served by small and medium sized departments consistently reported performance that was as good, and often was better than, reported by those residing in similar neighborhoods served by larger agencies. (Parks 1979,246)

There seems to be little evidence that a bigger organization is more efficient. Based on the studies discussed, it seems to show the opposite. However in the article by Parks the larger agencies ranged from 300 to 12,000 officers. Administration needs to look at this and decide is this a true comparison of what a consolidation in his or her area would be like. It is hard to say how many consolidations would end up in the 300 to 12,000 officer range.

Other factors

Other areas that need to be considered include political, citizen reactions, legal restrictions, and employee concerns. Political and citizen concerns are two areas that have surfaced in consolidation efforts. In The Politics of City - County Consolidation the author says:

If group opposition to reorganization is lacking in the beginning of a campaign, it usually surfaces during the middle and final stages.... The benefits of consolidated government appear too abstract or too long range for the immediate interests of the voter. More specific and direct benefits need to be attached to consolidation to meet the concerns of residents, particularly those concerned with higher taxes. ... Political organization is necessary to gaining support for consolidation. (Marando 1975,80-81)

In the article "Consolidation," Kevin Krajick discusses the political problems involving a consolidation in Nevada. The author says "since July 1, 1973, the day the consolidation went into effect, there has been no rest." The two governments have been fighting about the Metro Police, as they are known, ever since. The City and County immediately began squabbling over who was going to pay how much for the police. This is another example showing the need for complete study before consolidation. The city commissioners are uncomfortable with the fact that they no longer have direct control over police decisions. They are helpless to demand any thing from the police. The disputes came to a head in October, when the city filed a lawsuit to have the

consolidation declared unconstitutional. He also found that the few attempts at consolidating even pairs of government agencies have almost always been defeated at the polls. The Vermont Commission on the Administration of Justice recommended consolidation to a number of small departments in 1974. Voters in each of the proposed areas promptly and overwhelmingly turned down the idea in referendums. (Krajick 1979,50) The political/ citizen concerns need to be realized both before and after consolidation.

Legal and employee issues need to be considered before consolidation is undertaken. One study noted that a city commission ran into legal and employee difficulties when trying to consolidate. This consolidation attempt took place in Louisiana between the Lafayette Police Department and the Lafayette Parish Sheriff's Office. The main issue which surfaced was a legal problem. The City operated under civil service and the Sheriff's Office did not. The Sheriff said he would oppose a consolidation if any or all of his employees were to be placed under civil service.

The charter commission was stalemated. It could not devise a plan of complete consolidation acceptable to both the parish sheriff and the personnel of the Lafayette Police Department, and it did not wish to force the issue by writing into the charter provisions that would antagonize either or both parties (and invite lawsuits to validate the several opinions of the attorney general). (Ferrell and Foster 1982,45)

The end result was that the agencies were left basically as they were before the consolidation effort was began. This indicates the importance of comprehensive planning in the time before consolidation is undertaken. If these types of problems can not be worked out before consolidation then consolidation should be abandoned.

An article by Krajick dealing with the consolidation of a police and sheriff's department in Nevada also found legal problems with consolidation. Since the consolidation the two entities have been arguing. Again this shows the importance of pre-consolidation study. The main argument dealt with the decision of who was going to pay for increased police services due to increased crime. This resulted in the City commission voting unanimously to file suit to have the Metro Police merger declared unconstitutional. The grounds were that the City residents are being taxed twice for the department - once through city property and business taxes, and once through county real estate taxes, which they are obligated to pay. (Krajick 1979,45)

Employee concerns need to be addressed from the start. The following is an example of an issue that should have been addressed before consolidation. Cooperation will be required to make a consolidation a success. In the Krajick article, the author discusses a situation where one agency that consolidated had employees that felt they have been cheated out of some benefits. This occurred because the new

consolidated police force was technically not city or county after consolidation. An example given was of a new holiday that the state decided to give civil service employees. Since they were not city or county employees, the police did not get the holiday. Both the county and city refused to appropriate money for the holiday. One officer said " I wish these politicians would get together and decide who we belong to. The trouble is, right now we are a bastard child. Everyone wants to own us, but no one wants to pay for us." (Krajick 1979,56)

In Police Consolidation, dealing with four Massachusetts police agencies, the author says that during the consolidation considerable anxiety was expressed by employees from each of the departments. The most critical area of consolidation was that of keeping officers informed of the changes. (Hoffmann 1993,77)

I believe it can be seen that consolidation is not a simple matter. There are many things to consider before the consolidation effort is to begin, such as political issues and employee problems. Therefore, it now becomes necessary to set the stage for an analysis of the present situation in Erath County.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Erath County with a population of 27,991, is located in north central Texas. It's 1,089.8 square miles are hilly, rolling plains, mostly agriculturally oriented and a major dairy center. Stephenville is the county seat with a population of 13,502. Located within the city limits is Tarleton State University, a State university with a current student population of 6,251. The only other city in Erath county with a police force is the City of Dublin, with a population of 3,190. The rest of the county is composed of several rural communities. (Electric 1991,1) (Kingston 1992,222-223)(Community 1993,1)

LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

The law enforcement agencies serving Erath County include the Erath County Sheriff's Office, including constables; various Texas state officers (Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas Parks and Wildlife Wardens, Texas Ranger);Tarleton State University Police Department; City of Dublin Police Department, and the City of Stephenville Police Department. Erath County has a communications division which handles radio communication on a 24 hour basis for the Sheriff's office, the various state officers and services requests for teletype from Dublin and Tarleton Police Departments. (Hollaway 1993) Tarleton University has office personnel that double as dispatch during regular office hours

and after hours the telephone is answered by control center personnel. (Hooper 1993) Dublin also uses office personnel to dispatch during regular office hours and a person who lives in an apartment next to the department who answers the telephone after hours.(Johnson 1993) Stephenville has a 24 hour dispatch which handles communications for the police department, the fire department, city utilities,and, is the 9-1-1 answering point for the entire county.

FIRE DEPARTMENT AGENCIES

Erath County's Fire services are provided by several different agencies. The City of Stephenville has a paid fire department supplemented by volunteers. The Department responds to fires in the City and to fires in Erath County, if the call is not handled by another fire agency in Erath County. The County pays a fee to the City of Stephenville for the calls it makes in the County. Stephenville Fire Department also responds to fire calls at Tarleton University. (Mooney 1993) The Dublin Fire department is a strictly volunteer agency. The Department responds to calls in the City of Dublin and also to calls in the County on a fee basis similar to the Stephenville Fire Department. (Johnson 1993) Erath County is also served by the volunteer departments of the communities of Huckaby, Morgan Mill, Bluffdale, and Selden.(Mooney 1993)

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Emergency medical, and ambulance services in Erath County follow jurisdictional lines similar to the fire agencies. The fire department in Stephenville answers ambulance calls in the City and responds to calls in the County. It is paid on a fee basis by the County. Ambulance calls for Tarleton University are also handled by the Stephenville Fire Department. Ambulance service in the City of Dublin is provided by the Dublin Police Department. Calls are answered in the City and in the County on a similar basis as Stephenville. There are approximately seven volunteer agencies in or overlapping into Erath county, that respond to emergency medical calls.

PRESENT COMMUNICATIONS STRUCTURE

Presently, the Stephenville Police Department communications section's five employees are responsible for many different functions. The role has expanded in the last two years by the addition of fire department dispatch duties and the addition of a 9-1-1 primary answering system. The section's primary duties include:

- handling walk in citizen traffic;
- telephone calls and radio traffic for the Stephenville Police Department;
- telephone calls and radio traffic for the Stephenville Fire Department;

- after hours telephone calls and radio traffic for city utilities;
- the primary answering point for 9-1-1 in Erath County.

As the primary answering point, all 9-1-1 emergency calls in Erath County first come to the Stephenville Police Department.

The City of Dublin has a police clerk who handles telephone and radio traffic for the police/ambulance and fire departments, along with additional clerk duties during normal working hours. This clerk also is the 9-1-1 secondary answering point for the Dublin area. After hours, the calls are handled by a operator who lives in an apartment attached to City Hall. Dublin Police officers use the Erath County Sheriff's office for State teletype traffic. (Johnson 1993)

The Erath County Sheriff's office has five employees who handle telephone and radio traffic for Erath County and teletype traffic for Dublin Police and Tarleton University Police. In addition, Erath County is also a secondary 9-1-1 answering point for the area outside the city limits of Dublin or Stephenville. Radio traffic is also handled for various state officers. (Hollaway 1993)

Tarleton State University Police Department uses clerks to dispatch during normal working hours and after hours they are dispatched by the University's computer control center. The University Police Department uses Erath County for access

to the State teletype system. (Hooper 1993)

The way the 9-1-1 telephone system is set up requires several different combinations of call administration. Some examples of these follow:

- if a 9-1-1 call comes in from the city limits of Stephenville for police, fire or ambulance then a direct dispatch is made by the dispatcher;
- if a 9-1-1 call comes in from the city limits of Dublin for police, fire or ambulance then the Stephenville dispatcher transfers the calls to the Dublin 9-1-1 operator who does a direct dispatch of needed service;
- if a 9-1-1 call comes in from the county for a law enforcement function, then the Stephenville 9-1-1 operator has to transfer the caller to Erath county Sheriff's office;
- if a 9-1-1 call comes in from the county for a fire call, the Stephenville dispatcher has to determine which fire agency needs to handle the call, if in the Dublin fire area , the call is transferred to the Dublin dispatcher, if the call is in the Stephenville fire department area, Stephenville dispatchs the fire department;
- if an ambulance call is received from the County it is handled in similar fashion to the fire calls.
- if a 9-1-1 call is placed from a Tarleton University telephone the call goes to the University Police Department or control center. If the call is other than a police call the appropriate emergency service is contacted by regular telephone. There is one exception to this, when a 9-1-1 call is made from a pay telephone on Campus ,the call comes to the Stephenville Police Department, who notifies the University Police Department and other needed emergency agencies.

PROPOSED COMMUNICATION STRUCTURE

As can be seen from the previous section, there should be a better way for the citizens to contact the needed emergency service. Presently the caller may have to explain more than once what emergency service is needed. This adds frustration to an already tense situation. The answer to some of these issues seems to be a consolidated dispatch center for the entire County. This would allow the citizen to convey emergency information to only one person, rather than several. This, along with rising costs and personnel needs, has caused administration to take a look at the concept of a consolidated dispatch center. The idea being considered is a consolidated dispatch center for all emergency services in Erath County. All emergency calls would come to one location and the call would be dispatched from that location. It should be realized from the start that cooperation and some loss of direct control will be required.

FEASIBILITY

The first step that should be undertaken is a formal feasibility study. Consolidation can be very expensive to reverse, so adequate preparation is essential. (Krajick 1979, 48) There are several reasons for conducting a formal study. First, it provides a means to more thoroughly assess the benefits and costs of police service restructuring. Second, if a merger is considered feasible, the resulting

information can be used to promote the concept among the participating communities, using the resulting data and documentation. Last, the formal study can produce the baseline data necessary for the subsequent monitoring and evaluation of merged law enforcement service. Thus, after the implementation of a consolidated system, participating communities have a basis for objectively judging the value of merged service, and deciding on its continuance, change or termination. (Koepsell and Girard 1979, 12-19) The components of a formal feasibility study for police services include:

- Demographic profile of participating jurisdictions,
- Profile of reported criminal activity,
- Organization and operation of existing law enforcement agencies,
- Law enforcement personnel staffing,
- Management and administration,
- Equipment and facilities,
- The cost of law enforcement service,
- Public opinion inventory,
- An assessment of the current law enforcement system,
- A presentation of alternate approaches, and
- Recommended alternatives and necessary steps. (Koepsell and Girard 1979, 12-19)

The demographic profile should include demographic information for each community involved in the consolidation. This could include such things as area, population, criminal

activity, businesses, and other information that might make a community unique in delivery of emergency services.

The profile of criminal activity of the involved communities might need to be adapted to include the number and type of calls handled by the communications division. This information would need to be collected for each agency involved in the consolidation. It has been recommended that at least three years of data be collected. This will serve two purposes, one to be sure the new organization is staffed adequately, and two, to provide a baseline for future evaluations of the consolidated organization.

The organizational and operational data for the agencies to be consolidated must be gathered. This should include such things as organizational charts, documents dealing with legal authority of the organization, and operating procedures. This information can be used to point out strengths, weaknesses, and comparability of current service, and will aid in determining the feasibility of alternative organizational arrangements.

The feasibility study section dealing with personnel staffing should be adapted to our present case. It should include the following information on each employee. The name, age, rank, job description, years of law enforcement service, previous employment, length of service with current agency, current salary and benefits, training completed and certifications held, and other related information. This

information provides an inventory of personnel resources available in the areas of consolidation. This could be used to consider what salaries and benefits would be needed in the consolidated agency. Matters of rank and seniority that might need attention could be addressed before consolidation.

The section dealing with management and administration should include personnel policies and related issues. It should include methods of recruitment, selection, promotion, wage scales, incentive programs, benefit programs, and training policies. Recruitment and selection analysis should consider testing procedures, and, procedures for screening applicants. Promotional procedures should also be evaluated. Wage scales by rank, and, procedures for step increases, need to be included. Benefits and incentives should be described in detail. Minimum basic training requirements and inservice training programs also need to be documented.

This information can be used to identify the best features of the different agencies. The better salaries, and benefit packages are usually adopted to make sure no employee loses any income or benefits. The inventory of different procedures will allow a choice of the best procedures for implementation in the new agency. This data can also be used to determine if any positions are no longer needed by the consolidated agency.

The section dealing with equipment and facilities should include a complete inventory of the facilities and equipment owned or leased by the agencies involved. This should include the description and location of buildings, including size, age, and condition. It should also include the amount of space actually used, overcrowding, and related issues. The communications equipment inventory, should describe all equipment by: type, make, capabilities, age, condition, and approximate current value and/or purchase price. This inventory will make it possible to determine the types and amounts of compatible equipment that may be transferred to the consolidated unit. It might also be used as a basis for contributions which may be credited against a community's share of first year operating costs. New technology also needs to be addressed in this section. It may be possible that technology is available that would make the operation more efficient, but it will only be available with the combined resources of the agencies after consolidation. This needs to be considered in the feasibility evaluation so there will be no surprises for any of the involved agencies.

Budget information for the current year, and, two previous years, should be obtained for each agency involved in the consolidation. If possible, a two to three year projected budget should also be obtained for each agency. The projected budgets will most likely have to be estimated by the agencies involved. The information should include

salaries and wages, employee benefits and insurance, general operating expenses, capital costs and any miscellaneous expenses. This information will supply the actual or projected operating costs of communications services. This will be used in assessing the feasibility of consolidation by providing a basis of comparison between current costs and the projected costs under the merged system. The data will be helpful at a later date in comparing law enforcement costs before and after consolidation. For example, would costs have increased at a greater rate under the old system as compared to the new?

A public opinion poll might be used to assess the community's attitudes toward consolidation. The results of the poll could be used to develop a public education program to gain support for the consolidation. It may also alert administration of any strong opposition to the consolidation.

An assessment of the current agencies' communication sections should be made from the information gathered. There is no best way to arrive at a final decision concerning consolidation. However, deciding if a major change is necessary may be determined by answering the following questions:

- Can needed service be provided at a desired level without consolidation?
- Can the desired quality of service be provided through existing arrangements?
- Can the desired level and quality of service be provided economically under existing arrangement?
- Can better service be provided at reduced cost with consolidation?

If the answers are negative, then steps should be taken to describe the changes in existing agencies that will be needed to provide the desired level of service.

The next step would be to present alternative approaches available to the agencies. These should include actual organizational alternatives (including changes to existing agencies or consolidation). Legal requirements required for the changes should be documented. Describe what services should and could be provided under the new system. Detail the costs of the different plans. Discuss what will happen to personnel presently employed by local departments if the reorganization occurred. Describe how facilities and equipment will be utilized. Discuss how facilities and equipment will be transferred, if a consolidation occurs. Explain how interjurisdictional groups might be structured to

insure that each agency has representation. Describe when and how agencies can terminate involvement in a merged system if the service and/or cost are found to be unsatisfactory.

Finally, a recommended course of action should be presented. This recommendation should include details on the most appropriate organizational arrangement, staffing needs, equipment and facility requirements, operating needs, and methods for financing the recommended system.

IMPLEMENTATION

In the implementation phase, the information from the feasibility study can be a great asset. Some of the issues include facilities and equipment, personnel and labor relations, administrative and legal considerations, and operational considerations.

Facilities and equipment issues need to be addressed in the feasibility study. In the case at hand in Erath county, due to limited space considerations, the consolidated communications center would probably have to be located at a site away from all the present agencies. While this might add to the overall cost of the consolidation, it would allow space to expand in the future if needed. However, this cost might be offset by the elimination of duplicate administration functions and personnel. All issues relating to facilities and equipment need to be resolved before consolidation. If they can not be worked out then

consolidation may only cause more problems.

Prior to consolidation, decisions should be made regarding what equipment will be transferred to the new unit. Any new equipment that is expected to be needed should have been discussed in the feasibility study. Equipment may have to be modified or updated to be compatible with other agencies' equipment. There should be a plan for purchasing of new equipment in the future, and, how the costs will be allocated among the consolidated agencies.

One personnel issue involves the adjusting of wage and benefits packages. This happens when the personnel from the old agencies are moved to the new agency. There is also the issue of hiring, promotional procedures, training requirements, rank structures, and terminating unnecessary personnel. It has to be determined who will manage the tasks, who will pay for them, and if they need to be changed, who has the authority to change them. It is possible that some of the cost savings will be offset by the fact that more administrative level employees will have to be hired for the bigger agency or it might be that fewer administrative level employees will be needed. Also, at the start of the consolidation it may be good to have new uniforms and other equipment. This will help facilitate assimilation of the employees from the different agencies into one new agency.

Administrative considerations should include liability concerns, policies and procedures, development of common forms, and in the case of a consolidated dispatch, some provision would need to be made to supply the law enforcement agencies with future statistics on the number of calls and related issues. If the consolidated dispatch operation is a success, then a consolidated records system is the next logical step. The liability concerns should address who provides insurance, who defends the agency in law suits, and a provision that individual involved agencies will hold the other agencies harmless in regards to the normal provision of services.

Operational considerations should be addressed in a contract between the different agencies. Some of the things that need to be addressed in the contract include:

- General terms and legal base including the identification of jurisdiction involved, the general purpose of the contract and the legal basis for the contract;
- Services to be provided including the quantity or extent of specific services to be provided, and other details concerning the services to be provided (i.e. number of personnel, backup services, etc.)
- Liability concerns consisting of who has the responsibility for defending the agency in suits, an indemnification clause should one party be found liable, the consolidated agency should be held harmless for its' actions or for liability arising from normal services;

- The amount and manner of payment should include the amount that each agency must pay for specified services, including the means used to arrive at the figure, the time and manner in which the payments will be made, and possible funding sources available (share of costs by population, crime figures, etc.);
- There should be provisions for the maintenance of records and issuance of financial and activity reports, each agency's access to the reports and records of the consolidated agency, and terms and conditions for periodic reassessment;
- Administrative issues including the persons authorized on behalf of each party to administer the contract, and provisions that stipulate the head of the consolidated agency retains control over all personnel matters in the new agency;
- The establishment of a law enforcement board, the composition of the board, and the role and responsibility of the board;
- Real property and equipment to be transferred, the method of transfer and provision for return of the property if the consolidation is dissolved;
- The duration of the agreement, circumstances under which the contract can be terminated, and procedures for amending the contract. (Koepsell and Girard 1979, 101-102)

The contracting issue is discussed in several different articles. (Myers and Tees 1978, 108) (Colby 1982, 34) (Espinoza 1993, 19) (Bickers 1990, 2) In Interlocal Cooperation Meyers and Tees say:

Under Texas law ,virtually anything a local government can do lawfully on its own authority, it can also do cooperatively with another local government unit through interlocal agreement.... In the 1970's, the Texas legislature provided cities, counties and other political subdivisions of our state with a broad grant of power to enter interlocal agreements with one another. (Myers and Tees 1978,108)

Bickers also discusses the use of the Interlocal Cooperation Act in Texas. The Act was passed in 1971, to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of local governments by authorizing the fullest possible range of intergovernmental contracting authority at the local level.(Bickers 1990,1) This act can be used to consolidate agencies in Texas and also allows for various formal agreements between different agencies.

CONCLUSIONS

Although research found instances of dissatisfaction with consolidation, there have been very few agencies which have dissolved a consolidation. This may be because of the expense involved in breaking up the merger or it perhaps is an indication that consolidation works well. It may provide good service at less cost or more service for the same cost thus the agencies do not want to reverse the process. Some arguments that consolidation provides no better service than separate smaller agencies is open to some debate. There are other studies that seem to suggest that service is better

with consolidated agencies. There are also arguments that state consolidation costs as much or more than current systems. This is an area that is extremely hard to document because very few agencies go to the lengths it takes to properly track the expenses before and after consolidation. There is also the problem of different agencies handling financial records in different ways, which makes it difficult to compare the agencies. When costs increase after a consolidation, sometimes it is hard to determine if the costs were due to the consolidation or if they would have risen even without consolidation.

The importance of pre-consolidation planning cannot be overstated. Feasibility studies provide a means to more thoroughly assess the benefits and costs of the police service restructuring. If the merger is found to be feasible, the resulting information can be used to promote implementation, since the documentation offers an objective assessment of available alternatives. This planning also produces baseline data necessary for subsequent monitoring and evaluation. A final major planning activity which should precede consolidation concerns the transition from the old to the new agency.

The successful consolidation must meet all legal requirements. A capable attorney should be retained for the planning of consolidation. Financing arrangements are critical for the success of planning and implementation of

the consolidation. Research has shown cases where the greatest time was spent, and, the most disagreements arose, during the planning and implementation of consolidation. Financial considerations are also significant when it comes to public acceptance of the consolidation. These should include the availability of revenues sufficient to sustain the level of service desired by participating jurisdictions. A method of determining equitability of cost sharing formulas and associated procedures should also be included.

A formal contract should be used so all agencies will know what to expect. These should include a formal description of services to be delivered and what costs will be incurred by the different agencies. It should formally spell out what is expected of all the agencies involved.

The final thing to remember is that if the consolidation is undertaken, then it should be evaluated on a regular basis. This might be best done by placing an independent board over the consolidated agency. The boards of this type usually include members of county and/or municipal councils, and, a county and/or city attorney. The responsibilities of the boards vary, but generally involve policy making, oversight of activities, and advising the agencies of specific problem areas. (Koepsell and Girard 1979, 49)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arnold, David S., ed. Local Government Police Management.
Municipal Management Series. Washington D.C.:
International City Management Association, 1982.
- Bickers, Thomas E. "Interagency Agreements for Law
Enforcement in Texas: A Guide for Drafting and
Implementation." Texas Law Enforcement Management
Institute, 1990.
- Colby, Peter W. "Intergovernmental Contracting for Police
Services." Journal of Police Science and Administration
10 (1 1982): 34- 42.
- Community, Lone Star Gas. Stephenville Texas 1993 Community
Profile. Lone Star Gas Company, 1993.
- Electric, TU. TU Electric Community Audit City of Dublin. TU
Electric Economic Development Department, 1991.
- Espinoza, Michael. Will Consolidation of Police Agencies and
Functions Increase Operations Efficiency ? Texas Law
Enforcement Management Institute, 1993.
- Ferrell, Thomas H. and Burk Foster. "Stopping Short of
Merger: Obstacles to Police Consolidation in Lafayette
Parish, Louisiana." Journal of Police Science and
Administration 10 (1 1982): 43 - 46.
- Hillman, Mike and Dave peterson. Guide to Cooperative Law
Enforcement. South Dakota Criminal Justice Commission,
Pierre, SD 57501; South Dakota Division of Law
Enforcement Assistance Administration, 1980.
- Hoffmann, John. "Police Consolidation." Law and Order, March
1993, 76-78.
- Hollaway, William, Chief Deputy Erath County. Telephone
interview by author, 1993.

Hooper, Robert, Chief Tarleton University. Telephone interview by author, 1993.

Horgan, William P. "A Look at local Control and Efforts Toward Consolidation of Police Service." Journal Police Science And Administration 8 (1 1980): 1-4

Johnson, David, City Administrator of Dublin, Tx. Telephone interview by author, 1993.

Katzenbach, Nicholas. Task Force Report: The Police. The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967. Technical

Kingston, Mike. Texas Almanac 1992- 1993. ed. Dallas Morning News. Dallas: Gulf Publishing Houston, Texas, 1992.

Koepsell, Terry W. and Charles M. Girard. Small Police Agency Consolidation: Suggested Approaches. National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, 1979. project

Krajick, Kevin. "Consolidation." Police Magazine, January 1979, 47- 56.

Marando, Vincent L. "The Politics of City-County Consolidation." National Civic Review, February 1975, 76-81.

Mastrofski, Stephen D. "Police Agency Consolidation: Lessons from a Case Study." In Police Practice in the 90's, ed. Barbara H. Moore. 10-27. Washington D. C.: International City Management Association, 1989.

McAninch, Thomas and Jeff Sanders. "Police Attitudes Toward Consolidation in Bloomington/ Normal, Illinois: A Case Study." Journal of Police Science and Administration 16 (2 1988): 95-104.

- McDonnell, J. J. Central Police Dispatch - Division of Central Operations for Police Services (COPS) - Exemplary Project. ABT Associates, Inc.
55 Wheeler Street
Cambridge MA 02138, 1975.
- Miller, Gary. "The Universal City Joint Dispatching System." In Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis in Indiana University, 1976.
- Mooney, Jimmy, Fire Chief Stephenville, Tx. Interview by author, 1993.
- Myers, Kent A. and David W. Tees. Interlocal Cooperation Six Case histories. Institute of Urban Studies The University of Texas at Arlington, 1978.
- Ostrom, Elinor. "On Righteousness, Evidence, and Reform: The Police Story." In Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis in Indiana University, edited by Jnana Hodson, , 29, 1976.
- Parks, Roger B. How Well Does It Work? Preview of Criminal Justice Evaluation 1978. National Criminal Justice Reference Service, 1979.
- Rubin, Richard S. "Consolidation of the Police and Fire Services." Journal of Police Science and Administration 12 (2 1984): 221-226.
- Sobba, Robert L. "Public Services Consolidation." FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, February 1991, 6-10.