

MIS DIVISION STUDY

RECOMMENDATION:

As a result of the classification and organizational analysis of four positions in the Computer Operations and Networking section of the City of Costa Mesa MIS Division, the following recommendations are made:

- Combine the existing classes of Police Information Systems Specialist and Network Administrator into a single new class of Network Administrator at the salary level of the Police Information Systems Specialist class.
- Allocate positions currently classified as Police Information Systems Specialist to the new Network Administrator class
- Establish a five percent (5%) salary differential between the class of Computer Operations and Network Supervisor held by Mr. Adam Silva and the recommended new class of Network Administrator.

BACKGROUND:

The City engaged the National Center for Education Research and Technology, Inc., to conduct a classification study of several positions in the City MIS Division. The scope of work was to determine whether the concept and essential functions of the classes, as documented in the class specifications, are consistent with the work assigned to the positions, and if not, to determine the appropriate classification for the positions. The consultant was to determine the appropriate salary level of the classes based upon internal salary relationships and available local labor market compensation data.

The following positions were included in the study:

CURRENT POSITION CLASSIFICATION

- Computer Operations and Networking Supervisor
- Police Information Systems Specialist
- Police Information Systems Specialist
- Network Administrator

INCUMBENT

- Adam Silva
- Mydung Parsons
- Lloyd Swanson
- John Downey

METHODOLOGY:

Our methodology in the conduct of this study was as follows:

- The consultant discussed background information and planned the study design, scope of work and methodologies with Mr. Lance Nakamoto in the Personnel Division.
- A Job Analysis Questionnaire was completed by each incumbent and reviewed by Mr. Adam Silva, Computer Operations and Networking Supervisor, and Mr. Rick Kirkbride, MIS Manager. However, in the case of Mr. Silva's Job Analysis Questionnaire, it was reviewed by Mr. Kirkbride. Mr. Lance Nakamoto, representing Personnel, forwarded the questionnaires to the consultant.

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- The consultant met with Mr. Kirkbride and Mr. Silva to discuss recent changes in the organizational structure of the MIS Division and the regularly assigned duties and responsibilities of the positions under study.
- The consultant met with Ms. Parsons to discuss her current classification, duties and responsibilities. The consultant reviewed the Job Analysis Questionnaire with Ms. Parsons, discussed each answer on the Job Analysis Questionnaire, listened to explanations of the information provided on the questionnaire, and gave her the opportunity to make any changes.
- The consultant met with Mr. Swanson to discuss his current classification, duties and responsibilities. The consultant reviewed the Job Analysis Questionnaire with Mr. Swanson, discussed each answer on the Job Analysis Questionnaire, listened to explanations of the information provided on the questionnaire, and gave him the opportunity to make any changes.
- The consultant met with Mr. Downey to discuss his current classification, duties and responsibilities. The consultant reviewed the Job Analysis Questionnaire with Mr. Downey, discussed each answer on the Job Analysis Questionnaire, listened to explanations of the information provided on the questionnaire, and gave him the opportunity to make any changes.
- The consultant met with Mr. Silva to discuss his current classification, duties and responsibilities. The consultant reviewed the Job Analysis Questionnaire with Mr. Silva, discussed each answer on the Job Analysis Questionnaire, listened to explanations of the information provided on the questionnaire, and gave him the opportunity to make any changes.
- The consultant contacted each of the organizations listed below to collect salary data for the positions under study, as well as organizational information concerning their MIS functions.

City of Fountain Valley
City of Newport Beach

City of Huntington Beach
City of Santa Ana

City of Irvine

- The consultant conversed with Mr. Nakamoto to report preliminary findings and recommendations of the study. A summary report was prepared in preparation for a meeting of the consultant with Stephen Mandoki, Terri Cassidy, Lance Nakamoto and Debra Yasui to discuss the lack of comparable salary data within the identified labor market and applicable internal salary relationship practices within the City.
- A draft report was prepared and submitted to the Personnel Division for review and comment.
- A final report was prepared and submitted to the Personnel Division.

DISCUSSION:

Recently, the decision was made to re-organize the information technology functions of the City of Costa Mesa. In the past, the City of Costa Mesa Police Department had responsibility for the majority of its own technology needs. The MIS division is now responsible for meeting the technology needs of all city departments, including the Police Department.

The MIS Division is now organized into three sections: Systems and Programming, Computer Operations and Networking, and Central Services. Two positions in the class of Police Information Services Specialist were assigned to the Computer Operations and Networking section under Mr. Silva. Mr. Silva also supervises positions in the Network Administrator class. The section is staffed by Ms. Parsons (Police Information Services Specialist), Mr. Swanson (Police Information Services Specialist), Mr. Downey (Network Administrator) and Mr. Anthony Hamm (Network Administrator). There are plans to add another Network Administrator position to the section. The Police Information Services Specialist has primary responsibility for meeting the technical needs of the Police Department. The Network Administrator has responsibility for meeting the technical needs of the rest of the city and for the underlying internet and email systems that support all city employees. The level of staffing is driven by organizational choices to place a high priority on providing an almost instant response to internal customer issues and the recognition that all public safety systems (Fire and Police) operate in a twenty-four hour and seven days a week environment.

The Computer Operations and Networking section provides services to internal customers that require a range of technical skills from entry level to the advanced journey level. The Network Administrator and the Police Information Services Specialist are broad classes that are assigned the entire range of duties from entry to advanced journey level. These assigned duties range from the most basic changing out of a keyboard or assisting a user with their email password to the advanced tasks of configuring a router, monitoring network traffic and maintaining and troubleshooting the most critical network systems.

The class of Police Information Services Specialist and the class of Network Administrator are performing substantially the same duties and the technical difficulty level of these duties is comparable. Mr. Kirkbride, MIS Manager, told the consultant that the positions are being used to perform essentially the same duties. Mr. Kirkbride did indicate that there are some differences in the type of applications supported and the systems that support these applications. The Police Department has its own firewall, public safety related applications such as the CAD system and RMS, and supporting hardware. While it is common in other organizations for the Police Department to have its own dedicated internet connection, exclusive of the rest of the organization, the internet backbone, anti-virus server, exchange servers, and email support have always been provided by the MIS Division in the city of Costa Mesa. The consultant concludes that the differences are overcome with experience working with the applications and do not involve a significant difference in the level of technical difficulty. Mr. Silva and Mr. Kirkbride concurred with the assessment. Mr. Silva feels that there is no practical difference in the duties assigned to the Police Information Systems Specialist and the Network Administrator nor the expectations he places upon the incumbents. Mr. Kirkbride and Mr. Silva did not feel that there was any significant difference in consequence of error between public safety and non-public safety duties.

Information provided to the consultant by the incumbents of the Police Information Specialist and Network Administrator positions supported the positions of Mr. Kirkbride and Mr. Silva. Each incumbent was interviewed individually about their current duties. It is important to note that each incumbent informed the consultant that they had completed most of their respective Job Analysis Questionnaires by simply typing in

information straight from the official class specification for their class. Each incumbent, when asked, indicated that they felt that the technical difficulty level of the Network Administrator position was identical to that of the Police Information Systems Specialist position. Each incumbent indicated that any rotation would require orientation and training in the particular applications. In the case of CLETS, a training session is required for certification (training provided internally by the Records Bureau).

The consultant used interviews to identify any differences between the positions by asking questions of each incumbent regarding working conditions, consequence of error and customer expectations.

1. Working Conditions: One working condition difference is important to note. Each of the two Police Information Systems Specialists is required to be "on call" for two weeks out of each month. This means that they carry a pager and cannot travel beyond a specified distance from the Police Department building, even on weekends. They are able to resolve some issues by logging in remotely, but often have to come to the Police Department station. They are compensated for this "on call" time.
2. Consequence of Error: The consultant developed some hypothetical situations in order to determine the difference in consequence of error between a Police Department application or system failure and a city-wide application or system failure. These examples included 911 system failure, CAD system failure, RMS system failure, and Internet backbone failure. Certainly, in the perfect storm of events, it is possible to conceive a greater consequence of error if a network problem that resulted in the 911 system failing caused critical information to be delayed in getting to public safety personnel. However, in today's environment there are backup systems and procedures that mitigate this risk. The city 911 function has a backup mechanical system, dedicated 911 telecommunication system, radio system access and cell phone access. Police officers are equipped with radios and cell phones, in addition to in-car computers, and are trained to approach situations like car stops with the understanding that even though the information they received regarding the owner of the car may or may not indicate a higher level of vigilance, it cannot tell them that the person stopped is the owner prior to approaching.

The consultant believes that there are appropriate backup systems and training that make it very unlikely that an application or system failure would be the direct cause of serious injury to a police officer, member of the public or cause grievous financial harm. It is probably just as unlikely that a city-wide failure that disrupted the payroll process would remain unaddressed long enough to cause financial penalty to the organization. The most likely consequences of error would result from losing Internet connectivity and access to email information for an extended period of time. This disruption of communication could be embarrassing and in the extreme cause more serious harm.

3. Customer Expectation: Each incumbent expressed the importance of customer service. Each incumbent indicated how important it is to know your customer and get things right the first time. Ms. Parsons and Mr. Swanson stressed that the nature of the calls that they get require more immediate attention, simply because they work in a public safety environment. Mr. Downey similarly stressed that his customers expect him to provide very prompt attention to their requests. The consultant does not find a significant difference in the customer expectations of Police Department personnel and, for example, those in the City Manager's

office. It is obvious that appropriate staffing needs to be allocated in order to promptly address a problem in critical public safety systems, and that is presumably the reason why Mr. Kirkbride has assigned four positions to serve the Police Department, including two Senior Programmer Analysts and two Police Information Systems Specialists. The consultant does not find that any differences in customer expectations require higher levels of technical skill.

The consultant recommends that the City of Costa Mesa MIS Division rotate its Computer Operations and Networking staff between Police Department and City-wide support roles. The consultant would suggest rotating one from each location every six months to one year in order to maintain continuity at each location and simultaneously develop proficiency among the entire staff.

The consultant interviewed Mr. Silva regarding changes in his own position that resulted from the re-organization of the City's MIS functions. Mr. Silva pointed out that the size of his staff has increased from two to four (and soon to five). Mr. Silva informed the consultant that instead of being responsible for just the City domain, he was now responsible for the Police domain and a new domain that is being developed. Mr. Silva indicated that his portion of the MIS budget is now larger, but did not provide any estimates or figures. Mr. Silva pointed out that he is now required to plan for a greater range of technology issues and that his range of duties is more diverse. Mr. Silva is asked to work as a liaison between Police Department administration and the MIS Division regarding technical needs. Mr. Silva also indicated that he has a greater role in planning future technology decisions than prior to the merging of the MIS functions. Mr. Silva did not mention, but it was noted by the consultant, that the difficulty of his role as a supervisor has increased. Mr. Silva must now develop, monitor, evaluate and supervise employees that are physically located in two different buildings, albeit sharing a parking lot. While he is available by phone and messaging to answer staff questions, it does provide a challenge to observe the work habits of staff.

The consultant does not find that the increase in staff, the increase in domains, and the unspecified increase in budget are at a level that would require a change in classification. Similarly, the consultant finds that the increased supervisory difficulty, planning and liaison role remains within the concept of the class of Computer Operations and Networking Supervisor.

LABOR MARKET

The public sector labor market for MIS positions is difficult to evaluate as it does not often yield good benchmark positions. Each organization has different technical requirements and often different solutions to fulfilling its needs. Further complicating the picture, it is still very uncommon to have Police and City-wide MIS functions combined outside the Police Department. When allocating duties within the computer operations and networking profession, it is also more common than not to have separate classes perform duties based upon technical difficulty. For example, it is common to have low level technicians perform rudimentary tasks and staff a "help desk" to respond to simply user requests. Commonly, there is a journey level class that performs more difficult functions and assists in system upgrades. The typical series is then capped by an advanced journey level class that handles the highest level networking and system duties. This highest level class is typically given additional first level supervisory or even managerial responsibility. Sometimes the MIS Division or Information Services Division is in fact a department of its own, rather than a division of a "super department" consisting of numerous diverse functions. Finally, some or all of these tasks may be contracted out to private providers.

The City of Costa Mesa does not compare well with other organizations for labor market purposes, largely because the unique needs of the city and the priorities set by city leadership have resulted in a fairly unique MIS division structure within the Administrative Services Department. The city has decided to employ all advanced journey level technicians, rather than spreading work out across a range of narrow, increasingly advanced classes. The city has merged the Police Department MIS function into the MIS division. The city has separate supervisor and managerial classes above the technicians that may provide technical direction, but are not expected to provide day-to-day advanced journey level services in addition to their supervisory and managerial duties.

The consultant contacted human resources representatives of the comparison cities and, where applicable, spoke to representatives of the divisions or departments within the organizations that actually perform the MIS functions. The following organizations were contacted:

1. City of Irvine: The entire MIS function is contracted out.
2. City of Santa Ana: The advanced journey level network responsibility is contracted out.
3. City of Newport Beach: The advanced journey level network responsibility is held by a supervisor, supported by one journey level and one entry level position.
4. City of Fountain Valley: The advanced journey level network responsibility is held by a manager, supported by two entry level positions.
5. City of Huntington Beach: While the City of Huntington Beach has taken a similar path in consolidating the Police and city-wide MIS functions into (in this case) an Information Services Department, the networking position is arguably not comparable. The City of Huntington Beach has an extremely large staff as a legacy of once having an MIS function in every city department. They have divided the computer operations and network function among numerous classes, with a Network Administrator who does only the highest level networking functions. That position currently provides technical direction to a Senior Technician and the managerial position (Communications Manager) above it is vacant. Another complicating comparison factor is that the class specification for Network Administrator includes the language "May supervise communications staff." Further, there is some discussion in Huntington Beach that they may not fill the manager position and may instead use the Network Administrator position as a supervisor that reports directly to the Department Head. The position also has planning and budget responsibilities that are not present in the Costa Mesa Networking Administrator class.

The only piece of reliable information that provides the consultant with labor market data is that the City of Costa Mesa had sufficient applications and was recently able to fill a Network Administrator position at the current salary. Mr. Kirkbride did indicate that it has been difficult to fill these positions, but also indicated that it has become increasingly difficult to fill all MIS positions due to extensive reference and background checking procedures required by the Police Department of all MIS staff. These checks are performed in the same manner that the Police Department would if it were hiring a new officer or other Police Department employee. Mr. Kirkbride, while supportive of the new background check procedures, did indicate that many candidates who were otherwise technically proficient were excluded. Mr. Kirkbride did not provide any data that indicated that he was losing staff to other organizations as a result of the salary and benefits offered by the City of Costa Mesa. While somewhat anecdotal, the evidence suggests that the salary offered by the City of Costa Mesa for the Network Administrator class has been sufficient to attract and retain highly qualified employees. Further, that any difficulty in hiring is most likely the result of applicants who are unwilling or unable to pass the stringent reference and background checks.

INTERNAL SALARY RELATIONSHIPS

The Police Information Specialist class is currently allocated to a salary range that is approximately thirty percent above the level of Network Administrator. Both the foregoing classes are broad full journey level classes in network administration that incorporate advanced level work. The consultant recommends combining the classes into one class of Network Administrator. The common practice for determining the salary of the new class when classes are combined is to place the new class at the higher level of the classes being combined, unless there is compelling market data or internal relationship data to the contrary. As indicated previously in this report, market data is not available within the City's identified labor market of local cities. Placing the new Network Administrator class at the Police Information Specialist level will result in the new class being midway between the entry level Programmer class (Programmer Analyst I) and the advanced level programming class (Senior Programmer Analyst) while maintaining a five percent differential below the journey level (Programmer Analyst II) class. The internal relationship that results from placing the new Network Administrator class at the level of the current Police Information Specialist is reasonable.

The consultant did find a rather serious issue of compaction between the salaries of Police Information Systems Specialist and Computer Operations and Networking Supervisor. Currently, three percent (3%) separates the two classes. It is customary in the City of Costa Mesa to have a larger differential between supervisory classes and the employees they supervise. It is recommended that an internal salary differential of not less than five percent between the Computer Operations and Networking Supervisor class and the maximum salary of the classes supervised.