



Office of the Flagler County Sheriff

James L. Manfre
SHERIFF

Accountability • Integrity • Respect

November 12, 2015

Mr. Craig Coffey, County Administrator
Flagler County
1769 E. Moody Blvd. Building 2
Bunnell, FL 32110

Dear Administrator Coffey,

On Thursday, October 29, 2015, Flagler County Innovative Technology (County IT) employees informed my office that a Flagler County maintained and operated computer server that housed the New World System (NWS) software, one slated for replacement in 2014, ran out of disc space and subsequently resulted in the server crashing. This system houses the computer-aided dispatch (CAD) software used by all public safety agencies in Flagler County, as well as jail, fire and law enforcement records software. Ultimately, connectivity and user access to the system's far reaching abilities, to include mobile report writing, was either eliminated or greatly reduced until the system was restored to what has been described as "95%" operational on Monday, November 9, 2015.

As Sheriff, I have many concerns and questions about why these events actually took place. One of my largest concerns is the fate of thousands of scanned records that were not backed-up by County IT staff since February 2014. These critical records consisted of evidence and booking photographs, warrants, report narratives, and scanned documents, jail disciplinary reports, inmate request forms, teletypes, and employee internal affairs investigations, just to name a few which were imported into the NWS system. We not only contracted with County IT for this service, we were informed on more than one occasion that all of our systems were being properly backed up. For the record, in February 2015, County IT staff failed to properly back-up another critical server that allowed my detectives and crime scene personnel the ability to store reports and forensic evidence. In this case, Flagler County paid over \$13,000 dollars to have the data sent to a California technology company for a forensic retrieval. Fortunately for all, the data was recovered. It was after this incident we were once again reassured that all aspects of our critical infrastructure was being backed-up. It was also around this time that we asked County IT to design an off-site disaster and recovery system for all of our records, one we did not have at the FCSO. Although we earmarked funding in our budget to implement this technology in the 2014/15 fiscal year, we were advised by your IT Director that this project was being pushed to the next budget year. It is my understanding that no substantial effort has been completed on this



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effort, one we know is vital to the retention and safety of law enforcement data. This redundancy is considered to be an industry standard, one we desperately need.

Since the crash on October 29, please allow me this opportunity to describe to you some of the issues we have faced or are currently facing. This is not an exhaustive list:

- Communications:
 - Employees were relegated at many times over the eleven day period to document law enforcement and fire activities on paper cards, thus greatly limiting the efficiency of all of our public safety partners. During these times, additional staff was brought on board to assist with the increased workload. After the system was restored, every one of the cards was entered by hand into the system.
 - Throughout the eleven day period of time, CAD would malfunction (freeze) as County IT staff attempted to restore the system. Many times, these malfunctions came during critical traffic stops or calls for service. As a direct result, at times it took the actions of three communication specialists to enter one call when one specialist could have entered and managed the call with ease.
 - To add to officer safety, when CAD is fully operational, it automatically queries a tag to ensure the registered driver had no warrants or flags for officer safety. As of this writing, all inquiries must be made separately by another employee using a different system.
 - As of this writing, critical information text messages via CAD cannot be sent to all public safety partners.

- Records:
 - As a result of the crash, staff has been unable to merge law enforcement reports. This process includes taking reports written by deputies in the field, ensuring names and information is correct and adding them to our records management system. Once there, they are automatically shared with many components to include detectives and PIO. Now that the system is functioning, staff is at least a full week behind in merging reports. This also affected Bunnell and Flagler Beach police departments. Overtime for the FCSO will be required to overcome this deficiency.

- Many simple public record requests were not satisfied during this time period as staff had limited access to records. Although we now have access to many records, we still cannot access the records that were not backed up by County IT staff.
As of this writing, we have fielded one complaint against the Sheriff's Office for not being able to completely fulfill a public records request.
 - During the early days of the failure, felony warrants were not entered into the FCIC/NCIC system in a time period required by our agreements with state and federal governmental agencies. This also created an officer safety issue as people who may have been queried in the field by law enforcement would have shown no want or warrant.
 - To overcome the inability to merge reports, staff resorted to copying reports and hand carrying them or emailing them to areas of need. An initial concern with using our email system was the crash of our email server a few days prior to the NWS system crashing. This system is maintained by County IT. Furthermore, faxing was impossible until Tuesday, November 10 as fax lines to the new facility were not operational until then.
- Detectives:
 - This system failure had many negative consequences as it related to detectives being unable to review and electronically assign cases for follow up investigation. As was stated above, reports were being copied and later emailed. A rudimentary method of assignment was instituted and this procedure stayed in place until the system was restored to near full capacity a few days ago.
 - Detectives, and for this matter, all records management users had a greatly limited or no access to critical law enforcement records while conducting their investigations. This limited their ability and efficiency.
 - Although not part of this system failure, but during the same time period of the failure, detectives have had no access to our new interview rooms as the room recording devices are not functional for our needs. The system would not record past five minutes or even allow a copy of said interview to be burned to a disc. Although efforts are underway by County IT, the manufacturer and installer of the system, our detectives have had to take suspects to the Flagler Beach Police Department or the State Attorney's Office for use of their functional interview rooms.

- Jail:
 - Since the system failed, jail staff has been unable to upload booking photographs to our webpage and server and many times throughout the failure period, were unable to upload the newly arrested into the system. Much like their law enforcement counterparts, back-up plans were quickly put into action.
 - At the onset of the failure, jail staff was unable to use the system to track and properly release those whose sentences had ended. Resorting to paper copies allowed staff to ensure all releases were properly made.
 - We also suffered a loss of interfaces with jail medical and inmate billing.

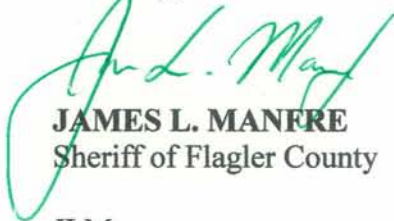
All throughout this process, we have resorted to pre-established back-up procedures and improvised successfully to accomplish our responsibilities. I have reassured the community via the media that calls for service; specifically ones made to 911, for all of our public safety partners would not be affected. However, I have been frank that efficiency is not what it was like prior to the failure. As the Sheriff of this county, one responsible for investigating crimes, being an advocate for our victims, and completing all of my duties as Sheriff, I respectfully request to know why this failure occurred and what reassurances we have from County IT that this will not happen again to any of our computer systems or infrastructure. Furthermore, I would like to know why there was a considerable delay in transitioning to the NWS upgrade after you purchased a server and accessories to accommodate the transition in 2014. For the record, this server sits idle.

Prior to our agreement in January 2014, I informed you that it was our intention to consolidate our IT division with the City of Palm Coast. You requested that I reconsider and instead consolidate with the county. I expressed my concern that the County IT was not able to handle its own needs at that point. You reassured me that you would use our combined resources to hire a qualified director and staff. I placed my faith in your reassurances and went forward. We are now on our third director since that conversation and have the failures outlined in this letter. Finally, I have been disappointed with the lack of timely communications and status reports concerning the system to my staff.

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In closing, we remain fully committed to this process and have made all of our resources available to your County IT staff throughout this process. I look forward to your responses.

Sincerely,



JAMES L. MANFRE
Sheriff of Flagler County

JLM