DRAFT

STATE OF VERMONT
ENHANCED 9-1-1 BOARD
General Meeting #3
10 December 2014
Capitol Plaza Hotel
(Rm #335 – Montpelier, VT)

9:04 AM – Call to Order
Chair Roger Marcoux brought the meeting to order. The following were in attendance:

Board Members Present
Roger Marcoux, Chair
Jerome Pettinga, Vice-Chair
Heather Dale Porter
Chief Gary Taylor
Steve Gold
Chief Bob Schlachter
Captain Don Patch

Staff Members Present
David Tucker, Executive Director
Soni Johnson, Board Clerk

Public Members Present
Jeb Spaulding, SoA
Jim Porter, PSD
Kiersten Bourgeois, ACCD/Connect VT
Justin Johnson, AoA
Colonel Matthew Birmingham, DPS
Paco Aumand, DPS
Dave Gram, Associated Press
Stephen Whitaker
Charles Larkin

Approval of Minutes
- *October 22, 2014. Motion: Steve Gold made a motion to accept the minutes as written; 2nd by Bob Schlachter. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.*

Public Comment
Charles Larkin – provided background on his involvement in public service & telecommunications in VT. He voiced concerns about FairPoint:
- They are under investigation by PSB;
- Ongoing issues with service interruptions & service quality;
- Failure to put in fiber as agreed;
- Issues with redundancy;
- Cautioned against them receiving the contract for the next E9-1-1 system in VT.

Stephen Whitaker – provided background on his involvement in public service & telecommunications in VT. He expressed concerns about FairPoint:
- Selective routing of calls through a neighboring state;
- Multiple failures/service interruptions since 2008;
- "Diversity where available" language in FairPoint's proposal for the new 9-1-1 system.

Mr. Whitaker suggested that the current E9-1-1 system contract be extended for one year while the FairPoint issues are investigated. He also suggested that the Board explore other options such as unbundling the network & getting outside engineering assistance.

Chair Marcoux asked both Mr. Larkin & Mr. Whitaker to put all of their questions & concerns in writing so the Board can investigate further.

New Business
Act 190: Jeb Spaulding provided a brief overview of this telecommunications bill (created to promote efficiencies in state government). The bill proposed that E9-1-1 be absorbed into PSD, DPS, or ACCD. He & his team have been gathering input and will make a recommendation to the Governor; they are focusing on savings & enhancements in quality. State revenue forecasts are down. State government is looking at all departments for possible savings. He feels that a move to DPS (Dept. of Public Safety) is the most logical; it would allow for staff consolidation, monetary savings, better communication (outage would have been handled better by DPS) & enhancement in services. He is concerned that the Board is against this move because it is special funded and, as such, shouldn't have to face the same budgetary constraints of other state agencies.

Kiersten Bourgeois provided a brief overview of the process she and the other committee members used when putting together the report for the Secretary of Administration. Report is still in draft form and board meeting comments/concerns will be added to the report if they so choose.

Board member concerns/comments:

- Board has cut its budget in the past even though it is special-funded.
- If the move is made will E9-1-1's budget get added to the new department or will they have to try to absorb 9-1-1 system costs?
- Can E9-1-1 funding be safeguarded at another department or will those funds be appropriated for other programs?
- Board planning for future expenses can appear to be a "windfall". Will it be understood that this "extra money" is to ensure that the Board can pay for new systems without having to ask the legislature for budget increases to cover one-time system transition costs?
- DPS already has budget/funding issues.
- What savings would be generated by this move? Are specific numbers available?
- Efficiency is great, but maintaining customer service & system quality is very important. It's important to balance efficiency with effectiveness.
- Could 9-1-1 be "lost" in a larger department? Will staff be able to focus on 9-1-1?
- Would restructuring put more of a burden on municipalities & service providers to maintain the system?
- Current system is a partnership between 9-1-1 and all emergency responders/agencies in VT. This allows Board to focus solely on the 9-1-1 system & its integration with all responders. Can that focus remain a priority if 9-1-1 becomes part of another department?
- How will all the back office work/maintenance/updates be handled (GIS database, ALI database, MSAG database, ESN database, and coordination with telcos & municipalities) if absorbed into another department?
- Possible loss of staff (both call-taker & office staff)
- Possible staff "overload" – if positions are combined with staff at another department, will those staff members have too many duties added to the ones they already have?
- Public oversight of the system is still important.
- Loss of program autonomy.

Director Tucker discussed E9-1-1 budgeting decisions over the last few years. These decisions were made in order that the Board would not have to ask for extra funds to cover one-time costs associated with the new system. The Board has been careful with its expenses and has cut its budget a couple of times in the last few fiscal years and still has the money set aside for system transition.

Chair Marcoux noted that no one really knows the true cost of running the 9-1-1 system (some expenses are currently covered by the PSAPs). If efficiency & savings are the goal then a study should be done of the true cost. DPS already has funding/efficiency issues that should continue to be addressed before they absorb another agency.
There were communication issues with the recent outage, though the PSAPs did a good job coming up with ways to communicate. The Board recognizes that mistakes were made & that changes need to be made.
Chair Marcoux met with Senator Ashe for a short time concerning the bill and the reasons for it. The senator was concerned that 9-1-1 has "luxurious staffing", that only large departments get looked at when cuts need to be made, and that 9-1-1 doesn't get scrutinized due to its funding mechanism.

Other comments:

- DPS will be conducting a "top down" review of all their operations for possible efficiencies. This will include dispatch centers & dispatching/call-taking positions.
- E9-1-1 restructuring is not motivated by DPS financial concerns; they are two separate issues.

Chair Marcoux called for a short break in the meeting. (10:08-10:15)

FairPoint Outage: Chair Marcoux asked for an update on the FairPoint outage of 11/28 that impacted 9-1-1 service.

Director Tucker – Outage Timeline

- 11/28 at approx. 3 PM, FairPoint experienced an issue with one of their circuits that feeds into VT;
- 9-1-1 was notified by FairPoint an hour later;
- Approx. 45 minutes after that the office received communication from a PSAP that there were issues with 9-1-1.
- Director Tucker then involved board staff. Office initiated communication between staff, FairPoint & Intrado.
- At approx. 5:07 PM E9-1-1 staff called VEM. At that point it was E9-1-1's understanding that the issue had been fixed so no alert was issued by VEM. After it was determined that outage was still ongoing a second call was not made to VEM.
- FairPoint had two failures (both primary call path & secondary call path failed);
- Some calls did make it through to 9-1-1 (approx. 105);
- Some communities were in stand-alone, some completely w/o service & some were fine;
- 9-1-1 system missed eighty-three calls during the outage.

Follow-up/Investigation

- E9-1-1 got callback numbers from Intrado & FairPoint for calls that did not connect to 9-1-1. There were issues getting numbers from both Intrado & FairPoint.
- Board staff reached out to everyone they could (calls came in from a payphone, a 9-1-1 only cell phone, & a number not in service – callbacks were not possible for those calls). All other callers who actually had emergencies (some folks called just to see if they could reach 9-1-1) were able to reach responders in alternate ways.
- Board has informed FairPoint that discussion will need to happen on these issues (system redundancy, call routing, etc) & what it means for the new system contract.
- E9-1-1 is working with the PSB on investigation & will be filing for party status in the investigation. The draft schedule released by public service indicates that the investigation will run until June 2015.
- Board staff is working on gathering alternate contact info for emergency responders to add to the VT Alert network.

Public Comment

Mr. Whitaker suggested that the Board be represented by an attorney familiar with PSB investigations & telecommunications law in VT; the Board should not rely on Public Service Department to provide us with info. He also thinks the Board should conduct an independent investigation into FairPoint issues.

Board Chair/Member Comments

- PSAPs communicate well together; E9-1-1 needs to work on outreach to other service responders.
- Multiple notifications are already received concerning phone outages. Can Board staff determine which of these outages are actually impacting 9-1-1 and would necessitate public/responder outreach?
- E9-1-1 needs a protocol (unified approach) for public outreach for phone outages & 9-1-1 system issues.
- E9-1-1 needs to gather alternate contact info for emergency responders so notifications can go out even if phones are down.
- E9-1-1 needs to run drills/exercises to make sure that protocol works.
- E9-1-1 needs to work on public education concerning outages.
- Media presented this as a 9-1-1 outage, when really it was phone outage that impacted some 9-1-1 services.

Motion: The Board will set up a committee to create a protocol for outreach to all stakeholders concerning outages. The committee should contain (but not be limited to) the emergency service board members (or their representatives) and representatives from the PSAPs.

- *Move: Gary Taylor*
- *Second: Don Patch*
- *Discussion: It was suggested that the committee should have flexibility in its mandate to adapt its plans as more info becomes available.*
- *Vote: Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.*

Other Business

CoverageCo – Don Patch asked about an email received concerning CoverageCo and their 9-1-1 only identifier. Director Tucker said staff has been told that this issue is caused by CoverageCo not having a roaming agreement with AT&T. He has had discussions with FCC (they are responsible for wireless carrier oversight) & Board staff are continuing to work on the issue.

Operating Costs – Chair Marcoux discussed having LR Kimball produce a report detailing the true costs of running the 9-1-1 system. Discussion ensued:

- Should the Board provide them with a list of specific cost questions to be answered?
- Should the report look at costs for the current system, the cost for it to be absorbed into another agency, or as if the entire system were being built from scratch?
- How do you split out call-taking costs from dispatching costs (seat must be filled 24/7 even though 9-1-1 calls don't come in all the time)? Call-taker positions are currently paid in part by the PSAPs. Should the report detail the Board taking over all call-taking (but not dispatch)?
- How is it determined how many call-taker positions are needed?
- Should LR Kimball look at all 9-1-1 office positions (detailing duties, staffing needs & possible efficiencies)?
- LR Kimball previously completed a study concerning call-taker positions, call volume & funding…it might be that some of these questions have already been answered.
- Board members would like "bulleted" list detailing costs and/or savings.

Next Meeting Date & Adjournment – Chair Marcoux

It was determined that the next Board meeting would be held on Wednesday, April 8, 2014 at the Capital Plaza Hotel (Montpelier, VT).

Motion: There being no further business, Steve Gold made a motion to adjourn; 2nd by Bob Schlachter. There was no discussion. The meeting adjourned at 11:12 AM.

Respectfully submitted:

Soni Johnson, Clerk

12/15/14
Date