

**9-1-1 CALL-TAKING/DISPATCH  
SERVICES WORKING GROUP  
General Meeting #4**

**27 September 2016**

**Cap. Plaza Hotel, 100 State St., Montpelier, VT – Room #338**

**10:03 AM – Call to Order**

Chair Gary Taylor brought the meeting to order. The following were in attendance:

**Working Group Members Present**

VT Enhanced 9-1-1 Board Representative: Chief Gary Taylor, Working Group Chair  
VT Ambulance Assoc. Representative: Jim Finger, President (via conference bridge)  
VT League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) Representative: Gwynn Zakov  
VT Sheriff's Assoc. Representative: Sheriff Roger Marcoux  
VT Assoc. of Chiefs of Police Representative: Chief Leonard Stell  
Dept. of Public Safety Representative: Captain Tom Hango

**Enhanced 9-1-1 Staff Members Present**

Barbara Neal, Executive Director  
Soni Johnson, E9-1-1 Board Clerk

**Others Present**

Paco Aumand, Executive Director, Central VT Public Safety Authority  
Chief Seth DiSanto, Newport Police Department (via conference bridge)  
Lee Krohn, Chittenden County Regional Planning  
Chief Steve Locke, Burlington FD (via conference bridge)  
Stephen Whitaker, Member of the Public  
Alexei Rubenstein, WCAX  
Representative Sarah Buxton (arrived after roll call)  
Bob Davis, WCAX (arrived after roll call)  
Rachel Aragon (arrived after roll call)  
April Burbank, Burlington Free Press (arrived after roll call)

**Approval of Minutes**

8/4/16 – Soni Johnson informed the group members that the 8/4 minutes were incomplete due to missing information (concerning adjournment). It was determined that Jim Finger moved for adjournment at the 8/4 meeting.

*Motion: Chief Stell made a motion to accept the minutes as amended; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Gwynn Zakov. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote (Sheriff Marcoux abstained as he did not attend the 8/4 meeting).*

**Business**

- Update on DPS Fee Structure – Captain Tom Hango
  - DPS is not putting together a dispatching fee schedule at this time. It would be preferable if the discussion of setting fees came from legislative directive rather than having DPS institute them.
  - DPS currently dispatches for approximately 105 non-state agencies/entities. DPS still supports a move (over time) to regional dispatching.
  - DPS is still interested in moving towards dispatching for state agencies/entities only.

Discussion/Talking Points/Public Comment:

- What is best for 1st responders?
- Given all the time & resources put into building DPS dispatching infrastructure, is it fair that towns not have that available to them?
- Isn't some of the DPS infrastructure already shared with other towns/agencies?

- DPS should provide written documentation of what they are willing to provide (or cannot provide) in the future.
- Will it be possible for towns to find/afford alternate dispatch agencies?
- Plan needs to be put in place for transition of services (if it takes place).
- What benefits would DPS see if it stops dispatching for those 105 towns? (DPS expects no changes to personnel and would be able to provide better dispatching to state agencies/entities).
- What about DPS & 9-1-1? DPS still takes 9-1-1 calls, but would not be averse to “shedding” some of its 9-1-1 call-taker work stations. The Commissioner has suggested a study be done on the most efficient and cost effective way to provide 9-1-1 dispatching in Vermont. (It was pointed out that multiple studies have already been done on that particular subject. The information provided in those studies will be referenced in the report the working group will submit to the legislature.)

#### Public Comment

- We’ve been “kicking this can down the road for so long”. The working group needs to make detailed recommendations for any possible transition plans in its report to the legislature. It might be possible to use the communications unit district model (with some modification) as part of a transition plan. The transition plan should also take into consideration those towns that have already invested in long term infrastructure for public safety and those towns that have not. Regional and state dispatch positions could co-locate.

#### ➤ Dispatch/Call-taking Issues

1. Working Group Legislation – Chair Taylor spoke to group members about this legislation. The text of the legislation was provided to each member. A determination was made that the group would address each section of the legislation; each section to be voted on as needed.

- Section 1A (9-1-1)
  - *Motion – The working group has studied Vermont’s 9-1-1 system and determined that the current model being used in the State of Vermont, with an independent board governing that system, is the most effective, efficient, and cost-effective means of providing statewide 9-1-1 call-taking. Moved by Sheriff Marcoux; 2nd by Chief Stell. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote.*
- Section 1B (dispatch services)
  - *Motion: The working group has studied dispatch services and has determined that in certain areas a change may be needed and we should look at a multi-jurisdictional/regional approach to dispatching in those areas. Moved by Gwynn Zakov; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Sheriff Marcoux. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote.*
  - *Motion: The working group has determined that dispatch providers should be able to at least recoup their costs for providing services. Moved by Sheriff Marcoux; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Captain Hango. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote. After the vote, the concern was raised that the motion was vague concerning “recouping costs” and should more specific language be added. It was determined that the motion language was intentionally broad, and will be expanded upon in the report to the legislature. The motion remained as written; no further discussion was had, and the motion passed (again) unanimously by voice vote.*
- It was determined that no motions/votes were needed on the rest of the working group legislation.

#### 2. General Discussion followed:

- The working group is not in a position to dictate fees/policy to DPS.
- Legislative mandate will be needed as part of the solution.
- Sharing of resources/infrastructure will be needed.
- Town budgets are tight. How will towns not currently paying for dispatch services find the revenue to pay in the future?
- Could the universal service fund be expanded to cover dispatch services as well as 9-1-1?
- The final report should include a safety net; towns cannot be left without dispatch coverage.
- A draft report to the legislature will be completed and distributed to group members the first week of November.

**Public Comments/Questions**

Stephen Whitaker asked if the group would consider revisiting its motions and/or amending them; motions should include the terms “equitable” and “fair share” and are ambiguous as written (when speaking of recouping costs). It was determined that the working group will expand on those issues in its report to the legislature; no amendments were made to the motions. Mr. Whitaker spoke to possible changes to the USF allocation; he expressed concerns that those possible changes could impact 9-1-1 funding. He also mentioned that the State’s 10-Year Telecommunication Plan is due to be fully revised and suggested that some dispatch issues could be addressed at that point.

Representative Sarah Buxton introduced herself; she represents Royalton/Tunbridge. Emergency service providers in her area have spoken to her about dispatch services issues (mostly funding related). She would like the working group to continue to consider fair & equitable funding/fees and to remember that geographical location can influence the technological options available for towns when it comes to dispatching.

Paco Aumand commented that the enhancement of technology and/or communications capabilities is a decision that starts at the local level. The disparity of costs in dispatching is fundamental to the working group’s mandate. DPS has visited this issue multiple times in the past with no resolution.

**Next Meeting Date & Adjournment**

It was determined that the next Working Group meeting would be held on Tuesday, 15 November 2016. The meeting will take place in Montpelier (location tbd).

*Motion: There being no further business, Chair Taylor entertained a motion to adjourn; move by Chief Stell, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Sheriff Marcoux. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote. The meeting adjourned 11:45 AM.*

Respectfully submitted:

Soni Johnson

Soni Johnson, Clerk

10/7/2016

Date