

Transcript

October 15, 2024, 2:01PM

□ **Johnson, Soni** started transcription



0:04

Alright, just to remind everybody, this meeting is being recorded.

So let me just get to my people list here.

OK.

So I have Roger Marcoux.

Deep lock.

You waving Steve 'cause? I can't hear you.

So I can't see you either, so I can see you're logged in, but if you could do check your microphone and your camera, that would be great. Drew Hazleton.



Drew Hazelton 0:39

I don't.



0:41

Eric doranson.



Eric Nordenson 0:43

Wasn't.



0:46

Miss loris.

Yeah.

Ann sparnham.



Burnham, Lance 0:50

Here.



Brian Keefe 0:54

Here.

0:56
It's Violet.

CV **Chris Violette** 0:57
I am here.

0:59
And Christian padotti.

PC **Pedoty, Christian** 1:02
Hey, good morning.

1:03
Alright. And I'll let you tell you, seduce myself.
Sonny Johnson, board clerk.
And let's see.
And let's.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:11
Can we go by?

1:11
We also have, OK.
Ahead, Barb.
Never mind.

NB **Neal, Barbara** 1:14
OK.

I, Barb Neal, executive director of the 911 board. Jared, go ahead and introduce yourself and then we'll go to Ashley.

1:17
OK.

L **Lamere, Jared** 1:23

My name is Jared Lemire.

I'm the IT manager here at the enhance signal board.

HA **Happy, Ashley** 1:28

And actually happy training communications manager at the 911 board.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:36

We have any guests showing besides our our staff.

1:40

Yes, we do.

Except I can't remember their names. But if you'd like, if you'd like to introduce yourself.

Hi, good morning.

My name is Tara Miller.

I'm the crisis training and curriculum development specialist at the Department of Mental Health and I'm here with my colleague Heather.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:56

Print.

1:57

Hi, I'm Heather sink with crisis operations manager with dmh.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 2:03

Welcome. Thanks for joining us.

Any other guests showing?

2:09

No.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 2:12

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OK. Then I think we're the next on the agenda is going to be to approve the Minutes from general meeting #3 which was July 16th, 2024.
Have a motion to approve those meeting minutes.

2:30
Doris moves.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 2:33
Thank you, Chris and Lance.

BL **Burnham, Lance** 2:34
That second.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 2:35
Lance Burnham seconds.
Thank you, Lance.
Any discussion on special meeting #3?
Hearing none.
All those in favor of accepting the OR approving the minute meetings, please signify by saying aye.

2:51
Right.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 2:56
Those general meeting number through a special meeting #3 minute meetings are approved. Next up is meeting #4, which was in August 2nd, 2024 looking promotion to accept those minutes meeting.
Thank you Chris 2nd.

PC **Pedoty, Christian** 3:27
Yeah.

BK **Brian Keefe** 3:27

One second.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 3:29

I see. Brian, any discussion on general or special meeting #3?

None. Those in favor of accepting the minutes from the meeting.

Special meeting #3 signify by saying aye, aye.

BK **Brian Keefe** 3:48

I.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 3:50

Any opposed?

OK.

Very good. Thank you.

So next we're gonna go to.

See here.

I don't get lost public comment.

Is there any public comment?

OK, hearing none.

We're gonna go right into our 988 presentation. And Barb, I'm gonna let you set that up.

And again ladies, thank you for joining us.

NB **Neal, Barbara** 4:23

OK.

Great. I'll get right to it by reintroducing Tara Miller and Heather Sink wits and I hope

I got that right, Heather.

Both from the Department of Mental Health.

I've been working with both of these folks for.

Well, in some cases a couple months now on the 988911 relationship and they are here today to tell the board about the 988 service.

And then I'll have some a little bit more of an update on where we are in

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conversations related to.

Memorandum of understanding between 988 and 911 and how we are currently interacting and hope to interact in the future.

So Tara and Heather, I will hand it over to you. Thanks for being here.

5:14

You tear the screen.

All right.

Good morning, everyone.

Good morning.

Thank you for having us to your meeting.

Just sharing our screen now.

We wanted to do a little presentation for you guys on what 988IS.

We are always surprised because some people have never even heard of 988, so this is a great forum for us to just describe a little bit about what crisis services look like in Vermont.

Beginning with 988.

Slide Yep, 98 is not just a crisis response, it's a resource for Vermonters to have a safe space to talk about their issues and have an objective ear to help them process some of life's most challenging moments.

3D.

911.

Excuse me. 911 doesn't have to be just for crisis.

Excuse me. 911 doesn't have to be just for.

It can be issues related to mental health, interpersonal relationships, grief and loss and all.

It can be issues related to mental health, interpersonal relationships, grief and loss, and.

BK **Brian Keefe** 6:09

Thank you.

6:15

Basically, all situations where caller may feel like they have nowhere else to go and

seek support.

So it's not just for crisis, but it is the the national crisis line as well.

We're kind of using 911 guidance to rethink 988 as Vermont's crisis line.

Back years ago, there was no 911 and people were calling.

Their, you know, fire houses, their police stations, their local hospitals for emergency dispatch, and then once 911 came out, everybody kind of knew.

Excuse me that.

This is the process.

For calling 911 to get your emergency response and we hope to kind of integrate that into 988 so that people know to call 988 or when they're in a mental health crisis and they can get the help that they need, whether that.

A mobile crisis team?

Or a referral to maybe longer term services.

So we've developed our own vision for what crisis service will look like in Vermont.

And as of now, all of the designated agencies have crisis teams, but we are moving forward.

With using 98 as a sole crisis line.

So I wanted to show you just the continuum and where this piece falls in with care.

So we have a person who's in crisis who can call 988 themselves or any first responder, or anyone working with that individual can call 988.

And you'd have to talk to 988 before you would get a mobile crisis response.

So we have two call centres and between the two they cover 24/7.

Ideally, as we move forward, we'll be able to have other call centres or or just increase these teams.

Right now, if you're located physically in Vermont and you have a Verizon or at mobile phone, you'll be routed to a Vermont call centre no matter what your zip area code is, AT&T is going to start routing in the late fall.

OK.

Otherwise the call is routed based on your area code, so if you have an 802 area code, you will be routed to a center in Vermont.

If the two centres are busy and can't answer the phone.

Headrest in New Hampshire is our backup center.

And if they can't answer it, then it goes to a national backup. And in August, Vermont received around 1400 calls to 988 with a 96% answer rate.

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So I have some data points that I can.

Think would be really helpful.

So I broke it down in our third quarter, which was July, August, September. We got
3864 calls.

Hey Cortana.

Yeah, 3000 speakers.

317 chats and 518 texts.

The beach.

It's my birthday tomorrow.

Can you guys hear that echo?

You didn't hear that ago?

NB **Neal, Barbara** 9:38

I'm hearing a little bit of an echo, yes.

9:40

Yes.

BK **Brian Keefe** 9:42

Yes.

9:46

Just muted and unmuted it.

Could everybody make sure that they're on mute?

Yeah, we'll we'll give it a try, OK.

We'll give it a try.

So yes, so 90 day, can you can do texts and chats in addition to just phone calls. So
for this quarter in state answer rate was 94%, which is up from 85% of the previous
quarter.

And the time for the calls to be answered averages at 5 seconds, which is incredible.

The number of contacts that included suicide attempts in progress was less than 1%,
significantly less .26%, which I thought was a little bit. It's a lower number than I was
expecting.

Number of contacts resulted in a mobile crisis.

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Number of contacts resulted in a mobile.

Response was 2.1% which I think is excellent. One of the biggest concerns the crisis teams in the state have had about 988.

That the call takers would refer every call or the majority of their calls for assessments.

Showing that's not the case.

Number of contacts where emergency rescue was needed because imminent risk was reduced.

Number of contacts where emergency rescue was needed because imminent risk was.

This is also a key piece of data 37.4%, which is a very high number.

So they're able to de escalate the individuals by phone and decrease the response.

And 95% of the calls to 988 are resolved over the phone without any further intervention.

And 95% of the calls to 988 are resolved over the phone without any further.

So if somebody feels like 988, if they call 988, they're just going to get a police response or somebody knocking at their door.

Certainly not the case.

And and and we actually have reduced the risk of of callers who are in crisis, suicidal crisis.

Through just talking to them over the phone.

So very few cases where further intervention was needed.

And tar gave the 95% stat and I just wanna say the national average is 80%.

Vermont's doing really well.

So the number of contacts that resulted in an emergency rescue where the individual was in agreement with the response was .47%.

That shows that these calls are really being managed very well.

The next piece of data is important because what we hear from a lot of folks is they're afraid to call 988 because they think police are going to respond and there are states where if there is a call for mental health, police are required to go.

And So what our data shows.

Is that the number of contacts resulting in the involuntary rescue?

Was only 7 which is. This is a fantastic number.

.15%.

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And so we're hoping that this can kind of help quell the fears that folks have about calling 988. And our aim is to reduce law enforcement engagement. And so we want to just keep promoting this, this information.

So what?

We're working on right now.

We're working on, right?

We're in the process of signing a contract with behavioral health link, which is our mobile dispatch solution.

So this is a system where every 98 call taker in the state and every crisis clinician in the state can log.

In see what calls are coming in and see what responses need to be have happening.

And so the 988 call centers can now once this is in place, dispatch whichever clinicians they need to around the state and with our new mobile crisis.

Implementation. We're having paired responses so we can have a crisis clinician in Chenna County and if we don't have a paraprofessional available in Chittenden County, we can find one in another county.

Can tell health in so we can do the paired response.

So this is going to bring the entire state together to operate as one team.

And then just because some people are unfamiliar with 988, when would you call 911?

And then just because some people are unfamiliar with 988, when would you call 9/1?

And when would you call? 988911 is really used for imminent risk to life or danger to a person if they require medical attention.

If there's a fire, if.

They're, you know, injury beyond first aid. If they need a law enforcement response because of violence, that's when you would call 911. But 988 can be used any time. You're in a mental health crisis and anytime you need someone to talk to and get a telephonic response, whether that be call, chat or text, and most times a trained crisis counselor can resolve the call without further intervention.

And you can call 988 whenever you need help in resolving an emotional issue.

And that concludes our presentation.

Does anybody have any questions for us?

About 988.

And it's like, Yep, Chris Flores.

Umm.

Got a couple.

First one is you spoke that you had 38164 calls, 317 chats, 518 texts and gave some resolution of those.

How many of those calls, chats and texts were transferred?

To 911.

Probably a very small number.

So the ones that would have been transferred would be.

So you don't.

The voluntary and involuntary.

So do you do you?

So do you do?

Sorry to follow up. Do you explicitly track the number that were transferred to 911? And I'm saying 911 rather than whatever you define as emergency rescue because I've never heard the term emergency rescue before.

Yeah.

OK.

So we don't track the data of specifically 2911.

We so we work with vibrant emotional health, which is this national agency that overseas the implementation.

Let's see.

Let's see.

That overseas, the implementation of the.

OF988.

And they have requirements of the call takers.

Requirements of the cold fixtures.

Dangerous.

So the calling 911 directly is not a data point.

So we can directly answer a different format.

But I think it would make sense and we could talk about adding that in.

But I think it would make sense if we could talk about another.

OK. And could you give me the definition of emergency rescue?

You use that twice during the presentation.

I never heard that term before.

Could be my ignorance.

Could be my.

Yes.

So just looking to see.

No, no, no.

And these are and. These are new terms to me.

And these are and. These are new terms to.

This is specific new, vibrant, but what an emergency rescue would be is if someone's actively trying to end their life.

We need this is specific to be vibrant, but it's just basically like a life.

In this sense.

And we need to send help.

Or they've made the attempt and they need medical attention.

Where they made the attempt to make.

Incredible treatment.

All right.

Thank you.

And one last question, I apologize to to monopolize it, but is Department of Mental Health or and or vibrant have any plans or have you started with working with any researchers to validate findings?

Department.

Create a process evaluations and create outcomes, and if so, when would you be planning to do that?

Vibrant does have a team that works on that. I don't have access to it.

I I am just given these monthly reports by the 988 call centers and that's where I pull my report.

OK.

I'm I'm sorry to dive in, but is that pursuant to a the contract with vibrant that they don't give you all the raw data?

That's a good question.

That's a good.

I'm not actually sure about that.

OK.

No, that's cool.

No, that's.

That's why asking questions to to see. Thank you.

All I got appreciate that.

Yeah, absolutely.

Any other questions from anybody in the group about 988 or when you would call or?

RM Roger Marcoux 18:35

Yes, I'm sorry this.

18:36

What?

Sure.

RM Roger Marcoux 18:40

Roger Marcoux again here.

18:42

Good to hear too.

RM Roger Marcoux 18:44

I attended a a symposium with the courts here about a month ago.

18:47

The courts here wanted to go.

RM Roger Marcoux 18:50

And somebody is still not muted. OK, let me try that.

And one of the questions they had about 988 was and it came from a judge was was there material like cards or whatever that they could hand out to people?

They see and and it'd be the same thing for our peace apps are there.

Cards that we have where you know in a lobby or something of a peace app that people can pick up.

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You know, explaining this and and and how it all maybe doesn't get into the detail of how it works as to what you said this morning, but just something to market the the the 988.

19:34

Yes, there are marketing materials and they actually have an online store.

Through samsa.

Where anyone they've opened it up to the public can go in and order the supplies and it's all free. And so we're happy to gather stuff and and send it wherever anyone wants it. But we can also share.

The website so that you can go on and order the items.

And that includes cards, stickers, bumper stickers, magnets, all that.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 20:01

Yeah, that that I think that that would be good if we could get that, you know, maybe.

Send that that site to to Barb or whatever you can do to help that out. But I think that that might help you get the word out a little bit through through the partnership with us so.

20:10

Yeah, absolutely.

Fantastic.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 20:22

Anybody else have any questions?

Think that this is a great work. Oh, Lance Burnham.

BL **Burnham, Lance** 20:31

Real quick question, what is the the the call takers at the 988 system?

What is the training that those call takers receive?

In order for them to receive these calls.

20:45

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So they work with a licensed supervisor who works with them.

To.

Explain how you take the calls and what you do with the calls.

There isn't AI.

There isn't.

Don't believe there's an education requirement? I think if.

So then bachelors.

But they usually training takes about a month and then typically when they're kind of launched solo, they'll take a call. They'll check in with a supervisor to make sure that they're kind of advising the individual in the right way.

They have a pretty lengthy.

BL **Burnham, Lance** 21:18

OK.

21:19

The you know.

Training process that they go through, so it isn't just like oh here, this is how you answer a call for someone in suicide. Like it's a very lengthy, it's a multi page agenda that they go through, protocols that they go through how to answer.

And everybody is overseen by a licensed clinical therapist.

So, like Heather said, there's no requirement for a bachelor's or a master's level, but a lot of.

A lot of folks do have an advanced degree that are answering calls.

And there's actually.

Something new called the Unified Platform, which is this tech solution so that all calls, chats and texts come through one system.

So that the call takers can see what's going on and can even manage a couple of conversations as one at once.

But what's really nice about the platform is it the supervisors can be logged in and watching the conversations and helping to advise the call taker.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 22:22

Standardizing it then.

22:24
Yes.

RM Roger Marcoux 22:27
Are these call takers paid or they volunteers?

22:29
They volunteer.
They're paid.
This is their job. It's their job.

RM Roger Marcoux 22:35
Ah.

22:36
And they work our our ends, our partners at NCCSS. Take the daytime hours and nkhs
takes the overnight and evening hours.

RM Roger Marcoux 22:47
How many call takers do you have?

22:50
Oh, that's a great question.
Good. That's a great question.
I would say.
My guess would be 20 to 25.
And those are not crisis clinicians, even though they're at these two call centers are
with designated agencies, they're separate from the crisis teams.

RM Roger Marcoux 23:10
These people are 25 people are trained.

23:13

Yes. Yeah.

Yeah.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 23:14

That's excellent.

OK.

Any other questions for Tara or Heather?

23:21

Yep.

I know.

Yeah, this is Chris again.

Yeah, this is Chris.

Just one more and I asked about the flow between 988-2911. But given the goal is to dispatch mobile crisis teams.

Rather than police or ams, do you have any data about how the calls can be formal the other way when someone calls?

911 and there's a recognition that it may not be right for emergency rescue.

And is, do you have any data?

And is, do you have any?

How many calls are transferred to 9884? The crisis mobile teams directly in the barracks or with our designated agencies?

That would otherwise not have gone to PD.

So now.

Use the burden on.

NB **Neal, Barbara** 24:17

There you want me to tackle that, Heather?

24:20

Sure.

NB **Neal, Barbara** 24:21

OK.

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So Chris, right now that's the very question that Heather and Tara and I are working on is how do we?

How do we create the protocol?

For taking calls that come into 911 first and determine if there is a need for 988 versus some other set of responders.

That protocol is actually not in place at the 911 level right now.

Those decisions about when and whether to engage with 988 in Vermont are happening at the dispatch or responder level.

So 911 would could receive a call that has a mental health component. As it stands right now, that call would be.

Transferred to either law enforcement or EMS, depending on the situation.

And then that dispatch agency and or the response agency would make a decision about whether to engage 988 or mobile crisis or or whatever, whatever other engagement needs to happen based on their local protocols. I think it's safe to say that Heather and Tara and and.

I even would like to have the ability to implement at the.

988 diversion, if you will.

911 level but there needs to be a common cohesive.

Understanding in the responder field.

And an acceptance, an acceptance of that before we can implement so.

On that note, there are national standards being developed by Nina, the National Emergency Number Association, that give guidance on the interactions between 911 and 988.

Some states, including New Hampshire, have implemented protocols even before that national standard has come up.

Ashley and I actually have been working on comparing the New Hampshire protocol to what has so far been developed in the national protocol to see if they're hitting all those marks.

And the national protocol is probably still several months away from being finalized.

So so the question would be whether.

When we're ready to advance, that conversation is really the the question at this point.

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OK, good. Thank you that that helps because the question I left Unass was, is there any model?

To, you know, measure ourselves against, to maintain fidelity to the model of the interaction. It sounds like that's exactly what you're working on, Barb.

Using the what's being set up by Nina and bouncing it off of New Hampshire?

NB **Neal, Barbara** 27:28

Right, exactly.

New Hampshire's had their their protocol in place, I think.

27:29

From level.

NB **Neal, Barbara** 27:32

Now for a couple years, according to their director, it's been working very well.

I you know it might be easy to just say, well, we'll just adopt that.

But because we have the national standard being built, I I I think we're we're entirely based on national standards.

So I think it's worth having the conversation at the national level and then implementing here in Vermont. The bigger question for me is.

How to engage with the responder community to make sure they are in agreement that these kinds of decisions should be made at the 911 level?

So that's still an unresolved question for me.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 28:13

So Barb and Terry and Heather, So what happens if you've got a call taker, IA988 call taker on a situation and it really goes S the suicidal situation and it really goes South.

28:13

OK, perfect.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 28:32

Involving, you know, maybe a firearm or something like that. Is there contemplated a easy transfer process to put that call back to 911?

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So that we can get law enforcement or whatever we need out there from the emergency response community.

28:52

So typically they connect with the crisis team.

With whatever area the person's calling from but.

I think that's a good question.

I think in cases where there's a firearm, sheriff mark, who it would, they would make the the they would make a call to 911 in that in that case. So if there's, if there's a threat to life or.

Dangerousness to a someone if there's harm to self or harm to someone else, I think that they're going to call in whatever services they need as far as law enforcement or. An EMS response.

But at that by this, at the same time, having somebody from the mobile crisis team there to kind of go in and maybe if the situation is safe enough to de escalate the situation, they can help in that way.

RM Roger Marcoux 29:47

So yeah, I was just wondering, Barb, if if a transfer.

Kind of situation from 988 like we can transfer from from PSAP to PSAP or or from PSAP to whatever dispatch service.

Would that make it a faster response than having someone you know from 988 have to dial 911?

11.

NB Neal, Barbara 30:13

The right now there are arrangements in place for A988 call taker in Vermont to simply dial 911 and then get connected to the the correct responder.

There's nothing that would prevent A988 call taker from going directly to whatever agency. If they have those numbers maintained, and I don't know that they do. I think that's maybe why they use 911.

Heather and Tara explained that the backup center is in New Hampshire.

So if there was a need for an immediate response and that 988 call had been answered in New Hampshire, or actually even at the national backup center, those

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entities have all been provided with what we call our it's kind of our back door number, our eight.

100 number into the 911 system in Vermont, so they can directly transfer to a 911 call taker in Vermont.

Who would then connect them with the with the right responder?

But I would turn it back over to Heather and Tara.

Do you?

Do you maintain a separate list of like 7 or 10 digit phone numbers for response agencies, or are you relying on 911?

31:25

I think each call taker has the list of designated agencies and their you know, their 802 or 800 number at their at their disposal. And they can call mobile crisis at any time.

During the call, if they feel like they need support.

RM Roger Marcoux 31:47

OK.

Alright. Is there any other questions for Tara, Heather?

This is an excellent.

Program.

You may know that I that I work with Department of Mental Health a lot.

32:08

Yeah.

RM Roger Marcoux 32:09

And and really support you all and I appreciate you coming on today and and continuing that conversation with Barb.

And anything we can do to help?

People and and by the same time saving, you know, having a police to have to go out to a situation where they don't really have to go out is is very, very supported. I think by all of us so.

32:34
Yeah.

RM Roger Marcoux 32:35
Having said that, anything else ladies?

32:39
Now I think we're good.
Thank you very much for having us.

RM Roger Marcoux 32:41
OK.
Well, no, thank you so much and and look forward to to the collaboration in the
future.
Thank you.

32:49
Thank you, Sheriff Marku.
Alright, Barb, did you have anything else or do you want us to hop off?

RM Roger Marcoux 32:52
Oh, OK.

NB Neal, Barbara 32:57
I think you are afraid of. I was just going to mention that that Heather and Tara and I
are working now on an on an MOU that will document the current practice that's in
place when a 988 call is transferred into 911 and we.
Added a placeholder for continued work on kind of the the reverse of that right. So
what will happen when a call goes from 911 to 988? Those conversations as I just
explained, are still going on, but we're formalizing what?
Happening now in an MOU and I just wanted the board to be aware of that.
It's kind of a work in progress at this point.
But we're we're getting things down on paper.

33:39
Perfect.

NB Neal, Barbara 33:39
And and then Heather and Tara, I think you're certainly welcome to stay, but I think we're going to move off your topic now.

33:48
OK.

NB Neal, Barbara 33:48
I'll hand it back.

33:50
Perfect. Thank you, Barbara. Thank you everyone.

RM Roger Marcoux 33:50
Say thanks again, thank you.

NB Neal, Barbara 33:52
Thank you.

RM Roger Marcoux 33:54
Yeah.
OK, Barbara, when we go right to the director's report.

NB Neal, Barbara 33:59
OK.
So first thing up on the directors report is the tropical storm Debbie. After action report, which you all should have received.
From Sony in an e-mail recently, and let me bring this up so.
As you may recall, are you all seeing that OK?
Make it a little bit bigger.

RM Roger Marcoux 34:26
Yes.

NB Neal, Barbara 34:30

Currently I'm not going to be able. There we go.

So back on August 9th of this year, Tropical Storm Debbie hit Vermont with a lot of rain and a lot of very high wind.

We experienced an exceptionally high call volume that evening, especially between 6:00 and 10:00 in that 4 hour period there were 830 calls to 911.

Our normal call volume is somewhere just under 700 calls a day.

So this was a a huge amount of calls coming into the system. Of those 830 calls, 63 of them rolled to what's called Armivo MEVO phones.

That's our disaster recovery backup phones.

So they're just phones that sit at each 911 position.

63 calls rolled out of the the typical call handling system to the Mevo phone.

And we're about half of them, 31 were answered on the Mevo phones, and the remaining 32 actually were returned back to the primary call handling equipment after the caller had waited some extended amount of time. So.

We talked a little bit about throughout the slides.

I'm going to show you about the average call volume per minute in each of these this 4 hour period.

Get to that in a minute.

Also worth noting, on this day the Shelburne Peace app lost power at about 7:05 PM and then had a generator failure at 8:30, so they were knocked offline for a considerable amount of time during this 4 hour period.

Additionally St.

Albans Peace app was not available in 911 for most of the four hour period.

We did a follow up call with them and learned that they had been as everybody was.

Overwhelmed by their dispatch lines?

So they busied themselves out of 911.

Also going on during this period, we had reports that the 911 mapping was slow and so the plotting of 911 calls was taking much longer than normal, which if nothing less is a huge aggravation to call taker who is trying to manage this.

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Huge call volume level.

So we have taken steps you can.

Jared could give us more details, but we've taken steps with Geo Commer.

To increase the capacity of the the hardware that runs the mapping, hopefully to prevent future issues with slowness during high call volume.

So that's the the high level overview here. If you're looking at your handout and I'll just let the slides kind of roll by here.

We included a map of where the the 911 call volume was coming from.

You can see that there was a a good chunk of calls in the Chittenden County area.

So these calls typically would would try to go to Williston first.

There was some bump in call volume down in the Hartford piece up area as well, maybe drifting over into the Westminster.

Call catchment area.

This next figure, Figure 2, it breaks out the number of calls by minute for each hour.

Each of those four hours. And if you look at this orange line here, that's the seven O clock hour and right about at 725 was our our highest call volume.

Of the event with 13 calls in the in the 25th minute of that hour.

So that was that was a significant.

Event right there you can clearly see the Orange line, as I said, represents the time between 7:00 and 8:00 PM and that was the the very highest call volume of this event.

The next slide down takes a look at color ring times.

So this is basically what the caller is experiencing.

How long the the phone is ringing before someone?

Picks up the line.

The standard.

The national standard and what the 911 system in Vermont meets consistently in regular events is to answer 90% or more of the calls within 10 seconds.

And then 95% of the calls within 20 seconds.

I believe the standard is.

You can see that we kind of held our own through the six O clock hour with 163 calls answered within 10 seconds.

What was concerning to us when we got into the seven O clock hour, there were 143 calls that took between 31 seconds and one minute to answer.

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So that that's a long wait time when you're trying to get through to 911.

Additionally, there were 20 some odd that were between 1:00 and 2:00 minutes and 40 or more that were over 2 minutes of wait time.

It's significant to note here that what's not included in this chart is those calls that rolled over to the meevo disaster phones.

So those folks would have had a longer wait time, but they're not included in this metric.

'Cause it's it's the data is stored in a different place essentially.

So this is just looking at the calls that were answered within the 911 system itself.

So 17% in the 70 clock hour 7 to 8 O clock hour.

Were answered within 10 seconds. Almost half of the calls took between 31 seconds and a minute to answer and over 24% took over a minute to answer.

So we were concerned about the wait time that that callers experienced there or we note the wait time that callers experience there. So we did.

We took a look at.

What was the percentage of time that piece apps were available?

Throughout this event, and the way Jared calculated availability was to take the total number of positions 911 call taking positions in a piece app. At times the four hours that we're looking at and that became the the availability, the maximum availability would be the number of.

Piece out positions times the four hours.

So, for example, Hartford PCP has three positions.

Which equals 12 hours of potential availability in this block of time. I should note here that it would never be a realistic expectation to expect 100% availability in of all positions doing during the four hour period. But so we did this calculation and we found that.

Hartford was available about 85% of the time.

Lamoille 81% St.

Albans because remember they were.

They had logged out, was available just under 7% of the time.

Shelburne was at 23%, given their power failures and generator issue.

Westminster was just under 18% availability and Williston was 50, almost 57% availability, which gave us a a system total of about 44% availability.

So these higher availability centers.

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Were powerhouses really in the handling of these 911 calls, as was Williston?

And we'll see that when we take a look at the at the call volume that they handled and we'll see that in a in a slide or two, so.

So these lower areas of availability are of concern.

Earn we have.

We will be following up with St. Albans to ensure they know if they're going to have to go dark they need to let the let us know that.

The Shelburne issue was explained with a generator and issues and so forth, and I believe Chris Podi will have a little bit more to say about the Westminster availability once once I'm done talking.

But that was of of concern as well.

Moving then on to the next chart, Figure 5, which is the call presentation versus answer rate.

So how many calls were presented to AP, SAP or call taker?

And how many did they answer?

If you see a high number or a higher number of presentations, that's the blue column.

Two calls actually answered.

That means that the call was either refused.

The call takers have an option to push the call away from their position to another position.

Or the caller.

The call kept ringing because no one was able to get to it.

So you want to see, you want to see a high call presentation to answer rate and you can see the figures down at the bottom there. Hartford was at about 86 Lamoille at 63 St.

Albans, even though they weren't logged in long, didn't answer 87% of the calls that were presented to them.

And the similar figure for Westminster.

Know their staffing was low, lower than we would have perhaps hoped.

They did answer 93% of the calls that were presented to them and so forth.

So that's just another metric to kind of see what was going on.

In the peace apps.

And then let's see. I was going to say finally, but no, we have a couple more to go.

Figure 6.

Shows how many call takers would we have needed to meet that metric of having 90% or more answered within 10 seconds and we broke it out again by hour.

So in the 6:00 hour there and there is a calculator called an Erlang calculator which helps you determine these staffing calculations.

That's what we use to figure this out.

So based on the call volume in the 6:00 hour.

Ideally, we would have had 17 call takers logged in. In fact, we had just under 11. So so 10.81 call takers were logged in and available during that hour. In the 70 clock hour when the call volume went through the roof, we would have.

Needed 23 call takers.

Logged in and available.

And in fact, we had still just under 11.

80 clock hour the the projection or the ideal would be 14 1/2 call takers. We had 11.6 and then in nine O clock we were kind of returning back to normal.

So the projected or ideal staffing would have been 10 and we had just over 10 for that time.

So if we if you take a look on your report and go back to the call.

Answer times.

You should see things returning to normal in the 9:00 hour so.

This was just of interest.

How many positions?

How many call takers would we have needed to meet this demand?

We have, I believe, and Jared will correct me if I'm wrong or Ashley will 26 positions available in the peace apps so.

Had we been able to staff them all on a moment's notice, this might have been.

A better figure in the 70 clock hour.

OK.

So and in a minute, I will take a breath in case there are questions.

So the the last or the next to last figure here.

Figure 7 is the PSAT primary catchment area rate.

So what? This is gonna show you is how many calls from the pcp's primary catchment area did they actually answer? And you the metric that we like to see is, is that a PSAP should answer 90% or more?

Well, you can see it.

A very quick glance that most of the Pcp's did not meet that metric.

And that's because of the intense call volume and calls were just going every which way.

Which is how the system is designed, right?

To minimize to minimize impacts on anyone, piece up and to get the caller to help sooner.

But it was.

It was of interest to see how the primary catchment area rates were were impacted, so.

And then the Figure 8 shows you where all of the calls were answered.

So if they couldn't be answered in their primary catchment area.

Where were they answered?

And might take a minute to kind of study this this.

Chart a little bit, but if you take the first line of Hartford, so Hartford answered 51 of its own Quechan area calls, it answered.

10 of Iamoils one of St.

Albans, five, of Shelburne, calls five of Westminster's calls and 25 calls that rolled out of Williston.

So that's kinda how that chart.

Reads across.

So it was kind of interesting to see where all the calls eventually landed.

And then finally, well, still not finally.

Sorry, Figure 9 is the PSEP total calls, so this is broken out by. If they answer their own catchment area calls.

I'm sorry it includes both your own catchment area calls and other catchment areas calls. So this is the total calls answered.

I don't have it on the chart here.

But I did a little math yesterday in preparation for this meeting so that I could tell you that Hartford answered 21.3% of the call volume in this 4 hour block of time.

And Hartford's yearly average for statewide call volume is just under 8%.

So they handled.

Over 20% of the call volume in this 4 hour period Lamoille handled 16.5% of the statewide call volume in this 4 hour period compared to their yearly average of about

7.3%.

St.

Albans, again, was was logged out of the system. They handled just 1.8% of this 4 hour call volume Shelburne handled 3%.

Westminster handled 14%.

And typically on a yearly average, Westminster would handle 27.5% of the call volume.

So that was another area of concern that they didn't meet. Even what sort of the general expectation is for the amount of call volume that they would handle.

And Williston answered 43.4% compared to their yearly average of just over 40%.

So they were right in the same ballpark as far as the total call volume that they answer.

So.

Now finally, the last slide just shows the highest hourly call volume per year for the last.

Several years and you can see that this August 9th event was, you know, just way ahead of any other previous event that we've handled at least recently.

We certainly expect that those storms are going to continue.

We think that longer.

Well, we know if there were more call takers logged in, fewer callers would have had to wait as long as they did to get answered.

So that's something that needs looking at.

One thing that's important for you to know is that peace apps do see when calls are going into queue.

They know when callers are waiting.

To have their calls answered.

At sometimes that's unavoidable, I would say, in a high call volume event like this.

However, it should be.

A.

A cue to the call takers that are on duty, that there is pretty much an all hands on deck event going on.

And in my opinion, everyone needs to log into the greatest extent possible.

We also might want to take a look at.

The dedicated 911 call taking role.

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We had Ashley actually had an inquiry from Hertford very early on in this event asking for permission to stay logged in in the dedicated 911 call taking role 'cause. They could see this. This call volume ramping up. We said yes, do that and you can see.

In their call volume performance that that really was an asset to the system.

And so that is that is the overview of what happened on August 9th and I will pause now for.

Questions or or comments?

RM **Roger Marcoux** 53:33

Alright, before we get to my questions, I'll open it up for everybody else.

BL **Burnham, Lance** 53:40

I have a quick question.

SL **Steve Locke** 53:41

Sure, sure.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 53:42

Dance.

BL **Burnham, Lance** 53:44

First of all, thank you Barb I.

This was a tremendous amount of work.

I can't fathom.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 53:49

Hmm.

BL **Burnham, Lance** 53:50

But and quite frankly, I think what this what I really like about this is it really spells out the data.

And sometimes we take a lot of and pay a lot of attention to this quote UN quote 90% catchment area, which I've always thought really doesn't tell the whole story. But

this is fantastic.

So thank you, crew and and yourself for this.

And forgive me if I'm asking a weird question, but I'll be the first to admit. When this came in, I was out doing my retirement tour.

But how much notice did the state or did we have about this storm before it was coming in?

We're the peace app's able to plan for this. Or was this just a free storm that just popped up?

NB Neal, Barbara 54:42

So that's a really good question and I think it depends entirely on how much you were paying attention right to the weather.

To me, it felt like a a storm that.

Was unusual in its intensity, but it had been brewing right from Hurricane Debbie hit the southern States and then was making its way north and eastward.

So I don't have a good sense of how.

Aware the peace apps were and I'm going to.

See if maybe Jared or Ashley have any insight on that.

Do you guys have a sense of that?

L Lamere, Jared 55:20

I know that that wasn't a surprise. The storm.

I don't know that people expected the intensity that it hit Vermont with, so, but I I you know, it was being tracked.

Let's.

RM Roger Marcoux 55:33

It's interesting.

HA Happy, Ashley 55:33

Yes.

RM Roger Marcoux 55:34

Go ahead, Ashley.

HA **Happy, Ashley** 55:36

No, I was gonna say as far as the conversations that I'd had with even some of the call takers, they were aware that it was coming.

But like Jared said, I don't think that they were expecting it to be as strong as it was.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 55:48

So the interesting thing is, is we we went over we we just had a a windstorm this weekend.

And wind storms are difficult to to figure out because it's not like, yeah, we're expecting 3 inches of rain or or what have you.

And the wind storm over the weekend.

We had all sorts of trees down in the in the stove Lamoille region, but it's it's just very, very difficult to.

To track and it comes up on you pretty suddenly and and you know an hour is just one hour. Is hardly enough time to get someone in. If there's anybody else out there available. But.

Other other questions?

CV **Chris Violette** 56:41

I had a couple.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 56:43

OK, Chris.

CV **Chris Violette** 56:44

Some of it's just maybe from my own understanding, but.

No particular order, but.

I'll can you repeat where the the Meebo phones are located, are they?

I think I understood. You say their phones within the peace apps that are unnecessarily tied into the 911 system directly.

NB **Neal, Barbara** 57:06

Well, they are.

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They're part of the 911 system, so in a peace app you have a 911 call taking position which is a computer, right?

And that's the primary call handling.

Software or equipment that's the primary call handling equipment.

Jared, you'll probably have to explain the technical aspects of that, but of this.

But if the call cannot be answered or is not answered within a certain amount of time on that primary call handling solution.

It will roll over to these Nevo phones, which are telephones that sit right next to the 911 call handling equipment.

So I think in a sense they have rolled out of the system.

I'm going to.

I'm going to turn it actually over to Jared now to to explain the detail of that.

Lamere, Jared 57:58

So the Mevo phones are essentially there for disaster recovery.

So if we had a catastrophic failure with our primary call handling, those meet up phones could still deliver and I won't. Calls to peace apps, they they are part of the system, they're they're interconnected.

And So what happened is because calls weren't answered in a certain amount of time the the the system.

Then delivered them to me. Though thinking there's problems with the call handling and that's just the way the system's set up.

We have certain queues, if nobody's available in the queue, then it'll roll to the next queue, and so on until it gets to this, send it to me though, and then if it's not answered at a certain time at Mevo, then then our controllers are now one.

System controllers will then put into a safety queue and so the safety queue essentially leaves the call indefinitely there. Most of them would be abandoned callers because they had been answered in time.

They eventually gave up.

Or the carrier terminated the call because it wasn't answered in a certain amount of time.

CV Chris Violette 59:02

The do the.

NB **Neal, Barbara** 59:02

Jared, go ahead. I'm sorry. Go ahead.

CV **Chris Violette** 59:05

No, I was just gonna ask to the Meebo Meebo phones ring at all the peace apps at the same time. At that point then.

L **Lamere, Jared** 59:13

To get delivered to AP SAP in in within that PSAP is the ring all, so all. So Hartford has three.

They have 3 meebos. It'll ring at all three Mevo phones to be answered.

CV **Chris Violette** 59:25

So in this case, they weren't necessarily.

So they're not like there to ring and notify somebody that maybe isn't on a 911 call.

They thought the 911 system was down.

That's what they're designed to do is is ring the miivo phones in case the 911 system is down.

So it's not like there was extra bodies to all of a sudden answer these Mivo phones.

L **Lamere, Jared** 59:45

No correct. There are secondary ancillary telephone with a a display that has the map. So when they answer it on the Meebo, they still get location of the caller.

Excuse me.

So yeah, it's it's really designed disaster recovery, but we set up the queues thinking that if a call is not answered in a certain amount of time, that there probably is likely an issue with the call handling.

And so that's but, but our controllers are still anchoring the call.

And so then if it's not answered at neevo in a certain amount of

Time.

Put it into the safety queue to be able to be, you know, handled by the call takers.

CV **Chris Violette** 1:00:22

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And and it you said a certain amount of time, so is it more like after 2 minutes that's what happened or that's what the chart showed is there are considerable amount, a number of them that went two minutes more than two minutes.

L **Lamere, Jared** 1:00:36

Correct, it would be.

It would be minutes that would then return back to the safety queue.

CV **Chris Violette** 1:00:43

And any other question I have 'cause I think if somebody was gonna mention you mentioned somebody, Barb that somebody might tell us what happened at Westminster.

But do we know what type of calls were coming in?

NB **Neal, Barbara** 1:00:55

So Ashley listened to a sampling of these 800 or so calls.

And Ashley, you can add to this if you want, but they were mostly reports of traffic hazards from trees or downed power lines from the sampling.

You listen.

Do you remember how many you listened to, Ashley?

HA **Happy, Ashley** 1:01:13

I do not remember.

It was a small sampling.

I didn't listen to like 400 of them, but it was a small sampling and yeah, they were just down power lines, traffic hazards and they were very random like medicals that were sprinkled in.

But they weren't related to the storm.

CV **Chris Violette** 1:01:31

That's what I would have guessed.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:01:37

Good, Chris.

CV **Chris Violette** 1:01:40
Now. Yep. Thank you.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:01:41
OK, alrighty.
Any other questions about the storm?

NB **Neal, Barbara** 1:01:50
Steven has his hand up.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:01:51
Steven.

SL **Steve Locke** 1:01:53
Sorry, I'm in my car so hope.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:01:54
Steven then drew.

SL **Steve Locke** 1:01:57
Is the audio working?

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:01:59
You're very, very, very.
Can't hear you very well.
No, not much volume.

SL **Steve Locke** 1:02:08
One second is that working.
Any better go to go, go to, go to Drew and come back, go to Drew and come back.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:02:12

Go, go, go.

OK, got you, drew.

DH **Drew Hazelton** 1:02:19

I was just looking for the follow up on kind of what happened at Westminster.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:02:24

OK, we'll get to that with Chris probably.

Barb, is that correct K?

NB **Neal, Barbara** 1:02:29

Yes. Yep.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:02:30

Alright, Steve, go ahead and I'm gonna repeat it. 'cause. I can hear you somewhat.

SL **Steve Locke** 1:02:35

Is this is this any better?

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:02:37

Yes.

SL **Steve Locke** 1:02:39

OK.

So first I love the data.

Good points.

A couple things I'm just wondering is is Barb, do you have recommendations or are you gonna bring recommendations or is this the cost of doing business?

Is this you know these we can never. I don't think you ever can be prepared.

100 you know to for for an event like this where you're gonna hit every call within 90 seconds or within. You know, the 90th percentile.

But it does seem it does seem like this was a pretty significant problem, especially to me.

The Saint.

Albans, you know, going offline.

For, you know, really voluntarily going offline.

I think that's one of the ones that I'd be curious to know. Did they have? Were they?

Were they just staffed with what their staffing was looked like that night? So, so

again, look, I'm just looking more for some longer term recommendations here.

It would be nice to hear something back on steps.

We could take.

RM Roger Marcoux 1:03:33

I have some ideas I've been working with Barb, but I'm gonna let Barb go.

NB Neal, Barbara 1:03:38

I think one of the things that I noted through this and actually through our regular call handling experience right is the power of dedicated 911 call takers, so.

If you recall, I don't have the the report right in front of me.

Now, hang on one second.

For example, Williston had.

SL Steve Locke 1:04:05

There was a report.

NB Neal, Barbara 1:04:05

A.

SL Steve Locke 1:04:06

There was a report a couple of yeah, there was that report a couple years ago that showed the power of a dedicated call taker.

NB Neal, Barbara 1:04:08

Yeah.

Yes, right.

Exactly. So Williston had about a 56% availability rate.

Remember we talked about that earlier. So of the 12 hours or of the of the four

hours multiplied by the number of positions they have, they were available about

57% of the time and they handled an enormous call volume because of the way they do things.

Operationally, which is really to have people dedicated to 911 call taking?

So so I'm not.

I don't have a cohesive recommendation around that other than to note that that is a powerful resource to have dedicated 911.

And I think it might be helpful to hear from Chris now about what happened in Westminster. Just kind of an informal observation is they they had the people working, the people were working in Westminster doing their normal functions.

It was a question of how many of those people were available to take 911 calls.

So we're going to pick on you a little bit, Chris, but you and I've already talked about this.

So if you want to let us know, kind of what happened and what what, what you're doing to to look at that?

PC **Pedoty, Christian** 1:05:37

Yeah. Thanks Bob.

And I know we had, we had talked about and I'll get to that in a moment about dedicated 911 call takers. But for the storm itself, I mean, there's no way to sugarcoat it.

I mean, things could have been done a lot better in hindsight.

I do know why for showing four or five call of call takers that are logged in, for example, four or five people that are logged in to 911.

I think that the optics of that can be deceiving, and even on on on our side of the fence because it implies that all of them are actively taking not one calls whereas.

Few of them may just be logged into 911 because they wanna use the mapping feature.

Or whatever the case may be, I think. I think in that case that's that's what was happening here.

So it might.

It might have been showing we had four or five people that could take 91 calls, but that was not reality.

The fact was, is we had one person who was taking dedicated 911 calls and the only reason that person was dedicated to 911 was because they were a trainee who was

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certified in 911, but they weren't certified as a dispatcher yet. So.

Really.

And that came in handy.

Thank God we had that right.

But there's no doubt they could have been a much better job with.

At least having another couple people during the during that time frame to be logged in and accepting calls and not busied out, so I've had.

Not only with you, Barb, but I've had many conversations on my side of the fence as to why and how this can't happen again.

And it shouldn't happen again.

And so we've been talking about for a while and even on these meetings like.

Trying to model some of the stuff we're doing in Williston in Westminster because again, it hasn't been the norm down there to have dedicated 911 call takers.

So what we've done now is we're going to be hiring.

Right now we have about four people in the queue that we're going to be putting into the next 911 class.

I believe that's in early December now.

And with the intention that again, they're part time, but they're going to be available during those busy hours.

So let's just say for argument's sake, noon to midnight type hours.

Which we're going to see how it works out with those four part timers.

Maybe hire a couple more part timers after that fact and if if things if things improve, if we see that noticeable improvement. Of course with our catchment stats, that's one thing we hope we don't have an event like this any time soon obviously.

But I can only imagine that having that that dedicated staff is going to help us if we if we actually see that the 911 is only the part timers are only having a marginal effect.

On on our catchment rates then we're what we're proposing and what we're looking to do is maybe take a couple of our ECD positions. One or two of our ECD positions, full time positions and transfer those into 911 exclusive positions.

There's some.

There's some inherent concerns with doing that, but I've already had those discussions and I'm prepared to do that if need be, to have those folks available. And I think again, I think overall it would just be a huge help within the peace app. So I think there's going.

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To be more to come on this and you know there's going to be a lot to see on how it works out with these, these call takers that we have.

That are coming on board.

But.

There's there's no, there's no doubt that there was some things that could have been done much better at Westminster during the storm I. And that's with understanding that everybody was inundated at the time. So I'm not trying to imply that things were rosy and everything was easy, but.

I think the benefit we also had in Williston at the time was we had.

Slightly higher available staff that we pulled in from our day tour that were willing to stay over.

We didn't have that bench depth in Westminster.

We had nobody like no extra people, if you will.

So I think that helped us too in Williston, but overall they they did, like I said, a great job, I think.

With that sort of a thing.

So but any any other questions from anyone about that?

I know that's just a general overview.

RM Roger Marcoux 1:10:12

Chris, where are you at with?

Your your staffing versus you know what you'd like to have in both places, Westminster and Williston?

PC Pedoty, Christian 1:10:26

Yeah. So in in Westminster, we're currently at 4 vacancies and and that recently has when I say 4 vacancies. I should also add, we also have a supervisor that is out currently out on FMLA, who we anticipate is going to be retiring soon.

So really, that's another vacancy.

And.

I think we've been at different levels recently like we've hired a good amount of people in Westminster. Unfortunately through the training process, we've lost, you know half of that.

So we'll, you know, we'll hire 5.

RM Roger Marcoux 1:10:59
Yeah.

PC Pedoty, Christian 1:11:00

And that's that's been the general way it's been going.

So we were down to nearly one or two vacancies for a day or two at least on paper, I should say, because those folks weren't done with training yet.

So that's where we are in Westminster.

In Williston, we still have our 11 vacancies and again, one of those is a supervisory position and and that's substantial obviously.

There's no doubt it's a it's a substantial numbers.

And and with that, we hope.

We're we're non-stop hiring.

This has been happening way before my time, obviously, and we continue to be on non-stop hiring at both of these locations.

Right now, again, we're targeting Williston to try to get some of those numbers down a little bit more.

And of course, we have these part timers that we're hiring in Westminster at the moment.

But you know, overall I think when when I saw the last stats catchment stats that came out, I was I was pleased because I saw the.

Despite this incident, of course that we had in August with the storm Debbie, our stats for September went up in Westminster. We're at 89.79 for for Westminster for a catchment and at 95%.

For Williston.

So I thought that that's that's a positive trend in that sense because we've probably been lingering closer to that 87% maybe in Westminster 8687, that type of a thing and it's positive that we're getting closer to that 90.

Percentile and and of course if we did do better and and and get even higher and get closer what Willston has, I think that's going to be, of course the goal.

RM Roger Marcoux 1:12:46
Yeah. Thanks.

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We're we're doing a storm or at that time in into this day, we're still down 2%, two vacancies here in Lamoille. And I'm wondering if you go through each piece app, you're going to see that everybody has some significant issues.

One thing.

That, you know, we have to consider as a board is are we staffed properly in terms of peace apps.

You know, do we have?

You know, would one more piece app which brings in another another group of of or or another region.

With the labor market there is that something that we have to look at and I talked to Barb about do we stand up a Cape, an emergency capability out of the out of the 911 board like we did for for COVID.

I think Ashley and and and.

Howie, I think at the time actually helped out there.

Answer calls there.

It's not.

It's not something that they wanna do, but it's another location because this was a windstorm.

And but what happens if this is a school shooting or something like this? You know, I think as a board we have to give this some thought.

So Drew, you got your hand up.

DH **Drew Hazelton** 1:14:19

Yeah, I'm. I'm new to the board, so I don't understand exactly how the positions are funded, but it sounds like there was 11 seated positions that were funded.

How many positions? I'm assuming those are funded through the 901 board.

Are normally funded for a typical day.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:14:40

So what you're asking, Barb, I think, is how many seats are expected to be.

Occupied. Go ahead.

NB **Neal, Barbara** 1:14:50

Right. So there are there are 26 positions out in the field that could be staffed.

Typically we run between 10 to 14.

I would say, and I'm looking for nods from Jared and Ashley.

10 to 14 call takers logged in and available to take.

Call it at any given time fluctuates through the day.

It might dip down below 10 at night actually.

In terms of funding, the 911 board pays the psaps essentially a stipend.

Based on.

Based on the call volume percentage that they answer so.

I can get you those figures through.

It's a. It's a. It's a little bit of a complicated formula that we use, but we use the the catchment area metric and we have a pot of PSAP reimbursement funds.

That's about 1.1 million that then gets distributed among the P sets based on call volume and meeting those.

Those metrics.

DH **Drew Hazelton** 1:15:59

So it's not.

NB **Neal, Barbara** 1:15:59

That answer your question.

DH **Drew Hazelton** 1:15:59

It's not an expect, yeah.

So it's not an expectation that a certain piece app have a certain number of seats on at a certain time, but there's no, you know, expectation that, you know St.

Albans is gonna have two, and Westminster's gonna have four or anything like that.

NB **Neal, Barbara** 1:16:13

Correct. We have traditionally stayed out of the operations aspect as far as staffing goes.

The way it's defined in the MOU is that the piece Apple staff so that it answers 90% of its primary call catchment area.

The on an annual basis.

So it's it's quite vague and it doesn't say you know you have to have 50% or more

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and it's measured over that longer period of time.

So, Roger, I'm gonna go to Jerrod, if, if you're OK with that. Yes. OK, go ahead, Jared.

RM Roger Marcoux 1:16:48

Yes. Yep.

LJ Lamere, Jared 1:16:50

Yeah. No, I was just gonna elaborate.

I I think you nailed what Drew was getting at. It used to be you had to have so many positions staff, but then we went to the metrics based so that it was up to the peace out to staff accordingly to meet those metrics.

RM Roger Marcoux 1:17:06

Oh, we got Steve lock on.

SL Steve Locke 1:17:12

OK, is and we haven't adjusted that funding and the the total amount of funding we split or that's the question. Have we adjusted that?

NB Neal, Barbara 1:17:23

Yes it it. It went up by 3% in FY25 in the current year and in the budget for FY26, we've factored in another 3% increase in that amount of funds. It went for a very, very long time like over well since I.

SL Steve Locke 1:17:24

Over over the last several years.

NB Neal, Barbara 1:17:42

Been director and I don't know how long before that.

So over 10 years, with no changes in the pot of reimbursement funds.

SL Steve Locke 1:17:53

I mean to just let you understand, it does not cover like the salary and benefits of a full of one person.

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So there, yeah, they're getting partial coverage for a person.

And if someone could put my hand down, I'd appreciate it. I don't.

I can't figure out how to do it on my phone.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:18:10

The tape over it, Steve.

So you're good.

SL **Steve Locke** 1:18:13

Thank you.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:18:13

Lance, you got question.

BL **Burnham, Lance** 1:18:17

Yeah. Thank you, Chris.

This is probably a question directed towards you.

And maybe you haven't done enough research, but I I also have my own personal opinions about this, but would it help if the board made a recommendation to DPS about having full time 911 call takers rather than those positions coming from the ECD positions?

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:18:44

The ECD is is what guys.

BL **Burnham, Lance** 1:18:47

Ecd is.

PC **Pedoty, Christian** 1:18:47

Where she got.

BL **Burnham, Lance** 1:18:47

Ecd is a dispatch plus a 911 call taker position.

It is if you're. If you're. Yeah. If you're high by DPS, you're hired as as an ECD.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:18:53

Combine combine position.

Yeah.

Gotcha. Thank you.

BL **Burnham, Lance** 1:19:00

So Chris, that's that's my question.

PC **Pedoty, Christian** 1:19:03

Yeah, and it's a good question. I think as far as and you do, you mean that overall like between Williston and Westminster or you just referring to Westminster?

BL **Burnham, Lance** 1:19:15

Well, I think overall and I'll be blunt, I think that the, I think we can lose ECD positions to a full time 911 call taker because we have seen benefits of that just through our part timers through Williston. So.

But I certainly don't want to step on anybody's toes and I welcome.

PC **Pedoty, Christian** 1:19:37

I heard a lot too through some discussions because, you know, my initial thought was, hey, we'll just, you know, we'll just pop a couple of these ECD spots over.

Especially because we have a couple of vacancies now anyway.

But you know, I know that's kind of like frowned upon in a certain sense. It has to do with, you know, the 901 positions are lesser positions in a sense of pay and et cetera, this and that. And once we give up those E.

Positions.

My understanding is we probably will never get them back again.

So this is just what I hear through the through the through the Grapevine, right?

But having said that.

I certainly don't think that would be a bad thing. You know, as far as recommendations are concerned.

Because then again, maybe it you know, if not pressure, maybe that's not the right word.

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But I think it it it shows a little bit support in in that realm just to say that there is an importance for this sort of a thing.

Again, I think we're trying to see what we can do with part timers because we've had that success up here in Williston.

But I'm not saying that that's going to totally address the concern, you know, I mean, as you know, with part timers, you're kind of like at their whim for availability and.

BL **Burnham, Lance** 1:20:56

Point though.

I mean, you would not be a part timer. You'd be a full time employee with expectations and and you know, I'll, I'll pivot that to Barb or or Roger or Steve is would the board ever consider making that recommendation.

SL **Steve Locke** 1:21:13

So I'm gonna just jump in 'cause, I think no matter where you place them 'cause, you could put them any place and just, well, is a dedicated positions are gonna answer the most calls. And if you could have dedicated positions and that was the first stop that they.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:21:14

No.

SL **Steve Locke** 1:21:28

Go to and perhaps not for the regional peace taps who want that catchment area, but it wouldn't matter whether it was Westminster or Williston, it would still be a part of the total state.

Catchment area. Those dedicated positions are gonna answer the majority of the calls.

And so to me, I think that's that is definitely the way to go before we open up another piece to app or did anything like that dedicated call takers take lessen the burden the most.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:21:57

K.

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I'm gonna go to Chris and then I'll I'll say something and and then in the interest of time, we've gotta move on.

But this is, I think, that we perhaps should consider some kind of a subcommittee or something to continue this conversation.

So Chris, while?

CV **Chris Violette** 1:22:18

Yeah. My I was just going to say 'cause along with that is this must have had a significant impact on these peace apps to then dispatch.

You know, calls to public safety because they're tied up on 911 calls.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:22:34

So to your point, Chris, and this is what I wanted to say for those of you that are not involved in the, you know, dispatching business, what was going on in let's say Lamoille is I think we called in an extra person and just the amount of calls.

Coming in on 7 digit phones or something that that isn't, that isn't really.

Shown in the the excellent slide presentation and the work that.

Barb and Jared and everybody did.

So it it's not like people are sitting around doing crossword puzzles when something like this is happening.

Everybody is right out.

Straight stress to the Max.

My point is, is that this was a wind storm.

What happens if this is a violent event?

Where the the stress level is through the roof for our call takers and and dispatchers.

And I'll I'll finish out by saying.

Rest and I think I had this conversation with Lance.

Chris Padotti that the fact that.

Call takers are not financially recognized in the same way that a dispatcher is is here are dispatchers.

They're combined, but you could have a call taker who's recognized in a lesser way in DPS than a dispatcher. That call taker is dealing with a suicidal subject.

And so on and so forth.

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Hopefully you get my my point.

I think that there you're on mute, Chris.

PC Pedoty, Christian 1:24:22

Oh, am I off?

Can you hear me?

RM Roger Marcoux 1:24:24

Yep, you're good.

Now I can hear you.

PC Pedoty, Christian 1:24:26

I could agree with you more. I mean I I think that's just the nature of what that position title is right now and what that pay grade is.

That was, unbeknownst to me, because I really had no idea that they were paid less, to be honest with you.

Until not that long ago, when we started to investigate these positions and I said, wow, that's that's interesting.

But I I agree with you.

I think they're doing an incredibly important job.

And and they should be compensated like a like anyone else.

I I I think.

I think I think overall.

The general consensus is that the ECD position, the ECD position is more challenging because there's a lot more to learn.

There's a lot more juggling that they have to do.

I'm assuming that that is the reason that they are paid higher.

You know, and even with training, it takes us to, you know, about six months to train an ECD work.

NB Neal, Barbara 1:25:21

To me.

PC Pedoty, Christian 1:25:25

To to train, you know, a 911 person.

So again, that's not.

That's not to minimize it.

That's a great thing.

I mean, it's great that we can get the 901 folks.

On board a lot faster, but I'm assuming that that has something to do with the pay grade, just the amount of complexity that's involved with the ECD position overall.

RM Roger Marcoux 1:25:45

It's sort of none of my business to.

It's just me speaking as a the sheriff, so not the chair.

PC Pedoty, Christian 1:25:49

I.

I I.

BL Burnham, Lance 1:25:51

It would require it. It would require a reclass the last time the 911 position was reclass was probably in the 1980s, so I think it's just a reclass it it's it's a painful process, but it's necessary.

I I think it to me the writing's on the wall.

It's to me it's it's right there.

RM Roger Marcoux 1:26:14

I'll throw an open invitation for you to come up here to moil and and you know, we can go out to lunch and take a look.

PC Pedoty, Christian 1:26:19

Yeah.

RM Roger Marcoux 1:26:23

And maybe I could get Lance's down the road.

Get him to come up to. He's real familiar with our operation, but just to get a

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different perspective as well.

Alright. Last question is Jared and then Barb, we're going to go on to budget, Jared.

L **Lamere, Jared** 1:26:39

Oh yeah, no, I was just.

I had my hand raised 'cause. I was gonna suggest doing the reclassification for the 91 position to get the you know that.

But Lance covered it.

Thank you.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:26:49

OK.

This is excellent conversation.

Everybody, this is, you know, not a rubber stamp committee and and I appreciate.

Thoughts on this important, significant event so far?

NB **Neal, Barbara** 1:27:04

OK, excellent.

Well, thank you.

Let's move on to the FY26 budget overview.

So we have just recently actually completed the budget development for FY26.

We it will be submitted by our financial Director later today to finance and management.

Which means if there needs to be any changes, I should make them today.

We came in at a 5.3 million.

Which is up 9% from the current fiscal year.

It's up that amount because I have included or or reintroduced. The idea of this \$300,000 capital replacement or system upgrade fund set aside funds that had been in place many years ago before the Vermont Universal Service Fund started to have all its issues.

If I did not include that 300,000 in this budget request, we would come in right at finance and management's recommendation of a 3% increase.

So the reason I included it now the 300,000 is well, there's two reasons.

One, it's really helpful to have that money that builds up over the course of five

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years, which is typically when we need to do a system upgrade or.

Or even a system replacement.

If those funds have been building up, then we have a big chunk of what's going to be needed to make those upgrades or replacements.

And the other reason is in the last legislative session, the Vermont Universal Service Fund was fixed.

So as you recall well, it was, let me say this, it was restructured so that it is going to bring in more revenue.

Than it had been under the previous structure.

So they have changed it from a percentage fee on retail to.

Sales in Vermont to a per line fee, so lines that are able to access 911 would pay a certain amount to the Vermont Universal Service Fund and then those funds are dispersed in the same waterfall that.

Has existed all along, so several programs are ahead of the 911 board.

Then there we are and we take the biggest chunk of those funds.

And then they also added behind US988 funding.

So because the the Universal Service Fund is going to have more revenue coming into it, I believe I can justify that \$300,000 increase essentially into our base budget, right?

So it'd be built back in and there for future years.

So unless the board says otherwise.

I intend to continue with that.

You know to advocate for that.

So I guess I'll pause here and say if the board see if the board's going to say otherwise, so.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:30:19

I I think you you proceed as as you're doing any other.

Thoughts or comments?

OK, babe.

NB **Neal, Barbara** 1:30:30

OK.

Excellent. OK.

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So next on the list is the tariff study update.

So you should all recall that we partnered with the Company 911 authority for them to do a comprehensive review of the existing 911 tariffs in Vermont.

These this is a little refresher. The tariffs were filed by the regulated telephone companies at the inception of the 911 system back in the 90s.

It the tariffs provide those companies with a cost recovery mechanism essentially for two things.

One is for database maintenance activities, so maintaining their customer data in their in their records so that the correct information displays to a 911 call taker. We pay about \$112,000 a year to among the regulated companies for those activities.

And we pay.

I don't have the figure right in front of me.

Sorry, I should have written it down in the neighbourhood of \$40,000.

I'm sorry \$20,000 per year for the other component of tariffs, which is trunking charges.

So that's the equipment that it takes to deliver a 911 call into the 911 system. So a 2011 study suggested that the board could save.

Significant money.

Especially on database maintenance costs. If the tariffs were reexamined and reexamined, is what's happening with this current study.

So the the current study will review and validate or not validate what what was.

Uncovered, or what was concluded in the 2011 work, and it'll essentially answer the question from the legislature of what does Vermont pay for 911 tariffs?

How does that compare to other jurisdictions?

And to the actual cost of doing that work.

911 authority is currently in the stakeholder outreach portion of the project, so they're talking to they've posed several questions to the impacted telephone companies here in Vermont about the tariffs and how they it impacts their ability to deliver 911 calls. We have draft and.

Final reports due from 911 authority by the end of this year, actually.

I think closer to the beginning of December.

And my thought is, once the report is out, we will likely want to have a special meeting sometime in December to discuss the report and develop the board's position.

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What? What? The position the board will take with the legislature based on any report conclusions that come out.

So work is underway is the short way to say where we are with the tariff study update?

Questions on the tariff study.

Next on the list is the Emergency Communications Training coordinator position. Unfortunately, in the most recent posting for our long vacant training coordinator position, we were not able to successfully hire a new person, so we plan to repost that position in November.

RM Roger Marcoux 1:33:48

No.

NB Neal, Barbara 1:34:04

Probably in the middle of November and take applications.

Through the end of the year and begin a new interviewing process early next year. Between now and when we post the position, Ashley and I will be working with the state HR folks to make sure we've got.

All available kind of outreach and recruiting mechanisms in place and ready to go when we when we post the position and hopefully we'll have better luck with the next process.

I will say that the the vacancy in the training department, so Ashley is a one woman show right now in in training and has been for a while and she's responsible for all of the training programs, the curriculum, development, quality control, quality assurance, public education and outreach and.

So it's a lot and with one with being down one person. Well, let me step back.

That's a lot with two people.

So being down to one position is.

You know, we we have discussed the need for a more robust QA QC program, so quality control program.

I've I've begun to do some preliminary research on alternatives to help us address or help us improve our quality control activities, which might include a consulting services to come in and help with that might include perhaps part time employees coming in to help with that.

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Umm, and perhaps along with that part time employees, there could also be a piece of this dedicated 911 call taking.

So I'm just spitballing ideas right now that Ashley and I have talked about.

I'll have more information on both of those possibilities at A at a future meeting, but I think it's fair to say on the quality control piece that even when we have.

The the Training Department, fully staffed at two, it's not possible for those two people to meet.

The the recommended.

Call review of seven to 10% of the of the 911 call handling volume on an annual basis.

So you're talking about if you go with 10% because the math is easier, you know you're talking about reviewing 25,000 calls.

A year which is a reach with two, we've always done the best that we can, but I think that there's there's some room for improvement there.

So I'll be coming back with ideas.

An app.

So questions on the training coordinator vacancy?

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:36:53

No, but always sending accolades towards Ashley. We're just very lucky to have you and you know that you're appreciated.

HA **Happy, Ashley** 1:37:03

Thank you.

NB **Neal, Barbara** 1:37:06

While we're sending accolades, I meant to say this earlier. A couple people commented on the data from the tropical Storm Debbie report.

Don't thank me.

Thank Jared, because he did all of that work and we wouldn't have been able to present as clear a picture of the situation without without that.

So thank you, Jared. If I didn't say it.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:37:25

Jared how?

Jared, how many hours did it take you to do that?

L **Lamere, Jared** 1:37:33

Hey, bet you say a good twenty solid hours of, you know, cause a lot of the I3 logs that call taker availability. You have to comb through the logs.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:37:37

Yeah.

L **Lamere, Jared** 1:37:43

So it was.

It was a good undertaking over multiple weeks so.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:37:46

Well, yeah, no, that that's a great job.

And that's exactly the sort of thing that's really gonna help us get to the meat of what we need to be doing. So much appreciated.

NB **Neal, Barbara** 1:38:01

OK.

Next item is of the originating carrier rule making status.

So we have a couple things that we know we need to change in our we call it the telco rule, but really it's the originating carrier rule.

And and we are waiting for the tariff study that I mentioned a few minutes ago to be completed so that we can understand how that might impact where we want to go with the original call taking or carrier originated carrier rule so.

I should have maybe some more certainty around the timeline for that rule when we meet in January.

Dependent upon what we think the legislature may or may not do with the tariffs, so there's some moving pieces there, but it's not falling off the radar.

And then finally, I just wanted to give you a update on the public Safety Communications task force.

This is the the task force that I Co chair with Commissioner Morrison from.

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Department of Public Safety we are then we are tasked with oversight or the development of a plan for a statewide interoperable public safety communication system.

So this is really addition addressing the dispatch side of the house.

The task force continues to meet every other week. In September, we held four regional town halls that were attended by over 100 and 51st responders.

For emergency communications personnel, I know Chris from DPS attended. I believe all four of those.

So I think it was pretty good, pretty good outreach effort. We learned a lot of the things and documented a lot of things that we all kind of knew about, you know anecdotally.

But now there feels like there's a little bit more structure around what everybody's experiencing experiencing.

We do have upcoming actually next week.

Two virtual listening sessions.

For this is intended for input from the the general public.

So a broader audience, though anyone is welcome to attend.

And then in November, there will be a series.

Of specific subject area workshops going on to discuss various topics.

Those topics are not completely finalized yet, but as an example they may include CAD and technology conversations.

Governance, funding, conversations, coverage issues, and operational considerations.

But we're kind of finalizing where we wanna go with the workshops as we speak.

There is a draft design report due from mission critical partners.

Who is our system planning consultant? In December and then finalization of that report in January of next year?

So things are moving along.

With the task force, it's still there's no preconceived.

Notion of where this is going to end up.

So we're keeping our minds open and and just doing all the data collection and inventory at this point. And that is all I have.

RM Roger Marcoux 1:41:21

OK.

Thank you.

Is there any questions on?

Anything that Barb's just gone through?

Hearing none, is there any new business?

Hearing none, I'll just add a a comment here before we go in.

I'll get together with bar because I want to make sure that that we we follow through on this tropical storm. Debbie.

You know.

Report and that we actually take what we think we've learned from it and maybe get some of us together.

In a subcommittee or some other.

Format to to continue to.

To discuss this and and see you know what we might be able to do to help us in the next situation like that.

Here in my area, we've had three floods in 18 months.

In from the law enforcement perspective, it's absolutely getting crazier and crazier out there.

So we need to, if we have some kind of another natural disaster like this or.

Heaven forbid a mass shooting or something like that.

We need to sit around and have a table top, maybe an internally about. You know what these scenarios would look like and and really what's the most cost effective way but.

A practical way that we can kind of mitigate that.

So I just kind of want to throw that out there.

And I'll get done pontificating and going to ask to establish a new.

The next meeting date, Sony.

Ha ha ha.

NB Neal, Barbara 1:43:39

I would recommend earlier I'm throwing my two cents in here just in case we have things we wanna address right out of the.

You know, right at the very beginning of the legislative session.

RM Roger Marcoux 1:43:52

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I agree.

Does that initially work for everybody or or most of us?

OK, let's shoot for that silly and and now motion to adjourn.

Alright, Chris. Thank you. Second.

BL **Burnham, Lance** 1:44:18
2nd.

RM **Roger Marcoux** 1:44:19
Oh, Brian, thank you and any discussion.
Hearing none vote on adjourning signify by saying aye. We'll see everybody next
year.
Thank you very much for your participation and a good meeting. I I think so. Take
care.

BL **Burnham, Lance** 1:44:40
Bye.

NB **Neal, Barbara** 1:44:40
Thank you very much.

□ **Johnson, Soni** stopped transcription