

## **E-911 Consolidation**

There are two Legislative Bills, S.33 and H.87 that have been introduced in the 2015 session that address transferring the administration of the Enhanced 911 system over to the Department of Public Safety. The emergency service providers in Vermont, the ones most impacted by this change were not asked to provide any input into this consolidation idea.

We are asking that this legislation be put on hold, which will allow the emergency service agencies the time to discuss this change idea and provide feedback to the Legislature.

There is one, E-911 telephone system in Vermont. The E-911 mission involves working with telecommunications companies, town governments, data collection and management, and specialized equipment. It connects callers in distress with specially trained Call Takers. Answering the 911 call, verifying the type of emergency, location, and what agency to call takes a minute or less, on the other hand, dispatching the emergency services could consume minutes or hours of a dispatcher's time. A major accident, fire or rescue call involving multiple agencies could be hours or more in duration.

Call taking and Dispatching are two different functions. Vermont was the first state in the nation to have a state wide E-911 system. When Vermont started up the Enhanced 911 system state wide the idea was to have the same person answer the 911 call and do the dispatching of the emergency service organization that would handle the emergency.

This concept has its advantages and disadvantages. Even though the two functions are different at the time they strived to maximize existing personnel, real estate, and other overhead cost.

There have been no conversations about the transition, timetables, end game plans for the E-911 System, and the continuity of the 911 services. The parties involved, E-911 Board, staff, PSAP Managers or the end users, (the emergency service providers) have not been asked to provide any input into this change.

The lack of planning is evidence by the fact that the E-911 Board was not informed of the plans to move the entire E- 911 Board and system over to DPS until one hour before it was announced by the Governor in his State of the State Address.

The present setup was created so that the end users, the emergency service providers, had representation on the 911 Board and had input on how things were done. With the proposed change it will be one person rule, the Commissioner of Public Safety.

This may be the right time to separate Call Taking and Dispatching. E911 Board establishes the training and standards that have to be met by Call Takers. It may be time to look at having the E- 911 Board have control of and handle all call taking.

Again, we are asking this committee as we have done with the dispatch issue to give the emergency services time to discuss this issue and bring back to the Legislature a plan that we feel would improve how we do things in Vermont.

The safety of our citizens, visitors to our great state and the emergency service works out on our roads serving the public, is what we are most concerned about.

Thank you for your time.

Should there be any questions I will do my best to answer them, or get you the answer.

Thanks again,

Robert Kilpeck  
Past President  
VT. State Firefighters Assoc.  
Member VT. Fire Rescue Coalition  
Past Chief Brandon