



# Vermont Enhanced 911 Board

OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW – APRIL 2018

**Barbara Neal, Executive Director**

# VERMONT ENHANCED 911 BOARD

## Operational Overview

April 2018

- **Enhanced 911 Board Overview**

- The Enhanced 911 Board is the single governmental agency responsible for statewide enhanced 911. (30 V.S.A § 7053)
- The 911 Board is responsible for the development of policy, system design, and standards and procedures related to the statewide 911 system. The 911 Board consults with various state agencies and local community service providers to meet these responsibilities. (30 V.S.A § 7053)
- The 911 Board consists of nine Board members, appointed by the Governor, one each representing state, local and county law enforcement, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Service, municipalities, and three members of the public. The Governor appoints the Board Chair and Vice-Chair. (30 V.S.A § 7052)
- The 911 Board is required to meet at least four times a year and holds special and/or emergency meetings as necessary. (30 V.S.A § 7052)
- The 911 Board and the statewide 911 system are funded through the Vermont Universal Service Fund as appropriated to the Enhanced 911 special fund annually by the General Assembly. (30 V.S.A § 7054)
  - The FY19 budget request is \$4,831,183.00 (down slightly from \$4,832,613.00 in FY18)
- The Board appoints, subject to the approval of the Governor, an Executive Director, who serves at the pleasure of the Board. (30 V.S.A § 7052)
  - The Executive Director's duties and responsibilities are assigned by the Board and include:
    - Provides leadership and direction for all activities associated with the operation of the statewide 911 system and program
    - Directs day to day agency operations and supervises nine member staff, consultants and contractors
    - Establishes system performance benchmarks, measurements, and compliance
    - Develops and manages annual budget
    - Serves as the Board's primary spokesperson to constituent groups, telecommunications providers, local/state/federal governmental and legislative officials and the public.
- Board Staff currently consists of the Executive Director, nine full-time staff members, and one part-time administrative support person. Staff member responsibilities fall into three broad categories:
  - IT Management
    - Provide 24 x 7 coverage related to IT management of the 911 system and system contractor
  - Database Administration
    - Development and maintenance of multiple databases critical to the operation of the NG911 system
  - Training/Communications
    - Responsible for training & certification of approximately 100 call-takers as well as quality control, and public education and outreach

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- **Vermont 911 System Overview**

- The 911 Board currently contracts with Consolidated Communications for a fully-hosted, Next Generation 911 (NG911) system that facilitates the delivery of 911 calls and text messages, and associated location data, to certified call-takers at the six Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs)
  - Vermont was among the first in the nation to move to NG 911 technology.
  - The Vermont 911 system continues to be positioned well to adapt to changes in the way people communicate – currently demonstrated by our ability to handle text to 911 messages in all PSAPs.
- The 911 Board and its staff ensure:
  - Vermont 911 calls are routed to the appropriate PSAP and answered by a certified call-taker
  - Accurate and complete location and responder data is presented to the call-taker
  - the caller is connected with the dispatch agency for the appropriate responders
  - the caller is asked all appropriate questions and provided with any needed pre-arrival instruction in accordance with Board-approved call handling standards and protocols
- The statewide 911 system processes approximately 200,000 calls and text messages each year.
- All call-takers are fully-trained and certified in accordance with industry best practice and national standards.
- The 911 Board does not have oversight over:
  - Dispatch agencies or their operations
  - Emergency response agencies.

- **Current PSAP Configuration Overview**

- Six Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs)
  - Each PSAP is responsible for answering calls from a primary catchment area (see attached PSAP configuration map)
  - Each PSAP is also responsible for handling overflow calls from all other PSAPs.
  - Two Department of Public Safety PSAPs:
    - Located in Williston and Westminster
    - Answer approximately 68% of the total 911 call volume
    - House a combined 16 911 workstations
  - Four regional PSAPs:
    - Operated by the Hartford, Shelburne, St Albans Police Departments and the Lamoille County Sheriff's Department
    - Answer about 32% of total 911 call volume.
    - The regional PSAPs each house two funded 911 workstations. In addition, two unfunded workstations are currently housed at two of the regional PSAPs.

## Operational Overview April 2018

### • Recent Initiatives

- January 2017: Technical Review and Evaluation of existing 911 system conducted by outside consultant.
  - Throughout 2017 - completed implementation of several critical recommendations related to the system design/security
  - Several recommendations would require contractual changes and the Board continues these items.
- July 2017: Implementation of a new PSAP reimbursement model
  - Moved from reimbursement based solely on number of positions to a model that includes a portion of the reimbursement being based on call volume.
  - To receive the full call volume reimbursement, the PSAP must answer >90% of their primary catchment area calls.
  - Total PSAP reimbursement funds remain the same, at \$1,080,000/yr; but are distributed more equitably
- December 2017: Reached Final System Acceptance with system provider
- March 2018: Issued NG911 System RFP
  - Current contract with Consolidated expires in July 2020

### • Initiatives Moving Forward

- Ongoing Evaluation of Priorities - We have a small, but effective, team. Careful and ongoing evaluation of Board staff operations is critical to ensuring staff expertise is applied appropriately across many competing priorities such as:
  - Leverage NG911 technology to improve service to Vermonters through initiatives including:
    - Implementation of LVF – Location Validation Functionality.
      - A tool that allows telephone service providers to ensure a customer’s address is accurate by comparing it to specific points in the GIS data. This will be improvement over the current MSAG based validation.
    - CARE Program Revisited
      - Currently working with Vermont Emergency Mgmt, the Vermont Dept of Health, 211 and the United Ways of Vermont to review and assess an existing program called CARE (Citizens Assistance Registry for Emergencies).
      - This program allows citizens who would need special assistance in an extended power outage, isolation, or evacuation event to be identified in the 911 GIS data and made available to responders during such events.
    - Improving Wireless Location Accuracy
      - Monitoring the development of possible solutions that could help improve wireless location accuracy
  - Monitor compliance with existing FCC requirements for wireless location accuracy.

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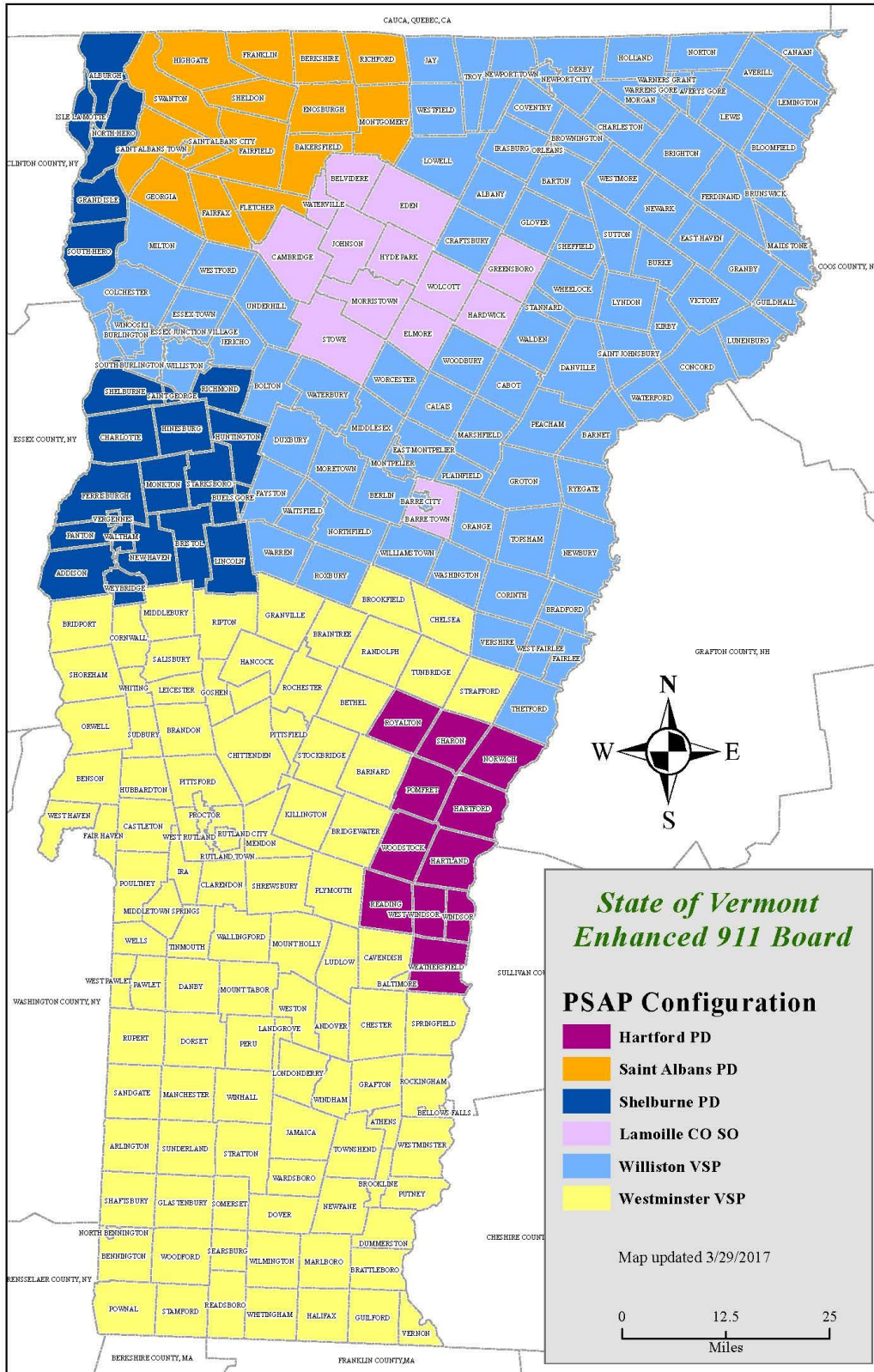
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- Rulemaking – a continuing priority is the review and updating of existing rules; and identification of any additional rules that may be needed.
- Improved Multi-Line Telephone Systems/Enterprise Communications Systems Outreach/Compliance Program
  - Development of program to ensure MLTS/ECS end users have the same level of service that other users have
  - Currently work is focused on Vermont’s public schools where we have seen considerable improvement in the number of schools capable of sending complete and accurate location information to 911....expecting to be at about 44% by end of the year (up from just 20% in 2016)
  - Program will expand to all MLTS/ECS systems moving forward
- Continued Engagement in NG911 Discussions Nationwide
  - Board IT, GIS and Executive staff are frequently asked to provide guidance and information to other jurisdictions in various stages of NG911 implementation and to interested media/public. We welcome these opportunities to discuss our experience, share our lessons learned, and hear of others challenges and successes

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PSAP Configuration Map 2018