



# 9-1-1 CALL-TAKING/DISPATCH WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

January 2017

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE



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**Report to the Legislature  
by the  
9-1-1 Call-Taking/Dispatch Working Group  
January 2017**

## **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

The 9-1-1 Call-Taking/Dispatch Working Group was formed in the summer of 2016 and tasked with studying and making recommendations regarding the delivery of 9-1-1 call-taking services and dispatch services in Vermont. A number of previous studies related to 9-1-1 call-taking and dispatch services were reviewed and discussed over the course of multiple meetings.

### **Highlights of the Working Group Discussion**

- **Distinctions Between 9-1-1 Call-Taking and Dispatch Services:** A clear understanding of the distinction between 9-1-1 call-taking and dispatch services is critical to informed discussions regarding efficient and effective models for delivery of these services. 9-1-1 call-taking and dispatch services are two separate functions each providing a unique service using different, and specialized, equipment and networks. Each function requires specific training and each has different funding and governance structures.
- **The Role of the Department of Public Safety:** During the Working Group sessions, the Department of Public Safety (DPS) stated on behalf of Commissioner Keith Flynn that the department wishes to eliminate existing dispatch service for the non-state agencies they currently serve. DPS also restated its interest in discontinuing 9-1-1 call-taking services.
- **Insufficient Information to Provide Potential Fee Structures:** The Department of Public Safety did not provide the Working Group with information it requested related to potential fee structures based on the costs DPS incurs to provide dispatch service. This information is necessary to provide a realistic and comprehensive recommendation on possible fee structures for dispatch services around the state.
- **Impacts on Municipalities:** Any changes to the delivery of dispatch services will have potentially significant financial impacts on municipalities. In the event DPS ceases to provide dispatch service for non-state agencies, technological impacts will also be a challenge. Over the years, millions of taxpayer dollars have been invested in state infrastructure to improve dispatch capabilities. Individual municipalities have not had access to the same funds and will need to play “catch up” technologically.

### **Recommendations**

- **No Changes Recommended to Statewide 9-1-1 Call-Taking Operations:** The current model being used in Vermont is the most effective, efficient and cost-effective way to provide 9-1-1 call-taking service.

- **Recommendations Related to Dispatch Services:**
  - The Department of Public Safety should continue to provide dispatch services to the non-state agencies it currently serves, and should develop a fee structure to outline its costs for providing that service.
  - All entities that provide dispatch services should be allowed to recover the costs of those services.
  - Decisions about changes to dispatch services should be made at the local level.
  - The Working Group recommends local authorities consider regional partnerships to improve efficiencies where needed.

### **Conclusion**

The Working Group concludes that the delivery of 9-1-1 call-taking services is being provided in a reliable, cost-effective manner. The delivery of dispatch services is impacted by many variables, and any changes to the current model must consider the impacts on municipalities.

## Introduction

Act 118<sup>1</sup> of the 2016 legislative session created the 9-1-1 Call-Taking/Dispatch Working Group. The Working Group was directed to study and make recommendations regarding:

- the most efficient, reliable, and cost-effective means for providing statewide call-taking operations for Vermont's 9-1-1 system;
- the manner in which dispatch services are currently provided and funded, including funding disparity, and whether there should be any changes to this structure.

The Working Group was further instructed to take into consideration the "Enhanced 9-1-1 Board Operational and Organizational Report" dated September 4, 2015 and make findings related to the financing, operations, and geographical location of 9-1-1 call-taking services, including:

- a description of the number and nature of calls received,
- an evaluation of current and potential State and local partnerships with respect to the provision of such services.

The legislation directed the group's recommendations should strive to achieve the best possible outcome in terms of ensuring the health and safety of Vermonters and Vermont communities.

The Working Group membership, as defined by the statute, included representatives from each of the following organizations:

- Enhanced 9-1-1 Board - Chief Gary Taylor
- Department of Public Safety – Captain Tom Hango
- Vermont State Employees' Association – Sarah Copen
- Vermont League of Cities and Towns – Gwynn Zakov
- Vermont State Firefighters' Association – Kevin Goodhue
- Vermont Ambulance Association – Jim Finger
- Vermont Association of Chiefs of Police – Chief Leonard Stell
- Vermont Police Association – Chief George Merkel
- Vermont Sheriffs' Association – Sheriff Roger Marcoux
- Vermont Office of EMS/Injury Prevention – Chris Bell

The first meeting was held on June 28, 2016. The group elected Chief Gary Taylor as its Chair and Chris Bell as Vice-Chair. The minutes of each meeting are provided in Appendix A.

The Working Group was provided with multiple past studies that have been completed on the issues of 9-1-1 call-taking/operations and dispatch services funding/fees. A listing of those studies is provided in Appendix B. All of these reports are available from the Enhanced 9-1-1 Board upon request.

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<sup>1</sup> Act 118, 2016, an act related to law enforcement, 911 call taking, dispatch and training safety.  
<http://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Documents/2016/Docs/ACTS/ACT118/ACT118%20As%20Enacted.pdf>

## **Distinction Between 9-1-1 Call-Taking and Dispatch Services**

The Working Group members discussed the importance of clearly identifying the distinction between the 9-1-1 call-taking function and the dispatch function. 9-1-1 call-taking and dispatch services are two separate functions each providing a unique service using different, and specialized, equipment and networks. Each function requires specific training and each has different funding and governance structures.

A clear understanding of the distinction between 9-1-1 call-taking and dispatch services is critical to informed discussions regarding efficient and effective models for delivery of these services.

### **Unique Services**

- 9-1-1 is a statewide service focused on ensuring a 9-1-1 Request for Assistance<sup>2</sup> (RFA) is routed to the correct Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) to be answered by a certified 9-1-1 call-taker who can, using specialized equipment and databases, connect the individual to the appropriate emergency response agencies. Certified 9-1-1 call-takers provide Pre-Arrival Instructions for police, fire, and medical emergencies to assist the public prior to the arrival of responders on scene.
- Dispatch service is currently provided at the local, regional and state level and is focused on communications and activities to inform and coordinate emergency responders during an incident. Dispatch service typically involves monitoring and recording the location and activity of the responders during an incident and providing needed support and resources to those responders as the incident evolves. Dispatching service also includes handling non-emergency and administrative calls received on the agency's departmental telephone lines.

### **Specialized Equipment/Networks**

- 9-1-1 call-taking is performed using specialized equipment and software provided to each PSAP by the Enhanced 9-1-1 Board. The Board provides the Emergency Services IP Network (ESInet) and all necessary infrastructure, databases, and equipment to allow for the routing and delivery of 9-1-1 Requests for Assistance to Vermont's six PSAPs with whom the Board has agreements for 9-1-1 call-taking service. Certified call-takers in all six PSAPs use the same equipment which provides them access to the same resources and tools for effectively managing 9-1-1 calls for service.
- Dispatch equipment includes specialized radio equipment and technology, Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) functionality and access to networks and data that is separate from 9-1-1 technology and data. These resources are obtained and managed by the individual dispatch agencies.

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<sup>2</sup> With the transition to Next Generation 9-1-1, the public is able contact 9-1-1 using more than just voice calls. Rather than referring to 9-1-1 "calls" or "text messages", it is appropriate to describe all types of communications with 9-1-1 as "Requests for Assistance" (RFA).

### **Specific Training Requirements**

- The Enhanced 9-1-1 Board requires all Vermont 9-1-1 call-takers be trained and certified to handle 9-1-1 calls in accordance with national standards and industry best practice.<sup>3</sup> All 9-1-1 call-takers are certified to provide pre-arrival instructions, including emergency medical instructions, using medically-approved protocols provided by the 9-1-1 Board.
- Training requirements for dispatchers in Vermont vary depending on the agency that employs them. There are opportunities for basic dispatch training and continuing education in emergency communications, however there is no statewide training mandate in place for dispatchers in Vermont. Each dispatch agency makes its own determination regarding dispatcher training requirements and programs.

### **Funding Sources**

- The statewide 9-1-1 system is funded by the Vermont Universal Service Fund (VUSF). Funds to support the statewide 9-1-1 system are deposited into the enhanced 9-1-1 special fund annually as directed by the General Assembly.<sup>4</sup> A portion of these funds is used to reimburse Vermont's six PSAPs for call-taking services.
  - The VUSF, which is managed by the Vermont Department of Public Service, is funded by a 2% fee on retail wireline and wireless telecommunications service provided to Vermont addresses.
  - Per the most recent annual audit available on the Public Service Department website<sup>5</sup>, approximately \$6.3 million was received by the VUSF from telecommunications service providers in Fiscal Year 2015.
  - In FY15, the appropriation to the Enhanced 9-1-1 special fund was approximately \$4.6 million. Just over one million dollars of these funds was used for PSAP reimbursements for 9-1-1 call-taking services (\$1,080,000.00). Recent changes made to the PSAP Reimbursement Model are discussed in more detail later in this report.
  - The VUSF also supports additional programs in Vermont including Lifeline, the telecommunications service for the deaf, and the Connectivity fund.
  - Current law does not allow Enhanced 9-1-1 Special funds to be used to support dispatch or responder operations.<sup>6</sup> Without significant changes to the assessment on telecommunications service providers, the VUSF could not support the cost of dispatch services in addition to its existing programs.
- Funding for dispatch operations varies around the state. The Department of Public Safety (DPS) Communications Centers are supported by the General Fund. DPS dispatches for 105 non-state agencies; however, as of the summer of 2016, none of those agencies pay any fee for that service. Prior to the summer of 2016, DPS received fees for dispatch service from only five of the non-state agencies. DPS stopped charging these five agencies while the Working Group conducted its study in order to provide a level-playing for all DPS-dispatched agencies. Regional dispatch centers that dispatch for multiple emergency response agencies use varying fee structures to determine the costs to those agencies. Fee

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<sup>3</sup> Vermont Enhanced 9-1-1 Board, PSAP Operations Manual, November 2004.

<sup>4</sup> 30 V.S.A. §7514

<sup>5</sup> Vermont Universal Service Fund Financial Statements, Years Ended June 30, 2015 and 2014.

<http://publicservice.vermont.gov/sites/dps/files/documents/Telecom/USF/Vermont%20Universal.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> 30 V.S.A. §7054

schedules may be based upon call volume, population served, town grand lists or a combination of factors. More information about existing fee structures is discussed later in this report.

### **Governance**

- The Vermont Enhanced 9-1-1 Board is defined by statute as the single governmental agency responsible for the statewide 9-1-1 system.<sup>7</sup> The Board is responsible for all aspects of the 9-1-1 system to include training and quality control, management of multiple critical databases and IT management. The Board fulfills its responsibility for call-taking services by partnering with six PSAPs around the state.
- Dispatch services throughout Vermont are not governed at the state level. These services are governed by the agency that provides the service which may be a state, county, or local agency. Some regional dispatch centers are governed by independent boards or commissions representing the appropriate stakeholders.

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<sup>7</sup> 30 V.S.A. §7052



## **Current Environment for Providing 9-1-1 Call-Taking and Dispatch Services**

### **9-1-1 Call-Taking Service**

One of the responsibilities of the Vermont Enhanced 9-1-1 Board is to ensure that all 9-1-1 requests for assistance are answered by fully-trained and certified 9-1-1 call-takers. To accomplish this, the Board has entered into formal agreements with five Vermont law enforcement agencies<sup>8</sup> who have agreed to provide 9-1-1 call-handling services. Each partner agency, or PSAP, receives a stipend from the Enhanced 9-1-1 Board for handling 9-1-1 requests for assistance in accordance with standards, policies and procedures established by the 9-1-1 Board. These agencies also provide dispatch services to multiple emergency responders in their regions. Agreements related to dispatch service are separate and distinct from the agreements with the 9-1-1 Board for call-handling service.

Each PSAP is responsible for answering 9-1-1 requests for assistance from its primary call catchment area (see Appendix C) as well as providing “back-up” to all other PSAPs in the state. If the primary PSAP is unable to answer a request for assistance from their area – perhaps due to high call volume or ongoing emergent event - the request is automatically rerouted to an available call-taker in one of the five other PSAPs. This call delivery structure is possible because of Vermont’s Next Generation 9-1-1 environment and has proven to be an effective and efficient way to ensure citizens contacting 9-1-1 are connected to a certified call-taker without unnecessary delay. Call-takers are expected to answer the request for assistance, determine the location and nature of the emergency, notify the appropriate responders based on that information, and provide the requestor with any needed pre-arrival instructions to assist them (or bystanders, patients, victims etc.) until responders arrive on scene.

In some cases, the PSAP that answers the 9-1-1 request for assistance may also be responsible for dispatching the needed responders. In other situations, the responders may be dispatched out of another facility. In these cases, the 9-1-1 request for assistance is transferred by the call-taker to a dispatcher at another location. The dispatcher is then responsible for notifying responders, while the 9-1-1 call-taker ensures the requestor receives any needed pre-arrival instructions.

In October 2016, the 9-1-1 Board approved changes to the PSAP reimbursement model to one that is based in part on the number of workstations housed at each PSAP and in part on the 9-1-1 call volume handled by the PSAP. This change was in response to concerns raised by the Department of Public Safety (DPS) about inequities in the previous reimbursement model which did not account for call volume in determining the reimbursement. Appendix D provides additional information about the newly approved reimbursement model. The table below indicates the impact the changes will have on the stipends paid to each PSAP beginning in Fiscal Year 2018.

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<sup>8</sup> PSAPs are operated by: Hartford Police Department, Lamoille County Sheriff’s Department, St Albans Police Department, Shelburne Police Department and the Vermont Department of Public Safety – Williston and Westminster Communications Centers

The table below shows the number of funded 9-1-1 workstations at each PSAP, the percentage of 9-1-1 call volume answered by each PSAP during the period 8/1/2015 – 6/30/2016, the FY17 reimbursement amount and the anticipated FY18 reimbursement amount for each PSAP.<sup>9</sup>

PSAP	Operated by:	Number of Funded 9-1-1 Workstations	% 9-1-1 Call Volume 8/1/2015 – 6/30/2016	FY17 Reimbursement	Approximate FY18 Reimbursement
Hartford PSAP	Hartford Police Dept	2	6.90%	\$90,000	\$82,237
Lamoille County PSAP	Lamoille County Sheriff's Dept.	2	7.73%	\$90,000	\$86,752
St. Albans PSAP	St Albans Police Dept.	2	8.49%	\$90,000	\$90832
Shelburne PSAP	Shelburne Police Dept.	2	5.8%	\$90,000	\$76316
Westminster PSAP	Department of Public Safety	7	30.10%	Total DPS Reimbursement	Total DPS Reimbursement
Williston PSAP	Department of Public Safety	9	40.98%	\$720,000	\$743,862

### **Number and Nature of 9-1-1 Requests for Assistance**

The following statistics relate to 9-1-1 requests for assistance for the 2015 calendar year.<sup>10</sup>

- Total 9-1-1 Calls Received – 206,401
  - Total Cellular 9-1-1 Calls Received – 136,361 (approximately 66% of total)
  - Total Abandoned 9-1-1 Calls – 21,173 (approximately 10% of total)
- Average Time to Answer – 00:06 seconds
- Average Call Time – 02:09
- Total Text-to-9-1-1 Received – 550

The Working Group was also asked to determine the nature of 9-1-1 requests for assistance. It is not possible to identify the type of assistance needed in 9-1-1 calls or text messages without reviewing each individual request. Reports identifying the response agency to which each request was transferred are of little value because, in many cases, the call-taker who answers the 9-1-1 call/text is also the dispatcher responsible for notifying responders and therefore no transfer occurs.

<sup>9</sup> Data provided by the Vermont Enhanced 9-1-1 Board

<sup>10</sup> As above

### **Dispatch Service**

There are currently over fifty dispatch centers serving more than 400 Vermont emergency response organizations on a 24 x 7 basis. In addition, there are numerous dispatch agencies that operate less than 24 hours a day. The table below lists the dispatch agencies serving Vermont and the number of agencies for which they dispatch.<sup>11</sup>

<b>Dispatch Agency Name</b>	<b># Law Agencies</b>	<b>#Fire Agencies</b>	<b>#EMS Agencies</b>	<b>Total Agencies</b>
Barre City PD	1	7	2	10
Base Defense OPS Center	1	0	0	1
Bennington PD	1	4	3	8
Brattleboro PD	1	1	1	3
Burlington City PD	1	1	1	3
Claremont NH Dispatch	0	0	2	2
Colchester PD	2	3	2	7
Colebrook Dispatch	0	2	1	3
Dover PD/Westminster VSP	1	0	0	1
Essex PD	1	3	1	5
Grafton County SO	0	6	2	8
Hanover Dispatch	0	9	7	16
Hartford PD	3	12	8	23
IBM Security Control Center	0	1	1	2
Keene SW NH Mutual Aid	0	28	16	44
Lamoille Co SO	5	11	6	22
Lancaster/NH Dept Transportation	0	4	0	4
Ludlow PD	1	2	2	5
Manchester PD	1	1	1	3
Middlebury Central Communication	0	2	2	4
Middlebury PD/Westminster VSP	1	1	0	2
Montpelier PD	1	16	5	22
N. Adams Dispatch	0	1	1	2
Newport PD/Williston VSP	1	1	0	2
Red Phones	0	3	2	5

<sup>11</sup> Data provided by Vermont Enhanced 9-1-1 Board

<b>Dispatch Agency Name</b>	<b># Law Agencies</b>	<b>#Fire Agencies</b>	<b>#EMS Agencies</b>	<b>Total Agencies</b>
Regional/Westminster VSP	0	0	2	2
Rutland City PD	1	1	0	2
Shelburne PD	2	27	15	44
South Burlington PD	1	1	1	3
Springfield PD	1	0	0	1
Springfield FD	0	1	1	2
St Albans PD	1	14	6	21
St Johnsbury PD	1	11	5	17
St Michael's Rescue	0	0	1	1
Swanton PD/Williston VSP	1	0	0	1
UVM PD	1	1	1	3
VT ANG Fire Dept	0	1	1	2
Washington County NY	1	11	4	16
Weeks Memorial Hospital	0	0	2	2
Westminster VSP	20	31	17	68
Williston PD/Williston VSP	1	0	0	1
Williston VSP	20	18	7	45
Wilmington PD/Westminster VSP	1	0	0	1
Windham Co SO	2	0	0	2
Winhall PD/Westminster VSP	1	0	0	1
Winooski PD	1	1	0	2
Woodstock PD	1	3	3	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>451</b>

Dispatch service typically focuses on radio communication to coordinate and monitor emergency responders in the course of their duties. Dispatch service generally involves some level of incident record-keeping and resource management using a Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) tool. A variety of CAD systems are in place throughout the state.

As shown in the previous table, dispatch services are provided in a number of ways – at the local, regional, and state level. Discussions are occurring around the state to find effective and efficient ways to deliver dispatch services. The Central Vermont Public Safety Authority provided information about their plans for implementing a regionalized dispatch service in Central Vermont. The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission is also discussing ways to improve efficiencies and is expected to complete a study on the issue by the end of this year.

A wide spectrum of dispatch levels of service exists as well. Some services provide “end to end” service which includes notifying responders of an incident by radio or some other means of communication, monitoring and recording the location and activity of the responders during the incident, providing any needed support to those responders during the incident and logging when resources are in/out of service during the event. Other services simply notify the responder of an incident and provide no further routine support to the response agency.

As mentioned earlier in this report, funding for dispatch operations varies greatly around the state. The Department of Public Safety Communications Centers are supported by the General Fund and no additional fees are collected for dispatch services provided by DPS to 105 non-state agencies. Some communities dispatch needs are served through local or regional dispatch centers who use varying fee structures to arrive at dispatching charges for the agencies they serve. In the September 2015 *Enhanced 9-1-1 Board Operational and Organizational Report*<sup>12</sup>, a sampling of dispatching revenue ranges based on population was provided. These ranges represent data from three dispatch centers:

Population	Low	High
1,000 – 1,500	\$11,607	\$30,862
1,500 – 2,000	\$14,855	\$38,391
2,500 – 3,500	\$31,037	\$68,774
4,000 – 5,500	\$37,622	\$130,561

Dispatch centers that serve only one service or municipality are typically funded by municipal tax revenues. The *Enhanced 9-1-1 Board Operational and Organizational Report* provided the following information about tax revenue collected for operating costs for a city dispatching center:

Population	Low	High
6,000 – 10,000	\$304,260	\$537,698

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<sup>12</sup> Presentation to the E911 Board: Findings and Recommendations Regarding Operations and Management, Mike Smith, September 4, 2015.

## Working Group Discussion and Findings – 9-1-1 Services

The Working Group considered the “Enhanced 9-1-1 Board Operational and Organizational Report” dated September 4, 2015 and agrees with the conclusions outlined in the report that the current model being used in the State of Vermont, with an independent board governing that system, is the most effective, efficient, and cost-effective means for providing statewide 9-1-1 call-taking.

Further, the Working Group finds that effective partnerships have been developed and implemented for 9-1-1 call-taking services in Vermont that provide efficient, reliable, and cost-effective statewide 9-1-1 call-taking operations.

The annual cost to the 9-1-1 Board for 9-1-1 call-taking services is \$1,080,000.00. Partnering with the six PSAPs is a solution where everyone benefits. The state benefits from efficiencies related to personnel and facility costs and partner agencies benefit as they are able to recover a portion of their personnel costs – costs that would exist even if 9-1-1 call-taking services were not provided by that agency. In addition to answering 9-1-1 calls, all the PSAPs also provide dispatch services for multiple emergency response agencies. Obviously, dispatch services and 9-1-1 call-taking services both require 24 x 7 coverage. The 9-1-1 Board has calculated that the average number of hours actually spent handling 9-1-1 calls ranges from a low of 1.1 hours per day to a high of 7.8 hours per day depending on the PSAP’s call volume. The reimbursement to PSAPs does not, and was never intended to, fully cover the personnel costs at the PSAPs.

The efficiencies realized by these partnerships are significant. In 2013, the Enhanced 9-1-1 Board contracted with the consulting firm L.R. Kimball to conduct a study of certain aspects of the statewide 9-1-1 system. Kimball’s report entitled *Report on Alternative Structures for Taking Emergency 9-1-1 Calls in Vermont*<sup>13</sup>, included recommendations that the state consider combining the 9-1-1 call-taking and dispatch functions, but noted that additional studies would be required to fully understand the feasibility of a consolidation of those services at the state level. The Kimball report further noted that by “elevating the (9-1-1) call center service to the state level, the state then takes on the complete costs of facilities, and personnel...”. Additional potential costs were identified including necessary expansion of certain network components and functionality that would be in addition to the network and equipment costs already supported. Costs to the state would increase under such a plan. Estimates for personnel costs alone exceeded \$3,800,000.00 per year, nearly four times the current expenditure for call-taking services. Such a change would also “further separate call taking and dispatching” functionality – moving away from recommended best practice.

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<sup>13</sup> Report on Alternative Structures for Taking Emergency 9-1-1 Calls in Vermont; LR Kimball; November 2013

## **Working Group Discussion and Findings – Dispatch Services**

### **The Role of the Department of Public Safety**

During the September 27, 2016, Working Group meeting, the Department of Public Safety representative stated on behalf of Commissioner Keith Flynn that the department is not interested in providing dispatch service for any additional non-state agencies and, in fact, is working to eliminate existing dispatch service for the 105 non-state agencies it currently serves.

DPS did not provide a specific timeline for these changes and acknowledged that sufficient time and planning would be needed to allow these agencies to make other arrangements for dispatch service. DPS indicated it would not see a cost savings as a result of discontinuing dispatch service for non-state agencies, rather they would use existing resources to better serve the state agencies for whom they would continue to dispatch.

The Working Group finds that implementation of Commissioner Flynn’s plan to stop providing dispatch services to all non-state agencies would have significant financial, technological, and logistical impacts on the affected municipalities. In-depth discussion of the potential impacts is well beyond the scope of the Working Group’s directive.

### **Funding and Funding Disparities in the Delivery of Dispatch Services**

The Working Group finds that change is needed to address funding disparities so that a fair and equitable structure exists that will allow all communities to properly plan for their dispatch services.

Working Group sessions included discussions about the “true cost of service” for dispatch service. It was noted that:

- Average cost of a full-time dispatcher with benefits in Vermont ranges between \$72,000 (Locals) and \$78,000.00 (DPS).
- There are 24 hours in a day multiplied by 7 days a week. (24 X 7 = 168 Hours)
- If you divide 168 hours by 40-hour work week, it takes 4.20 employees to occupy one (1) chair and answer the telephone and radios each week. The “.20” translates into another full-time position or part-time hours to cover the work week.
- If you add in sick time, vacation time, and other leave it takes at least one additional employee to cover that time.
- 6.2 employees are needed to run a full-time dispatch center, with just one dispatcher on at all times.
- 6.2 employees X \$72,000.00 (or up to \$78,000.00) each = Total Salary Range of **\$446,400.00 to \$483,600.00**
- The number of workstations required is dependent on call volume, however industry best practice dictates that no communications center have less than two available workstations at any given time.

This estimation does not include any costs (though they are certainly real) of “bricks and mortar”, i.e., the costs associated with the physical building housing the dispatch center and associated maintenance and utility expenses; nor does it include desk and workstations, radio consoles,

antennas, control heads, microwave, computers, chairs, telephones, incidental supplies, and overall supervision and management.

It is important to note that existing regional dispatch agencies have been able to successfully provide dispatch service and recover the costs of doing so. The chart on page 12 provides an indication of the current range of cost recovery models. Multiple methods are currently in use by regional dispatch agencies to determine the fees they will charge for dispatch services. The Department of Public Safety does not currently charge any fees to the 105 non-state agencies for which it dispatches and did not provide the Working Group with information it requested regarding potential fee structures based on the costs it incurs to provide dispatch service to those agencies. This information is necessary to provide a realistic and comprehensive recommendation on possible fee structures for dispatch services around the state.

The Working Group discussed the fact that confusion exists in communities about the many different ways tax dollars (local, county and state) are used to fund dispatch services.

### **Impacts of Working Group Recommendations on Municipalities**

The Working Group discussed the impacts on municipalities of any changes in the delivery of dispatch services. If the Department of Public Safety were to begin charging a fee for their dispatch service, the 105 affected agencies would need to accommodate that change in their budgets moving forward. The question also remains as to whether the Department of Public Safety will continue to provide dispatch service at all. If it does not, there are potentially significant, yet largely unknown, impacts for the affected agencies. It was noted by the Working Group:

- Over the past twenty or more years, millions of taxpayer dollars have been invested in state infrastructure to improve dispatch capabilities. Municipalities have not had access to similar funding and will need to play technology “catch-up”, at unknown expense, to make necessary infrastructure updates if DPS is not providing dispatch services.
- Working Group members feel the Department of Public Safety should provide a written statement of what they can and cannot provide for infrastructure support to municipalities should the decision to cease dispatch services move forward. DPS declined to provide a written statement, however suggested the expectation is they would continue to adhere to existing relationships related to infrastructure support.
- A decision on the part of DPS to cease providing dispatch services will create significant financial and technological hardships for the affected communities. An accurate assessment of these hardships is beyond the scope of the Working Group.
- Affected communities must be allowed sufficient time and support for any changes to the delivery of dispatch services on the part of DPS, whether that is a result of of DPS beginning to charge for dispatch service (which the Working Group recommends) or the result of DPS ceasing dispatch services (which the Working Group does not recommend).
- In some areas, all is working well and no changes are needed to the way dispatch services are provided and funded. Decisions about changes to dispatch services need to be made at the local level. Individual communities are in the best position to determine the most effective solution to the provision of dispatch services, but to make those decisions they must be fully aware of their options.



- Where changes are needed, local authorities should consider a multi-jurisdictional partnership (regional) approach to improve efficiencies and distribute the “true cost of service” over multiple agencies/municipalities.

## **Recommendations**

### **Statewide 9-1-1 Call-Taking Operations**

The Working Group considered the “Enhanced 9-1-1 Board Operational and Organizational Report” dated September 4, 2015 and agrees with the conclusions outlined in the report that the current model being used in the State of Vermont, with an independent board governing that system, is the most effective, efficient, and cost-effective means for providing statewide 9-1-1 call-taking.

The Working Group finds that effective partnerships have been developed and implemented for 9-1-1 call-taking services in Vermont that provide efficient, reliable, and cost-effective statewide 9-1-1 call-taking operations.

The Working Group recommends that the Department of Public Safety continue to provide 9-1-1 call-taking services and that the 9-1-1 Board continue to examine whether changes are needed to call distribution plans among existing PSAPs. The Working Group notes that statute currently exists requiring the Department of Public Safety to provide 9-1-1 call-taking service.

### **Dispatch Services**

The Working Group recommends that the Department of Public Safety continue to provide dispatch services to non-state agencies and that it develop a fee structure outlining its costs to do so.

The Working Group recommends a comprehensive, professional study be conducted to identify the impacts on municipalities and the responder community of any changes that would result should the Department of Public Safety pursue its intention to discontinue providing dispatch service for non-state agencies.

The Working Group recommends that all entities providing dispatch services be allowed to recover the cost of those services and recognizes that communities that are not currently paying fees for dispatch will need time and support to allow for budget adjustments.

The Working Group recommends that decisions about changes to dispatch services be made at local level. In some areas, all is working well and no changes are needed to the way dispatch services are provided and funded. Individual communities are in the best position to determine the most effective solution to the provision of dispatch services, but to make those decisions they must be fully aware of their options.

Where changes are needed, the Working Group recommends local authorities consider a multi-jurisdictional partnership (regional) approach to improve efficiencies and distribute the “true cost of service” over multiple agencies/municipalities.

The Working Group regrets that it has insufficient information to recommend a definitive fee structure for legislative discussion related to dispatch services.

## **Conclusion**

The Working Group concludes that the delivery of 9-1-1 call-taking services is currently being provided in a reliable, cost-effective manner that leverages existing resources and includes stakeholders from the local, county and state level.

The delivery of dispatch services is impacted by many variables, not the least of which is the funding disparity that currently exists. An understanding of the costs to provide this service is needed from all stakeholders in order to begin to develop fair and equitable fee structures for the provision of dispatch services. The Working Group believes that agencies providing dispatch service must be allowed to recover the cost of those services. The impacts of any changes on municipalities must not be minimized and sufficient time and planning must be in place to support any changes in the delivery of dispatch services.

**Appendix A**

**Meeting Minutes**

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

**28 June 2016**

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

**10:02 AM – Call to Order**

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

**Working Group Members Present**

VT Enhanced 9-1-1 Board Representative: Chief Gary Taylor, Acting Chair  
VT State Employees Assoc. (VSEA) Representative: Tom Abdelnour (appearing on behalf of Sarah Copen)  
VT Ambulance Assoc. Representative: Jim Finger, President  
VT League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) Representative: Gwynn Zakov  
VT Firefighters Assoc. Representative: Kevin Goodhue  
VT Police Assoc. Representative: Chief George Merkel (arrived after roll call)  
VT Assoc. of Chiefs of Police Representative: Chief Leonard Stell  
VT Sheriff's Assoc. Representative: Sheriff Roger Marcoux  
Office of EMS/Injury Prevention Representative: Chris Bell, Director  
Dept. of Public Safety Representative: Captain Tom Hango

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

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

**Others Present**

Major William Sheets, VT State Police  
Chief Seth DiSanto, Newport Police Department  
Kyle Midora, WCAX (arrived after roll call)  
Robynn Beams, WCAX (arrived after roll call)  
Stephen Whitaker, Member of the Public  
Hailey Gilmore, VLCT intern

**New Business**

1. Election of Working Group Chair & Vice-Chair
  - a. *Sheriff Marcoux moved to nominate Chief Gary Taylor as Working Group Chair; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Gwynn Zakov. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote.*
  - b. *Chief Merkel moved to nominate Sheriff Marcoux as Vice-Chair; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Chris Bell. Sheriff Marcoux declined the nomination.*
  - c. *Sheriff Marcoux moved to nominate Chris Bell as Vice-Chair; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Chief Taylor. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote.*
2. Operational Overview of Vermont's 9-1-1 System: Chair Taylor asked Barb Neal to provide an overview of VT's 9-1-1 system. A pdf of the presentation is available from the Enhanced 9-1-1 Board on request.
3. Discussion of Current State of Dispatch Services Throughout Vermont:
  - a. This working group is not just about 9-1-1 funding, but also dispatch services funding/fees (or the lack thereof) throughout the state.
  - b. 9-1-1 call-taking and dispatching are two different things. They require different training, different equipment, etc.
  - c. PSAP funding (from the beginning of the E9-1-1 system to present day)
  - d. Dispatching services fees/funding
    - Some providers/towns pay for the dispatching services they receive and some don't;

- is it possible to come up with a fair & equitable set of guidelines to base future fees on?
- e. 9-1-1 PSAP/Call-taking Issues
    - Minimum staffing levels
    - Difference in cost between only doing dispatch or also answering 9-1-1 calls for the dispatch coverage area
    - Ongoing investigation into changing the current reimbursement model for all E9-1-1 PSAPs
    - Number of PSAPs (currently have six, should there be more or less)
    - Cost of setting up and/or relocating PSAPs/call-taking positions (one-time fees & recurring costs)
    - Volume of 9-1-1 calls answered at each PSAP (Dept. of Public Safety PSAPs answer the majority of incoming calls)
  - f. Dispatch Agency Issues
    - Local area coverage means dispatchers know the locations, can get help there more quickly
    - Staffing levels
    - Cost to taxpayers
    - Difference in cost between only doing dispatch or also answering 9-1-1 calls for the dispatch coverage area
4. Going Forward...
- a. Working group members will read two studies previously commissioned by the Enhanced 9-1-1 Board on 9-1-1 system configuration & funding mechanisms. Both of these reports are available from the Enhanced 9-1-1 Board on request.
    - L.R. Kimball – Alternative Structure for Taking Emergency 9-1-1 Calls in VT (November 2013)
    - Mike Smith’s Presentation to the E9-1-1 Board – Findings & Recommendations Regarding Operations and Management (September 2015)
  - b. Multiple past studies have been completed on the issue of dispatch services funding/fees. Sheriff Marcoux and Major Sheets will pull the most relevant of the studies from their files and make them available to other group members before the next meeting.

**Public Comments/Questions**

Stephen Whitaker provided the working group members with a brief overview of his involvement in the research leading up to the design & creation of VT’s Enhanced 9-1-1 system. He also spoke about the current 9-1-1 system provider, the way contracts for the 9-1-1 system have been awarded, the number of PSAPs, ongoing issues with 9-1-1 system funding, recent discussions of a possible merge between E9-1-1 and the Dept. of Public Safety, and the privacy/security of the E9-1-1 database. Mr. Whitaker invited working group members to contact him if they have any questions.

**Next Meeting Date & Adjournment**

It was determined that the next Working Group meeting would be held on Tuesday, 12 July 2016. The meeting will take place at the Cap. Plaza Hotel, room #338.

*Motion: There being no further business, Chair Taylor entertained a motion to adjourn; move by Jim Finger, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Chief Stell. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 11:16 AM.*

Respectfully submitted:

Soni Johnson  
Soni Johnson, Clerk

6/28/16  
Date

**9-1-1 CALL-TAKING/DISPATCH  
SERVICES WORKING GROUP  
General Meeting #2**

**12 July 2016**

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

**10:04 AM – Call to Order**

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

**Working Group Members Present**

VT Enhanced 9-1-1 Board Representative: Chief Gary Taylor, Working Group Chair  
VT State Employees Assoc. (VSEA) Representative: Sarah Copen (arrived after roll call)  
VT Ambulance Assoc. Representative: Jim Finger, President  
VT League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) Representative: Gwynn Zakov  
VT Firefighters Assoc. Representative: Kevin Goodhue  
VT Assoc. of Chiefs of Police Representative: Chief Leonard Stell  
VT Sheriff's Assoc. Representative: Sheriff Roger Marcoux  
Office of EMS/Injury Prevention Representative: Chris Bell, Working Group Vice-Chair  
Dept. of Public Safety Representative: Captain Tom Hango

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

Soni Johnson, E9-1-1 Board Clerk

**Others Present**

Major William Sheets, VT State Police  
Chief Seth DiSanto, Newport Police Department (via conference bridge)  
Stephen Whitaker, Member of the Public  
Representative Michael Marcotte

**Approval of Minutes**

6/28/16 - Motion: *Jim Finger made a motion to accept the minutes as written; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Chief Stell. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote.*

**New Business**

1. Chair Taylor provided an overview of a meeting previously attended by himself, Sheriff Marcoux, Stephen Whitaker, Charles Larkin, Barbara Neal (Exec. Director, E9-1-1 Board), Representative Kathleen Keenan, and Representative Michael Marcotte; the meeting was to discuss both the history of 9-1-1 and current dispatch issues. Chair Taylor also read a portion of the bill passed by the legislature that called for the creation of the working group. The working group must prepare a report to the legislature. The report will be written by Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Bell, Sheriff Marcoux, and E9-1-1 Executive Director Neal.
2. Review and Discussion of Previously Conducted Dispatch/Call-Taking Studies:
  - a. Several past studies were made available to working group members. These studies will be used by the working group as they move forward on the dispatch fees/funding issue.
  - b. Chair Taylor asked if the working group should ask for outside input. It was suggested that Paco Aumand & Mike Smith both have experience in this area.
3. Chair Taylor asked that Major Sheets provide an overview/comments on current Department of Public Safety dispatch issues/concerns.
  - a. Public Safety would prefer to continue dispatching for state entities and supports a move of all other dispatching to regional/local dispatch centers.
  - b. Public Safety currently provides most of its dispatching services for free (currently only five agencies pay for dispatching).
  - c. Public Safety will continue to provide dispatch services while a solution is worked on.

Discussion:

- There is a need to develop a fair/equitable fee structure. Can it be done in a way that works for both the State & for the free market?
- Towns will need time to plan for having to pay for dispatch services.
- Will Public Safety continue to be available as “back-up dispatch” in the event of an emergency?
- Possibility of creating dispatch districts
- Does Public Safety have the authority to set a fee schedule and require payment from all the agencies it dispatches for?
- Should the group research fee structures for current dispatch centers?
- What does it cost Public Safety to provide its current level of dispatching?

For next meeting:

- Public Safety will pull together information on their dispatch costs.
- VT League of Cities and Towns will distribute a survey to municipalities asking about their emergency service agencies, dispatch arrangements and costs.

**Public Comments/Questions**

Stephen Whitaker spoke about the creation of EC Fiber districts and the possibility of setting up dispatch districts using the same model. Mr. Whitaker will provide documentation on this subject to the Board Clerk, who will then forward it to all working group members.

**Next Meeting Date & Adjournment**

It was determined that the next Working Group meeting would be held on Thursday, 4 August 2016. The meeting will take place in Montpelier (location tbd).

*Motion: There being no further business, Chair Taylor entertained a motion to adjourn; move by Sheriff Marcoux, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Captain Hango. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 11:18 AM.*

Respectfully submitted:

Soni Johnson  
Soni Johnson, Clerk

7/18/16  
Date



**9-1-1 CALL-TAKING/DISPATCH  
SERVICES WORKING GROUP  
General Meeting #3**

FINAL  
*approved as amended*  
Approval Date: 9/27/16

**4 August 2016**

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

**10:03 AM – Call to Order**

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

**Working Group Members Present**

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

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

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

**Others Present**

Major William Sheets, VT State Police  
Paco Aumand, Executive Director, Central VT Public Safety Authority  
Chief Seth DiSanto, Newport Police Department  
Lee Krohn, Chittenden County Regional Planning  
Chief Steve Locke, Burlington FD  
Stephen Whitaker, Member of the Public

**Approval of Minutes**

*7/12/16 - Motion: Chief Stell made a motion to accept the minutes as written; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jim Finger. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote.*

**Business**

- Paco Aumand, CVPSA
  - Exec. Director Aumand provided an overview of the Central VT Public Safety Authority.
    - It is focused on dispatching, not 9-1-1 call-taking.
    - Working towards regional dispatch consolidation; it can be more efficient, reduce overtime & staffing redundancies, create redundancies in operations, and help contain the costs of public safety services long-term.
    - Working to develop full dispatching services, not just taking the call and handing it off to appropriate agency, but full involvement from beginning to end of the emergency.
  - He also spoke of a dispatch funding study conducted in 2003 (when he was affiliated with the Dept. of Public Safety). A copy of that report was previously provided to the working group and is available from the E9-1-1 Board office upon request.
  - Paco provided the group with the history of how dispatching through DPS came to be free.
    - DPS received a federal grant back in the 70's to build the statewide microwave network. Part of the grant requirements was that DPS provide dispatching service to all law enforcement in Vermont.
- Mike Smith was invited to this meeting but was unable to attend. However, he was able to speak to Executive Director Barbara Neal, prior to this meeting, to discuss the working group's mandate. Mike Smith previously produced a report for the Enhanced 9-1-1 Board in which he made several recommendations concerning 9-1-1

PSAP & dispatch funding. He stands behind the recommendations in his report. A copy of that report was previously provided to the working group and is available from the E9-1-1 Board office upon request.

- Major Sheets provided an overview of the Dept. of Public Safety's current position:
  - The department is currently working on cost figures for dispatching services.
    - Those figures will be able to be used to formulate a fee structure
  - The department still favors a move to regional dispatch.
- Lee Krohn (from Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission) spoke to the group about the Commission's ongoing regional dispatch implementation study for a number of municipalities in Chittenden County.
- Chair Taylor asked working group members if they had enough info to be able to work on recommendations or if more input was needed. Members agreed that no further input needed.

#### Discussion/Comments:

- There have been multiple attempts over the years to formulate and implement a cost model/fee structure for Department of Public Safety dispatching services. It has never been completed.
- There is a need to educate legislators, municipal officials, and the general public on the differences between 9-1-1 call-taking & dispatch services, how both services work, the costs associated with each, and how current funding is determined for both.
- Why would towns/service providers move away from Public Safety dispatching services? (you can't compete with free)
- There is a need to develop a fair/equitable fee structure. Can it be done in a way that works for both the State & for the free market?
- Towns will need time to plan for having to pay for dispatch services.
- Can the Universal Service Fund charge be increased? If the fee is increased can the extra funds be used for dispatch services funding?
- What savings, if any, will the State see if Public Safety dispatching services are reduced?
- The argument has been made that taxpayer dollars used for the Public Safety budget could be considered payment for dispatch services and requiring towns/agencies to pay for those services is double taxation.
- What are the true costs of dispatching? (staffing, bricks & mortar, equipment, different types of emergency calls require different levels of service, etc.)
- How to figure what to charge for dispatch (by population, by number of calls, combination of both)?
- How many dispatch centers/positions would be needed statewide to handle all dispatch calls?
- Possibility of creating dispatch districts
- Would consolidation of 9-1-1 PSAPs save money?
- Group should research fees/costs for current local and regional dispatch centers.

#### **Public Comments/Questions**

Stephen Whitaker spoke about 9-1-1 funding & budget issues, and current/future 9-1-1 system configuration. He suggested that the working group ask for more input from other services/agencies. He also suggested that the working group track current services/needs geographically to help with the possible creation of dispatch districts.

#### **Next Meeting Date & Adjournment**

It was determined that the next Working Group meeting would be held on Tuesday, 27 September 2016. The meeting will take place in Montpelier (location tbd).

*Motion: There being no further business, Chair Taylor entertained a motion to adjourn; move by Jim Finger, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Chief Stell. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM.*

Respectfully submitted:

Soni Johnson  
Soni Johnson, Clerk

8/10/16  
Date

Minutes Amended: 9/27/16 Section Amended: Next Meeting Date & Adjournment Change: Jim Finger listed in motion to adjourn.
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**9-1-1 CALL-TAKING/DISPATCH  
SERVICES WORKING GROUP  
General Meeting #4**

FINAL  
*approved as amended*  
Approval Date: 11/15/16

**27 September 2016  
Cap. Plaza Hotel, 100 State St., Montpelier, VT – Room #338**

**10:03 AM – Call to Order**

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

**Working Group Members Present**

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

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

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

**Others Present**

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

**Approval of Minutes**

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

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

**Business**

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

**Discussion/Talking Points/Public Comment:**

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

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

#### Public Comment

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

#### ➤ Dispatch/Call-taking Issues

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

##### ○ Section 1A (9-1-1)

- *Motion – The working group has studied Vermont’s 9-1-1 system and determined that the current model being used in the State of Vermont, with an independent board governing that system, is the most effective, efficient, and cost-effective means of providing statewide 9-1-1 call-taking. Moved by Sheriff Marcoux; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Chief Stell. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote.*

##### ○ Section 1B (dispatch services)

- *Motion: The working group has studied dispatch services and has determined that in certain areas a change may be needed and we should look at a multi-jurisdictional/regional approach to dispatching in those areas. Moved by Gwynn Zakov; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Sheriff Marcoux. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote.*
- *Motion: The working group has determined that dispatch providers should be able to at least recoup their costs for providing services. Moved by Sheriff Marcoux; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Captain Hango. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote. After the vote, the concern was raised that the motion was vague concerning “recouping costs” and should have more specific language be added. It was determined that the motion language was intentionally broad, and will be expanded upon in the report to the legislature. The motion remained as written; no further discussion was had, and the motion passed (again) unanimously by voice vote.*

- It was determined that no motions/votes were needed on the rest of the working group legislation.

#### 2. General Discussion followed:

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

**Public Comments/Questions**

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

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

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

**Next Meeting Date & Adjournment**

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

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

Respectfully submitted:

Soni Johnson

Soni Johnson, Clerk

10/7/2016

Date

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Draft minutes amended at meeting held on 11/15/16.

Sentence from draft minutes: What benefits would DPS see if it stops dispatching for those 105 towns?

Amended to: What benefits would DPS see if it stops dispatching for those 105 agencies?

Soni Johnson

Soni Johnson, Clerk

11/23/16

Date

**9-1-1 CALL-TAKING/DISPATCH  
SERVICES WORKING GROUP  
General Meeting #5**

**15 November 2016  
Cap. Plaza Hotel, 100 State St., Montpelier, VT – Room #335**

**10:00 AM – Call to Order**

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

**Working Group Members Present**

VT Enhanced 9-1-1 Board Representative: Chief Gary Taylor, Working Group Chair  
VT Ambulance Assoc. Representative: Jim Finger, President (via conference bridge)  
VT League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) Representative: Gwynn Zakov (arrived after roll call)  
VT Sheriff's Assoc. Representative: Sheriff Roger Marcoux  
VT State Employees Assoc. (VSEA) Representative: Sarah Copen (arrived after roll call)  
VT Assoc. of Chiefs of Police Representative: Chief Leonard Stell  
Office of EMS/Injury Prevention Representative: Chris Bell, Working Group Vice-Chair  
Dept. of Public Safety Representative: Captain Tom Hango

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

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

**Others Present**

Paco Aumand, Executive Director, Central VT Public Safety Authority  
Chief Seth DiSanto, Newport Police Department (via conference bridge)  
Lee Krohn, Chittenden County Regional Planning  
Chief Steve Locke, Burlington FD  
Stephen Whitaker, Member of the Public

**Approval of Minutes**

9/27/16 – *Motion: Chief Marcoux made a motion to accept the minutes as written; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Chief Stell.*  
*Discussion: Captain Hango asked that the minutes be amended. On page two, "What benefits would DPS see if it stops dispatching for those 105 towns?"; towns s/b changed to "agencies".*  
*There was no further discussion and the minutes from 9/27/16 were approved (as amended above) by unanimous voice vote.*

**Business**

- Discussion of Dispatch/Call-Taking Issues and Draft Report – A first draft of the working group's report to the legislature was made available to working group members prior to this meeting. Chair Taylor asked all working group members for their thoughts on the draft report.
  - Some of the Department of Public Safety numbers are incorrect. Corrected information will be sent to Exec. Director Neal for inclusion in the next draft.
  - Department of Public Safety has stopped accepting payment from the five towns/agencies which were previously paying for services. DPS has done this to "level the playing field" until the dispatch issue is resolved.
  - Commissioner Keith Flynn has declined to provide a fee structure to the working group at this time. If the legislature wants them to do so DPS can put that information together for them when requested.
  - The working group had previously asked for a letter detailing what DPS would and would not provide. The Department of Public Safety is not prepared to supply a letter, but there are agreements in place that they will honor.
  - The Department of Public Safety is still interested in getting out of dispatching on the local level and only dispatching for State agencies.

- The Department of Public Safety is not taking on any new agencies at this time.
- The wording of Act 118 suggests that the legislature would like to be provided with specific cost/fee information. What will the response be if the working group doesn't provide the legislature with a fee schedule from the Department of Public Safety?
- The working group should add what fee info they have to the current report so the legislature will have some idea of what is out there.
- If Department of Public Safety can provide numbers if the legislature asks them to, why can't they provide them to the working group?
- The report should provide more information of the impact on municipalities if changes are made to current dispatch services (whether DPS ceases to provide those services or starts charging for them). Towns need as much information as possible to be able to plan for any changes. There are many different variables for them to consider (budget schedules, funding, technology needs and challenges, geographical issues, etc.).
- Department of Public Safety should stay in the dispatching and 9-1-1 call-taking business.
- Everyone pays already...either by taxes paid into the general fund or by separate arrangements. Some communities feel they pay twice because they do both.
- If the working group doesn't have a fee structure from DPS it seems disingenuous to include other agency fees in report.

➤ *Motion – The working group's report to the legislature will reflect the position of Commissioner Keith Flynn, that the Department of Public Safety is not interested in providing dispatch services for any further agencies at this time, would prefer to work with communities to eliminate dispatching for municipalities, and will not provide numbers for a fee structure as requested.*

*Moved by Sheriff Marcoux; 2nd by Chief Stell.*

*Discussion: Jim Finger asked that the motion be repeated. He then suggested it be added that the Department of Public Safety has stated they will not see any cost savings if they cease dispatching for non-state agencies. It was decided that the motion would be voted on as originally stated, and could then be amended as necessary.*

*There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote.*

Further discussion: It was determined that more detailed information be added to the report concerning dispatch funding disparities. Some communities feel that they pay twice; once with taxes and then again for their separate dispatch agreements. It was also suggested that the report clearly state that the Department of Public Safety has suggested that they will not reduce staff or see any savings if they cease dispatching for non-state agencies.

### **Public Comments/Questions**

Stephen Whitaker:

- The credibility of the working group hinges on them providing a useful report to the Legislature. The Department of Public Safety should be held accountable and should be required to provide the requested information; he could get funding information from them through a FOIA request.
  - Group Comment: Existing public records can be requested from DPS, but the working group cannot force them to create documents.
- The working group shouldn't base its recommendations on current funding, but should start with a blank slate and figure out what is needed.
- The working group should also consider that next year the Governor is going to have to decide to opt-in/opt-out in regards to First Net. If they partner with a carrier in Vermont it might be possible for some towns to enter into agreements to use their towers.

Paco Aumand:

- Public Safety fees – It is possible to obtain budget information from them, but why would DPS put together a fee schedule if they want out of dispatching?
  - Group Comment: Broad figures are available, but those figures are not broken down in such a way as to be able to determine the true cost of providing dispatching services.
- Draft report – The report should address 9-1-1 call-handling costs. The Kimball report talks mostly about the efficiency of the single-stage call process. The current model has evolved to the point where

dispatching now subsidizes the call-handling function. Could call-handling, as a stand-alone function, be paid for solely out of the USF?

- Group Comment: Language can be added to the report to provide further information on 9-1-1 call-handling costs.

**Next Meeting Date & Adjournment**

It was determined that the next Working Group meeting would be held on Monday, 12 December 2016. The meeting will take place in Montpelier (location tbd).

*Motion: There being no further business, Chair Taylor entertained a motion to adjourn; move by Sheriff Marcoux; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Gwynn Zakov. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 11:26 AM.*

Respectfully submitted:

Soni Johnson

Soni Johnson, Clerk

11/23/16

Date



**9-1-1 CALL-TAKING/DISPATCH  
SERVICES WORKING GROUP  
General Meeting #6**

FINAL <i>approved as written</i> approval date: 1/11/17
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**20 December 2016  
Cap. Plaza Hotel, 100 State St., Montpelier, VT – Room #338**

**10:02 AM – Call to Order**

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

**Working Group Members Present**

VT Enhanced 9-1-1 Board Representative: Chief Gary Taylor, Working Group Chair  
VT Ambulance Assoc. Representative: Jim Finger, President (via conference bridge)  
VT League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) Representative: Gwynn Zakov  
VT Assoc. of Chiefs of Police Representative: Chief Leonard Stell (via conference bridge)  
Office of EMS/Injury Prevention Representative: Chris Bell, Working Group Vice-Chair  
Dept. of Public Safety Representative: Captain Tom Hango

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

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

**Others Present**

Chief Seth DiSanto, Newport Police Department (via conference bridge)  
Lee Krohn, Chittenden County Regional Planning (via conference bridge)  
Chief Steve Locke, Burlington FD  
Representative Maida Townsend (House Government Ops Comm.)

**Approval of Minutes**

11/15/2016 – *Motion: Captain Hango made a motion to accept the minutes as written; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Chris Bell. There was no discussion and the minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.*

**Business**

- Letters of Recognition – Chair Taylor spoke to the group about drafting a letter, to be placed in the personnel files for Barbara Neal & Soni Johnson, thanking them for their administrative support of the working group.  
*Motion: The Working Group will write a letter thanking Barbara Neal & Soni Johnson for their administrative support of the working group.*  
*Move: Chris Bell 2nd: Gwynn Zakov*  
*There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote.*
- Discussion of Dispatch/Call-Taking Issues and Draft Report – Executive Director Neal put together a summary of all comments/suggestions received from working group members concerning the first draft of their report to the legislature. The members discussed all suggestions & comments made:
  - Captain Hango confirmed that while the Department of Public Safety has expressed a continued interest in ceasing dispatch services on the local level, no date has ever been set.
  - Language concerning the Department of Public Safety’s current dispatching arrangements will be amended to reflect that DPS is not in a position to add to the number of agencies it currently provides services for (should a fee structure be created & DPS continue to provide dispatching services at the local level).
  - Language detailing the total program expenses of the VUSF (VT Universal Service Fund) will be removed from the report; details concerning the Enhanced 9-1-1 portion of the program will remain. Information will also be added to explain where the funding for the VUSF comes from.
  - The Department of Public Safety has stopped accepting payment from the five towns/agencies which were previously paying for services. The final version of the report will provide an explanation as to why (DPS has done this to “level the playing field” until the dispatch issue is resolved).

- Language concerning the Central VT Public Safety Authority will remain in the report (as part of the section detailing what some other organizations are studying/implementing concerning dispatch services).
- An Executive Summary and/or cover letter will be added to the report.

10:20 AM: A break was called in the meeting to deal with an issue with the conference bridge. The meeting reconvened at 10:28 AM.

- Discussion of Dispatch/Call-Taking Issues and Draft Report (continued)
  - The prior dispatch studies referenced in the report will be listed in an appendix, with a note that copies of the studies are on file at the Enhanced 9-1-1 Board office.
  - The report will not reference whether or not the Department of Public Safety can charge for dispatch services without a legislative mandate.
  - Language will be added to clarify comments about disparity in current funding for dispatch services.
  - Language concerning the need for another dispatch study will be removed from the report.
  - A final draft will be completed and provided to working group members for approval at the next meeting.

**Public Comments/Questions** - none

**Next Meeting Date & Adjournment**

It was determined that the next Working Group meeting would be held on Wednesday, 11 January 2017. The meeting will take place in Montpelier (location tbd).

*Motion: There being no further business, Chair Taylor entertained a motion to adjourn; move by Gwynn Zakov; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Chief Stell. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 10:45 AM.*

Respectfully submitted:

Soni Johnson  
Soni Johnson, Clerk

12/27/16  
Date

**9-1-1 CALL-TAKING/DISPATCH SERVICES WORKING GROUP**

**General Meeting #7 - 11 January 2017**

**Enhanced 9-1-1 Board Office**

**(100 State St., Rm #412, Montpelier, VT)**

**& via conference bridge**

**9:31 AM – Call to Order**

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

**Working Group Members (all attended via conference bridge)**

VT Enhanced 9-1-1 Board Representative: Chief Gary Taylor, Working Group Chair

VT Ambulance Assoc. Representative: Jim Finger, President

VT League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) Representative: Gwynn Zakov

VT Sheriff's Assoc. Representative: Sheriff Roger Marcoux

VT Assoc. of Chiefs of Police Representative: Chief Leonard Stell

Office of EMS/Injury Prevention Representative: Chris Bell, Working Group Vice-Chair

Dept. of Public Safety Representative: Captain Tom Hango

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

Barbara Neal, Executive Director

Soni Johnson, E9-1-1 Board Clerk

**Others Present**

Lee Krohn, Chittenden County Regional Planning (via conference bridge)

**Approval of Minutes**

12/20/16 – *Motion: Chief Stell made a motion to accept the minutes as written; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Gwynn Zakov. There was no discussion and the minutes were approved by unanimous roll call vote.*

**Business**

➤ Commendation Letter

*Motion: The Working Group accepts the letter as written by Chair Taylor. The letter will be placed in the Enhanced 9-1-1 Board personnel files and also be sent to the committee of jurisdiction.*

*Move: Chris Bell 2<sup>nd</sup>: Sheriff Marcoux*

*There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously by voice vote.*

➤ Report to the Legislature

- Chair Taylor advised group members that he had reviewed the latest draft of the report, had no changes to recommend, and felt that the report should be submitted to the legislature as written. Chair Taylor asked group members if they thought any changes were needed or if the report should be submitted as written.

Group member comments were taken by roll call:

- Capt. Tom Hango – no changes needed
- Chief Leonard Stell – no changes needed
- Chief Gary Taylor – no changes needed
- Sheriff Roger Marcoux – no changes needed
- Chris Bell – no changes needed
- Jim Finger – no changes needed
- Gwynn Zakov – no changes needed

**Public Comments/Questions** – Lee Krohn thanked group members for their work.

**Adjournment**

*Motion: There being no further business, Chair Taylor entertained a motion to adjourn; move by Sheriff Marcoux; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Chief Stell. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 9:43 AM.*

Respectfully submitted:

Soni Johnson

Soni Johnson, Clerk

1/11/17

Date

**Appendix B**

**List of Existing 9-1-1 Call-taking and Dispatch Studies**

### **9-1-1 Call-taking and Dispatch Studies**

Presentation to the E-911 Board: Findings and Recommendations Regarding Operations and Management; Michael Smith; September 2015

Alternative Structure for Taking 911 Calls in Vermont – Final Report; LR Kimball; November 2013

Report on E-911 and Emergency Dispatch; Vermont Department of Information and Innovation, Vermont Enhanced 9-1-1 Board, and Vermont Department of Public Safety; April 2010

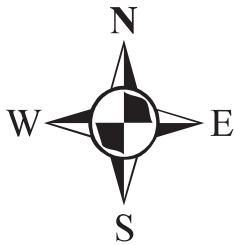
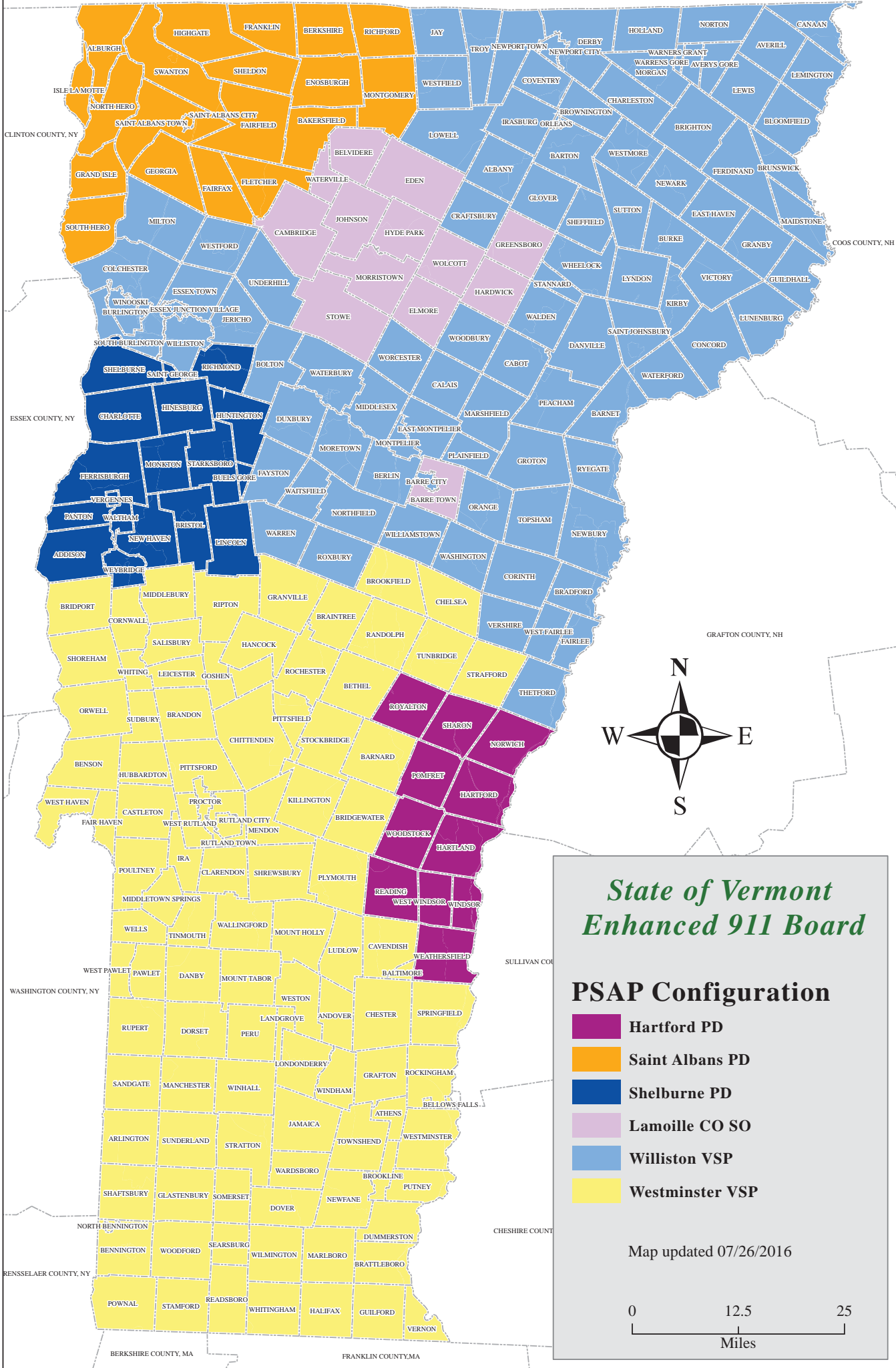
Dispatch Services Executive Summary and Final Report; Vermont Department of Public Safety and Vermont Communications Study Group; September 2006

Report on the Dispatching of Emergency Services Providers; Vermont Department of Public Safety; January 2004.

Supplemental Information to: A Feasibility Study for Developing and Implementing a Regional Emergency Communications Center with Enhanced 9-1-1 Capability; RAM Communications Consultants, Inc for Vision 2000 Communications Planning Group; January 1996

**Appendix C**

**PSAP Configuration Map**

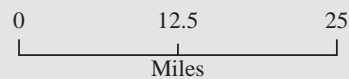


*State of Vermont  
Enhanced 911 Board*

**PSAP Configuration**

- Hartford PD
- Saint Albans PD
- Shelburne PD
- Lamoille CO SO
- Williston VSP
- Westminster VSP

Map updated 07/26/2016



**Appendix D**

**PSAP Reimbursement Model – Proposed PSAP MOU Language**



## PSAP Reimbursement Model – Proposed PSAP MOU Language

Approved October 2016

### SCOPE OF SERVICES

- 1) The Contractor shall be primarily responsible for receiving 9-1-1 calls originating in the Contractor's primary call catchment area, per the Enhanced 9-1-1 Board PSAP Configuration Map attached hereto as Attachment D and transferring, or relaying emergency 9-1-1 calls to other public safety agencies or private safety agencies. The area assigned to the Contractor may be modified by mutual agreement during the term of this contract, and if a modification is made, an addendum outlining the change and a new map incorporating the changes shall be made as an amendment to this contract. If the Contractor determines that a proposed change in area is inappropriate it may, following notice to the State as required in this contract, cease to be a PSAP.
  - 2) The Contractor shall also be responsible for receiving 9-1-1 calls delivered to it from the "Statewide Queue" and transferring or relaying the 9-1-1 calls to the responsible public/private safety agencies.
  - 3) The Contractor will provide all necessary facilities, trained personnel and related resources in order to fulfill its responsibilities under this contract.
  - 4) The Contractor shall ensure adequate staffing levels exist so that, annually, 90% of 9-1-1 calls from the Contractor's primary call catchment area are answered within the PSAP. In addition, Contractor will take reasonable steps to ensure at least one call-taking position is always available and logged into the system to take 9-1-1 calls on a 24x7x365 basis and to increase the number of available call takers available and logged in during times of significant emergency affecting the ability of any other PSAP to take their normal share of 9-1-1 calls.
  - 5) The Contractor will cooperate with the local governmental authorities within its area of responsibility. The PSAP will cooperate with all emergency response organizations serving its area of responsibility, including volunteer and government entities. The Contractor will cooperate with the State and implement the State's direction concerning the handling of 9-1-1 calls for emergency service, use of Board-provided equipment, training and certification requirements and quality control requirements.
  - 6) The Contractor will work with the state and other PSAPs on a strategy to more evenly distribute the number of emergency calls taken in the statewide system.
  - 7) The State will be responsible for ensuring that the Contractor is supported by other PSAPs in the statewide system in the event calls cannot be answered in a timely manner.
  - 8) The State will take reasonable steps to ensure timely training of all individuals employed by the Contractor to take 9-1-1 calls, but will not compensate the Contractor for any costs that are incurred as the result of participation in training.
  - 9) The State will provide all equipment necessary to perform the call-taking service. The State reserves the right to determine the appropriate number of 9-1-1 workstations in each PSAP.
  - 10) The State will strive to provide training in the most cost effective manner possible.
  - 11) If this agreement is cancelled by either party, the Contractor agrees to cooperate with the State to ensure a smooth transition to a successor PSAP. Upon request of the State, any equipment paid for by the Enhanced 9-1-1 Fund shall be returned to the State or its designee.
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## PAYMENT PROVISIONS

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The maximum dollar amount payable under this agreement is not intended as any form of a guaranteed amount. The Contractor will be paid for products or services specified in Attachment A, or services actually performed, up to the maximum allowable amount specified in this agreement. The payment schedule for delivered products, or rates for services performed, and any additional reimbursements, are included in this attachment.

The following provisions specifying payments are:

- 1) State will pay the Contractor a total of \$22,500.00 per year per 9-1-1 workstation housed at the Contractor's facility. In addition, the State will pay the Contractor a percentage of the PSAP Reimbursement Fund based on annual call volume answered at the Contractor's facility.
- 2) The Fiscal Year 2018 reimbursement amount will be provided to each PSAP and will be based upon the number of 9-1-1 workstations housed at the Contractor's facility and the Contractor's call volume for FY16.
- 3) Beginning in calendar year 2017: On or before September 1, the State will provide the reimbursement amount that will be in effect for the subsequent fiscal year. The reimbursement amount will be based upon the number of 9-1-1 workstations housed at the Contractor's facility and the Contractor's call volume for the preceding fiscal year.
- 4) The Contractor will be paid in equal payment amounts on July 15<sup>th</sup>, October 15<sup>th</sup>, January 15<sup>th</sup> and April 15<sup>th</sup>.
- 5) Reimbursement rates are contingent upon meeting the performance measure outlined in Item 4 of Attachment A and in accordance with the chart below:

Primary Call Catchment Answer Rate	% of Call Volume Portion of Reimbursement
> 90%	100%
Between 85 – 89.9%	90%
Less than 85%	Equivalent to answer rate percentage