

1 August, the last business day of August, to them and I have not heard
2 anything back from them on that. In the Ops Report that I send you, there
3 is a link to the report or if you'd prefer me to send it to you, I'm happy to
4 do that too.

5 Steve Gold: No, were you anticipating any issues as a result of creating that report?

6 Barb: I expected that they were going to call me and have me testify at the
7 September meeting, but they had a pretty full agenda. I anticipate being
8 asked to come over again or be asked to come over and discuss that
9 report. One of the things we were supposed to do in that report was
10 identify any vulnerabilities in the system. And, so we did call out to the
11 issue of isolation, which happens when a – wire-line companies are cut off
12 from their central office, essentially, It puts an entity, a town, an area,
13 into standalone so that they can't get any calls out of their area – their
14 exchange – including to 911. So those isolation vulnerabilities have
15 existed in the 911 system since it began, and they continue to exist.
16 Basically we did get information from the wire-line companies that the
17 vulnerabilities do exist still, but not specifically where.

18 Consolidated, who would have the bulk of those locations, had indicated
19 that in order to really study how to address those vulnerabilities would
20 cost several tens of thousands of dollars just to identify how to fix –
21 potential fixes, and in many cases they were quite clear that it's not going
22 to be feasible to fix these locations. So I expect there may be questions on
23 that. What do you want to do about that? I think you, the Board, would
24 want to tread carefully because you can throw a whole lot of money at not
25 good answers or solutions here.

26 Not that every 911 call isn't equally important, but these areas are
27 definitely represent a low call volume. Do you remember the numbers

1 offhand?

2 Joel: 70 percent of our are –I think it's like 75 percent is wireless and VOIP.
3 They're between residential and business wire-line, and so these would be
4 like residential mostly. It's a remote/host issue, and so we have these
5 remote exchanges. An exchange might be like Greensboro, Vermont
6 where they have to go back to maybe St Johnsbury as their host. And so
7 they have two connections – that usually it doesn't have path diversity or
8 goes to another host. If that gets severed somehow, that umbilical, then
9 that exchange is isolated to itself so you can call somebody else on that
10 switch in Greensboro. You couldn't do long distance or 911. And the
11 problem is, back when this was developed the answer was, well we'll just
12 point those – remediate that issue with the isolation; we'll point it to a
13 dispatch number in Greensboro or whatever. Through consolidation of
14 dispatch we don't have that availability anymore to send a 911 call at that
15 local switch, to somebody off that switch. There's only a few instances
16 and one of them is actually in Lamoille where we still have that capability,
17 so that gets isolated – then you can get – you know somebody in an
18 emergency services.

19 I mean that's sort of where we're at, so we gave them the information.
20 The other vulnerability that we pointed out in the report to the Legislature
21 was that the impending investigation results, right? About the meta-
22 switch?

23 Barb: Yeah.

24 Joel: The switched network, so that we would follow through that. Does that
25 answer your question?

26 Steve Gold: Yeah, yeah, no, it does.

1 Barb: You explained it much better.

2 Steve Gold: We have places where we're stepping backward rather than forward it
3 sounds like.

4 Joel: Well the problem is you know we're trying , you know, it's kind of one of
5 those things we had like Barb said, we have to tread carefully because it is
6 a legacy system. If we're going to start, it kind of falls into that sort of
7 CoverageCo thing. Do we start putting money into other people's systems
8 to make them resilient? – and when ultimately it should be – we thought
9 of other ways of maybe letting public education assist people in
10 determining – maybe one solution they might have. You know it is, like
11 Barb said, we care about every 911 caller, but at some point it's – you
12 know – how much money can we pour into somebody else's system?

13 Steve Gold: Do these places, these vulnerable places, are they identifiable? Do we
14 know who they are?

15 Joel: They only gave us a number. They would not share the details with us. I
16 think there was—

17 Steve Gold: Who is they?

18 Joel: Consolidated. Most of the other ILECs don't have sort of that host/remote
19 arrangement. Usually you know they're small enough companies – the
20 other ones, they don't have this issue. It's all or nothing for them. But
21 yeah, I mean, I think you know we could probably guess at some of them,
22 but they were not willing to share it. For the purposes of this report it was
23 a shortened timeline, we chose not to kind of pursue the intricacies, but
24 we can certainly – you know, we could continue.

25 Barb: We could pursue that. I think – We are – There is probably a mechanism
26 for us to get that information.

1 Steve Gold: My question, really it's there's two issues here that I see immediately.
2 One is that when – if something bad happens in one of those places,
3 we're going to get the blame, number one. It's not our problem, but we're
4 going to get the blame. Number two, Is anybody taking responsibility for
5 letting the people in those exchanges know that this vulnerability exists
6 and that they better come up with an alternative plan that they inform
7 their citizens of who are on that exchange? Again, I don't think that's our
8 responsibility, but we might want to, if you get a chance to testify on it,
9 you might want to raise that issue and say that this is something that
10 Consolidated should be responsible for.

11 Barb: ... for notifying their customers of the potential risk, right?

12 Steve Gold: Yeah, yeah.

13 Barb: Right.

14 Marcoux: Probably bring Emergency Management into it too.

15 Chair: I can tell you, as someone who runs a regional dispatch center, if that
16 happens to us, we tell them, oh the people that we dispatch for – we send
17 out an alert to them telling them that they need to man their stations and
18 that the public needs to call directly to whatever entity that is. Then it's
19 worked out fairly well for us. I think Roger does the same thing. I don't
20 know what happens in an area where there is no regional dispatch.

21 Steve Gold: Right, exactly.

22 Jared: That all happened because Montgomery had isolated multiple times, and
23 that's part of our process. We do – will notify the PSAP that covers that
24 area that when we're aware of either – even what might be isolation or
25 multiple customers that are – had dial tone at all. We let them know
26 about it.

1 Chair: Are – We could literally call the fire chief, we have phone numbers, and
2 say: Hey! – you know – Here's what's going on?

3 Steve Locke: Unless you can point that number right to that location, does that help?

4 Chair: Well mostly what people do if they can't get through on the 911 thing is
5 they will call you know, – In the old days we have a magnet that sat on
6 your refrigerator. They'll – you know – call the police station or the fire
7 station and say “I can't get through on 911”, but – you know – “Bobby just
8 shot Billy and somebody needs to get over here.”

9 Joel: Yeah, to answer your question, it's more of a situational awareness than
10 anything because a lot of the dispatch even – dispatch like – a lot of
11 dispatch, I think VSP still has a lot of Consolidated lines, but a lot of
12 dispatchers are off net so it wouldn't even work anymore. If you're like --
13 you have to be connected like an isolation event. We're talking about
14 Greensboro again. If you're not connected to Consolidated, and you get
15 service from Consolidated, you're off net. You will not get through. If you
16 have Comcast, you have some other, SoverNet, you know Level3 you can't.
17 You can't – you will not be reached. That's the other crutch. It's not just
18 about Consolidated, consolidation of dispatch, but also there's all these
19 other players that are providing dial tone service in Vermont.

20 Male: Yeah, VEM is going to help us out of those things happened and they can
21 put out that little runner's strip on the bottom of the TV or the top of the
22 TV, assuming they can still get TV, and they're not in isolation.

23 Steve Gold: I still think there needs to be some – we need to find out where those
24 places are and then push to have an education campaign launched in
25 those communities.

26 Chair: I don't disagree with you.

1 Barb: – By the service providers.

2 Steve Gold: Yeah, I mean it's, you know.

3 Barb: Okay.

4 Steve Gold: I think so. I don't I don't think we want to accept that responsibility when
5 it's not – we didn't generate – We're not generating the problem.

6 Barb: Right, we have had discussions like that internally that the important thing
7 is that the caller gets the message that their phone service isn't working,
8 so if you dial a number and you get a fast busy, right? You know it's not
9 working, so you go on to Plan-B for getting help or calling whoever you
10 need to call. In these situations if you're calling your neighbor, you're
11 going to get through. The problem is you can't get through to 911, so
12 there's really no indicator that something's up with your service which is
13 also of concern.

14 Steve Gold: I would testify that- I would – I think we ought to pull the covers off of
15 that one if you get a chance.

16 Barb: Okay.

17 Steve Gold: Just don't make us responsible.

18 Barb: Okay. I'm getting better and better at that. [laughter]

19 Chair: You are responsible [crosstalk] every time something goes wrong.

20 Steve Gold: That's my point here. We're seen as responsible, but we're not and that's
21 why we have to pull the covers off at the point – at where the problem
22 lies, and tell him you know, that they've got to come up with an education
23 campaign at least so that people know what's going on. I think people
24 would do that. If you don't get through, you're going to call somebody if
25 your house is burning down.

1 Joel: I guess the practice too, though is that they're kind of a last resort, you
2 know, and some people might not have that ability to have a second form
3 of communication. [crosstalk] Having that feedback loop ought to know
4 ahead of time that, you know, I might not get through, or a feedback loop
5 so you know. Hey, I don't, you know, have phone service right now, so I
6 need to do something else. You wouldn't want somebody to sit there and
7 keep trying and trying and thinking it's a problem on our end.

8 Chair: Yeah, it's certainly important that you guys are pushing notifications out to
9 the PSAPs, because then we take responsibility for pushing it out to all of
10 our area. But you're right, there's a good chance that we're not going to
11 get everybody but—

12 Steve Gold: We should make the attempt at least to make —connect them know, but
13 I'm glad you talked about that in the report.

14 Barb: Yeah, I mean it was very clearly something that they were looking for, that
15 kind of information. So...

16 Steve Gold: I didn't mean to take so much time but [crosstalk] short question. Also
17 under legislative, they created the advisory committee to review existing
18 boards and commissions have you testified to them or heard anything
19 from them?

20 Barb: I have not.

21 Male: Okay.

22 Barb: I haven't, there is also, not sure I mentioned it in that report, but there is
23 the Joint Information Technology Committee – Oversight Committee now,
24 which is different than that particular one. I'm going to see them on
25 Thursday morning. They want an overview of 911, and I think it's kind of
26 an introductory conversation. I'm sure they want to know where our

1 challenges are and then that kind of thing, and probably will want to
2 explain their role to me. That will be on Thursday.

3 Steve Gold: I think the key, one of the key things which is – I'm sure you're aware of, is
4 what we were just talking about is being clear with these legislative groups
5 as to what the boundaries are.

6 Barb: Yes.

7 Steve Gold: You know, what's our responsibility and we take it seriously, but what's
8 beyond our responsibility but affects Vermonters or people in trouble and
9 you know in our concerns about those things but we don't have
10 responsibility. I think people get very confused across the street—
11 [crosstalk]

12 Marcoux: ...roll over too, of new people.

13 Barb: Right.

14 Marcoux: That's a constant education.

15 Steve Gold: Right.

16 Barb: I will stress that and I would maybe even include that in things we see as
17 challenges, you know as kind of just constantly having to clarify the
18 relationships here and who's responsible for what.

19 Steve Gold: Absolutely.

20 Barb: Okay, that's good.

21 Chair: Thank you.

22 Barb: Yeah, thank you.

23 Chair: Before I move on, any further discussion on the technical stuff that we've
24 heard about here today in the report and in the rules? All right, I guess the
25 next item on the agenda is the Chittenden Regional Dispatch update from