

Agency of Public Safety – Overview/Outline

January 26, 2021

Brief outline of the Executive Order components:

- The charge is to work with the legislature on the best avenues to move this work forward.
- The Department of Public Safety would become the Agency of Public Safety on 4/16/21
- The administrative and budgeting components of the Vermont Police Academy / Criminal Justice Council would come into the Agency on 7/1/21. The Council retains its independent statutory charge and status guiding training and having oversight of professional standards.
- On or before 7/1/2022:
 - The operations of 911 come into the Agency with the 911 Board retaining its role.
 - The sworn DMV Enforcement personnel move to the Agency.
- Additionally, further study and reports on the efficacy of moving the Warden Service, Liquor & Lottery Enforcement, Capitol Police, and regulatory safety components of the Department of Labor to the Agency are due at later dates.

High Level Goals and Intersection with larger Modernization Strategy

- Overarching goals – affordability, economic development, protecting the most vulnerable and government modernization
- For more than 50 years the legislature and the executive branch have been studying public safety modernization. Numerous studies have been conducted and reports written. We are poised to make significant progress on some of the long-standing ideas as well as new strategies that have emerged from discussions with public safety professionals and stakeholders throughout Vermont.
- This Executive Order exists as part of a larger plan - a set of 4 strategies – to modernize public safety delivery including:
 1. Internal work with the Department of Public Safety on an array of things ranging from budgeting to technology.
 2. Organizing the State’s public safety assets to achieve operational efficiency and provide better service to Vermonters – the Agency model.
 3. Modernizing the way we support statewide public safety operations in fire service, emergency medical service, emergency management, and policing – including enhancements to technology, facility and asset sharing, and planning for modernizing training.
 4. Adopting a mindful, equitable, fair, and reproducible system of criminal justice and public health service delivery to ensure that we are doing all we can in

prevention and education, outreach and early intervention to those in need and facing challenges, crafting a suite of effective alternatives for those in the criminal justice system, and ensuring that accountability for those who require more traditional Court sanctions and incarceration are available. There is a full construct for the system and a 10-point fair and impartial policing construct available at dps.vermont.gov/modernization. (Some cursory detail regarding the criminal justice and public health construct is noted below for reference only.)

Agency of Public Safety – Brief History & Current Outline

- Many versions of this concept have been crafted over the years. They have failed for a variety of reasons.
- Our construct for modernizing the way organize the State’s public safety assets can succeed because of its simplicity and the benefits it will provide.
 - As drafted, the Agency would have three components:
 - A Department of Fire Safety & Emergency management, maintaining the current structures of the two divisions.
 - Department of Law Enforcement; including:
 - Motor Vehicle Enforcement
 - Vermont State PoliceAND a future STUDY regarding the incorporation of:
 - The Fish & Wildlife Warden’s Service
 - Department of Liquor & Lottery EnforcementEach of these units will maintain its specialized mission
 - Division of Support Services; including:
 - Administration
 - Communications (911, dispatch, radio services)
 - Fleet Services
 - Forensic Lab
 - Training Division
 - This unit would include the VT Criminal Justice Council & Fire Service Training Council , which would retain the full scope of jurisdiction and responsibility of their governance boards while benefiting from the administrative and operational support of a Cabinet-level agency. (NOTE: This elevates criminal justice - to a cabinet level)
 - VT Crime Information Center
- Benefits of the agency structure include:
 - Administrative, not personnel, savings over time. Consolidation of some support functions, including a range of cost centers ranging from support personnel to facilities, vehicles, information technology systems, and

equipment will likely result in medium to long term cost savings and/or flattening of cost increases in these areas. It should be noted that there are no areas of public safety operations that are over-staffed and personnel savings is not a component of this plan.

- Regarding 911: Moving the 911 Board and talented staff into public safety will allow for communications assets and operations in our public safety answering points, the radio technology services group, and 911 to work more closely together in unified mission to achieve the best possible emergency services and government communications infrastructure possible.
- Enhanced effectiveness of targeted areas for improvement. Coordinated operations (e.g. motor vehicle enforcement - possibly future alcohol and other enforcement initiatives - training, and operational modernization such as fair and impartial policing or justice system modernization) coordinated across multiple units within one span of control will create faster, more robust results. Additionally, as budgets continue to tighten over time, efficiencies will assist in *maintaining* critical staffing levels for each area of operation.
- Decreasing, with an eye toward eliminating, redundancy, complexity, and duplicate costs through more mindful and robust sharing of facilities, equipment, infrastructure, and technology creating cost savings and operational efficiencies and cost savings over time.
- Reduction in complexity / simplification of field operations strategy to better inform and contribute to other, upstream, components of the criminal justice system. Having a single entity feeding information and coordinating strategy with prosecutors, corrections, and Courts will yield a variety of efficiencies - some known and others unknown.
- Increased collaboration or the inverse, reduction in collaboration and operational variations caused by changes in leadership across the multiple organizations where the entities currently reside.
- Accelerating the modernization of technology, data driven decision-making, training, and operations by providing a more unified focus on improving service delivery across all public safety.
- Elevating the entirety of public safety operations, and budget construction, to a cabinet level within State government.
- Perhaps most important - providing easier access to services for Vermonters through unified communication systems, technology assets, and – eventually – single points of access for public safety services.