

**VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY LAW  
ENFORCEMENT ADVISORY BOARD**

**SUMMARY REPORT  
2018**

The Law Enforcement Advisory Board advises the commissioner of public safety, the governor, and the general assembly on issues involving the cooperation and coordination of all agencies and constables that exercise law enforcement responsibilities.

Prepared by: DPS Law Enforcement Advisory Board

Date: January 29, 2019

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## **LEAB Members**

**2018**

Chair: Richard Gauthier, Executive Director, Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council

Vice-Chair: Sheriff William Bohnyak, Orange County Sheriff, Vermont Sheriffs' Association

Commissioner Thomas D. Anderson, Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety

Colonel Matthew Birmingham, Director of the Vermont State Police

Chief Thomas Hanley, Middlebury Police Department, Vermont Association of Chiefs of Police

Gwynn Zakov, Vermont League of Cities and Towns

Bram Kranichfeld, Attorney General's Office

Executive Director, State's Attorney & Sheriff's Office

Kraig LaPorte, U. S. Attorney's Office

Chief George Merkel, Vergennes Police Department, Vermont Police Association Representative

Matthew Valerio, Defender General's Office

Michael O'Neil, Vermont Troopers Association Representative

Constable Nelson Tift, Vice-President, Vermont Constable Association

## SUMMARY REPORT 2018

### INTRODUCTION

In 2004, the Vermont General Assembly created a Law Enforcement Advisory Board (LEAB) of the Department of Public Safety with authorizing language contained in T.24 V.S.A. § 1939. The purpose of the Board is to advise the Commissioner of Public Safety, the Governor, and the General Assembly on issues involving the cooperation and coordination of all agencies that exercise law enforcement responsibilities. Membership of the Board is set by statute. The current members are listed in appendix A.

In 2018, the LEAB addressed the following:

- E-Ticket
- Public Safety Dispatching.

As always, LEAB members would welcome an opportunity to offer testimony and answer any questions regarding any subject in this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Gauthier, Executive Director  
Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council  
2018 Chair, LEAB

## Electronic Ticket (E-Ticket) Update

Electronic ticket (e-ticket) allows law enforcement officers to issue electronic traffic tickets rather than hand written paper tickets. E-tickets has been in the development and testing phase for the past few years and can now be implemented statewide.

The feasibility of an E-ticket program in Vermont was commenced several years ago and has passed through a number of progressions including software selection, program development and two separate testing pilots. The pilots were implemented in 2015-16 and 2017-present, respectively. Currently there are approximately 50 vehicles equipped with the e-ticket capability across 17 separate law enforcement agencies.

The funding for this program has thus far been exclusively federal funding from the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA). NHTSA funding has been used to purchase the hardware needed to equip the vehicles as well as the contracting cost for the IT support required to utilize the equipment. This included the development of an IT workaround to ensure that the two Record Management Systems used in the State would be able to communicate properly with e-ticket software and the judicial bureau. This testing has now been successfully completed.

The ultimate goal of the e-ticket program is to equip all law enforcement vehicles that perform traffic enforcement duties with e-ticket capability. This will require implementation of the program statewide, which will ultimately require equipping 450 cruisers with e-ticket capabilities.

Benefits of the implantation of e-ticket for law enforcement community are:

### **Officer and Public Safety**

- Increased Officer Safety – less time in the danger zone;
- Increased Officer Efficiency – Average of 10 fewer minutes per stop;
- Faster Justice for drivers – average time for court notification drops from 30 days o 1-2 days;
- Increase or hold on total number of tickets written – due to efficiencies the number of tickets issued stabilizing;
- Bias Free Policing – Improves the ability to collect data on every stop and requires all fields to be filled. This allows for better analysis over all agencies;
- Public Safety – Use of e-ticket allows for better analysis of ticket issuance data to ID areas of concern;
- Multiple Violations – Allows for multiple violations to be included in one ticket rather than the current need to write multiple tickets at one stop.

### **Financial and Administrative Benefits**

- Fewer Dismissals – Due to the timeliness of submission and removal of illegible information the percentage of tickets dismissed drops from 12% to <1%. This accounts for a projected cost recovery of approximately \$500,000 in surcharges. This is based on 2017 data where 12% of the 94000 tickets were dismissed.
- Modernization – This system moves Law Enforcement further along in modernizing systems and would make the overall process significantly more efficient at all levels of interface: the officer, the driver, the judiciary and data analyst.
- Reduction in paper – After full implementation the use of ticket books would be nearly eliminated as the information will be transmitted electronically. This will reduce paper waste as well as the cost of the books.
- Reduction of errors on tickets

- Eliminate the need for VSP and Judiciary admin to enter ticket information freeing them to perform other administrative duties.

The benefits of a fully implemented e-ticket program are numerous and significant. They range from officer safety to waste reduction to sound economics. The Law Enforcement community supports the use of e-ticket as does the judicial bureau. The plan to fully implement the program state-wide is significantly supported by the federal government but the need for a State investment is needed. This investment is in the area of the software systems need to operate and support the e-tickets equipment in the field.

NHSTA funds are available to purchase the hardware to reach full implementation. The estimated cost for the software agreements to operate e-ticket is estimated to be approximately \$200,000 a year. The return on the investment is demonstrated above in the reduction of dismissed tickets. This calculation does not consider the improved efficiencies that the modernization brings about as well as the improved safety it brings to all law enforcement officers writing tickets.

The Department of Public Safety is working together with the Governor's Highway Safety Program within the Agency of Transportation to identify the annual IT funding that will be required for this project.

Law Enforcement Advisory Board  
Dispatch Report 2018

At the conclusion of the last legislative session, the Law Enforcement Advisory Board (LEAB) agreed to review the dispatch system in the State of Vermont as part of an ongoing review of by the House and Senate Committees on Government Operations of the manner in which dispatching services are provided in Vermont. To conduct his review, the LEAB formed a working group which was tasked with reviewing:<sup>1</sup>

- The manner in which different dispatch services should communicate with each other;
- Whether there should be different dispatching services used among State agencies and departments;
- The role of regional dispatch centers;
- The funding source or sources for the proposed plan; and
- The timeframe for implementing the proposed plan.

The working group, after concluding that that responsibility for providing dispatch services and emergency communications is a local responsibility, presented to the LEAB a potential process for a regional approach for dispatch services. This option would be modeled after the Special Investigation Unit model. See 24 V.S.A. 1940. Under this model, a Board would be created to coordinate efforts to provide dispatch services in each region of the state. The Board would determine eligibility criteria, the processes for applications and award grants for the purpose of building out dispatching capacity at region-wide level. One identified potential funding source for these grants would be through an increase in the Universal Service Fee. The Board would oversee and administer these grants over a period of three years. During this same period, legislation would be adopted that would terminate dispatch services for localities currently receiving dispatching services from the Department of Public Safety, which would then be solely responsible for dispatching for all state agencies.

While the LEAB did not reach full consensus on this model, it nonetheless believes it is worthy of further discussion.

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<sup>1</sup> . The working group consisted of Gwynn Zakov, representing VLCT; Rick Gauthier, LEAB Chair; Gary Taylor, St. Albans Chief and Chair of the E911 Board; Tom Hanley, Middlebury Chief, representing the Chiefs' Association, Seth DiSanto, Newport Chief, and VSP Captain Tom Hango, PSAP Commander.