

**HAMPDEN COUNTY RECC
REGIONAL 911 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION DISTRICT PLANNING COMMITTEE**

JANUARY 5, 2017

10:00 AM

EAST LONGMEADOW FIRE DEPARTMENT

150 SOMERS ROAD, EAST LONGMEADOW MASSACHUSETTS 011028

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TOWN OF LUDLOW

APPROVED MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 10:12 AM. The Agenda was modified to include discussion of specific questions to be asked at a meeting with Curt Wood, an Undersecretary for Public Safety to be held January 20, 2017. With that modification, the minutes were approved. The draft minutes from the November 30, 2016 meeting of the DPC were also approved.

There was a general discussion of the Draft Interim Report of the DPC, which had been distributed electronically the day before. One of its purposes is to fulfill a requirement of Chapter 500 of the Acts of 2015. There was general agreement that the report needs to have a summary and streamlined section almost in an FAQ format that can be used to help explain the process and what to expect in the future, especially to elected officials that need to decide whether to sign on to the District Agreement. A one page Town by Town impact statement needs to be included.

The DPC then heard reports from the various subcommittees, focused on the action steps and decisions that lie immediately ahead. The Governance and Finance Committee described the next steps in drafting and approval of the District Agreement, and the need to reach agreement on what current local costs (with projected future expenses) are for each Town operating its own dispatch function. It was requested that future RECC costs be presented on a per capita basis.

Concerns expressed by rank and file sworn personnel about moving to a regional center were discussed. It was suggested that local union officials be encouraged to get in touch with unions in places where a regional center has been in operation for some time.

The Building Subcommittee reported it believes a 9,000 sq. ft. space would meet the Center's needs. Rehabing the Ludlow Mills site would cost about \$6m, without technology, and the 12,000 sq. ft. is more than we need. New construction, without considering land costs, would be about \$1m less. The many problems with the Ludlow Mills site were discussed, including the need for a new tower, the lack of fiber, and lack of clarity from the developer as to possible terms.(N.B. any site chosen will most likely need a new tower).

Chief Madera from Ludlow moved that the Carell Group be instructed to devote no further resources to the Ludlow Mills site, and to look for alternative sites instead. This motion was seconded by Chief Morrissette from East Longmeadow, and unanimously approved.

Stephen Crane said the Greenwood site might be a possibility again, or possibly land at a planned for new DPW facility in Longmeadow, but possible decisions on this were months away. Ellie Villano said Ludlow might have some raw land on Mooney Street. **Greg Carell made the request that all communities identify any possible land they might have.**

Chief Farnsworth moved that the Carell Group be instructed to provide a budget number for building a 9000 sq. ft. building; this was seconded by Chief Ricardi and unanimously approved.

George Fosque from the Carell Group presented the Operations Subcommittee report. He showed a proposed staffing plan of 5 dispatchers and 1 supervisor (who would also take calls/dispatch when needed) for the day and evening shifts, with 4-5 positions staffed on the overnight shift. This would require 21 dispatchers and 6 supervisors. An Executive Director, IT Director and part-time administrative assistant were also included in the staffing plan.

This would be the buildout level of staffing, not needed necessarily on day one, but required to take on calls originating from cell phones.

The motion was made by Chief Babineau, seconded by Chief Farnsworth, to support operational budget planning at the maximum anticipated need, including the goal of taking on the cell calls. It passed unanimously.

Some skepticism was expressed that the Carell Group has accurate call volume numbers. George Fosque agreed that some Towns have not supplied, or don't have a way to reliably measure all the call volumes. He suggested that CAD incident counts were the most useful measure of activity and urged all communities to provide that data, as there continued to be data gaps from three of the towns.

An eight console design was presented, with capacity to expand in the future. George Fosque emphasized the need for the Executive Director to have broad authority to run the Center, with strict accountability to the Board of Directors. It was stated that the current draft of the District Agreement provides for broad authority from the Board to delegate to the Executive Director.

George Fosque also emphasized that the Dispatch Center could be of help to participating fire departments by taking over certain functions like managing call backs now done at the local level.

The budget would include funds for data conversion to put local historical records in the Regional CAD system, while maintaining redundancy with an off-site CAD at one of the police stations.

The Technology Committee reported that the biggest cost was the radio system. It presented three options. Chief Farnsworth said Option 1 should not be considered, and that we should have a new system. It was pointed out that Option 1 was not what was followed in Essex, because they did not have direct RECC console connection with town radio systems, rather relying on RF Control Stations, which the Carell Group staff views as not an acceptable arrangement, and which Essex also does not recommend. George Fosque said we need to phase in the new radio system, with possibly Option 2 as an ultimate goal. The Carell group believes the final decision should be deferred until after WESTCOMM has some operational data and the Director and the Board can review and decide on the correct solution.

After much discussion, Stephen Crane suggested that the Technology Committee (which was meeting at the conclusion of the DPC meeting) specify a discrete question(s) to ask at the January 20, 2017 meeting. He also said we need guidance from the Tech subcommittee on the path we need to take to move from today to Day 1 of the operation of the Center. A motion to this effect was made by Chief Dearborn and seconded by Chief Stankiewicz, and unanimously passed.

There was no discussion of additional agenda items, given the lateness of the hour.

The group scheduled the next DPC meeting for 11:00 am on January 31, 2017 at the East Longmeadow Fire Department. The meeting adjourned at 12:40 pm

Among the Questions discussed that should be raised at the January 20, 2017 meeting were:

- In order to qualify for funding, does the District Agreement have to specify one site for the Dispatch Center, or can it propose alternatives, to be decided later?
- What level of increased grant subsidy can we expect by regionalizing, as the range among current RECCs seems to range from a 200%-600% increase?
- Can grant funds be used for new construction of a Dispatch Center, rather than rehabbing an existing building, and if yes, what complications/delays are involved, if any?
- Does the plan to have the State Police take over dispatching for the City of Chicopee indicate a new state-wide approach, with corresponding lack of priority for supporting new Regional Dispatch Centers

After the Tech Meeting, George Fosque suggested the following question:

- Will EOPSS give the District permission to terminate and use certain strands of EOPSS-controlled dark fiber currently available in the MBI construction to the public safety facilities of the 6 participating towns? Our usage will be for radio system connectivity, hot spare CAD/RMS connectivity and other public safety purposes. Will there be annual costs to the use of these strands and if so, what will those costs be?

Minutes prepared by Michael Gardner, January 7, 2017 and Approved by the District Planning Committee at its next meeting on January 31, 2017

The mission of the Hampden RECC/DPC is to develop and implement a governance structure and operational systems for a regional dispatch that meets the needs of all member communities today and in the future. The DPC member communities share a goal of enhanced and cost effective emergency dispatch services.