

PLACEHOLDER_Vermont Community Listening Session-20241024_180408-Meeting Recording

October 24, 2024, 10:04PM

1h 37m 13s

● **Speaker 7** started transcription

 **Speaker 1** 0:04

We will be having a third listening session in later November, with additional translators available if there is anyone who has translation needs that are not being met. If you could raise your hand.

Or drop a note in the chat.

We'll do the best we can to take care of that.

I'm going to take a quick minute to look at the people lined up here to see.

If our ASL translator is on the call.

Do not see the the.

Asl interpreter.

However, there was also nobody who indicated a need for ASL.

So I think we'll be OK.

So can you go to the next slide, please?

Neil, you're not seeing the slide deck?

 **Speaker 2** 1:02

I don't.

I don't see it.

Maybe it's just me. Is everyone else seeing it? I'm seeing it.

 **Speaker 1** 1:08

Can somebody else give us a check?

 **Speaker 3** 1:10

Yes, I can see it.

 **Speaker 4** 1:11

I'm seeing it.

 **Speaker 2** 1:14

OK, I'll I'll figure it out. Thanks.

 **Speaker 1** 1:16

OK. And we're happy to send you the slide deck if you would like me to do that, Neil. Right, so so here's the history of the public Safety Communications task Force and an overview this task force was created in the spring of 2023 by Act 78, which is also known as the Big Bill.

And it's actually about 5 pages that creates this task force and and lays out a large scope of work.

Inside the budget build, tucked right inside the budget bill.

And so in this bill, we were tasked with the planning and implementation of a reliable, secure and interoperable statewide public safety communications system.

So the budget was passed at the end of the veto session in June of 2023, and the task force immediately began its meetings.

We started at the end of June in 2023, we hired our project managers, which I'll introduce to you in a minute. And we also hired system planning consultants in early 2024.

Now those things might sound like they're not hard to do, but I have to tell you, the state contracting and procurement process takes a very long time. So we're very happy that we've had the band altogether since the beginning of 2024. With their help the T.

Force has established regular stakeholder updates and we are in the thick of things with our data collection and stakeholder engagement plans as we get started, I want to stress two important things about our work.

One we appreciate.

Value all of your input and feedback.

We look forward to hearing about what is and what is not working for you now and what you think could be improved upon and the most important thing is that we, the task force Members, have no preconceived notion of the future structure of the Vermont statewide community. Commun.

System.

There is an awful lot of work going into getting to a place where recommendations will be made, but the Community's input is essential to determining.

How the system will look and how it will be managed and governed and paid for?

So can you go to the next slide, please?

Here are your task force members.

This is Barb Neal on the left, top left. As I said, she is the executive director of the Vermont Enhanced 911 board just to the right with the flags looking all official.

That's me.

Down below us is Mr. Paul White, who was the chair of the Berry Town Select Board and his position on the task force was because he was the chair of a previous working legislatively.

Put together working group.

Study this issue so he's had years of experience exploring this issue.

Up in the middle, on top is Mayor Mike Dungus from the city of Rutland, and below him is Ron Kummitz. As I mentioned, the chief of the Alburg Volunteer Fire Department. And then in the top right and also on the screen with us is Jim Mack, who's the.

Peace app administrator at Shelburne Police Department and last but certainly not least, in the lower right corner is Michael Wright.

Who represents the Vermont State Ambulance Association and he is the CEO of Calx Ambulance service.

So those are your task force members and next slide please.

So now it's time for me to introduce to you the the two companies that we've contracted with. The 1st is televate.

They are serving as the project manager for the task force.

Understanding that all 7 Task Force members have day jobs that are big jobs and take up a lot of time, we immediately identified the need to hire some subject matter experts in this field who could be the trusted advisors for the task force? Really help us get our.


Thoughts together and direct the work of the other contracted partners.


So televate, represented by Don Mccurry and Rick Burke, are our trusted project managers.





Speaker 5 5:30


Good evening.

 **Speaker 3** 5:31
Everyone.

 **Speaker 1** 5:33
And they they have been integral to the task force being able to keep things moving forward with a really great cadence.
So they're here tonight. Also here tonight. And this meeting is being facilitated by mission critical partners.
They are the system planning vendor and there are several members of mission critical.
Knight Jason Malloy, who is our project manager for this project, along with Bonnie Mainy, who's the operations senior advisor, and she will be facilitating the bulk of this meeting.
Bonnie is there.
Are there other team members here?
I know Scott and Gigi are sometimes here, but I can't see the attendees right now.

 **Speaker 6** 6:15
Answers on as well.

 **Speaker 7** 6:17
France is on his way.

 **Speaker 1** 6:17
Oh, rants is on ramp.
Stuffy is part of the team.
So that's mission critical partners. They are doing the scope of work laid out in Act 78.
And it is a big pile of work as you'll hear about more about.
But thanks for the to the entire team for being here.
And we'll get started with a quick review of what the current emergency communications landscape looks like.
So.
Of you might know all this, we prepared this in the event that there are folks who

aren't very much immersed in this world.

So sorry if I'm being a little bit too elementary for others, but Vermont has a single statewide 911 system that routes 911 calls and text texts to one of six public safety answering points or psaps.

All Vermont 911 call takers are fully trained and certified, including emergency Medical dispatch certification.

911 call takers answer the 911 call. Determine the location and nature of the event. Connect 911 callers to the appropriate dispatch Centers for the needed responders, and they also provide any needed pre arrival instructions to the caller. While responders are en route to the scene.

All aspects of the statewide 911 system.

Are governed by the Enhanced 911 board.

In some cases, the PSAP also provides dispatch services for the needed responders and in other cases the calls must be transferred to one of many dispatch centers, providing services to Vermont response agencies.

So in addition to the six piece apps in Vermont that handle 911 receiving 911 calls, there are 37 dispatch centers serving Vermont.

The emergency communications professionals at these dispatch centers focus on coordinating and supporting emergency responders during events and monitoring responder locations and activities.

Dispatch service may be governed at the local, regional or state level.

Next slide please.

So this map as soon as it gets there, Nope one more.

There we go.

This map shows the locations of the six piece apps.

Those are shown in red and green circles.

The six are in Hartford, Lamoille County, Shelburne PD, St.

Albans PD and the Vermont State Police operate two piece apps, one in Westminster and one in Williston.

I'm not going to run through all the other.

Dispatch centres. You can see them on the slide and they are represented by just a green dot on the map.

So you can see that right now we have a organically created.

System that also in many cases relies on out of state dispatch services that provide service to Vermont based first responder organizations.

So this is the current state of affairs, and tonight we're looking for input on many aspects of what a future system might look like. And to facilitate the bulk of that, I am going to turn you over to Bonnie Mainie for mission critical partners.

 **Speaker 7** 9:54

Thank you, Jen, and thank you everybody for being here.

It's a lot to get through if you're not familiar with the public safety communications, you know, world.

But that's what why it's important to have that foundation and then for us to be able to hear.

Your concerns what you think is working well, what you think is not, you know, advance this slide.

It will work.

Here we go.

So as Jen said, this is the. This is kind of the meat and potatoes, the community, the Community discussion.

Just a couple of little kind of housekeeping things on that as well.

We know we are in the remote environment and it's really great that it can be that inclusive and bring everybody together so people can participate from across the state and at times that are convenient. But we do ask you to try and be as present as possible.

And then we really need you to be candid.

We need to have honest feedback and the same time as being honest and candid, to be respectful of those that are also participating.

Contributing everybody's experiences different and we ask you to not only listen as partners, but listen as community members and you know and what you may think is important to the Community and not just based on your own experience.

We do welcome the criticism of the ideas, of course, but at the same time we want you to think big. Picture again, think community, think.

Your region.

And then if there are topics and things that we start discussing, we we kind of start going down different rabbit holes.

We do use something called a parking lot and we'll take and we'll note those ideas down because they may be important as part of a future discussion. We want to make sure we capture them.

Jason is monitoring the chat and he's taking notes and he's going to be, you know, monitoring that parking lot as well for information that may need to go in there. So with that.

Jen also mentioned that we are going to use live polling and to get everybody warmed up and prepared.

The first thing that we're going to ask you, and I'm gonna show you how to get on to the live polling here on the next slide is what's one key take away you want us to gain from today's listening session?

I know a lot of time.

Normally we ask people what do you want to gain.

But in this case, again, we are here to listen.

And So what would one key take away? You want us to gain from today's listening session?

Now here is how the polling works.

If you have trouble getting on the polling, don't worry. You can unmute and share your opinion on your ideas and your thoughts, or you can also put it in the chat. And again Jason will be monitoring that and he will be, you know, calling those out. So how?

Do you get on the polling?

You can use your your phone your mobile device.

You can click that QR code up there in the right top corner.

That QR code will take you to.

An area where you can put in the B Maine 119 and should access the polling system.

You can also join by text, so using your mobile device, open up your text.

And message 37607.

And then in the message area, put BMANEY 119.

And press send.

Now when you press send, that's gonna open up, so to speak. The portal to the text or to the the live polling. And as we scroll through these polls.

They'll just pop up automatically, so just send B Mani 119 to 37607.

That opens up the portal the 3rd way that you can join is just using your web browser on on either your mobile device or your laptop and go to pollev.com.

Forward Slash B Maney 119 and that will also give you access.

Right. So joining by the web is [pollev.com/B MANEY 119](https://pollev.com/B%20MANEY%20119), and we actually have somebody great has already figured it out.

That's awesome.

And they're looking forward to hearing input from participants.

Oh, I think that's somebody from our, from our side of the house.

So great.

Please don't be shy. We really need you.

To share your opinion so again.

If you're not feeling comfortable with doing the polling that way, feel free to raise your hand well, you know, unmute and share during chat feature as well.

So with that, Jason, do we have any anything in chat?

 **Speaker 6** 14:57

Not yet.

And Rance is gonna cover chat.

 **Speaker 7** 15:01

OK.

Thank you, rance.

All right. We're gonna just give a second for, you know, I know it takes a little bit to warm up, but you know these things.

Hopefully it's you're you're taking the time out of your day to be here, so it's obviously important. So please share. What? What is something you want us to gain from today's listening session?

As we learned on the town halls, I'm a very patient person when it comes to the silence.

So I will.

You know, pause.

Give everybody an opportunity.

Meg, is there something you would like us to get out of this? Craig Wooster.

Something you would like us to gain?

 **Speaker 8** 15:57

I'm just typing in my response right now actually.

 **Speaker 7** 15:59

Oh, perfect.

Yay, awesome.

So do not yes.

 **Speaker 1** 16:01

Hey, Bonnie.

Bonnie, can I jump in on this?

The the first comment was do not sacrifice what works right at this time.

A centralization pars in the future.

Interestingly enough, I told you 5 dense, dense pages, that of language inside the budget bill that created this task force part of the statute legitimately says do all this, do a big inventory.

Design a new future system and don't break anything that's currently working.

So it's a, it's interesting, but that your your viewpoint is already codified in statute.

But thank you for telling us that 'cause we don't want to break things that are working well.

We want it would only be wise to move forward with a system that improves things for everyone.

 **Speaker 7** 16:50

Absolutely. Thank you, Jen. And thanks to that commenter.

So stakeholders from all public safety entities let me make sure I Scroll down here.

Stakeholders from all public safety entities need to be involved in selecting an actual CAD system to transition from Valcour VSP alone or primarily OK so so the the Community folks on here that may not know what all those three letter four letter words are.

Our our acronyms are CAD is actually what they call computer aided dispatch and that is how 911 operators and dispatchers they use that to be able to.

Know where calls for service are, where their police or fire or medical units are, and it's how they really kind of track everything that's going on.

Valcour is a vendor of those types of systems.

He is Vermont State Police.

So, folks, when you're putting in these, I know it's great that you.

Are our public safety savvy?

But let's do remember we have community members on here as well.

Just looking to see how this is going to build on current systems.

That's OK.

That's great.

How's everything work together?

And I thought, did somebody come up mute the Sher?

 **Speaker 9** 18:13

Have a comment for the chat.

 **Speaker 7** 18:14

Yes, please go ahead, Lance.

 **Speaker 9** 18:17

I would like to encourage coordination with vem.

I'm going to go with Vermont Emergency Management.

If not, correct me and consider how radios can be part of the plan.

Both amateur and gmrs.

 **Speaker 7** 18:30

Local medical response system.

I believe that.

Is that all right?

Thank you very much.

 **Speaker 10** 18:36

No, that's the general mobile radio service.

 **Speaker 7** 18:38

Oh, thank you. OK, I had I had medical response on my mind.

Thank you for clarifying that.

 **Speaker 9** 18:47

I have a second one, Moni.

 **Speaker 7** 18:48

There's nothing.

 **Speaker 9** 18:50

How can we leverage assistance even through serve Interstate and international calls?

That's from the Beecher Falls Volunteer Fire Department.

 **Speaker 7** 18:58

We do know that the northern part of the state does have that pesky Canada to to to work with, and I say that lovingly, of course.

But yeah, we understand that those Interstate and international calls can be challenging.

So another thing that folks want us to take away is to really listen to the needs of first responders who are on the receiving end and what is working now and what's not.

And we are going to dig into that as well.

And that is.

It's interesting.

I will say because we're at, you know, we've asked.

This is as a community listening session, but we also have to be aware and acknowledge the fact that there are a lot of volunteer services in the state of Vermont, lot of volunteer departments and that makes those field responders both a responder and a Community member and then.

An understanding of what stakeholders think is working well and what is broken.

So that is great.

I appreciate all of that. If you still have things to share, don't hesitate to put them in the chat, but we are going to move forward.

So thank you guys for for getting warmed up there with that first poll, the remaining remainder of the session tonight is broken down really into two sections.

One is considerations of the current emergency communication system.

All right.

And we have two polling questions there.

About what is working well today and what is not working well today. The second-half is about the future vision and there'll be three questions that we're going to explore when we get to that piece.

Something else I want we would like you to keep in mind is when we are talking about emergency communication system, we are really talking about.

The receiving of calls and the dispatching of calls.

We know that there may be opinions and thoughts and concerns about the actual field response itself, but really we want to focus on the receiving and the dispatching of calls and the communication that goes on inside of that at this point, so.

With that in mind, then I'd move to this next poll and ask you what is working well today.

And this kind of goes to the, you know, the thoughts that were brought up on the previous slide. If please don't break what what is working well today. So what are those things that are working well that you don't want to have interfered with?

You have a second for folks to respond.

Or begin responding.

Again, I think Jake and and Beecher falls out. If you're more comfortable in the chat, that's great.

We can't wait to hear from you, but what is working well today?

Text base Vermont alert system OK.

The person who shared that, would you mind talk coming off of mute and sharing a little bit more about that.

I think this is one of the first times we've heard about the text based Vermont alert system, so you wouldn't mind coming off mute and sharing a little more.

 **Speaker 11** 22:48

Yeah. Hi. My name is Nick.

I put that in the poll. What I was talking about is when people can sign up for the Vermont alerts, they usually get them via e-mail, but they can also receive them via text. Anything from Rd. closures fires, things like that.

 **Speaker 7** 23:06

OK, excellent. Thank you. Appreciate that.

Something else from the viewpoint of a citizen who listens to scanner radio traffic, I feel that whatever systems Lamoille, Lamoille Lamoille County uses works well.

 **Speaker 1** 23:20

Home oil.

 **Speaker 7** 23:24

OK. And I appreciate you putting the area in there in the region that helps us. I mean again the state is a big state, so.

Does anybody on here? I don't know if Jen or Jim.

Can you share it all?

What Lamoille County is, how they're doing things over there.

I know we have a lot of information that we would go back to.



Speaker 4 23:45

You need her right now.



Speaker 1 23:45

Thank you.

It would be important for this comment for me to understand if the person who's writing it is complimenting the quality of her of the ability to hear what's happening on the radio system.

So if they're talking about the technology or something else, but Lamoille County is one of the six regional or de facto regional dispatch centers.

They are a peace app and they are also a dispatch center where they dispatch for other first responder agencies, not just themselves.



Speaker 7 24:19

So go ahead.



Speaker 12 24:22

Do you wanna comment from the writer of that point?



Speaker 7 24:25

Yeah. Yes, please.



Speaker 1 24:25

Yeah, totally.



Speaker 12 24:26

OK.

I'm Jonathan Sturgis.

I live in Morrisville. I'm citizen.

Semi retired and I do listen to scanner traffic and I find that Lamoille County emergency dispatch.

Very effectively dispatches.

Fire ambulance, police, traffic.

And and I think whatever systems they are using appear to work very efficiently.

 **Speaker 1** 24:56

Sounds like we're talking operations bucket guys for those who are taking notes, I think that we're talking about the quality of how they are, their procedures and their operations.

Am I correct Sir?

 **Speaker 12** 25:09

Yes. And it also seems to me that the the framework follows the incident command system.

 **Speaker 7** 25:16

OK.

I think we'll be something else that we can note from that. If I'm correct, is a consistency perhaps in the language that is used by the dispatchers back and forth with the field responders perhaps.

 **Speaker 12** 25:31

That would be correct regardless of of which municipality or which service within the municipality the the framework of the calls are always the same.

 **Speaker 7** 25:41

Thank you so much for that.

Appreciate it.

Let's see.

We have another one here.

The local dispatch centers are phenomenal at further screening calls. Once transferred from 911.

Currently, the peace apps are inadequately reforming this.

Again, same kind of comment.

Whoever would want to come off mute, perhaps, and share a little bit more about that experience, where where is this area, these local dispatch centres?

Where is this person from?

 **Speaker 13** 26:12

Hi, Bonnie. My name's David.

I'm a firefighter paramedic with the Berry City Fire Department.

I'm also a dispatcher with the Berry City Police Department.

 **Speaker 7** 26:19

Excellent.

 **Speaker 13** 26:20

This is Speaking of the three dispatch centers that serve central Vermont being Lemoyne Berry and Montpelier.

The calls that are transferred from the peace apps are typically generic and aren't able to paint an adequate picture to pass along to our responders.

So there's the initial call taking process through the peace app you know is seems to be done rather quickly, but then the local dispatch centers are left to get all the supplementary but necessary pertinent information.

And they're done doing this by themselves when there should be a peace app role, in my opinion.

 **Speaker 7** 27:06

OK.

The local center should be doing the P Sep role.

 **Speaker 13** 27:15

Either way, no matter how it's structured, the.

Whoever that public safety answering point is, whether it's local or in the current model.

 **Speaker 7** 27:24

Mm hmm.

 **Speaker 13** 27:24

That should improve if left with the current model.

 **Speaker 7** 27:28

Oh, I see, I think.

OK.

I think I'm tracking with you now and if I'm understanding the the speed at which the calls are being processed is lacking in substance. Ultimately for the local dispatch and responders, is that an accurate statement? OK.

 **Speaker 13** 27:46

Yeah, yeah. For for example, you know, on the police aspect of things of oh, yeah, there's people fighting and they give the location and the callback information.

But you know well, are there weapons?

How many people are fighting?

Is it physical?

Is it verbal?

Just those, you know, we don't need all the information right off, but just that pertinent information, I feel that that should be done by the peace app and.

Another example for the medical aspect.

Someone's down unconscious.

Well, OK, our breathing.

That's a a very important.

Question to ask.

And that determines the amount of responders in the priority that they go to these calls.

 **Speaker 7** 28:32

OK.

All right. Excellent.

I thank you very much for that, David, appreciate that.

Doesn't look like we have anything else on from the pool side.

Anything rants from the chat side?

 **Speaker 9** 28:47

We have one from the chat, Bonnie, this is back again from our Beecher Falls Volunteer Fire Department. Enhanced 911 seems to be working with interfacing our Vermont 911 calls up in our area. I believe they are probably up in that Canada area again, so.

Vermont to New Hampshire.

Cobra dispatch. So that connection between out of state you're talking about out of state and also out of country.

 **Speaker 7** 29:11

Got you.

Alright, excellent.

Thank you all so much for that.

I am gonna.

I'm gonna move on and I will actually pause for a second.

Anybody else have anything to share that about what is working well today?

Alright. Well, let's move forward to what some people have found to be an easier question at times.

What is not working well today?

There are some things that it's like, yeah, not not.

It could use some improvement.

2nd.

Like I said in in some other sessions this seems to have been that the easier question at times.

I know we've kind of covered a little bit of that even in the last one.

David was how he was sharing that.

There could be some, you know better call call processing before it goes to the dispatch or the local level.


Things like that. So.


Anybody have anything yet?


Either that or you guys are taking a really long time to type something in 'cause. It's a long response.


 **Speaker 1** 31:02


Bonnie, it might be useful at this juncture to to ask a couple questions, like some of the things we've heard in other sessions are inequitable funding.


 **Speaker 7** 31:08
Sure.


 **Speaker 1** 31:12
The cost is inconsistent across the state, whether whether that relates to being dispatched by the Vermont State Police or one of the other dispatch centers. We've heard complaints about dead zones.
We've heard complaints.
We've heard, you know, feedback about.
Gosh, what are some of the other things that were common?
So I just really would like really want your feedback on this guys.

 **Speaker 7** 31:37
Mm hmm.

 **Speaker 1** 31:37
You're not gonna hurt any feelings.

 **Speaker 7** 31:40
Yeah.

 **Speaker 1** 31:40
So, you know, let her rip, because that's what we're here for.

 **Speaker 7** 31:45
Yeah. And again it does.
This is some community, folks.
But citizens?
But we also do have responders out here, so in here.
So if you do have things related to that, please don't hesitate.
Having to notify multiple dispatch Center for the same emergency call, police, fire and EMS. We have definitely heard that across the board at all of our sessions and

the challenges with that.

Even though the call comes in and be, you know, trying to not only just have to call those three services, but maybe having to call multiple different agencies to find.

Find the units that you need, so that is definitely a consistent theme.



Speaker 9 32:38

Honey from the chat.



Speaker 7 32:39

Yep, go ahead.



Speaker 9 32:41

From a fire perspective, once toned, we have no way of communicating with any Vermont dispatchers and due to terrain and limited computers, we have many dead spots where no communications can take place.

Basically, we're radio radio coverage.



Speaker 7 32:57

OK.



Speaker 9 32:57

And and limited computers.



Speaker 7 33:01

A very another very very common issue as Jen alluded to as well that we are we are hearing.

I would ask this at this since we are kind of talking about.

Radio communications repeaters, especially for the community members on here.

Radio towers so to be able to have communication, consistent communication, whether that be cellular or or you know wireless for public safety.

There it it requires radio towers in those, you know big, tall, you know structures.

What are the thoughts and feelings about having those structures in your community?

Any any thoughts, any anything about that?

 **Speaker 13** 33:58

Hey, Bonnie. Dave with central Vermont again.

I have another point that I think might be a little too long to type, so once we OK, I don't interrupt the radio tower thing.

 **Speaker 7** 34:04

OK.

Go for it.

Well, that's that's fine.

It'll give people a chance to think about it.

 **Speaker 13** 34:13

Yeah.

 **Speaker 7** 34:14

Go ahead, Dave.

 **Speaker 13** 34:15

OK, not to to harp on, you know, computer aided dispatch system, a CAD system.

We 3 dispatch services 4 counting state police.

Served the Central Vermont area.

Into that first point that's on the screen. You know that's not working well, and police might have an update that should be relayed to fire, but it's not because it's just lost in that telephone game between the three or four dispatch centers.

But crew resource tracking?

In the resources tracking the aspect of the CAD system to say I need three more ambulances. Currently we need to call around to be like hey, do you have an ambulance that can be sent to this instead of it being built into the CAD system that says oh?

This person has an ambulance to send.

We can do this automatically.

We don't need to call around saving vital minutes.

There's just one example of.

A benefit that the CAD system can provide.
If properly focused on fire and EMS, in addition to law enforcement.

 **Speaker 7** 35:22

Right, right.
Absolutely. I appreciate that.
France, do we have anything in chat?

 **Speaker 9** 35:33

Yes, I would prefer to have radio towers for ample communications, but this audience is likely one that would prioritize emergency response communications over aesthetics.

 **Speaker 7** 35:44

OK, understood.
Any anybody else on the radio towers idea of having towers or more towers in and around your community that are visible?
Or does is, you know Jake's point?
Here it is.
We would rather have the emergency response communications.
Over the the aesthetics of a tower.
The gentleman.
I'm sorry, I'm I'm. I've turned my.
Names off on my chat.
So the gentleman that that was sharing that he was a citizen that listened to scanners, you know, do you have any thoughts?
You have any towers in your community, you know that.
Would be able to provide your your feelings on on what that would be if you had more towers.

 **Speaker 12** 36:49

Jonathan Sturgis again in Morrisville and I just put something in the in the in the pole, but I'm not sure that I was in the right queue.

 **Speaker 7** 36:52

Thank you.

Nope. OK.

 **Speaker 12** 36:58

But anyway, my my comment was regarding radio towers. The terrain in Vermont is not conducive to lighter side radio communications.

With all the mountains and valleys, so I suspect that public safety agencies and the contract radio shops that they depend on have already exhausted possibilities.

Now I'm saying that from the standpoint that I am a licensed amateur radio operator.

 **Speaker 7** 37:22

OK.

 **Speaker 12** 37:23

So I and as the frequencies go higher as we go from VHF to UHF, it becomes more and more line of sight direct. If you can't see the tower, you might not be able to get the message through.

 **Speaker 7** 37:38

Yeah, yeah. Excellent.

I I appreciate that very much. Thank you.

So another one we have on here.

Not all are on the same UHF and VHF. Forcing small departments to have several different high and low radio or band radios in their vehicles in order to communicate with others.

That is something else.

I think that we have heard as well to having to have multiple, you know, carry multiple radios, multiple devices to be able to communicate.

Having to, you know, relay information from one basically system to the other.

You know that definitely is something that we've heard is not working well today.

Anything from?

Our task force members on the call.

Or televate that would like to share anything regarding the these comments about radio or the radio towers.



Speaker 3 38:42

Yeah, Bonnie, this is Rick.

I'll be happy to share with some ideas. So for the audience here we have actually held a number of sessions directly with public safety and with the community.

This is second one for the community and our questions regarding tower citing are important because there have been a number of towers cellular towers.

And and and public safety towers that have encountered resistance from the local community.

And so, you know, we can't improve radio communications without increasing the number of towers of radio towers to to broadcast.

And so you know what?

We're encouraging towns that that may and you know any town or any jurisdiction.

That is.

Responding to a request to install a tower to, you know, to perhaps instead of rejecting a tower to, you know, ask that the tower be becomes stealth.

It'll look like a a a tree.

You know, there's a number of ways that we can make cellular towers and radio towers on any tower to be more conducive to the surrounding.

So it fits in better and and you know to make it more aesthetically pleasing.

So because of the the comments Jonathan brought up and others about the difficulty in providing reliable radio and cellular communication throughout.

The state.

Yeah. You know, we we're gonna try to encourage and and share ideas with the local community on what they may, you know, further consider so that we can get coverage if we don't have so more than 70% of all 911 calls are are coming from.

Over the cellular network and we, we've encountered a number of of stories from the first responders.

Where someone drives by an accident and and there's no cellular coverage of the accidents.

So someone drive someone, drives up the road and.

Orts it and so you know, the only way we're gonna be able to get service more robust on the cell side for for going calls to be made is to increase the number of towers.

We're also working, you know, so that if if a tower is licensed by a cellular towers

license, you know, perhaps make that tower available to local public safety so that they can use that tower.

So we're gonna be.

You know, we're we're gonna be both sharing ideas as a result of what we're finding and.

Obviously what we hear from you is going to be part of our recommendations back to the state as well.

 **Speaker 7** 41:26

Great. Thank you, Rick. Appreciate that.

 **Speaker 3** 41:27

Thank you. Pleasure.

 **Speaker 7** 41:29

Yep.

 **Speaker 1** 41:30

Hey, Bonnie. Bonnie, it's Jen.

 **Speaker 7** 41:30

All right, yes.

 **Speaker 1** 41:32

So I'm really just 'cause. We seem to have a little bit of time right here in this section. I really want to hear from citizens, and of course, all first responders are citizens. Also, how should we pay for this?

What is a fairway of paying for a statewide system?

What are the ideas about what citizens would feel comfortable with as a funding model?

If you have thoughts on that.

Drop it in the chat or in the poll, because that's obviously a huge piece of this, not just what do we build like where do we site towers?

But how do we pay for it? How do?

How does governance work?

These are all parts of this puzzle that I think the public should have input on.



Speaker 7 42:19

Excellent. Thank you for that Jen. And yes, please put it into chat. Throw it in the poll that is fine.

We'll we'll be able to find that information so.

People are thinking about that and hopefully putting it into the chat or again, you can raise your hand. You can come off mute and we will engage that way as well.

Alright, to keep us moving forward.

And we'll, you know, we'll bring up the the funding again that that's kind of all about the current system and this is again the funding kind of lays in here into the future.

But moving forward into the vision for a future statewide emergency communication system.

The three questions we're gonna, you know, kind of explore here are what expectations do you have for emergency communications in your community?

The.

And what is something you would not want to change?

And then how do you think the emergency communication system could be improved now I'm I'm going to give you a little heads up when it comes to the last question.

I will be going around the room, so to speak, the virtual room and calling on each person, so we want to make sure that everybody has an opportunity to.

To contribute, and Even so, just just a heads up that we're gonna do that.

So the first two of these again are polls, and again we'll engage conversation.

And then the third one is, is more of that opening up the the MIC and and talking to folks directly.

So what expectations do you have for emergency communications in your community?

And this is important for for several reasons, right?

Some folks live in very rural areas.

And you know, maybe the the, you know, extended response times are a concern.

Maybe they're not those that live in the more populous, you know, communities may have a different expectations on how their calls are handled, how things are dispatched.

Right, great.

Well, thank you, whoever popped that in there, the funding question informing the public on how the current system works and it's inaccurate adequacies will shock most citizens.

And I'm going to think that the rest of that responses says is to provide real world examples.

I call public safety response in a timely manner.

All right.

And I'm going to ask you a little.

To expand on that, whoever put that one in there, what is the definition?

How do you define timely manner?

Again for folks, yes, please.

 **Speaker 12** 45:27

Can you talk Jonathan Sturgis from Boris Phil again?

Timely manner is 10 to 15 minutes. As far as I'm concerned.

 **Speaker 7** 45:36

OK.

 **Speaker 12** 45:36

I realize because in Morrisville we're dealing with volunteer services for the most part, so the volunteer needs to arrive at the station or at the ambulance office.

Get in the vehicle and then respond to the location so that that's, I think what I'm looking at.

 **Speaker 7** 45:52

OK.

 **Speaker 12** 45:52

The more the more rural you are, the longer the time frame would be.

 **Speaker 7** 45:57

Right, right, right.

Anybody else have a definition of of a timely manner?

How quickly they expect to have somebody have a field responder at their at their doorstep or at their at their at the scene of their incident.

From the time that they call.

Besides just come, you can come right off mute.

These are very important elements.

 **Speaker 13** 46:36

Citizen and I call number one, I expect the person gathering the information to have a general idea of where I might be based on the things that I'm describing and be able to quickly assign the resources.

 **Speaker 7** 46:46

Mm hmm.

 **Speaker 13** 46:51

Appropriate and send them in a timely matter, I think because of the diversity in the population and training Vermont that's subject to each community of what those response standards and expectations are.

 **Speaker 7** 47:06

OK. Is there OK.

So really not a specific time frame, so it could be different in a rural or municipal area or small town.

 **Speaker 13** 47:17

In Berry City, you know we have an average response time of less than 4 minutes. However, if I'm in the middle of the Northeast Kingdom, you know a 4 minute response time isn't possible and likely shouldn't be expected.

 **Speaker 7** 47:31

Appreciate that.

Dance anything in chat.

 **Speaker 9** 47:37

One comment from it's back from our Beecher Falls Fire Department.

We expect that we will move forward at some point with our current barriers in communications challenges.

 **Speaker 7** 47:53

There we go.

 **Speaker 9** 47:55

I haven't.

I never no longer want.

I think that it's important for you to specify what type of emergency communications you're referring to.

Please clarify when you're just referring to 911 emergency dispatch communications as our town's Emergency Management coordinator, I refer to emergency communications to also include how we internally communicate with our town Emergency Management team. So it'd be helpful if you were seeking input on specifically 9.

11 emergency communications just to clarify, the scope of the discussion.

 **Speaker 7** 48:20

Excellent. Thank you, Jake.

Yes, we are talking about 911 emergency dispatch communications, not necessarily internal communications.

However, I will preface that I'm I'm going to kind of, yeah, go ahead, sure.

 **Speaker 1** 48:37

Bonnie, can I? Can I jump?

We're we're talking way beyond just 911, obviously, how the information comes through 911 to a dispatch center.

This is what we're primarily talking about is the information comes to a dispatch center and now dispatch is talking to the first responder community.

So the scope of work that this task force has been.

Tasked with Task Force Task force.

See what I did there?

Does not contemplate internal municipal emergency communications.

It is specific to police, fire, EMS and there could of course.

Wrap into that some of the other first responder elements that are enlisted, like the the highway public, public works crews, etcetera.

But it does not contemplate internal municipal or state level.

Communications. I hope that that's helpful.

 **Speaker 7** 49:41

The only thing I was gonna add to that Jen, was from a governance perspective and how communications for you know the the governance would maybe play into to this.

With things like local control and how.

That would all play a part, but.

That's separate from exactly what you said for sure.

 **Speaker 9** 50:09

Morning.

 **Speaker 7** 50:10

Yes.

 **Speaker 9** 50:11

Comment. As a former volunteer firefighter and 1st responder, many community members still are unaware of how dispatching works beyond calling 911 and how 10 to 15 minutes can feel like an eternity in a crisis.

 **Speaker 7** 50:26

Yes, Nick, very good .5 minutes can feel like an eternity as well.

So I appreciate that that comment and I think this is where you know, part of these Community listening sessions is to have to invite the Community members to to learn a little bit about how things are working. So for those that are on here probably.

You know or hopefully learning a lot and and maybe a little bit surprised at some of you know the things and the challenges that are being expressed.

 **Speaker 3** 50:58

Hey, Bonnie, may I ask a follow up question to to the representative from Belcher Falls Volunteer Fire Department who asked a question regarding.

 **Speaker 7** 51:07

Absolutely.

 **Speaker 3** 51:10

Expect that we will move forward at some point with our current barriers and and communication challenges is that will that person come off mutants and talk to us a little about what they mean by that?

 **Speaker 7** 51:16

Mm hmm.

Future falls and you do have audio access.

 **Speaker 14** 51:26

Yes. Can you hear us?

 **Speaker 7** 51:27

We can.

 **Speaker 3** 51:27

Yes, we can.

 **Speaker 14** 51:29

OK.

I'm Todd Nichols, captain.

We beat your falls fire and sitting behind me is our chief Steven Young.


I'll. I'll just come out and say I think the easiest solution up here for us is we need to get a repeater on top of Mount Monadnock.


And that's been a challenge and I live in the town of Leamington, and I understand the point of view of our selectmen and their concerns.


But I have we have to look in the positive side and say at some point we're going to move forward.

And towers aside and all that stuff.

The easiest fix for us here is to have a repeater on top of Mount Monadnock. That would solve a ton of our problems as far as communications go, whether it's coming to dispatch or us as responders out in the field.


 **Speaker 1** 52:18
So I.


 **Speaker 5** 52:18
If I could ask, Sir, what's what's been the obstacle to getting that repeater?
Is it funding? Is it?


 **Speaker 14** 52:28
The obstacle has been, you know, there's there's a couple of different views, views from the selectmen.
One is concerned about, you know, maintaining, maintaining that tower worries about it being vandalized, worries about it causing a fire and well, as well as the cost sharing because it's it's been explored already, but.
There's been some, there's been some problems with, you know, working out the proper cost sharing of the tower.


 **Speaker 1** 53:02
So Dom this is a.


 **Speaker 14** 53:02
So.


 **Speaker 1** 53:04
This is a situation that we we've been apprised of for a little bit and I really wanna hear, like I I know exactly what Beecher falls is talking about, but I'd be curious from others on the call. They're raising the issue of we know we can have better.


 **Speaker 14** 53:11
Replay.


 **Speaker 5** 53:16
Yes.


 **Speaker 1** 53:23
Communications in the field. If we invest what?
What is the group?
Think about the need for ubiquitous cell service.
Is that imperative to keep your first responder safe, or is it not?
Are we OK with the current landscape of, OK.
Everybody knows there's a dead zone here, whether that's radio or cell.
So I guess I just would like to hear some feedback from the public and from people inside the first responder space about.
Your expectations does does a future statewide system mean that we have to cover all the dead zones, or can we do better?
And not necessarily achieve perfection.


 **Speaker 7** 54:20
Any thoughts?

 **Speaker 15** 54:20
I had to.

 **Speaker 7** 54:22
Sure. Please go.

 **Speaker 15** 54:23
Can I add a little touch in?

 **Speaker 1** 54:27
100%.

 **Speaker 15** 54:28
I think that.

 **Speaker 1** 54:28

I will definitely take a friendly amendment, Ron.

 **Speaker 15** 54:33

I I think that when considering that question, one has to.

Keep in perspective the practicalities of coverage.

There are simply some areas that do not have enough people and you know nobody goes there that you, you know, you never ever unless you have an unlimited budget, you don't have 100% coverage. If you're lucky of 95% coverage, so.

You know when you're looking at that, you need to put into perspective how likely am I to go to that place and is there an alternative to, you know, building out a tower somewhere just to cover a place where I rarely go at all?

Would that be vehicular repeaters or or some other solution like that so?

You, you know, you need to really put in perspective that that 100% coverage is.

Is is like a Disney movie.

 **Speaker 7** 55:45

Any other thoughts, feedback, questions? Bonnie comment from the chat.

OK.

Go for it.

 **Speaker 9** 55:53

Just just a thought regarding communications towers. If we are putting up antennas in dead zones, it would be beneficial to get input on what other communications equipment would go on a tower from additional stakeholders. For example, like the local Emergency Management directors in his town that he's SPE.

Of my town Emergency Management team communicates internally with those gmrs radios externally with amateur radio.

And if a tower was going up in our area, it would be very, very beneficial.

If we could also put up GMGMRS repeater on it and would help us out communicate internally or even with surrounding towns.

 **Speaker 7** 56:38

Jen, Rick, Dom, any any response there?

 **Speaker 1** 56:45

Still, just fishing for feedback from the field and from the general public.

I mean, I think there are some people who we've interacted with in this project who would advocate that we can never be successful until there are no dead zones.

And I think that as I think people have varying opinions on that, most Vermonters have gotten used to having known dead zones for cell service.

I know that when I was a police officer in the field, even in the city of Burlington, right, there were known dead zones.

And you figured out work around.

I'm just trying to gauge the appetite from the public.

And from the first responder community for what success looks like, do we?

Do we have to address all these dead zones or can we go from say 85% to 90% and and know that better is enough?

I'm just trying to get a vibe because ultimately at the end of the day.

People's expectations, which is what this question is about, is going to end up driving cost when we design something.

 **Speaker 13** 57:56

Thank you for that statement.

I think as a boots on the ground responder in the field, if I'm inside a building fire and I need help or needed to clear a mayday, I get in trouble.

I need someone to be able to hear that.

I also understand the the fiscal aspect of that, so I think.

You know, reaching 100% is likely not possible, especially this go around, but I think at least working towards achieving that and bettering that.

A police officer in the field.

And wrestling with someone they need back up.


They need to be able to communicate.


That is their lifeline.


So we need to continue to work towards improving that well-being reasonable, that 100% isn't going to happen overnight.


 **Speaker 7** 58:50


That's a very good point to consider here in the timeline on achieving these things, right.

 **Speaker 15** 58:51
Can I?

 **Speaker 7** 58:58
You're right.
It won't be overnight and as the recommendations are made, they will have to be prioritized and we know as recent as five years, the last three years how quickly technology is changing and enhancing our ability to communicate in many different ways.
So.
It's a very good point of that. What would be acceptable overtime to ultimately get to where it needs to be?
And featured fire department. Were you going to say something?
Were you coming off mute there?

 **Speaker 15** 59:36
Honey, can I respond to that last comment if you don't mind?

 **Speaker 7** 59:40
Absolutely sure. Go right ahead.

 **Speaker 15** 59:41
So so I I like to you know, I I think we also need to keep in perspective that there are many operational problems that we.
Sometimes 'cause ourselves as first responders and and as a Fire Chief myself, I'm allowed to criticize the fire service.
And and I think that to to to the previous responders comment.
I think that's right. If I if I have firefighter that falls to the floor, I wanna make sure that when he has a mayday that I can hear him. But the reality is that the people that are coming to that firefighter's assistance are 50 feet away and.
If his agency.
Is, is, is myopic and they refuse to understand that using a repeater that 6 miles away

to talk to somebody that's 50 feet away, they're that agency is placing that firefighter's life in danger.

That's an operational problem. It's an.

It's a lack of understanding of how the technology works.

And and that is is a problem now law enforcement is often a different story because the law enforcement officer, unlike you, know the fire service we we respond like a giant Cub Scout pack and we bring our leaders and we bring everybody that we need with us so.

There's always somebody to assist us, you know, adjacent to where we are for the most part.

But law enforcement tends to be a different, different situation because law enforcement officers are most likely gonna respond by themselves. And when the situation goes bad, they need to to be able to summon help.

You know whether they're in a building, whether in the basement, wherever they happen to be and and that is a situation where they don't have a choice but to use.

A wide area communications technique, so I think we need to keep all this in mind and I think that we as first responders.

Agencies need to to actually understand the technology we're using and use it both responsibly and effectively.

 **Speaker 7** 1:01:53

Excellent. Thank you.

 **Speaker 15** 1:01:53

And I'm off my soapbox now.

 **Speaker 7** 1:01:56

That's all right. Thank you, Ron.

Appreciate that.

All right, let's move on.

 **Speaker 9** 1:02:01

Honey, one last comment for the chat.

 **Speaker 7** 1:02:01

To yes, please go forth.

 **Speaker 9** 1:02:04

Back from our beach from our Beecher Falls Fire Department. If there's a practical way to make comes better, we owe it to our communities to do so. Reaching 100% is not necessarily practical, but if we could make it better, we should.

 **Speaker 7** 1:02:17

So thank you for that good discussion.

Really appreciate it on on to the next question.

What is something that you would not want to change?

Now we asked early on something that you know, what would you want us to take away?

We talked about if it's, if it's not broke, don't fix it.

And so I think we've explored some of those things already, but.

Is there anything else that you would not want to change?

So question that we have, if anybody wants to chime in here, are there any case studies from other mountainous areas in the country?

Think this is probably a a very common issue in these mountainous areas, but you know Rick or Dom from the radio communications perspective, I'll toss that over to you for your expertise.

 **Speaker 5** 1:03:15

Oh, I'm sorry. Yeah, thanks.

Thanks, Bonnie.

Yes, there are certainly case studies from other mountainous areas in the country.

Rick and I and also members of Mission Critical Partners have worked with various agencies throughout the country and there are certainly.

These types of situations that that we see elsewhere, there are solutions to these problems, but.

Unfortunately they are, you know, capital intensive there.

Are there is physics involved here with radio frequency communications? And as you all know, you are in a very mountainous area with a lot of hills and valleys. There can

be communications, but it generally takes more antenna sites, which means more towers.

In specific locations.

These towers all have to be connected to each other in some manner so that you can have.

Seamless communications throughout the area, there are certainly ways to address this, but you know that's I think a lot of the reason for Commissioner Morrison's request it it takes funding and part of our challenge here and the Task force challenge is to.

Determine the best ways to approach this with.

A reasonable funding option.



Speaker 3 1:04:56

And this is Rick. And if I could add on to what Dom says, I I'm glad Dom that you brought up the funding point because in order to provide a higher reliability of radio coverage and cellular coverage into environments, you know, geographic environments with the mountainous terrain, hill.

And valleys.

And mountains and valleys and and beautiful lakes. You know, we need more towers. And so that's the only way we're going to get there.

Now there are other solutions coming. They're called Leo satellites.

So there's low Earth orbiting satellites that coming that are working on direct cellular to to satellite communications. So without the need of any.

Antennas or hardware and those are coming, but they're not quite there yet.

But we work in a number of communities that that have radio coverage challenges because of their mountains and their citizens are are engaged in in, in finding ways to fund these solutions.

So exactly what Commissioner Marcin is asking is, you know, we're always looking for ways to find funding from the communities. But but.

In order you know there's 22 barriers, we'll have one.

How to get approval from the local communities to build towers where they're going to be the most cost they're going to provide the greatest radio coverage and two, we got to find if we're building them on our own, we've got to find a way to pay for them.

So going back to the idea of, you know, what ideas do we have and what what

additional, you know thoughts? Does the Community have for funding? It would be ideal to hear from everyone.

 **Speaker 7** 1:06:41

Thank you for that, Rick.

 **Speaker 3** 1:06:42

Pleasure.

 **Speaker 7** 1:06:45

So another one on here is do not change local dispatchers with local knowledge. Yes, regionalize them.

But do not have them work in another region outside their coverage area.

Anybody wanna share about that?

Again, technology very helpful mapping programs to help you know know and see what is in there without having to actually live in that area.

We understand that this is, you know, very people are very comfortable when it comes to having somebody that they know from their community that is dispatching. Sometimes we counter that conversation.

With the thought of if a new police officer or firefighter somebody comes into an area.

They may not. They move.

There they become part of the community. They don't necessarily know that region anywhere, but they do learn it over time with focused training.

So when we say when we see that.

My question back in if somebody could share about about this.

How local?

How regional?

What's what's the concern?

Behind that is, you know, what is your experience that is driving that that request?

 **Speaker 13** 1:08:09


Again in central Vermont.


The the community that I live in.


Over a decade ago now.


Began getting their dispatch services from an entirely another county.
And initially there was a massive learning curve of not knowing landmarks that took a long time to recover from and.


Natural turnover happens in these communication centers and just constantly trying to bring someone up on that, being a dispatcher and receiving calls.


 **Speaker 7** 1:08:40
Mm hmm.

 **Speaker 13** 1:08:47
Name old businesses old buildings that no longer exist.


 **Speaker 7** 1:08:52
Uh huh.

 **Speaker 13** 1:08:52
And having that knowledge saves time when time matters.

 **Speaker 7** 1:08:58
Sure.

 **Speaker 13** 1:08:59
I I think it's.
I think it's now a consensus that.
You know, merging this, the state's dispatch centers years ago.
Was not in the best interest.
And I I think that's a consensus now anyway.
But there was a lot of.
Hard feelings about losing all that local knowledge.

 **Speaker 7** 1:09:29
OK.

 **Speaker 13** 1:09:29
Even giving that project.

 **Speaker 7** 1:09:32

Sure. And you make a very good point.

I think this kind of relates back to some some conversations about the computer aided dispatch system as it relates to Valcour and whether it is a computer aided dispatch system or not.

And then you know, the fact that with mapping and with mapping and things that can go along which can enhance.

 **Speaker 13** 1:09:48

It's not.

 **Speaker 7** 1:09:55

That can be part of a CAD system. So appreciate that and really enjoy your your perspective, so to speak from both sides of the of the mic.

You will both sides of the headset and we have another one in here from another industries perspective, train dispatchers needed to exhibit or be tested on area familiarity, even though they may have been located hundreds of miles away.

All right. Interesting.

Oh, train dispatchers, OK.

I'm thinking you're you're talking about railroad dispatchers. OK, you're right.

So the person that made that comment are, are they you from that area or you are you in that industry?

 **Speaker 12** 1:10:36

Jonathan Sturgis in Morrisville again and I was a trained dispatcher in a prior lifetime and indeed we needed to know.

Not every little detail, but if someone said that they were calling from a certain location, generally we needed to know where they were.

 **Speaker 7** 1:10:53

Yeah. Excellent.

I appreciate that very much.

 **Speaker 15** 1:10:56

So I'd like to add to that because I think that caller, you know that that person has a very relevant comment, you know, Vermont, there's a lot of a lot of our old timers. You know, they're used to the fire phone system where we were being dispatched by the town clerk or the general store or places like that.

And they knew whose barn was whose and which family lived in that House 4 generations ago. And it's becoming increasingly.

Irrelevant.

Certainly the geographic information is necessary and haven't been in touch with that whole train dispatch industry.

They handle it very well, you know, they have computer systems that let that give the dispatchers accessibility to a lot of information. And as the you know, the person who made that comment.

Pointed out they they simply need to know where the.

The stuff that they're dispatching is and where it's going and where it came from.

So the computer aided dispatch.

When it's a system that works, gives the dispatcher a lot of visibility.

The other part of that is that if we're to have a situation where our dispatch facilities have have some kind of a backup where if I don't know it.

Let's say the Lamoille Sheriff's Department has a bomb scare.

And they need to get out of the building and and move all their stuff somewhere else. So it goes to another facility. If the computer aided dispatch and everything is all tied together correctly, the dispatchers in that facility have access to all the same information they have access.

To all of the Fire department's mutual aid plans within that facility. So.

I I think that.

The the having having a perspective of understanding the geography and the area is important, but physically being in that location is increasingly less important.

 **Speaker 7** 1:13:16

Great. Thank you very much for that.

Again, it speaks to like the evolution of the technology. And you heard Rick even talking about how you know, we're going to satellite lower satellite Leo satellite coming around.

So these are all very important elements to discuss.

Of course there is funding again attached to it, but those are things that through this

study that we, you know, we are going to comb through and and look at as well.

So.

Now, unless there is anything else, I think we've kind of hit a lot of different things here.

The last question.

And again, remember I said we were going to come around and ask everybody this directly.

I just have to get my chat up here so I get my participant list.

We're going to go around the the room again, so to speak, and I would ask that you unmute.

If you can, if you cannot unmute, that is fine.

But I would ask that you put your comment in the chat and rants will make sure to let me know that it is there and share your thought.

So this is the the last question.

How do you think?

Emergency communication system could be improved.

How do you think it could be improved?

So Jake, I'm gonna ask you to unmute first, if you would.

And.

Thoughts on answering that question?

Make are you able to unmute?

Or rants, do we have a comment perhaps?



Speaker 13 1:15:05

I I can.

I've been trying to gather my thoughts for this one but.

It's a multifaceted approach.

I think #1 is a statewide CAD system that's not designed just for law enforcement purposes.

That can be the 911 call takers.


Emd.


And same thing with fire dispatch as well.


Improving the coverage area in the systems and infrastructure that currently exists, and not just.


Making an entire area beyond one frequency, but having multiple frequencies and

channels for them to operate off of.
And training and standards.
That's statewide.
Those are just a couple off the top here.

 **Speaker 7** 1:16:02
Great. Thank you, David. Appreciate that, Jake.
Are you off?
You were off mute, Jake. There you are.

 **Speaker 10** 1:16:11
Sorry I'm I was in the middle of working on something and working hands free.
I I'm a member of the community and I do not know about enough about how the
system works well and does not work to be able to comment on that, but thank you
for soliciting input.

 **Speaker 7** 1:16:17
No worries.
OK.
I appreciate that.
Appreciate the the candor.
Beecher falls.
How do you think this system could be improved?

 **Speaker 14** 1:16:40
Yeah, I was trying to put in a chat, but I'll do the bum stacking here.
I think we have.
We have a unique situation up here. I think for us, you know, being Interstate and
international at Beecher Falls, the best solution for us is like get a repeater on top of
Mount Monadnock and also along with that hopefully having a ability to have
interoperability with other ver.
Emergency service agencies like such as state police.

 **Speaker 7** 1:17:10

Great. Thank you, Craig. Rooster.

What are your thoughts?

 **Speaker 8** 1:17:16

I have to go back and actually, Dave said pretty much everything that I was thinking was that the CAD system I've been out of it for a little while. But the definitely the CAD system has to be improved.

To you know, one for police, fire and EMS.

Separate so it reach specialize in their own their own way. But you know, as far as addressing goes and some information. But there is definitely improvement to get to pre plans and stuff like that out for the emergency responders.

Radio communications, I think as far as towers go.

There are a lot out there that can be.

Utilized part of the problem is there's talk about, you know, jumping on cell towers and stuff. We actually had to move.

Our existing system off of a cell tower or close to.

A cell facility because they're they're overpowering our system and just causing all sorts of havoc.

 **Speaker 7** 1:18:22

Just a minute.

 **Speaker 8** 1:18:28

I think that's about it.

What? What?

 **Speaker 7** 1:18:31

OK.

 **Speaker 8** 1:18:32

This committee is doing.

Commissioner Morrison and the members are, I think this is the right step and I'm just looking forward to seeing how this plays out.

 **Speaker 7** 1:18:42

OK.

Excellent. Thank you for that.

Jim Mack is a is.

A task force member.

Do you have any thoughts of how you would like to see this system improved?

 **Speaker 4** 1:18:56

No, I'm just sitting here listening to hear what other people wanna see us do.

 **Speaker 7** 1:19:00

OK.

Appreciate that Jonathan Sturgis.

 **Speaker 12** 1:19:06

Yes. And as already stated, listening to scanner in Morrisville, I feel that Memorial's doing it right based on whatever resources they have available to them.

It's gonna be hard on, I think, to improve radio coverage with a few possible exceptions, again, because mountains and valleys.

But I'm I'm pretty well satisfied with what I hear in Lamoille County.

 **Speaker 7** 1:19:33

Thank you so much, Jen.

I'm gonna skip over you.

So you'll be able to have the last word. How about Nicole?

Would you please unmute and share your thoughts on how you would like to see the system improved?

 **Speaker 16** 1:19:47

Hi, can you hear me OK?

 **Speaker 7** 1:19:49

Sure can.

 **Speaker 16** 1:19:50

OK. As a first responder and a chief of a volunteer department.

I think looking at other.

I mean, I love my dispatch center. I get dispatched out of New York.

So I'm on that list.

That's out of New York.

I don't know what I would do if I have to move away and be in an area with another dispatch and have to start over. And so, you know, looking at what other you know, even what other states are doing, how how they're making it work, dispatching how.

 **Speaker 7** 1:20:07

Mm hmm.

 **Speaker 16** 1:20:22

How their 911 and you know like the others that had mentioned about the CAD system everyone.

And we all have to be on the same page because we we're all working up for the same cause.

Whether we're the dispatchers, you know the task.

Like I said, the task force and the first responders, it's hard, especially when I'm listening to the scanner and I can hear other areas specially in a clear night. I can hear it way up north if the night is clear enough. And I'm like, oh, they're really good. And then you get closer and I'm looking at mine and I'm like, we're really good.

And then I'm hearing.

You know another area. And I'm like, oh, my gosh, these guys.

I don't know what I would do.

I would snap on the radio.

So I I just think we all gotta like, look at other areas and see what are they doing that's working or what are they doing if they're trying to improve as well. That really needs to be looked at. And I mean that's the and the jump on like.

A cell tower thing. I mean, I live in a dead zone.

So my cell phone is off my Wi-Fi so.

The cell tower thing I it's not the, it's just it's the radio. The communication between everyone is is the biggest thing.

I don't.

I'm not too concerned about tower and cells.

It's just communicating in general.

 **Speaker 7** 1:21:43

Good, Nicole.

Thank you for that. I think it brings up a A again kind of going back to some of that standardization.

How calls are dispatched? How communication is done? I even down to things like radio etiquette, can have a lot more professional, professional, clear order of of information being presented.

I'm thinking that.

I'm thinking that those are some of the things that you're hearing that make you feel that they're they're.

They're better than than others.

OK. Nick Parker, did you come off of mute?

Please and share your thoughts.

 **Speaker 11** 1:22:23

Sure. Well, I haven't been a firefighter since the early 2000s, late 1990s, so this is actually been a really interesting listen to hear, you know, some of the continuing challenges that people are having and then some of the more complex challenges with larger population growth and.

Things like that. You know, I work a lot with the disabled and deaf community so.

Looking at from the community and I think it would be just really great for.

Community folks to just hear more about what these needs are in the field, and I think there's, you know, education that could be had. You know, there are these issues because it it has been a while and people need to know that those those concerns are out there.

So yeah, thanks.

 **Speaker 7** 1:23:14

OK.

Thank you, nick.

Ron, what are your thoughts?

 **Speaker 15** 1:23:24

Hear my thoughts.

You might be sorry you asked.

I have a couple of thoughts I I think that it is critical that we get on to the computer aided dispatch bandwagon.

 **Speaker 7** 1:23:32
OK.

 **Speaker 15** 1:23:40

Balcor is a speed bump on the road of progress.

And I think that.

It would just be.

A serious improvement in our dispatch landscape.

Have a CAD system that's that doesn't require my dispatchers to be going through three ring binders to find out what department should be coming to a structure fire on the South end of my town so that that's the first half of it.

I think on the radio coverage part of this, I I think as as we move forward that individual agencies need to be a bit proactive and to sit down with their neighbors and and look at the.

Resources that they have amongst them and and who they are able to work with and who they're not able to work with, so that.

We can potentially look at improving their lot by building out.

Some sort of regional communication systems and sharing tower sites and.

And linking them together and things to improve groups of agencies. Lots instead of trying to do one at a time.

And you know the whole I need to do it all by myself and have total control myself thing.

It just doesn't fly the.

The the taxpayers don't need to pay for an agency that has 12 calls a year to have their own radio system so that that is my thought.

 **Speaker 7** 1:25:21


Alright, thank you for that. Appreciate it.


Megan Stewart. Younger, would you please come off mute and share your thoughts?


No, we have a is that in chat, Rance.


I saw it come up and chat.


 **Speaker 6** 1:25:41
Yes.

 **Speaker 7** 1:25:43
OK. Could you share, OK.

 **Speaker 9** 1:25:43
It did.
It did.
I'm sorry I got it. Like others have said, I'm not familiar enough with emergency communication system yet to know what needs to be improved.
This time I'm fairly new to Vermont, so I'll attend this meeting.
So I attended this meeting to learn more.

 **Speaker 7** 1:25:58
Oh, excellent.
That's fantastic and welcome to Vermont.
And I'm glad that you're hopefully you are learning from this.
That'd be great.
All right.
Jen and well, I'm going to pause one quick second.
Anybody have anything else they would like to share?
Anything else we would like to discuss before I turn it over to Jen to.
Wrap us up.

 **Speaker 5** 1:26:25
Bonnie, this is Dom. If I could address one thing.
Gentleman said.
Just a little while ago, Nick, I believe it was works with disabled and deaf community.
I wanted to point out, not sure if Nick is aware, but Vermont supports text to 911 throughout the state, so that's something that's very significant.

 **Speaker 7** 1:26:38
Mm hmm.

 **Speaker 5** 1:26:48

It's not universally supported throughout the country, but the state does support text to 911.

And what they like to say, of course, is call if you can text if you can't.

So for those that have.

Difficulty hearing they can text the 911 and that will be responded to in the same way as a phone call will be.

 **Speaker 11** 1:27:16

Yeah, this is Nick.

Thanks so much, Sir, for bringing that up.

I'm severely hard of hearing myself and use captioning, so that's something that we definitely let folks know about. And it's very important that Vermont has that, I agree.

 **Speaker 7** 1:27:31

And there are Jason just put 3 links into the chat as well for other resources.

The Vt alert which we we talked about a little bit earlier.

The care program and then supplemental alley. Those three that are in there for those that are wanting to learn more as well.

K.

Anything else to bring up?

We have another question from Jonathan, I think Rance, I saw something pop up.

 **Speaker 9** 1:28:05

Yes, my question, he said.

Maybe it's outside the scope of the study, however, again, back to GM.

So it's general mobile radio service, the gmrs and amateur radio have already been mentioned.

Is there still a place for volunteer radio emergency communicators, or B has the role of the volunteer groups such as the Vermont Emergency Management Radio, Amateur Civil Emergency Service become obsolete?

It's a question.

 **Speaker 7** 1:28:30

Hmm.

I will.

 **Speaker 15** 1:28:33

Can I comment on that?

 **Speaker 7** 1:28:36

Sure, Ron.

 **Speaker 15** 1:28:38

I I think that the answer to your question is yes. Those services are in fact still relevant, but in the context of, you know, major disasters when.

Other communications may be overloaded, and there may be a necessity of of passing all sorts of traffic that can't be handled by normal communications channels, and I think.

What we're trying to handle in this particular arena is, you know, the day-to-day communications, dispatch communications that the first responder agencies are are using.

Does does that make sense?

 **Speaker 7** 1:29:24

Jonathan, does that answer your question?

Jonathan left the chat, so hopefully that answered the question.

 **Speaker 6** 1:29:34

Bonnie David has his hand raised.

 **Speaker 7** 1:29:39

OK, David.

Oh, he's back.

 **Speaker 13** 1:29:42

Yeah. I just.

I just wanna say thank you to Commissioner Morrison.

For arranging this forum and shout out to telivate.

I know Rick and his team has been working on since Vermont Communications for several years now, thanks to the interpreters as well. I'm sure this is a extremely boring topic for them to cover, but they've done a great job.

And my my last part is.

I I know.


I knew you guys have had several of these and I'm not sure what the involvement has been from first responders, but I know in the central my area.


I don't think you'll have any trouble getting feedback from them.


But I'm not sure how readily.


Known this form is to them, so I just encourage a little bit more reach out to them, maybe through the Vermont Fire Academy.

 **Speaker 7** 1:30:30
OK.


 **Speaker 13** 1:30:34
They have quite the e-mail list.

 **Speaker 7** 1:30:38
All right.

 **Speaker 1** 1:30:39
Bonnie, I think you're about to throw the ball to me, so I'll jump in there and let you know.

 **Speaker 3** 1:30:43
Thank you, Dave.

 **Speaker 7** 1:30:43
I am.

 **Speaker 1** 1:30:44
That the Vermont Fire Academy has distributed the announcement for not just these two public listening sessions, but for our four previous fora that were designed for the first responder community.

In fact, the public was not allowed to participate.
It was specifically for police, fire and EMS and we held four of those.
So those lifts, lifts are have been completely activated in this effort.
Nonetheless, we.
Still find that sometimes a little further down the food chain than whoever's receiving emails from the Academy has not learned about these opportunities.
So there are many ways to participate which we're going to get to on the next slide as I wrap up.
I wanted to give a shout out to yeah.

 **Speaker 7** 1:31:32

I'm sorry. Ron has his hand up.
Ron, did you wanna share?

 **Speaker 15** 1:31:42

Yes, I did.
But I didn't wanna interrupt you.
I'm sorry, I I just wanted to point out that these forums are not the only way that people.
Can ask their questions and stuff that the task force members contact. Information is on our web page and if people have questions or concerns that they should feel free to reach out to us.


 **Speaker 7** 1:32:04


Excellent.

 **Speaker 1** 1:32:05

100% we are.
We're totally in it to hear your perspective.
We hear the feedback about the CAD.
I just want to be very clear that Valcour is a product that was not designed for fire or EMS.
It was designed by members of the Chittenden County Law Enforcement community as a way to have a lot more control of of data, and it was never contemplated as a CAD.

That being said, there is a CAD module in Valcour that. Most agencies have not turned on, so that's a conversation we can take offline and it may not be the CAD of the future, but it's certainly a very agile and nimble and cost effective records management system which is the follow on to CAD. So that we're we're fully aware of the limitations of that, but I don't think agencies are fully utilizing the capabilities of Valcour. I wanted to give a shout out to Vancouver integrated interpreting services who have joined us to provide. American Sign Language interpretation and as I mentioned at the beginning, we're gonna be having a third public listening session in November. The tentative date is November 21st. More feedback will be coming in terms of the exact time. And at that meeting, we are going to be doing significant outreach to. Communities that may not have English as their first language, and we will be providing. Interpretation services for language. Where people identify themselves to us ahead of time, we are going to do everything we can to have a breakout rooms with different languages. Being supported. So if you work in a community where. There there are folks who might want to participate, and honestly, I feel it's imperative for the task force to hear from people who do not speak English as their first language because these are folks who are more vulnerable in an emergency situation. If you can help spread the word on that when you see the notice of that next meeting, that would be really helpful. But other than that, I think we're at that place in the evening where we are wrapping up.

 **Speaker 7** 1:34:24
Mm hmm.

 **Speaker 1** 1:34:25
And let's just see if I've forgotten anything.
The task force meets every two weeks.
We can be reached by our website.

There's also an e-mail that is specific to the website.

So you can see on this last slide.

Thank you for attending and participating and participating that you can.

Go to our website.

I do want to tell you right now there was a weird glitch that happened and a lot of the content from the task force web page has to be reloaded.

So if you're looking for something and it's not there today, it'll probably be there by Monday.

And this e-mail address is attended to by our our partners at telivate, myself, Paul White and Barb Neal.

So we look forward to receiving your feedback in whatever way you feel comfortable providing it.

The last thing I'm gonna say before we ring off is going into this work we have been. Completely dedicated to the fact that this is not a law enforcement driven project, this is.

We are.

We are trying to move away from the days of a communication system that is designed for law enforcement and then we just bolt on EMS and fire as an afterthought. That is not the work we're doing.

We regard EMS as fire and other public safety.

First responders, such as our public works departments and others.

As essential to this process, and coequal, this is no that that's that's yesterday and in tomorrow.

EMS, Fire, Police and others will all be regarded with the same wait when we're making decisions, so thank you for pointing that out. We're keenly aware of the inequity in the of the past and seeking to remedy it.

So with that, I think we'll say goodnight to everyone.

Thank you for being here.


I know your time is valuable and this was right through the dinner hour, but.


Let us know if there's other questions you have or other comments you want to add, and thank you to mission critical partners.





Speaker 3 1:36:33


Thank you, Bonnie.


 **Speaker 7** 1:36:34
Thank you, everybody. Have a wonderful evening.

 **Speaker 5** 1:36:38
Thanks everyone.

 **Speaker 3** 1:36:38
Thank you everyone.
Nice to meet you all.

 **Speaker 7** 1:37:02
No, not yet.
Stop recording.

 **Speaker 6** 1:37:06
Recording.

 **Speaker 3** 1:37:10
It was well done, Bonnie. Thank you.

 **Speaker 7** stopped transcription