

STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS TASK FORCE

Meeting No. 6 – Meeting Minutes

August 17, 2023

Via Microsoft Teams

1:02 PM - Call to Order

Co-Chair Neal brought the meeting to order and conducted roll call for Task Force members. She reminded the attendees that the meeting was being recorded.

The following were in attendance:

Task Force Members Present

Barbara Neal, E911 Director, Co-Chair
Jennifer Morrison, Public Safety Commissioner, Co-Chair
Paul White, Regional Dispatch Working Group, Vice-Chair
Michael Wright, CEO of Calnex Ambulance
Mike Doenges, Mayor, Rutland City
Ron Kumetz, VSFA

Others Present

Soni Johnson, E911 Board Clerk (subbing for Task Force Clerk Cally Audet)
Phillip Sisk, Mission Critical Partners
Kim Cheney
Stephen Whitaker

Proposed Agenda Changes – none

Approval of Minutes from 8/9/2023

Motion: Mike Doenges moved to approve the minutes from the 8/9/23 meeting; 2nd by Co-Chair Morrison. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Status of RFPs

The Project Manager RFP is undergoing final review and is expected to be released the week of 8/21.

The Overall Project RFP is on the agenda for review at the next PAT (Procurement Advisory Team) meeting. This RFP is expected to be released the week of 8/21 (depending on feedback received from PAT).

Certain dates/timelines included in these RFPs will be calculated as soon as the release date is set for each.

Possible Project RFP Timeline

Release Date: no later than 8/25/23

Vendor Questions Due: 9/8/23

Task Force Responses to Vendors Due: 10/13/23
Vendor Selection or Determine Next Steps: 10/20/23
Project Kick-off: 11/1/23

Congressionally Directed Funding Discussion

Co-Chair Morrison provided a brief overview of available grant funds. Based on input from task force members and stakeholders, the Department of Public Safety will pursue the option put forth by the RTS (Radio Technology Shop). This proposal continues to be refined, the application process has been started and is on track to be completed on time.

Public Comment

Phillip Sisk is looking forward to reviewing the RFPs when they are released.

Stephen Whitaker expressed concerns that task force members must have discussed dates/timelines in Executive Session, in violation of public meeting law. The task force should be recording executive sessions for the record. He also stated that the timeline is too short (it does not take into account the time needed for contract negotiation and approval) and that there is no statutory authority/need for the PAT review of the Project RFP.

Kim Cheney – A long journey starts with small steps, and you're working on it.

Member Input on Task Force Priorities During RFP Process

Co-Chair Neal opened the floor to task force members to discuss priorities throughout the RFP release process.

Co-Chair Morrison spoke to the need for an effective communication plan to make interested parties aware of ongoing work/milestones and a plan for constituent outreach in advance of a contract award.

Mike Doenges suggested that information gathering/collection done in advance of the contract approval would be of assistance to the chosen vendor.

Paul White suggested that pilot projects should be focused on whatever part of the State that will provide the most immediate relief to the Department of Public Safety dispatch centers (possible Rutland County w/failover to Addison County). Also, the task force needs to discuss what regional dispatch center governance will look like (who owns it, who runs it, who is allowed to own it or run it, etc.) and the creation/implementation of technical and operational standards.

Ron Kumetz is onboard with having operational standards but cautions that the task force be aware of costs (both for procurement & maintenance) when planning standards. Agencies need to be able to afford the system developed using those standards.

Co-Chair Morrison advised members that they must remain open to all options and that work done (or information provided) should not "lead" vendors in any particular direction.

Co-Chair Neal suggested that members consider what other entities the task force might need information from.

Stephen Whitaker (guest) commented that if there is any delay in the contract award the task force needs to have provisionally adopted standards concerning pilot project planning and governance.

Kim Cheney (guest) advised members to get independent legal advice concerning municipal law and governance. Members need to be aware that DPS & Homeland Services have different regulations concerning grants – do Homeland rules allow for competitive bidding?

New Business

Next Meeting Date – The next meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, 8/30 @ 11:15 AM

Adjournment

Motion: There being no further business, Co-Chair Morrison made a motion to adjourn; 2nd by Paul White. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Soni Johnson

Soni Johnson, E911 Board

8/19/23

Date