

STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS TASK FORCE

Meeting No. 7 – Meeting Minutes

August 30, 2023

Via Microsoft Teams

11:19 AM - Call to Order & Roll Call

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
James ‘Jim’ Mack, Shelburne Dispatch
Ron Kumetz, VSFA

Task Force Members Absent

Mike Doenges, Mayor, Rutland City

Others Present

Cally Audet, Task Force Clerk
Mandy Wooster, Policy Development, Department of Public Safety
Phillip Sisk, Mission Critical Partners
Kim Cheney
Stephen Whitaker
Jason Bivens
Jim Morgan
Richard Townend
Norm

Approval of Agenda or Proposed Agenda Changes – none

Approval of Minutes from 8/17/2023

Motion: Micheal Wright moved to approve the minutes from the 8/17/23 meeting; 2nd by Paul White. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Status of RFPs

Co-Chair Neal provided a brief update on the current status of both the project management and subject matter expertise RFPs that are currently out to bid. The updates were as follows:

- Both RFPs were publicly posted on August 22nd, 2023, and updates were posted on August 28th, 2023.
- The title of the Task Force Support RFP was updated to include the words project management to better reflect the purpose of the procurement.
- The project management RFP was updated to provide a start date of ‘as soon as possible’, instead of the originally indicated start date of January 2024.
- The first paragraph of the project management RFP was updated to more clearly indicate the services being sought, which is project management.
- Items in both RFPs indicating that these projects are federally funded were removed, as they are not being federally funded and this would have required bidders to take unnecessary steps during the submission process; and if at a later date one of the larger projects requires the use of federal funding, that process will take place then.

Vice-Chair White provided clarification to Task Force Members that these updates were made to the RFP’s as they had been altered from the originally agreed upon items by the Task Force as the documents progressed through the drafting process within other agencies.

- Bidder questions for the project management RFP are due by Wednesday, September 6th, and questions for the subject matter expertise are due by Friday, September 8th.
- Project management RFP responses are due September 26th, and subject matter expertise RFP responses are due October 13th.
- Task Force Members will need to be involved in the review and scoring of the RFP questions and responses

Co-Chair Neal opened the floor to Task Force members for discussion on how they’d like this review process to take place. Further discussion took place and members agreed that as many task force members as possible should be involved with this process, and the majority agreed that the questions submitted for each RFP should be reviewed all at one time so bidders would receive their answers at the same time.

Co-Chair Neal recommend meeting Thursday, 9/7 and Monday 9/11 to answer questions. Could be held as special meetings where no other items are discussed. Members agreed to discuss meeting dates for question review later in the meeting.

Update on Congressionally Directed Spending Application

Co-Chair Neal shared that the grant application was submitted on 8/28/23 and is currently under independent review. She shared the Co-Chair Morrison may be able to provide additional information upon entering the meeting.

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. With no immediate suggestions, Co-Chair Neal shared suggested tasks she had drafted for Task Force Members to consider, the first being evaluating how the stakeholders are represented on or by the Task Force.

While all current members reflect appropriate representation, Co-Chair Neal shared that she had received feedback about protentional missing representation from stakeholder groups such as the sworn side of local and county law enforcement, and potentially the career side of the fire service. She also stated while there is no way to change the actual make up of the Task Force, they should be mindful of communicating with these other stakeholders moving forward to welcome and encourage their involvement.

Further discussion took place regarding which stakeholders should be communicated with moving forward. Co-Chair Neal shared that she currently has a good start to a master list with the E911 Board that the Task Force could continue to build on for a stakeholder engagement plan.

A point was raised about the need for communicating particularly with the municipalities who will eventually find themselves in need of new services that they have never had to account for in the past. Further discussion took place.

Ron Kumetz suggested developing a master list of all Fire, EMS, and Law Enforcement agencies, and where they are currently dispatched out of to help ensure that no agency is forgotten about during this process.

Michael Wright suggested the possibility of holding regional meetings with stakeholders to allow for questions and feedback for the Task Force. Ron Kumetz reiterated the fact that constant communication with possibly multiple groups (i.e., Fire Department, Town Manager, Selectboard, etc.) within a community may be beneficial to really ensure that the messages is being received across the board that the Task Force is soliciting feedback.

Co-Chair Neal shared that she would prepare a summary of tasks completed by the Task Force thus far, as well as updating the master list of agencies and contacts prior to next weeks meeting.

Co-Chair Neal initiated discussion regarding how the Task Force Members would like to evaluate the RFP responses. Paul White shared that he felt as many members as possible should be involved in the review process; Ron Kumetz and James Mack agreed.

Co-Chair Neal addressed items for discussion received by Co-Chair Morrison. These items being as follows:

- Does the Task Force need a separate RFP to identify options for sustainable financing?
- Who among the Task Force will be involved with review and scoring the RFP's

Co-Chair Neal shared that she believed the Subject Matter Expertise RFP out to bid currently addresses the item regarding options for sustainable funding, and it would be best to wait until responses came in to address this matter.

An additional item was brought up regarding the Task Force's need or desire for outside legal counsel. Co-Chair Neal asked for Members opinions on the matter, and then opened the floor to guest opinions. Further discussion took place regarding the benefits of seeking such counsel, and guest Kim Cheney shared that it may benefit the group to consider outside counsel familiar with inter-municipal processes. This process may require for the development of another RFP, but no official decision was made at this time.

Co-Chair Morrison joined meeting at 11:57 AM

B. Neal provided update to Co-Chair Morrison regarding next steps and previously discussed items.

Public Comment

Co-Chair Neal shared that due to the number of members from the public in attendance, that comments would be limited to 3-minutes each; and asked for members to raise their hand and indicate if they'd like to share.

Stephen Whitaker shared his opinion regarding the Task Force's inability to pave the way to pilot projects without first addressing the governance issue brought up in previous meetings. He encouraged members to seek expertise on governance recommendation from outside counsel familiar with municipal corporations. He also shared concerns regarding the Members ability to appropriately and/or effectively review RFP submissions. He encourage the Task Force to consider amending the RFP to invite specific proposals to address pilot projects by the close of the year.

Co-Chair Neal opened the floor to any further comment; none.

New Business

Discussion took place regarding when Members were available to meet to review questions received from RFP vendors.

A special meeting will take place Wednesday, September 6, 2023, at 3:15 PM for the purpose of discussing project management RFP vendor questions; and a regular meeting will take place Monday, September 11, 2023, at 1:00 PM to discuss the subject matter expertise RFP vendor question as well as any other regularly scheduled agenda items.

Co-Chairs agreed that questions pertaining to the subject matter expertise RFP would be forwarded to Task Force Members for review over the weekend leading up to the meeting being held on Monday, September 11th to aide in maximizing member participation.

Co-Chair Morrison shared with participants that the Congressionally Directed Funding grant application was submitted with the requested supporting documentation for funding for an independent expert review. The independent review does not take place unless the grant is approved and awarded.

Adjournment

Motion: There being no further business, Paul White made a motion to adjourn; 2nd by Micheal Wright. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 12:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cally Audet
Cally Audet

8/30/23
Date