

## STATE OF VERMONT PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS TASK FORCE

### Regular Meeting No. 28 – Meeting Minutes

June 19, 2024

Via Microsoft Teams

#### **11:17 AM - 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  
James ‘Jim’ Mack, Shelburne Dispatch  
Mike Doenges, Rutland City Mayor  
Ron Kumetz, VSFA  
Paul White, Regional Dispatch Working Group, Vice-Chair

#### **Others Present**

Cally Audet, Task Force Clerk  
Dominick Arcuri, Televate  
Steve Badgio, Mission Critical Partners  
Mark Anderson, Windham County Sheriff  
Rick Burke, Televate  
Phil Sisk, Mission Critical Partners  
Senator Irene Wrenner, Chittenden North  
Ryan Palmer, Windsor County Sheriff  
Stephen Whitaker  
Senator Jeanette White

#### **Approval of Agenda**

No changes were made to the agenda.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

- 06/05/2024 – Regular Meeting No. 27

*Motion: At 11:22 AM, Ron Kumetz moved that the Task Force approve the minutes as written; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mike Doenges. Motion passed unanimously.*

## **Public Comment**

Co-Chair Neal opened the floor to public comment.

Sheriff Mark Anderson introduced himself and shared that he is in attendance to bring himself up to date with future planning for regional dispatch centers.

Sheriff Ryan Palmer shared that he has a radio communication project in the works and is looking to collaborate with the Task Force to gather some guidance.

Co-Chair Neal shared with both Sheriff's that if they had any questions following the meeting, they were welcome to reach out to the Chairs for further information.

Paul White joined the meeting at 11:24 AM

Stephen Whitaker provided the following comments:

- With the lack in architecture, there appears to be no credible way to evaluate if the future plan is conducive to implementing regional statewide emergency calling.
- Various communication projects are in the works around the state that need oversight.
- Should be paying attention to the 10-year Telecommunication plan.
- He felt that the Department of Public Service does not have a clear understanding of what the Task Force is doing.
- Reiterated his belief that immediate pilot project(s) are needed for testing.
- Shared concerns about having peak hurricane season approaching, and solar maximum coming next year.
- The regional systems should use the CDS, even if the State has to own the infrastructure.

## **Project Updates - Televate**

Dom Arcuri from the Televate project management team provided the following project updates:

- The last few weeks have been spent working on data collection. The status report reflects their current status.
- As of Friday, 6/14, 43-44 dispatch centers that received the questionnaire. MCP has reached out to 18 centers who had not verified initial receipt.
- As of Friday, June 14<sup>th</sup> one completed questionnaire had been received, the deadline is June 28<sup>th</sup>.
- The Televate Team provided their recommendations on the COPS plan as presented at the last meeting to the Department of Public Safety and to Mission Critical Partners.
- Completed and distributed June Stakeholder Update
- Continue to update stakeholder lists, specifically the Sheriff's Departments.
- Ongoing activity for MCP is building out their site visit schedule and infrastructure inventory schedule.
- Projects and activities remain on schedule.

Co-Chair Neal opened the floor to questions - no questions.

Co-Chair Morrison noted that the Task Force should consider putting a placeholder on Monday, July 1<sup>st</sup> for review of questionnaire return numbers, should the Task Force members need to assist in reach out to stakeholders.

**Public Comment:**

Co-Chair opened the floor to public comment from Senator Jeannete White.

Senator White provided a brief overview of her prior experience as the Chair of Government Operations and expressed that working on dispatch concerns has been a priority of hers for years. Of the many plans and reports reviewed throughout the years, the majority had identified that dispatch is a regional issue and should be handled there. We now have the opportunity, with \$20M, to put a robust regional system in place; one that will use the same standards for interoperability and redundancy and have certain governance standards.

The Senator shared that two years ago everyone appeared to have agreed that this is where we were going, but that plan appears to have taken a turn. It now looks like the money is intended to be used to build out Vermont State Police (VSP) systems and capabilities. There is no mention of how this built-out system will support or relate to regional systems. There is also no mention of regional governance or governance standards. Senator White apologized for not having been more involved all along and shared that she is saddened for the prospect of these funds being used to build out a state system rather than a regional approach as originally discussed.

Co-Chair Morrison provided an overview of the work to date, noting the following events/items:

- The original path for the Department of Public Safety was to provide a passthrough to would be regional operators who were willing to do this work. This was how the \$9M earmark was applied for, and how the narrative was written.
- At the same time as being notified that DPS would be awarded the \$9M from Senator Leahy's earmark, they learned of additional conversations by Senator Hardy in GovOps to take this issue up through legislation.
- Having received the stream of funding through the COPS Technology grant program, this program disallows subgrants. If the funds were to be accepted by DPS, the money has to be spent on items owned and maintained by the State of Vermont. The options were to not accept the award because it did not meet the original intent of the project, or to use it in a manner to set a foundation for the State's future plan.
- Timelines of these two projects are conflicting, which has proven to add additional challenges.
- While VSP is the primary agency and covers the largest land mass in Vermont, many agencies do or can utilize this system as well.
- At the end of this process, we expect a list of options at the end of this process to select from

Senator White expressed her nervousness around creating a system(s) driven by funding requirements, and hopes this infrastructure build out does not preclude real regional dispatch. Regional dispatch folks will need to wait until a decision is made on the \$11M, however they will need to operate while waiting for governance standards for a path forward.

Co-Chair Neal shared that it might be useful for the Chair's to meet with the Senator offline to provide a more detail update on work and/or decisions to date.

Senator White shared that she would send email to the Chairs to set up a date and time to meet.

Rick Burke inquired about Sheriff Palmer mentioning a project underway, and requested for the Sheriff to have an opportunity to provide details on his intended project as to be sure it is captured in the current planning.

### **New Business**

Sheriff Ryan Palmer of Windsor County Sheriff's Department introduced himself and provided a brief overview of the pending telecommunications project he has been involved with, to include the following information:

- Windsor County Sheriff's Department was awarded a bit of funding through the COPS Technology grant for a radio project.
- This project is made up of two part: infrastructure and mobile/portable radio upgrade.
- They are currently deciding between a 5-6 tower simulcast system to cover Windsor Count, all connected through microwave.
- There will also be new in car repeaters, portables and mobile radios.
- Hoping to have dispatch counsel in Sheriff's office. Would like to stand up a regional center in the next few years.

Co-Chair Neal inquired about the timeline of the initial project. Sheriff Palmer shared that the money should drop in the fall and is hoping to have the project stood up by this time next year. They will be hopping on to existing towers.

No further new business.

### **Confirm Next Meeting Date and Adjournment**

The next regular meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 10<sup>th</sup>, at 11:15 AM. A new meeting cadence of every two weeks will start from that date. Televate will adopt this new meeting cadence to match their project status reports.

Paul White shared that he would be unavailable on July 10<sup>th</sup>.

There may be a special meeting needed next week.

*Motion: There being no further business, Ron Kumetz made a motion to adjourn; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mike Doenges. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:56 AM.*

Respectfully submitted,

Cally Audet  
Cally Audet, Clerk

06/21/24  
Date

DRAFT