

STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS TASK FORCE

Special Meeting No. 17 – Meeting Minutes

July 31, 2024

Via Microsoft Teams

11:15 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
Ron Kumetz, VSFA
Paul White, Regional Dispatch Working Group, Vice-Chair
Mike Doenges, Rutland City Mayor
Michael Wright, CEO of Calx Ambulance

Others Present

Cally Audet, Task Force Clerk
Dominick Arcuri, Televate
Rick Burke, Televate
Liz Tracy
Stephen Whitaker
Jeff Burnham, Springfield Police Chief

Approval of Agenda

Co-Chair Morrison requested that agenda items Statewide Dispatch Training Group Overview and Regional Town Hall and Community Listening Session Planning be moved to follow approval of the minutes. Co-Chair Neal echoed this request.

Motion: At 11:20 AM, Mike Doenges moved that the Task Force approve the change to the agenda; 2nd by Jim Mack. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

- 07/10/2024 – Regular Meeting No. 29

Motion: At 11:21 AM, Ron Kumetz moved that the Task Force approve the minutes as written; 2nd by Jim Mack. Motion passed, Paul White abstained.

Statewide Dispatch Training Group Overview – Liz Tracy, Middlebury PD

Co-Chair Neal introduced long time colleague, Liz Tracy who has worked and continues to work on minimum training requirements for dispatchers in Vermont, while also providing training opportunities, supporting wellness initiatives and advancing other issues critical to the emergency communications profession.

Liz Tracy provided a brief overview of her professional endeavors, sharing that she has 43+ years in dispatch experience, served as the training coordinator, and is currently working full time with the Middlebury Police Department. Over the years she has held many meetings with various stakeholders and legislators working to stand up and standardize a mandatory training program for dispatchers answering the 7-digit phone line, similar to that of E911 call takers.

Ms. Tracy shared that she has gotten the support of the Vermont Police Academy, who has continued to work on trainings for various topics including call taking, dispatching, wellness, and other statewide initiatives.

Co-Chair Neal asked for confirmation that the basic dispatch course is still being offered. Ms. Tracy stated that was correct and shared that the Association is trying to combine state 911 and statewide training basics because the dispatch basics tend to be the same across the board. A few days of the training course are spent on the basics of call taking, and another day would be spent on 911 specifics.

Co-Chair Morrison thanked Ms. Tracy for her service and efforts. She went on to ask Ms. Tracy to share any hurdles that might come to the top of mind when working on the statewide training and consistency across all dispatching entities, as well as the most compelling reasons for it.

Ms. Tracy shared that some of the hurdles that come to mind right away would be getting the word out, and staffing constraints. She shared that making this type of training mandatory makes it difficult for the smaller agencies that might not have the staff to allow employees to be pulled away from the daily operations. She also shared that getting everyone on board was very difficult as well.

Co-Chair Morrison inquired if there were any plans or considerations for making this training initiative a certification level program for dispatchers and shared that if that were to be the case the Criminal Justice Council would need to be involved in the process.

Ms. Tracy shared that she would like to see this training program be bolstered to the certification level and shared that there were past attempts at a 3-step process, however that process has fallen by the wayside for a variety of reasons. She also shared that the certification would put Vermont on the same playing field as other states

Co-Chair Neal opened the floor to questions from the Task Force members, and also shared if members had questions at a later date, she could pass them along to Ms. Tracy.

Co-Chair Morrison noted that the Task Force should be keeping a list of potential statutory requests that might arise for items such as mandating a certification process or creating best practices or recommendations. She asked the Televate project management team if this was a list they were able to compile on behalf of the Task Force. Televate team members shared that they would be happy to do so.

Co-Chair Neal shared that there is room for further discussion on this topic at a later date.

Regional Town Hall and Community Listening Session Planning

Co-Chair Neal introduced the regional town hall and community listening events set forth in Mission Critical Partners (MCP) project schedule. She shared that the regional town halls are intended to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to identify challenges and opportunities for increased efficiency in the dispatch function. The target audience for regional town halls would be local and state officials, select boards, town officials, state legislators, career and volunteer police, EMS and fire agencies. MCP is looking to provide up to four (4) in person meetings throughout the state in a geographically diverse fashion.

MCP is also looking to provide community listening sessions similar to town halls, but with a broader audience of community members to allow them the opportunity to identify concerns and expectations. These meetings are proposed to be hybrid (in-person and virtual), possibly in the North Central, South, and Central part of the state.

The current plan for the town hall meetings is to be held the week of September 9th to 13th, and the Chairs are looking for input from Task Force members on items that need to be considered as the planning for these events continues.

Co-Chair Neal opened the floor to Task Force members for their input.

Paul White inquired if both town hall and community listening meetings are planning to take place in that one week. Co-Chair Morrison shared that she did not believe this was the plan. MCP, Televate and the Chairs have been working to get the details of these events and travel locked down first and will work on the finer details next. Co-Chair Morrison shared that the hope is to get notice of these events out to stakeholders next week.

That being said, the Task Force will need to put together small groups of members (no larger than three (3) people) to discuss the specifics on topics for discussion during these meetings. Further discussion took place, and it was decided that Co-Chair Neal, Jim Mack and Mike Doenges will work together on the developing the structure and topics of the meetings with MCP; and Co-Chair Morrison and Paul White will work together to determine the logistics to include when, where, what supplies are needed and how to get the word out to stakeholder.

The Co-Chairs intend to circulate a draft plan to include the logistics of where and when these meetings should take place to the Task Force members by the end of this week.

Co-Chair Neal shared that she would be calling on Televate to help her group with meeting planning. Televate team members agreed to help with this.

Public Comment

Co-Chair Neal opened the floor to public comment.

Jeff Burnham, Springfield Police Chief introduced himself, and shared that he was sitting in to listen.

Stephen Whitaker provided the following comments:

- Shared his concerns regarding effective public participation and shared that he is still working on his efforts to get more members added to the Task Force and for Task Force members to have the ability to to elect their own chair as raised during Legislative sessions.
- Shared concerns regarding systems vulnerability stating the FCC recently released a report citing the nationwide AT&T outage in February resulted in 25,000 blocked 911 calls, and 91 million blocked anonymous cellular calls.
- Mentioned the recent CrowdStrike update disruption and the effects it had on state PSAPs.
- Expressed concern regarding the AT&T data breach, which is now reporting to have included 70 million customers records, revealing phone numbers of subscribers and all of the telephone numbers which have called from those numbers and who had called them, including sensitive phone numbers of high-level government officials and more. He went on to request a damage assessment.
- He stated that he has yet to see a plan that he believes meets statutory requirement for congressionally directed spending, nor an RFP for independent review per statutory review for IT activities. He also expressed his concern regarding other local congressional directed spending projects that are simultaneously taking place.
- He stated that he believed the Task Force should be discussing using general funds for LMR & LTE engineer planning to be covered in future proposed designs.
- He reiterated his belief in the need for pilot projects and requested the Task Force reassess priorities for meeting discussions.

Co-Chair Morrison left the meeting.

Project Updates:

Dom Arcuri from the Televate project management team provided the following project updates through July 22nd:

- The project is moving along mostly on schedule, with the exception of receiving completed questionnaires; the deadline was in June, however they continue to trickle in. The delay in response has not delayed the rest of the project.
- MCP has completed 5 of 38 site visits as of July 22nd. Anticipate being completed with these visits by mid-August.

- MCP met with the State of Vermont Radio Technology Services to gather data.
- Meetings have taken place with larger radio shops throughout the state.
- MCP will continue to analyze data and identify potential gaps.
- Televate delivered the July Stakeholder Update and will begin work on the August update shortly.
- Meetings with the Chairs have taken place regarding data collection to ensure the specifics of the data being collected remain confidential.
- The project management team will be working with Task Force members on the planning of Regional Town Halls.
- Continue to work on scheduling for plan development.

Mike Doenges clarified that the delay in questionnaires is just due to the actual submissions; that is correct. This information will be collected during the in-person site visits as well.

Stephen Whitaker inquired why the Task Force did not have a conversation about confidentiality as a group.

Co-Chair Neal shared she would take this comment back to Co-Chair Morrison offline.

Dom Arcuri shared that Rance Duffy, from the Mission Critical Partner team was unavailable for today's meeting as he was currently conducting one of the on-site visits.

New Business

No new business was discussed.

Confirm Next Meeting Date and Adjournment

The next regular meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 7th, at 11:15 AM.

Motion: There being no further business, Paul White made a motion to adjourn; 2nd by Mike Doenges. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 12:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cally Audet
Cally Audet, Clerk

8/1/24
Date