

# Statewide Public Safety Communications System Planning Project Stakeholder Update



March 2024

## Welcome!

The Public Safety Communications Task Force welcomes you to this inaugural edition of the *Stakeholder Update*. The Task Force will develop and circulate monthly *Stakeholder Updates* over the course of the Statewide Public Safety Communications System Planning Project. This Update is designed to inform and educate the Vermont General Assembly and the public safety stakeholder community, and to solicit ongoing participation and ideas to ensure the success of the program to the benefit of the statewide public safety community and the citizens they serve.

## About Our Project

To facilitate the planning and implementation of a reliable, secure, and interoperable statewide public safety communications system, the General Assembly of the State of Vermont enacted [Act 78](#) (the appropriations act for FY 2024) and in sections C.114 – C.115 of the Act, the General Assembly established the Public Safety Communications Task Force to oversee and manage all phases of its development, design, and implementation. In pursuit of this objective, in 2023, the Task Force released [three RFPs](#), including for project management support, system planning, and legal services. To date, the project management vendor is under contract and now supporting the Project, the Task Force is in final negotiations with the legal services vendor, and the system planning vendor selection is also nearing conclusion.

The Statewide Public Safety Communications System Planning Project will engage in ongoing outreach and collaboration with the statewide public safety stakeholder community to gather and analyze critical information regarding the existing public safety 9-1-1 call taking, dispatch, land mobile radio (LMR), mobile data and other critical communications systems. The Project will additionally review operational practices and governance strategies and models from the statewide stakeholder community with a focus on establishing statewide standards and best practices to the benefit of the public safety practitioners and the communities they serve.

The ultimate success of the Vermont Public Safety Communications System Planning Project is anchored on the participation of the public safety stakeholder community. **We have no preconceived notion of the future structure of the Vermont statewide communications system, and the community's input is essential to determining how this communications system will look and how it will be managed and governed.** We are excited to work together to identify the right solution for you.

## Did You Know?

*This section introduces the reader to relevant information regarding the state of public safety communications stakeholders, systems, best practices and other information of interest to the public safety stakeholder community.*



To provide critical 9-1-1 emergency calls for service and public safety response to the citizens of the state of Vermont, there are 38 dispatch centers, 6 of which are public safety answering points (PSAP) that provide 9-1-1 call-taking services.



The Communications Planning Project will directly engage with each of these 38 dispatch centers to learn about their capabilities, and to gather relevant information to best inform the progress and advancement of interoperable communications systems throughout the state.

## Our Team

The Vermont Public Safety Communications Task Force consists of seven members with a range of public safety experience:

- (A) **the Executive Director of the Enhanced 911 Board, who serves as Co-Chair:** Barbara Neal, Executive Director, Vermont Enhanced 911 Board
- (B) **the Commissioner of Public Safety or designee, who serves as Co-Chair:** Jennifer Morrison, Commissioner, Vermont Department of Public Safety or designee
- (C) **one municipal official appointed by the Executive Director of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns:** Mike Doenges, Mayor, City of Rutland
- (D) **one representative from a public safety answering point overseen by a municipal police department appointed by the Vermont Association of Chiefs of Police:** Jim Mack, Public Safety Answering Point Administrator, Shelburne Police Department
- (E) **one emergency medical technician or paramedic appointed by the Vermont State Ambulance Association:** Michael J. Wright, Chief Executive Officer, CALEX Ambulance Service
- (F) **one firefighter appointed by the Vermont State Firefighters' Association:** Ron Kumetz, Chief, Alburgh Volunteer Fire Department
- (G) **the Chair of the Regional Dispatch Working Group established by the General Assembly in 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185.:** Paul White, Selectboard, Barre Town / Chair, Vermont Regional Dispatch Working Group

Over the next few releases of the *Stakeholder Update*, the qualifications and expertise of the Task Force members will be highlighted so that you can get to know our team and learn how they are working to benefit public safety and welfare throughout Vermont. This issue of the *Stakeholder Update* introduces the Task Force Co-Chairs.



**Co-Chair, Barbara Neal**, has been with the Vermont Enhanced 911 Board since 2003, where she is currently Executive Director, providing leadership and direction for all activities associated with the operation of the statewide 911 system, budget management, and communications with constituent groups, telecommunications providers, local/state/federal governmental and legislative officials, the media and the public. With an extensive background in emergency response, she was previously a supervisor at Williston PSAP and a dispatcher at Middlesex Barracks.



**Co-Chair, Jennifer Morrison** has served in various roles at the State of Vermont and was appointed as the Commissioner of Public Safety in July 2022. She oversees seven divisions including the State Police, Emergency Management, Fire Safety, the Forensic Laboratory, the Crime Information Center, the Radio Technology Shop and Administration & Finance. She is the Governor's Homeland Security Advisor and Criminal Justice Policy Advisor. Jen previously served nearly 30 years in municipal policing including stints as Chief of Police in both Colchester and Burlington, VT.

Commissioner Morrison holds a B.A. in Criminal Justice & Journalism from The George Washington University and an M.A. in Leadership Studies from Norwich University. She is a graduate of the FBI National Academy and an instructor of IACP's Leadership in Police Organizations curriculum.

Jen is a lifelong New Englander and currently lives in the Lake Champlain Islands with her husband. When not at work, she can be found working in the yard, enjoying the lake and spending time with their children, grandchildren and friends.

## Project Status

In an ongoing effort to inform the Vermont General Assembly and the statewide public safety stakeholder community on the progress and status of the Vermont Statewide Public Safety Communications System Planning Project, each release of the *Stakeholder Update* will provide a brief project status overview.

- The Public Safety Communications Task Force continues to meet every two weeks on Wednesdays at 11:15 A.M. Your attendance at these public meetings is encouraged and the meeting schedule, conference/video bridge information and the upcoming meeting agenda is available at the Task Force project website at <https://dps.vermont.gov/committees-boards/communications>.
- The Televate Project Manager kickoff meeting and introduction to the Task Force was held during a Task Force project status meeting on January 10, 2024.
- Project status reports are now being published on a bi-weekly basis.
- The Task Force conducted an interview of the most qualified System Planning vendor candidates and determined which vendor is best suited to support the Project.
- Contract negotiations with the System Vendor have recently concluded and a kickoff meeting with this vendor is expected for mid to late March 2024. The selected System Planning Vendor will be introduced in the April *Stakeholder Update*.
- The draft Project Plan has been delivered and will be finalized once the System Planning vendor is fully on board and has provided their input into the Project Plan.
- The draft Communications System Planning Project schedule has been delivered to the Task Force and will be finalized once the System Planning vendor is fully on board.

### Meet Our Project Management Consultant, Televate, LLC

Founded in 2001, Televate, LLC is a leading public safety technology and engineering consultancy delivering sustainable, interoperable **land mobile radio, wireless broadband networks and applications, Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), and information technology and communications** solutions to power mission critical requirements.

Televate's Program Sponsor, Rick Burke, and Project Manager, Dominick Arcuri, have over six decades of combined communications experience, including

their engagement on previous statewide and regional public safety communications projects in Vermont.

As an independent third party and trusted advisor, Televate will work directly for the Vermont Public Safety Communications Task Force as the Project Manager of the Statewide Public Safety Communications System Planning Project. In this role, Televate will coordinate the activities between the selected communications system vendor and the Task Force and the statewide stakeholders, provide regular project status reports, manage project risks as they are encountered, and maintain the project schedule among other responsibilities to the Task Force.



*Televate Program Sponsor, Rick Burke*



*Televate Project Manager, Dominick Arcuri, P.E.*

***We want to know what topics you'd like to learn more about!***

The April issue of the *Stakeholder Update* will include contact information for the community to make direct inquiries to the Task Force about the project.

Visit our website at <https://dps.vermont.gov/committees-boards/communications>