

Vermont Department of  
Public Safety

---

# A Report on the Dispatching of Emergency Service Providers: **An examination of the depth of the problem.**

---

Prepared for the House and Senate  
Government Operations Committees

January 14, 2004

Presented by: Kerry L. Sleeper, Commissioner  
Department of Public Safety

---

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	1
Research	
Literature Review .....	9
Current Vermont State Police Dispatching Service .....	10
Funding .....	12
H. 410 .....	13
Unstructured Interviews .....	14
ESP's and Dispatch Summary.....	15
Survey Results.....	15
Problem Statement and Recommendations .....	16
Appendixes	
Letter Charging the Committees Work.....	A
Committee Members.....	B
Dispatch Issues from an Enhanced 9-1-1 Perspective.....	C
The Vermont Universal Service Fund – History and Public Policy.....	D
Survey Results.....	E
ESP's and Dispatching Summary.....	F
Excerpts from previous studies.....	G
H. 410 .....	H
Agencies dispatched by Vermont State Police .....	I

---

## Introduction

During the 2003 -2004 Legislative session H.410, an act relating to dispatch services to local law enforcement agencies, fire departments and emergency medical service providers was sent to the House Government Operations Committee for debate and testimony. Testimony surrounding staffing, financial issues and local dispatching arrangements seemed to complicate a potential solution to passing this legislation.

As a result of testimony surrounding H. 410 both Senator William Doyle and Rep. Cola Hudson chairs of the Senate and House Government Operation Committee were made aware of *critical* communications and dispatching problems involving a number of emergency services. In a letter to the Commissioner of Public Safety they asked that he form a committee and they charged the Commissioner of Public Safety to:

- Examine the depth of the problem of providing dispatch services to emergency service providers;
- Recommend a course of action that can be addressed by the General Assembly when it convenes in January 2004, and;
- Document why the recommendation is the best solution, and;
- Identify, if possible, potential revenue sources.

They suggested the following organizations be represented:

- Vermont Department of Public Safety
- Vermont Emergency Management
- Vermont Ambulance Association
- Vermont Coalition of Fire and Rescue Services
- Vermont Sheriff's Association
- Vermont Chief's of Police Association
- Vermont Police Association

- Vermont Enhanced 9-1-1 Board
- Vermont League of Cities and Towns

A list of committee members may be found in the appendix.

Over the years debate surrounding emergency dispatching services has surfaced several times. Attention was given to the desirability of more efficient dispatching at the Nineteenth Grafton Conference on Public Safety: Adapting to Changing Times. The unification of dispatching systems touches on old turf wars among different police or sheriffs' agencies, but the feeling at Grafton was one of enlightened recognition that the time had probably arrived in Vermont for a 911 system, and that jurisdiction considerations must give way to efficiency and public service.<sup>1</sup>

Since the writing of that report E 9-1-1 has become a reality. Enhanced 9-1-1 is a tariffed, regulated telephone service. Vermont's enhanced 9-1-1 system was designed to support whatever local dispatching arrangements exist. The E 9-1-1 system provides a statewide level of service to the public that is efficient, uniform and based on national best practices and standards.

Dispatching is the use of radio communications to coordinate and direct the police, fire and EMS responders. Dispatching is also much more than that as illustrated by the input output model (figure 1). Dispatching also involves non-emergency calls, administrative calls and other types of requests for support or information from emergency service providers. Historically, dispatching services have focused on the police. Local fire departments and Emergency Medical Services generally receive dispatching services from a variety of ad hoc means. While the call E 9-1-1 system has matured, Vermont's public safety community continues to struggle with how to provide emergency dispatching service, upon receipt of the call, to all emergency service providers -- fire, police and emergency medical service. Emergency service providers need an efficient way of communicating with one another and with dispatch, yet the fragmented and ad hoc manner in which dispatching is provided hinders efficient communications. In addition, there is a need for dispatching services for routine law enforcement activities, such as criminal background checks, license and vehicle registration checks, etc. This situation is no longer acceptable given that we now live in a world where a widespread emergency, such as a terrorist attack, could occur without warning. The range of dispatching needs must be addressed decisively and expeditiously.

Dispatch consolidation is one part of the solution. Consolidation of dispatch services is not a new concept in Vermont. The Lamoille County Sheriffs' Department has been operating a consolidated dispatching service for many years to the communities in that county. The Department of Public Safety/Vermont State Police has nearly completed the consolidation of its dispatching services into four (4)

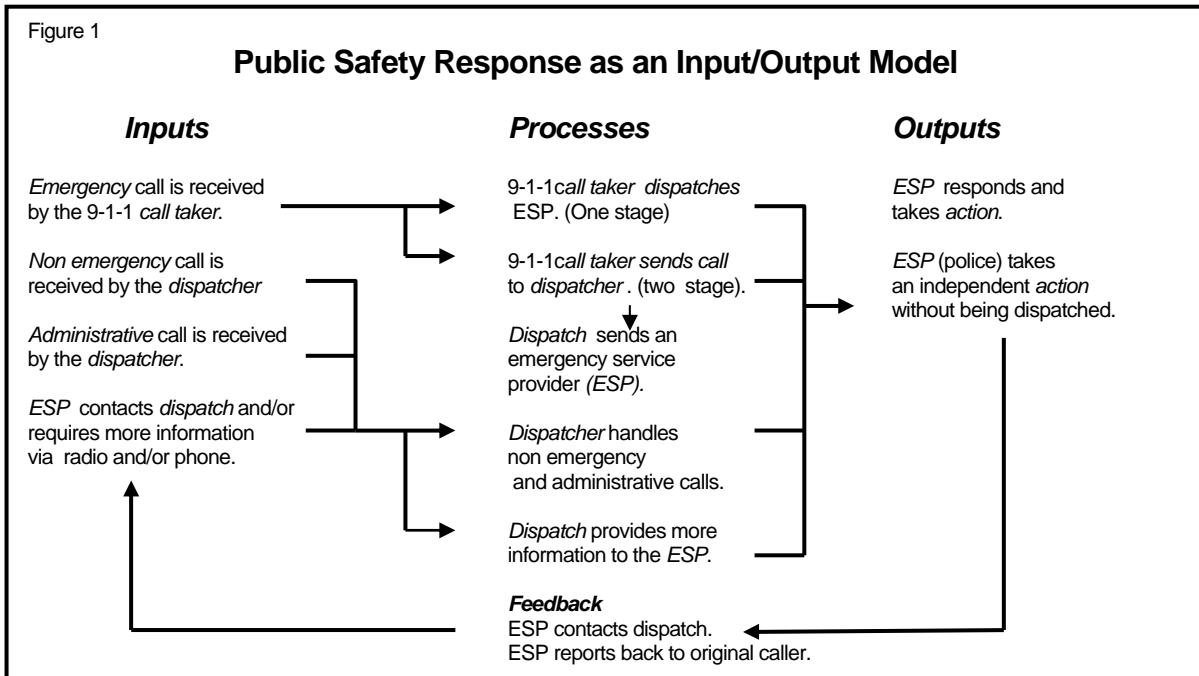
---

<sup>1</sup> Public Safety: Adapting to Changing Times, Report of the Nineteenth Grafton conference, June 3-5, 1990, page 14.

communication centers. Those four consolidated communication centers also serve as Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) in the statewide enhanced 9-1-1 system.

The Vermont Department of Public Safety (DPS) has embraced the vision of providing professional dispatching services to any public safety service provider that needs this service. However, the Department is concerned that staffing levels and infrastructure needs may not be adequate to support growth within DPS's system. The result is there are constables, fire departments and rescue squads providing service to the public without reliable dispatch. Towns are looking to consolidate dispatch into DPS sites but staff shortages are holding back the process<sup>2</sup>. The lack of financial resources to fund dispatch positions continues to be an obstacle in allowing other emergency service providers to receive dispatch services from the Vermont Department of Public Safety.

In Vermont, for emergency calls, the 9-1-1 call taking and the dispatching functions generally are handled by one person (one-stage call processing), although in some cases it requires two people to handle the call (two-stage call processing). Within the E 9-1-1 system an emergency call is received from the public and a 9-1-1 call taker will either act as a dispatcher and mobilize an emergency service provider or establish a conference call with the dispatcher who then sends an emergency service provider. In Vermont, those combined call taker/dispatchers may also handle non-emergency calls, administrative calls and other calls for information or support.<sup>3</sup> Vermont's 9-1-1 call taking and dispatching organizations can be viewed as systems that take *inputs*, *process* them, and produce *outputs*.<sup>4</sup>



<sup>2</sup> A report to the Vermont General Assembly, THE STATUS OF CONSOLIDATED DISPATCHING IN THE STATE OF VERMONT, A. James Walton, Jr., February, 2001, page 33.

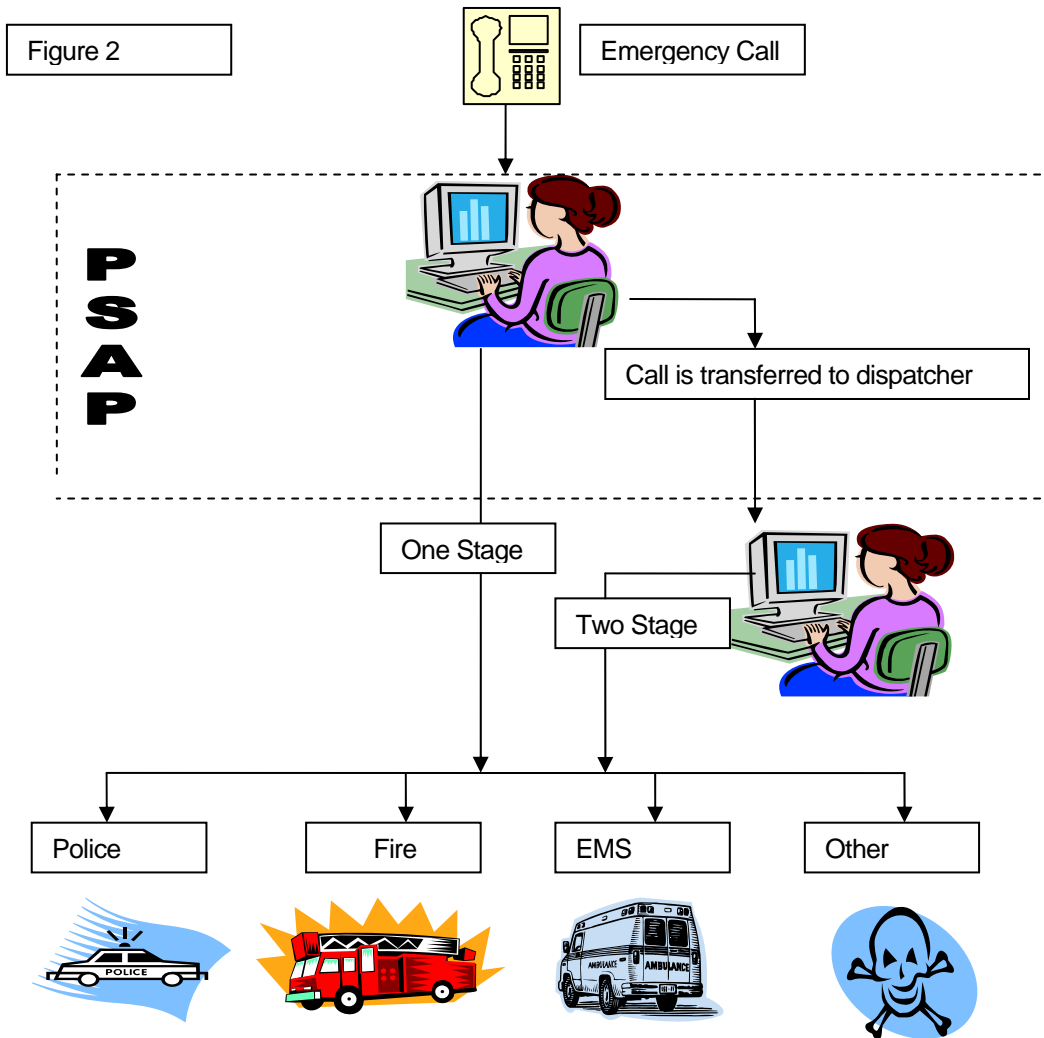
<sup>3</sup> There are also numerous other dispatching services that are not part of the E9-1-1 system and which provide emergency and non emergency communications services to local departments.

<sup>4</sup> Policing America, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Kenneth Peake, page 112.

The input/output model in Figure 1 may be used to help illustrate the public safety response and illustrates the flow of calls and how they are handled. Figure 1 is also used to help illustrate the difference between 9-1-1 call taking and dispatch. Emergency calls for service are the primary concern for the emergency service provider and the public safety response system as a whole.

The committee feels that the E 9-1-1 system in Vermont is working well. This perspective is supported nationally, where Vermont's governance model for the Enhanced 9-1-1 system is widely viewed as one of the most effective and successful in existence. The E 9-1-1 system will continue to work well as long as it can either relay the information to the appropriate dispatching service (two-stage call processing) or relay the information to the appropriate responder (one-stage call processing).

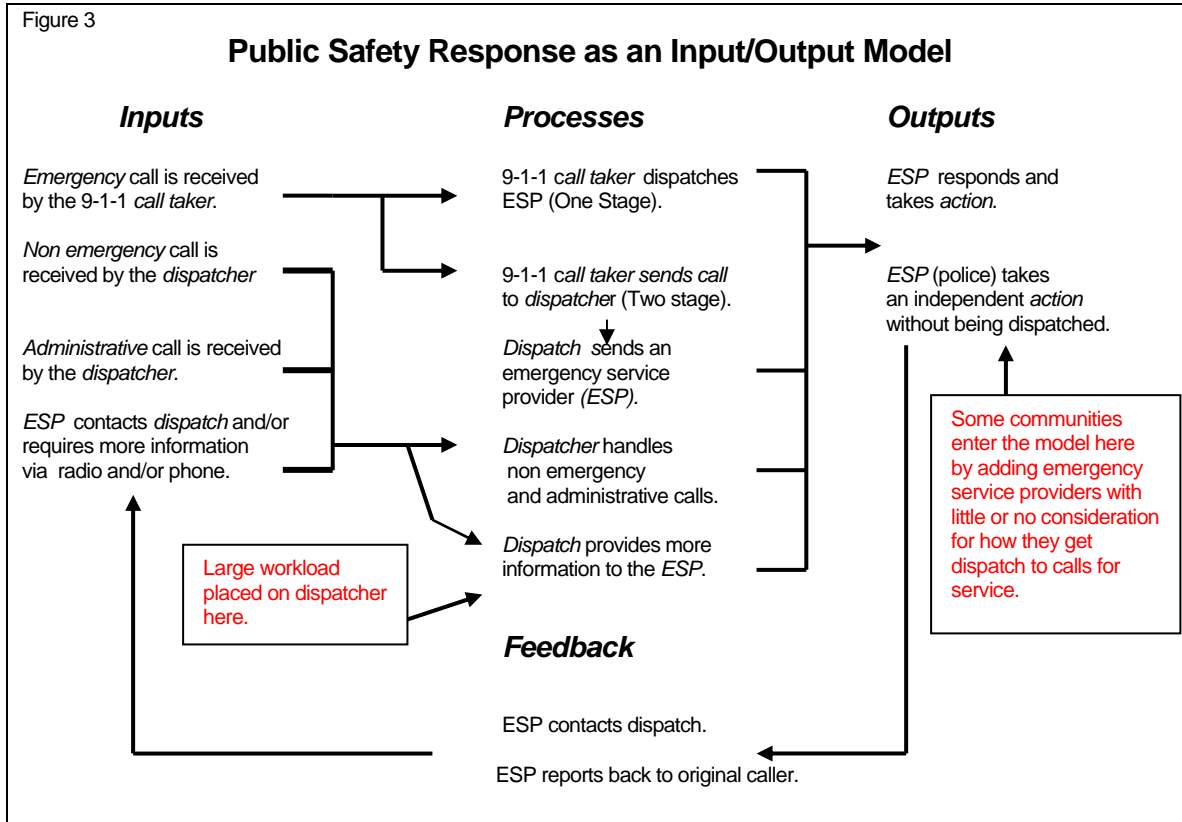
The above model helps illustrate the complexity of the 9-1-1 call taking and the dispatching processes. An illustration of a one-stage and two-stage call processing can be found below in Figure 2.



One of the work tasks that contribute to the increasing dispatch workload is observed in the Input/output model (figure 3) where the ESP, usually the police, asks for more information from their self-initiated work. As illustrated in figure 3 this is where the dispatcher handles any and all requests for further information from the ESP. Sometimes communities' desire enhanced coverage. The committee heard that the increase in information needed by an ESP results in added radio traffic being handled by the dispatchers. This complaint is not new as it was referenced in a previous study of rural law enforcement. This radio traffic originates from the police officer making motor vehicle stops and asking for license, registration information along with NCIC and other types of information needed to secure his/her safety and adequately assess the involvement. This added response creates an added workload for the dispatcher.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Report of the Rural Law Enforcement Committee, To the Senate & House committees on Judiciary and government Operations, March 2000, page 6

Figure 3



It must be noted that the workload of a dispatcher can be so heavy that it can occasionally interfere with proper 9-1-1 call processing. When the 9-1-1 call taking and the dispatching functions are combined, the individual may become so busy with radio traffic and ESP calls for service that he or she is simply hard pressed to answer a 9-1-1 call. When this occurs, PSAP managers must act quickly to separate the functions so that 9-1-1 calls receive dedicated answering priority and service and dispatchers are freed up to concentrate on their complex work, which involves much more than just handling emergency communications.

Figure 3 above is intended to illustrate that some communities enter the service of being an emergency service provider at the output phase of the model. Such is the testimony of Chief Zononus, N. Troy Police Department and Chief Boutin, Castleton Police Department, who believe that the state should be providing basic dispatching service. They believe they are providing an added service to their communities and relieving the Vermont State Police from providing service to these communities. Therefore, the State should be providing dispatch service. Further information on their comments are in the unstructured interview section of this report.

Public Safety services in Vermont have grown pretty much “Like Topsy” with little concern for organization, priorities, efficiency, cost-effectiveness, or possible



duplication of services to citizens and taxpayers.<sup>6</sup> The same can be said for dispatching services over the years. This is especially true for law enforcement dispatch services. The services that were once offered by the Vermont State Police for a five-person police department in Middlebury have seen that department grow to 15 personnel. Likewise, in Berlin the town started a police department with one-person and now there are five. Some communities such as Middlebury have recognized the added burden placed on the Vermont State Police dispatch system and have augmented the services received from the State Police with their own dispatching.

The Vermont Department of Public Safety through its largest division, the Vermont State Police, continues to cite examples of a growing use of dispatching services associated with the enhanced coverage or self-initiated workload (See figure 2). The Vermont State Police (VSP) operates the dispatching services for the Department of Public Safety. The State Police could not consider providing expanded dispatch service such as command and control dispatching services to a fire department because they are not staffed for such service. The Vermont State Police does indicate that once it has finished consolidating its dispatching centers it may be able to utilize dispatch positions differently. This reallocation of dispatching positions may allow for re-deployment in different centers allowing for more dispatch services to be taken on.

In summary the committee finds several factors that have an impact on the dispatching issue. These factors are outlined below.

- As local emergency service providers (ESPs) find it necessary to change their dispatch arrangements, or arrange for new service, many look to the Vermont State Police (VSP) for service.
- Dispatch service involves more than simply informing ESPs about an emergency. It involves handling non-emergency calls, emergency calls that come over a department's regular phone service (seven-digit number), administrative calls, calls for service due to routine law enforcement activities, calls for additional information, or support in response to an emergency call.
- Once the VSP has finished consolidating its dispatch service, efficiencies may be gained that would allow the VSP to take on additional dispatching services.

---

<sup>6</sup> Public Safety: Adapting to Changing Times, Report of the Nineteenth Grafton conference, June 3-5, 1990, page 6.

### Literature Review

Several documents have been reviewed that are relevant to the issue of dispatching. The entire excerpts from these reports are found in Appendix G.

In the "Report of the Public Safety 2000 Summer Study Commission to the General Assembly," January 4, 1993, a recommendation included the state should encourage greater coordination and consolidation of police dispatching. Since the writing of this report the Vermont State Police has worked at consolidating its dispatch centers into four locations.

The March 2000 "Report of the Rural Law Enforcement Committee to the Senate & House Committees on Judiciary and Government Operations" offered extensive discussion with regards to the dispatching issue. The report stated that the need for dispatching services continues to be a requirement for effective law enforcement and that the calls for service from the public are not a problem for the dispatch centers. However, the demand for increased coverage with communities adds to radio traffic and adds to the workload of dispatchers. The report went on to say that the State of Vermont should fund regional dispatch centers so they are able to provide the requisite dispatch services to rural communities.

The report concluded that dispatch services and radio systems need to be better funded by the State of Vermont. Dispatching services should be provided for constables who are reacting to calls for service and that dispatch centers should assess the impact of providing services to proactive constables, determine the workload impact and seek personnel to adequately meet those demands. The report also said the Department of public Safety should work to bring mobile data capabilities to the State. This project is being actively worked on today.

The report from the "Emergency Responder Workshop" held in 1992 stated that communication needs to be directly related to the funding problem. Coordinated radio frequency assignments were considered as one way of linking various emergency services. Centralization of dispatching, response and training was recommended by the participants at this workshop.

There was a time when communications was considered an ancillary function to public safety services. That is no longer the case. As noted in a report on "A Feasibility Study for Developing and Implementing a Regional Emergency Communications Center with Enhanced 9-1-1 Capability", prepared for the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, it is not unusual for a public safety communications center to serve other functions. These functions include taking messages for patrols, investigative and administrative police personnel, fire officer, EMS officers and for after-hours telephone answering town, City Hall and DPW offices. This report also notes that some communications centers function as

the “Command and Control Center” for public safety departments. The command and control functions should be done by field officers who have the knowledge, responsibility, and authority to direct public safety resources within their jurisdictions<sup>7</sup>.

If the goal of the communications center is to transmit messages efficiently, it must be designed and operated with the fewest impediments to information flow. Inbound information must be received promptly and transmitted promptly.

The above-cited report mentions that technology plays a large role in increasing functional productivity. As technology is applied to specific tasks and functions, the cost per unit usually decreases. The report mentions that the use of mobile data terminals in the field and trunked radio systems should be utilized in communications centers.

### **Current Vermont State Police Dispatching Service**

Dispatch is usually the first, and sometimes the only, contact that people have with the Vermont State Police. Dispatch centers are staffed 24 hours a day 7 days a week to provide emergency and non-emergency support to the citizens of Vermont.

The Vermont State Police dispatchers provide dispatch service for the Vermont State Police, the Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife (Game Wardens), the Department of Motor Vehicles, several county sheriff departments, several municipal police departments, and numerous fire and rescue agencies (see appendix .

Currently the Vermont Department of Public Safety operates four consolidated Communication Centers located at the State Police Barracks in Rockingham, Rutland, and Williston, and Derby. Each maintains its own communication services.

The Vermont State Police currently operate these four Communication Centers with an operating budget of approximately \$5.637 Million. Of this amount approximately \$475,000 is for overtime. They operate these centers with approximately 72 staff of which 65 are dispatchers and 9-1-1 call takers and seven are supervisors or administrators.

Again, dispatching is a complex task that has different meanings to different people. Generally, dispatching is the use of radio communications to coordinate and direct the police, fire or EMS responders. There are several levels of dispatching services being performed by the Vermont State Police.

---

<sup>7</sup> “A Feasibility Study for Developing and Implementing a Regional Emergency Communications Center with Enhanced 9-1-1 Capability”, Prepared for the Vision 2000 Communications Planning Group & the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, RAM Communications Consultants, July 1995, page 6.

## **Vermont State Police Levels of Dispatching Service**

### **Full Dispatch Service**

Description: At this level the Vermont State Police Communication Centers provide full dispatch service to select emergency service providers. This includes the following:

- Answering and referring emergency calls for service.
- Answering and referring non emergency crime calls for service.
- Answering and referring non-emergency calls for service.
- Answering and referring administrative support calls for service. (*This is a service the communication centers are working to transition away from even for the State Police.*)
- Dispatching resources to a scene.
- Radio and telephone requests for information from emergency service providers and full command and control dispatching for some fire, police and EMS departments.
- May provide technical and administrative support.

### **Full Dispatch Service for Law Enforcement**

Description: At this level the Vermont State Police Communication Centers provides full service dispatching for select police agencies. This includes the following:

- Answering and referring emergency calls for service.
- Answering and referring non-emergency crime calls for service.
- Answering and referring non-emergency calls for service.
- Answering and referring administrative support calls for service. (*This is a service the communication centers are working to transition away from even for the State Police.*)
- Dispatching resources to a scene.
- Radio and telephone requests for information from select police agencies.
- May provide some technical support, such as trouble shooting radio problems.

### **Basic Dispatch Service**

Description: At this level the Vermont State Police Communication Centers provides minimal dispatching service. This includes the following:

- Answering and referring emergency calls for service
- Answering and referring non-emergency crime calls for service.
- Dispatching resources to the scene.
- Life safety communication from an emergency service provider who is in the field.
- No administrative support calls.
- No routine radio and telephone requests for information
- No technical support except for basic radio troubleshooting.

## Funding

The committee discussed many of the funding strategies that have been recommended by previous studies. They include;

- County emergency services tax as recommended from the 1992 Emergency Responder Workshop. The committee's research has also indicated this tax system is used in Missouri to fund dispatching centers
- Dedication of DUI fines as recommended from the 1992 Emergency Responder Workshop.
- Charge a fee for dispatching services.

The committee also discussed use of the Universal Service Fund, as proposed by H.410. This was rejected outright by the committee.

The committee, in the time allotted for this study, could not come to consensus concerning how best to fund dispatching services. However, they felt strongly that whichever funding source was found it must be administered fairly and equitably. The members felt that if the State were to subsidize dispatching services then it should subsidize all services that provided dispatching for multiple agencies across different jurisdictions.

The committee heard from Sheriff Roger Marcoux Jr. regarding the fee structure in place for dispatching services within Lamoille County. Sheriff Marcoux advised the funding formula for his countywide dispatch services is a combination of population and grand list of the communities applied to the overall dispatching budget. The following is a step-by-step guide to the formula:

1. Determine one half of the total dispatch budget.
2. Divide that amount by the total population served (county population) and determine per capita cost.
3. Multiply per capita cost by each town's population.
4. This figure indicates the population portion of that town's dispatch budget.
5. Determine the town's grand list and divide it by the total county grand list to determine the individual town's percentage figure.
6. Take one half of the total dispatch budget and multiply it by each town's percentage figure.
7. This amount equals the town's grand list portion of the dispatch budget.
8. Add the population and grand list figures together to determine the town's dispatch budget total.

An example using the Town of Cambridge would be:

Lamoille County Population:	23,233
Grand List:	\$18,181,420.00

Lamoille County Sheriff's Dept. Dispatch Budget: \$480,105.22

Town of Cambridge Population 3186 and Grand List of \$2,531,000.00

Step 1: (1/2 of total = \$240,052.61)

Step 2: ( $\$240,052.61 / 23,233 = \$10.3323$ )

Step 3:  $3186 * \$10.3323 = \$32,919.02$

Step 4: \$32,919.02 equals population portion of budget

Step 5:  $\$2,531,000.00 / \$18,181,420.00 = 13.92\%$  (14%)

Step 6:  $\$240,052.61 * 14\% = \$33,417.26$

Step 7: \$33,417.26 equals the Grand List portion of budget

Step 8:  $\$32,919.02 + \$33,417.26 = \$66,336.28$

The Town of Cambridge pays Lamoille County Sheriff's Department \$66,336.28

The above funding strategy represents a commitment by towns within Lamoille County to support the consolidated dispatch center operated by the Lamoille County Sheriff's Office. This system also guarantees that calls for service would be dispatched by someone. It is interesting to note that Lamoille County towns have recognized that paying for dispatching service ensures the first input occurs within the public safety response model outlined in figure 3.

While the Committee did not endorse a particular funding strategy it felt that absent a subsidized state funded program the charging of fees for full dispatching services is something the Vermont State Police should explore.

#### **H.410 AN ACT RELATING TO PROVISION OF DISPATCH SERVICES TO LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES, FIRE DEPARTMENTS, AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE PROVIDERS**

H.410 was introduced by Representative Gail Fallar. Its purpose was to require the state police to provide dispatch services without charge to local law enforcement agencies, fire departments, and emergency medical service providers upon request. The bill proposed that the additional cost to the department of public safety of providing such services would be paid by the Universal Service Fund.

Rep. Fallar introduced the bill after a meeting with the Rutland County Firefighters Association, which expressed concern with being charged by the Vermont State Police for dispatching. The Tinmouth Fire Department, which is Rep. Fallar's home fire department, does not utilize the County Association's dispatching as it felt it could not afford the fees. The Tinmouth Volunteer Fire Department is dispatched by a pager company. At one point there was some concern that the fire department might lose access to the paging company. She indicated that at the time she thought there was a huge need to provide dispatch

service, but no way to fund it so she introduced H.410. There seemed also to be a huge disparity between who pays, who doesn't, who can, and who can't.

## **Unstructured Interviews**

### **N. Troy and Lyndonville Police Departments**

Leniy Zononos, Police Officer, N.Troy, VT attended a meeting and spoke about the creation of the N. Troy Police Department and the subsequent need for dispatching services. N. Troy is a small village on the Vermont Canadian border.

The Village Trustees wanted to address some of the quality of life issues within the community and subsequently hired Mr. Zononos to provide added police services. He advised that it was not economically feasible for the village to provide its own dispatching service. He stated that both he and the Trustees believe that dispatch service is a fundamental service the State should be providing.

Mr. Zononus felt his police service would help mitigate the response of the Vermont State Police. He went on to advise that Lyndonville, VT has the same problem. Lyndonville started up a police department and is in need of dispatching service but has been unable to acquire it from the Vermont State Police. He advised that there needs to be something in place to allow for dispatching services. While Mr. Zononus could not speak for the governing body of Lyndonville he advised that the trustees of N. Troy were under the impression that dispatch services would be provided by the State Police.

Mr. Zononus felt strongly that for officer safety reasons and added protection for the town of N. Troy there needs to be "spirit of cooperation" between local policing and the state with regards to dispatching.

The Vermont State Police through the Derby State Police Office are providing the N. Troy Police Department with lifeline communications. Lifeline communications is defined as those types of communications that are reasonable to provide officer safety. What it does not include is the answering of phones, taking of messages, the running of data on a regular basis or any other type of work that is indicative of providing a dispatching service.

### **Castleton Police Department**

The committee heard that Chief Gary Boutin had contacted Francis Aumand and expressed concern over the possibility of the Department of Public Safety possibly charging for dispatch services. He wanted to ensure that it be known this would place a significant burden on small police departments such as Castleton and Fair Haven. A significant increase in the budgets of small police departments to pay for dispatching services might cause a town to do away with its police department. Specifically in Castleton, where budgeting for the police department is sometimes controversial, it could be feasible that a significant increase might result in an

abolishment of the local police services. Chief Boutin believes the abolishment of small police departments, such as Castleton, would place a large burden on the Vermont State Police who would have to cover the community.

**ESP’s and Dispatching Summary**

Information was received from the E 9-1-1 Board regarding Emergency Service Providers (ESP’s) and dispatching services. Every fire department, police department (State, municipal, Sheriff) and emergency medical service providing service to Vermont communities is considered an emergency service provider (ESP). However, it should be mentioned that not all ESP’s are first responders. A first responder is an agency that is called upon to be the primary response to any emergency call received through the E 9-1-1 system. First response to emergencies is determined by each community’s wishes, while all fire Departments and emergency medical services are first responders not all police departments have this designation.

The following is a numerical summary by category of all the services providing dispatching for first response emergency service providers (ESP’s) in Vermont. Arguably, these services represent all the services that dispatch for all ESP’s. For a complete list of agencies see Appendix H.

**Summary of Dispatch Services**

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Number Providing Dispatching</u>	<u>PSAP</u>
Sheriff Offices	3	1
Municipal Police Department	27	5
Miscellaneous LE Agencies	1	
State Agencies – State Police	4	3
Fire & Rescue Departments	3	
Private	2	
Out of State Providers	9	
Vermont Hospitals	2	
Miscellaneous	<u>2</u>	
<b>TOTAL DISPATCHING SERVICES &amp; PSAP’s</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>9</b>

**Survey Results**

A survey was produced and distributed to all police, fire and emergency medical service providers in the state. The intent of the survey was to try and determine how many agencies were contracting for services, what they were paying, and what type of radio technology was being utilized. The committee only received a response rate of 25%.



It was determined, from the respondents, that the approximate costs for dispatching services was \$3,776,016. 28% (32) of the respondents do not pay for dispatch services and 49% (55) contract for dispatch services.

The budget for the dispatching for the Vermont State Police is \$5,637,000 and when combined with the above local costs of \$3,776,016 brings the cost of dispatching to \$9,413,016. However, the survey only netted a response from 25% of the emergency service providers which means there is another 75% of costs unaccounted for. Using a simple average of costs it was determined that the high costs of providing dispatching in the State of Vermont could be as much as \$23,949,006. The cost for dispatch service is a significant investment and should be considered in any recommendation for improving dispatch services.

## Problem Statements and Recommendations

The committee came to consensus on three problems that affect dispatching services. Those problems are stated below.

Until consolidation of the dispatching centers is complete and operations are moved to a single stage 9-1-1 call taking/dispatching system the State Police cannot determine the resources needed to provide additional service. Therefore;

- The State Police (VSP) feels it cannot be the “default” basic dispatch service provider for emergency calls and non-emergency crime calls that may need to be handed off (dispatched) to the emergency service provider (ESP) responsible for handling the emergency incident. The inability to dispatch an ESP to an emergency could result in lives lost or injuries occur. This problem is called **“The Lack of a “default” basic dispatching service”**.
- They (VSP) cannot provide, beyond what is currently being provided, full dispatching services. As a result in many cases the safety of ESP’s can be jeopardized. This problem is called **“The Inability to provide full dispatch service”**.
- If dispatch services are to be provided a source of revenue must be developed that is consistent, fair, equitable and reliable to all ESP’s. An unfair system will result in an unfair taxing scheme. This problem is called **“The lack of and the necessity for a Fair and Equitable Payment for Dispatching Services”**.

The committee felt there should be both long term recommendations and interim recommendations. The longer term recommendations recognize that it will take some time to develop a funding source and hire a consultant to perform the numerous task that have been outlined in this report. In the meantime however, there

are several recommendations that the Vermont State Police can do to help with the dispatch problems outlined in this report.

### **Long Term Recommendations**

1. **The Department of Public Safety should be provided funding to hire an outside consultant to review the state of dispatching in the State, develop a needs assessment of dispatching services in the state and provide recommendations for ensuring that all emergency service providers are adequately dispatched.**

The committee recognizes that the dispatching issue is complex. The committee, in the time it was given, could not do a needs assessment to determine the full extent of the dispatching problem. Further the committee found a lack of previous research or studies that indicates problems with the service delivery of emergency medical service (EMS) providers or fire departments. Only one report could be found that addresses the needs of EMS or Fire Departments with regards to dispatching. A needs assessment should be done to determine who needs what for dispatching service. If this is not done then dispatching services will continue to grow in an uncoordinated manner. Further, the State of Vermont will not be able to grasp the true cost of providing services. A consultant should also be charged with determining the number of personnel required to provide the needed dispatching services and a fee structure for dispatch services. The committee determined that the costs of dispatching services in the State are between \$9,413,016 and \$23,949,006. The committee feels that with this type of investment in public safety support systems more study is in order and this should be the priority recommendation. The committee also believes that a group should be formed made of stakeholders in the dispatch process to help guide the consultants work.

2. **Communities that do not provide their own dispatching services but want to operate police, fire or emergency medical services and want dispatching should pay for this service.**

Dispatching services have evolved over the past 30 years. Some police departments do not pay for services as a result of the pooling of federal money back in the 1970's to enhance the two-way radio system. There is also a belief in some communities that the State Police should provide full dispatch services to local police for no fee. Communities need to start planning for the true cost of providing local emergency services with full dispatching service (see definition of full dispatching service). Again recommendation #1 is crucial to guiding the creation of a fee structure that would be charged by the Department of Public Safety.

The Vermont Generally Assembly should authorize the charging of fees and the Department of Public Safety should develop a fee schedule, subject to

legislative approval, that is fair and equitable for all who want the service. The committee heard anecdotal information about how some departments paid and some did not. Further, the charging for services is not the same throughout the state. The Vermont State Police has made strides to develop a consistent system but has had difficulty in implementing it. This is due in part to the lack of support for paying for a service that is being provided for free to some.

Communities should not enter the public safety response Input/Output Model (figure 3) at the output phase. Communities need to understand that the cost of providing emergency services or public safety services includes dispatching services. These services are the first phase of responding to a public safety incident and are as much a part of the communities' responsibility as the actual response of the police officer, firefighter or EMS crew.

Support systems such as radio, dispatching, and information technology are needed in today's public safety response and need to be financially factored into a communities plan to provide services as well.

If charging for dispatching services is deemed to be inappropriate by the Vermont General Assembly then an equitable revenue generating and funding system should be found to fund dispatching services at the State level and help subsidize the cost of dispatching services at local at local departments which currently provide it and pay for it themselves.

### **Interim Recommendations**

- 3. The State of Vermont should assume responsibility as the "default" basic dispatching service for an Emergency Service Provider should any ESP loses its dispatch service.**

Most members of the committee felt that it was in the best interest of the State of Vermont to ensure that an emergency service provider always had a basic level of dispatch service for its emergency calls. If, for example, the Tinmouth Fire Department lost the services of its paging company then the State of Vermont through the Vermont State Police, if asked, would pick up the service. The term "default", as used above, is intended to mean for a short or pre determined time. This service is described below.

#### **Basic Dispatch Service**

Description: At this level the Vermont State Police Communication Centers provides minimal dispatching service. This includes the following:

- Answering and referring emergency calls for service
- Answering and referring non-emergency crime calls for service.
- Dispatching resources to the scene.
- Life safety communication from an emergency service provider who is in the field.

- No administrative support calls.
- No routine radio and telephone requests for information
- No technical support except for basic radio troubleshooting.

Some members of the committee felt this was not a problem currently however conceded that if a loss of service were to occur then it would be a major problem. It further should be noted that any community that wanted this basic level of service would have to provide the technology, at the local communities cost, to ensure that emergency calls get to that ESP.

The committee felt that “default “dispatching should be for a short period of time and that an ESP should work expeditiously to secure a full dispatch service provider, and if that service provider were to be the Vermont State Police then they should pay for that service.

**4. The Vermont State Police should complete its dispatch consolidation, combining personnel into one-stage emergency communication centers, to the extent feasible, and report on the progress to the House and Senate Government Operations Committees.**

The Vermont State Police testified that the creation of the Derby PSAP is not completed yet and the Williston PSAP has not moved to a one-stage dispatch system (See Figure 3). Once this is completed they will have a better understanding of the personnel resources needed to staff the centers. It is the committee’s recommendation that they report to the House and Senate Government Operations Committees and also work with the law enforcement task force that is to be formed based on the recommendation of the law enforcement working group. The Vermont State Police should report on its progress in developing one-stage emergency communication centers and whether or not any staff savings have resulted.

**5. The Vermont State Police should continue to provide “default” basic dispatch service to new police agencies and law enforcement certified constables.**

Any town supported small police department or law enforcement certified constable in need of basic dispatching services should be provided those services through the Vermont State Police. It should be understood that this BASIC service is only for the transfer of emergency calls, for transferring non-emergency crime calls and or providing life safety communication. The service is described above.

As this is a default service the agency or constable must work towards receiving more advanced levels of dispatching service and pay a fee for this service.

The practice of saying “no” to new police agencies and communities for this basic service should stop.

The Vermont State Police are viewed as the default law enforcement provider in many communities. Therefore, calls for law enforcement service, specifically reports of crimes are handled by the State Police in those communities. A community that starts a police department expects its officer will be providing relief to the State Police and also expects to receive dispatch service. However, the community does not understand that as the number of officers working at any given time increases the demand for dispatching also increases. The entry of a new law enforcement officer into the public safety response model (figure 2) at the output stage, where self-initiated work occurs, increases the work of dispatch staff. However, emergency and non-emergency crime related calls are handled by the State Police now and will continue to be processed through the State Police when a new police department or constable is established in a community. Therefore, the Vermont State Police should provide basic dispatch service, including non-emergency crime related calls to the new town supported police department or law enforcement certified constable. Two-way radio communications for critical life safety communication needs should also be provided.

The Vermont State Police should educate communities regarding the service that will be provided and enter into service level agreements that stipulate the nature of the service they will provide. It should be stressed to communities that radio traffic from the a police officer making a motor vehicle stops and asking for license, registration information along with NCIC and other types of information are not part of this service.

**6. The use of technology such as mobile data and new radio systems should be explored.**

The committee felt that technology could be implemented that would help make the communications centers more efficient. This would allow for greater flexibility in assigning staff and would help provide more service to other agencies. The State of Vermont should consider the use of future homeland security funds to further projects such as mobile data and a new public safety communications system.

# Appendix A

## Committee Members

Commissioner Kerry L. Sleeper  
Department of Public Safety  
103 South Main Street  
Waterbury, Vermont 05671-2101

Chief Doug Brent  
South Burlington Fire Dept  
575 Dorset Street  
South Burlington, Vt. 05403

Francis X. Aumand, III, Director  
Department of Public Safety  
Criminal Justice Services  
103 South Main Street  
Waterbury, Vermont 05671-2101

Sheriff Roger M. Marcoux, Jr.  
Lamoille County Sheriff's Dept.  
P.O. Box 96  
Hyde Park, VT 05655

Captain James Baker  
Vermont State Police  
103 South Main Street  
Waterbury, Vermont 05671-2101

Evelyn Bailey, Executive Director  
Enhanced 9-1-1 Board  
94 State Street, Drawer 20  
Montpelier, Vermont 05620-6501

Sheriff Robert W. Norris  
Franklin County Sheriff's Dept.  
30 Lincoln Avenue  
St. Albans, Vermont 05478-9367

Senator Jim Condos  
23 Victoria Drive  
South Burlington, Vt. 05403:

Lt. Todd Shepard  
South Burlington Police Dept.  
575 Dorset Street  
South Burlington, Vt 05403

Todd Odit  
Vermont League of City & Towns  
89 Main Street, Civic Center  
Montpelier, Vermont 05602

Mr. James Finger  
Vermont Ambulance Association  
275 Stratton Road  
Rutland, Vermont 05701

# Appendix B

This appendix is not available electronically.



# Appendix C

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** 3 December 2003

**TO:** Ad Hoc Dispatching Study Group

**FROM:** Evelyn Bailey, Executive Director

**SUBJECT:** Dispatch Issues from an Enhanced 9-1-1 Perspective

This paper addresses the question solely from the perspective of the problem that H.410 was trying to solve. There may be other issues, but they are outside the scope of this paper.

Background

### **H.410**

H.410 was drafted after a small, rural fire department decided it needed to change its dispatching arrangements, asked the Vermont State Police to take them on and were turned down because the VSP did not have adequate resources to do so. The solution H.410 proposed was to require the VSP to dispatch for any department that requested it, and to use the USF to pay for any increased costs that might be incurred.

### **E9-1-1 Service and E9-1-1 System**

Enhanced 9-1-1 is a regulated, tariffed telephone service. The E9-1-1 system consists of a sophisticated telecommunications network and specialized databases, which work together to selectively route a 9-1-1 call to the appropriate Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), and to display the caller's telephone number and locatable address along with the police, fire and EMS responders for that location to a 9-1-1 operator.

Each town is responsible for providing the E9-1-1 Board with information regarding its primary law enforcement, fire and EMS responders, including information about who dispatches for each of them.

The information is incorporated into two databases, the Emergency Service Zone/Emergency Service Number (ESZ/ESN) database and the Selective Transfer database, and programmed into the telecommunications switches and the PSAPs. The programming of the E9-1-1 system with this information (1) enables a 9-1-1 call to be routed to the proper Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), (2) provides an automatic display of the police, fire and EMS services for the caller's location, and (3) enables the 9-1-1 Operator (call-taker) to initiate a three-way conference call (selective transfer) between him/herself, the caller and the appropriate dispatcher with a single key stroke or mouse click.

## Dispatch

Dispatching is the use of radio communications to coordinate and direct the police, fire or EMS responders.

### The Nexus

The E9-1-1 system is designed to support whatever local arrangements exist for police, fire and EMS responders and dispatch. From the E9-1-1 Board's perspective, the issues that occasionally arise are those that surround change. Changes that impact the E9-1-1 system include change in a police, fire or EMS service's dispatching arrangements; change in the geographic jurisdiction of a police, fire, or EMS service; change in the telephone number for local police, fire, EMS or dispatch that is programmed into the E9-1-1 system for use when transferring 9-1-1 calls; dispatch consolidation.

All such changes require commensurate programming changes to be made to the E9-1-1 network, the various system databases, the GIS database, and the PSAP equipment. Sometimes, the impact is significant.

### Managing Change

The specific situation that gave rise to H.410 and similar situations that arise from time to time require close coordination between the local police, fire or EMS service, the former dispatch service, the new dispatch service, the local telephone service provider, the E9-1-1 Board's System Provider, and the E9-1-1 staff. Each stakeholder has responsibilities and tasks to ensure a smooth transition and to preserve the reliability and integrity of the E9-1-1 system and E9-1-1 call processing. In the instance that gave rise to H.410, everything went smoothly.

There have been times when things have not gone smoothly. Those times are always attributable to a change made by one of the stakeholders that was not communicated and coordinated with the E9-1-1 Board.

For example, a local department that provided dispatch services to a number of local emergency responders took one of its seven-digit telephone lines out of service. No one was informed. The E9-1-1 system was programmed with a number that no longer existed. The 9-1-1 Operator, trying to calm a frantic caller while initiating a three-way conference call with dispatch, got only a recorded message that said, "the number you have dialed, Nxx-xxxx, is no longer in service."

### Conclusion

While problems do arise, generally due to a failure to communicate, they are rare. The state's law enforcement, fire and EMS responders, as well as their dispatch service providers, have come to understand that certain aspects of their operations require coordination with the E9-1-1 Board. Mutual understanding, cooperation and collaboration between these important stakeholders and the E9-1-1 staff have steadily increased with the passage of time and the establishment of routine working relationships.

# Appendix D

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** 3 December 2003

**TO:** Ad Hoc Dispatching Study Group

**FROM:** Evelyn Bailey, Executive Director

**SUBJECT:** The Vermont Universal Service Fund -- History and Public Policy

---

1992. The Vermont Public Service Department (PSD), in response to concerns raised by consumers, emergency service providers, and Legislators, initiated a study of Enhanced 9-1-1.<sup>1</sup> The study determined that Enhanced 9-1-1 was feasible and should be implemented. The PSD also engaged Macro, Inc. to conduct a public opinion survey. The survey determined that telephone ratepayers would be willing to pay a surcharge on their monthly telephone bills for enhanced 9-1-1 service.

1993. The Vermont Legislature passed Act 83, which provided funding and direction to the PSD for further analysis and study.

1994. The two years of study and research resulted in the introduction of Enhanced 9-1-1 enabling legislation. The proposed legislation was conceived originally without the USF section. The Public Service Board (PSB) and PSD, in pursuit of broader public policy goals and with the Administration's agreement, determined that a Vermont USF was the appropriate funding mechanism for Lifeline,<sup>2</sup> Vermont Telecommunications Relay Service,<sup>3</sup> and Enhanced 9-1-1. The USF concept became part of the Enhanced 9-1-1 enabling legislation.

Enhanced 9-1-1 is a tariffed, regulated telephone service. Telecommunications utilities are regulated by state public utilities commissions (the Public Service Board in Vermont) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Thus, the use of a surcharge on telephone subscriber bills was viewed as the most logical and appropriate way to fund the Enhanced 9-1-1 telephone service.

Dispatching is the use of radio communications to coordinate and direct the police, fire and EMS responders.

---

<sup>1</sup> Enhanced 9-1-1 is a telecommunications service that selectively routes a 9-1-1 call to the appropriate Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), and which subsequently displays the caller's telephone number and locatable address along with the police, fire and EMS responders for that location to a 9-1-1 operator.

<sup>2</sup> Lifeline is an entitlement that subsidizes the monthly cost of basic telephone service for low income and elderly persons.

<sup>3</sup> VTRS is an interpreter service for people who communicate over the public switched telephone network using text telephones (TTY machines).

Enhanced 9-1-1 call taking and dispatching are separate and distinct functions. The law reflected that demarcation in establishing what the USF could fund and what it could not fund.

1997. The General Assembly extended USF funds to the Department of Public Safety (DPS), for “costs solely attributable to public safety answering point operations.”<sup>4</sup> There was logic to funding the 9-1-1 operators (“call-takers”) because their function was solely attributable to E9-1-1: they answered 9-1-1 calls and relayed the information to the appropriate dispatch service. The costs for four supervisors, one Administrator and one Secretary could receive USF funding for the portion of their duties that was solely attributed to E9-1-1. The funds were not to be used for the portion of their duties attributable to dispatch or other functions.

2002. H.410 was introduced in response to a situation that occurred when a small, rural fire department, dissatisfied with its dispatching/paging service, asked the Vermont State Police to take them on and were turned down because insufficient resources were available to accommodate the extra work. H.410 proposed to address the issue by requiring the VSP to dispatch for any department that requested it, and by using the USF to pay for any increased costs that might be incurred.

Testimony from stakeholders within State government – the Governor’s office, the Agency of Administration, Department of Public Safety, the E9-1-1 Board, the Public Service Department and Public Service Board – unanimously opposed use of the USF for this purpose, although their reasons for doing so varied. The reasons included resistance to using a telephone tax for a non-telephone purpose thereby increasing the burden on telephone ratepayers, a belief that the current USF policy is the right public policy, and a desire to avoid being in the position of taking on additional service with a funding mechanism that could not guarantee a consistent and reliable revenue stream. Testimony from other stakeholders was consistent with these positions.

---

<sup>4</sup> The six local PSAPs were not included in this provision.

# Appendix E

Radio Dispatch Survey Results are available here the actual survey is available in a separate electronic file.

## Radio Dispatch Survey Results

The Dispatch Survey was sent to over 400 police, fire and EMS departments and organizations around the state of Vermont.

Responses were received for:

1	of	14	Sheriff's Departments
24	of	52	Police Departments
40	of	246	Fire Departments
42	of	123	EMS Departments
---	--	----	
107	of	435	Total

Also, 5 towns and 1 communication center responded.

The results indicate that:

26 (23%)	do their own dispatching
55 (49%)	contract for it
32 (28%)	get dispatching without contracting for it.

The total dispatching costs:

4,070,735	reported
- 294,719	redundant costs reported
-----	-----
3,776,016	Total reported (corrected)
÷ 113	Number of reporting agencies
-----	-----
33416	Average cost per agency
x 435	Total number of agencies
-----	-----
14,535,990	Total extrapolated cost of dispatching in 2003



# Appendix F



Fair Haven	Yes
<b>Fairlee</b>	<b>No</b>
Hardwick	Yes
Hartford	Yes
Hinesburg	Yes
Ludlow	Yes
Manchester	Yes
Middlebury	Yes
Milton	Yes
<b>Montgomery</b>	<b>No</b>
Montpelier	Yes
Morristown	Yes
Newport	Yes
Norwich	Yes
Randolph	Yes
Richmond	Yes
Rutland	Yes
St. Albans	Yes
St. Johnsbury	Yes
Shelburne	Yes
S. Burlington	Yes
Springfield	Yes
Stowe	Yes
Swanton	Yes
Thetford	Yes
Vergennes	Yes
Vernon	Yes
Waterbury	Yes
<b>Weathersfield</b>	<b>No</b>
Williston	Yes
Wilmington	Yes
Windsor	Yes
Winhall	Yes
Winooski	Yes
Woodstock	Yes

Yes

**Miscellaneous Agencies**

**First Responder**

UVM Police	Yes
<b>Capital Police</b>	<b>No</b>

**State Agencies**

**First Responder**

Vermont State Police	Yes
Fish & Wildlife	No
DMV	No
Liquor Control	No

There are no constables or special police officers for any community that are designated as a first responder.

Summary of Police first response emergency service providers		
	<u>Respond First to Emergencies</u>	<u>Do not respond first</u>
Sheriff's Office	3	11
Municipal Police Dept.	47	3
Miscellaneous Agencies	1	1
State Agencies	1	3

### **Dispatching Services**

The E 9-1-1 board also provided a list of all dispatching services that call takers refer emergency calls to for assignment to a first responder. These dispatching services are listed below along with the agencies that serve as a Public Service Answering Point (PSAP).

<b><u>Sheriff's Offices</u></b>	<b><u>Dispatch Provider</u></b>	<b><u>PSAP</u></b>
Addison	Yes	
Lamoille	Yes	Yes
Windham	Yes	

<b><u>Municipal Police Departments</u></b>	<b><u>Dispatch Provider</u></b>	<b><u>PSAP</u></b>
Barre City	Yes	
Bellows Falls	Yes	
Bennington	Yes	
Brattleboro	Yes	
Burlington	Yes	
Colchester	Yes	
Dover (Part Time)	Yes	
Essex	Yes	
Hartford	Yes	Yes
Ludlow	Yes	
Manchester	Yes	
Middlebury	Yes	
Montpelier	Yes	Yes
Newport (Part Time)	Yes	
Rutland	Yes	
St. Albans	Yes	Yes
St. Johnsbury	Yes	

**Municipal Police Departments**

	<b><u>Dispatch Provider</u></b>	<b><u>PSAP</u></b>
Shelburne	Yes	Yes
S. Burlington	Yes	
Springfield	Yes	Yes
Swanton (Part Time)	Yes	
Vergennes (Part Time)	Yes	
Williston (Part Time)	Yes	
Wilmington (Part Time)	Yes	
Windsor	Yes	
Winhall	Yes	
Winooski	Yes	
Woodstock	Yes	

**Miscellaneous LE Agencies**

	<b><u>Dispatch Provider</u></b>	<b><u>PSAP</u></b>	UVM
Police	Yes		

**State Agencies**

	<b><u>Dispatch Provider</u></b>	<b><u>PSAP</u></b>
Vermont State Police		
Derby	Yes	
Rutland	Yes	Yes
Rockingham	Yes	Yes
Williston	Yes	Yes

**Fire & Rescue Departments**

	<b><u>Dispatch Provider</u></b>	<b><u>PSAP</u></b>
Springfield FD	Yes	
St. Michael's Rescue	Yes	
Lefevre Ambulance	Yes	

**Private**

	<b><u>Dispatch Provider</u></b>	<b><u>PSAP</u></b>
Contact Communication	Yes	
Red Phones	Yes	

**Out of State Providers**

	<b><u>Dispatch Provider</u></b>	<b><u>PSAP</u></b>
Washington Cty, New York	Yes	
Colbrook Dispatch, NH	Yes	
Hanover Dispatch, NH	Yes	
Keene SW Fire Mutual Aid, NH	Yes	
Lancaster FD, NH	Yes	
Twin State	Yes	
Grafton Cty. Sheriff, NH	Yes	
Claremont Dispatch, NH	Yes	
N. Adams Dispatch, MA	Yes	

**Vermont Hospitals**

	<b><u>Dispatch Provider</u></b>	<b><u>PSAP</u></b>
Weeks Memorial Hospital	Yes	

Porter Hospital

Yes

**Miscellaneous**

**Dispatch Provider**

**PSAP**

SSpeir – Hardwick

Yes

U.S. Customs – Beecher Falls

Yes

The following is numerical summary by category of all the services providing dispatching for first response emergency service providers (ESP's) in Vermont. Arguably, these services represent all the services in Vermont providing dispatch service to all ESP's

**Summary of Dispatch Services**

<b><u>Agency</u></b>	<b><u>Number Providing</u></b>	
	<b><u>Dispatching</u></b>	<b><u>PSAP</u></b>
Sheriff Offices	3	1
Municipal Police Department	27	5
Miscellaneous LE Agencies	1	
State Agencies – State Police	4	3
Fire & Rescue Departments	3	
Private	2	
Out of State Providers	9	
Vermont Hospitals	2	
Miscellaneous	<u>2</u>	
<b>TOTAL DISPATCHING SERVICES &amp; PSAP's</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>9</b>

# Appendix G

Several documents have been reviewed that are relevant to this issue and are summarized below.

In a "Report of the Public Safety 2000 Summer Study Commission to the General Assembly, January 4, 1993 the following was taken.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. The State should encourage greater coordination and consolidation of police dispatching.**

The Commission heard convincing testimony that dispatching of police officers would be both more efficient and more economical if there was a significant reduction in the number of dispatch centers. Consolidation of dispatching centers would result in significant savings for several reasons: 1) the expense of the hardware associated with dispatching can be spread amongst several users or municipalities if the service is shared; 2) consolidated dispatching centers would reduce the number of personnel required to staff the system; 3) expanded implementation of the emergency 911 telephone system is facilitated by consolidation because 911 exchanges do not necessarily coincide with municipal boundaries; and 4) there was an appreciation amongst some of the police departments that police dispatchers, who are civilian, need more training than they have obtained to date, and that consolidation of dispatching would make it more likely that such training would be forthcoming.

At the same time, local police departments expressed concern about delegating dispatching functions entirely to one organization, such as the Department of Public Safety, without an opportunity for input. It was suggested that these concerns could be addressed by instituting some administrative unit which would oversee the dispatching system but which would be advised by a board comprised of the users of the system and the public.

At the final meeting of the Commission, the group endorsed the creation of a Division of Telecommunications and Information Support Services, separate and apart from the Vermont State Police, but within the Department of Public Safety. The purpose of the Division would be to: 1) advise localities on consolidation strategies; 2) provide, where appropriate, consolidated dispatching services on a contract basis; and 3) to explore alternative funding structures similar to the municipal loan fund to support local and regional consolidation efforts.

Separation of the division from the State Police would alleviate some concerns of other police agencies that dispatching decisions might be biased if the system were run by the Vermont State Police. To address this concern, the Commissioner of Public Safety suggested the creation of a board of member agencies and the public to advise the Division of Telecommunications and Information support Services. The Division could be created without the need for additional revenues or legislation.



In a "Report of the Rural Law Enforcement Committee to the Senate & House Committees on Judiciary and Government Operations", March 2000 the following is taken.

Dispatching Services: The committee heard from a variety of witnesses that the need for dispatching service continues to be a requirement for effective law enforcement services within rural areas. Many small agencies, including constables, are called upon to provide a variety of services. These services not only include responding to calls but also include providing extra patrol coverage with their communities. Some Sheriff's Departments are being given patrol coverage with their communities. Many of these agencies do not have dispatching services and in many cases assume the Vermont Department of Public Safety should provide them. The calls for service from the public are not the problem for the dispatch centers. Many of the calls are calls that would have been received by the Vermont State Police or other service provider in the areas. However, there has been an increasing desire in communities to provide *enhanced* coverage. This type of coverage results in added radio traffic being handled by the dispatchers. This radio traffic originates from the police officer making motor vehicle stops and asking for license, registration information along with NCIC and other types of information needed to secure his/her safety and adequately assess the involvement. This added response creates an added workload for the dispatcher. Dispatching services whether by the Department of Public Safety or other agencies should be made available to small law enforcement agencies providing service in rural areas.

#### Summary of the issues

2. Dispatching Services: Dispatching services continue to be a problem for constables and other new law enforcement initiatives. In areas of the State where dispatching services are stretched to the maximum, dispatch centers are not able to provide services to new users. It is dangerous and inefficient for constables or other agencies to try to provide law enforcement services to a community without dispatching. It should be the responsibility of the State of Vermont to fund regional dispatch centers such that they are able to provide the requisite dispatch services for rural communities.

Again taken from the "Report of the Rural Law Enforcement Committee to the Senate & House Committees on Judiciary and Government Operations", March 2000

#### Conclusions and Recommendations

#### 2. Dispatching Services

The Committee has concluded that the lack of consistent dispatching services is a significant impediment to the development of additional police services in rural areas. Existing

dispatching services re overtaxed and stressed to the limit. All agencies, including constables, who provide law enforcement service to a community, must have adequate dispatching services in order to ensure officer and community safety, prompt response time, and efficient utilization of limited law enforcement services.

#### Recommendation

- 2.1 Dispatch services and radio systems need to be better funded by the State of Vermont in order to handle the additional workload created by the expansion of law enforcement and emergency services in rural communities.
- 2.2 Dispatching services should be provided to Constables who are reacting to calls for service. Law enforcement dispatch centers should assess the impact of providing services to proactive Constables, determine the workload impact, and seek personnel to adequately meet those demands.
- 2.3 The Department of Public Safety should continue to promote the consolidation of dispatching services (whether by the State Police or other providers) within the state in order to meet the growing demands of servicing the rural needs of law enforcement and the needs of other **emergency service providers**.
- 2.4 The Department of Public Safety should continue to bring mobile data capabilities into the State. This will be a way of reducing voice radio traffic and therefore provide the capability of meeting other demands for dispatch services.

In a report prepared for an Emergency Responder workshop held in 1992 the following is taken:

“The groups generally agreed that there is a need for better coordination between levels of government, response agencies and resource providers. Insufficient funding was identified as a contributing factor, directly or indirectly, to other concerns, such as lack of proper responder training, emergency planning, and adequate equipment. The present patch work of emergency communications, from *fragmented dispatching* to the lack of a statewide 911 or Enhanced 911 capability, was identified as a serious hindrance to emergency operations.”<sup>5</sup>

As has been previously noted in this report the E 9-1-1 system has been implemented and is a system that is working well. Further the issue of insufficient funding continues to be theme plaguing the public safety response to calls for service. The report after identifying the problem areas identified there priorities which one of them was communications.

“**Communications**” needs were directly tied to the funding problem. Both 911 and enhanced 911 were included as were the costs of regional dispatch services. Coordinated

---

<sup>5</sup> Report of the Vermont Legislative Emergency Management Summer Study Committee, Emergency Responder Workshop, July 15 and 16, 1992, prepared by the legislative council, page 1.

radio frequency assignments were considered as on way of linking various emergency services. Training on equipment and the roles of the users was deemed insufficient. A need for improved public notification capability was included as part of the total communications problem.”<sup>6</sup>

Centralization of dispatching, response and training was recommended, although there were those who worried about the loss of local control.<sup>7</sup>

Establishing regional dispatch areas was considered a major state communication project by this study committee. Re-assignment of some radio frequencies for compatibility should be accomplished in coordination with the new system. Training needs for operation of the new system must include use of equipment and the roles of responders. Along the same channel, statewide trunking of emergency service communications systems was propose as a means of coordinating responses.<sup>8</sup>

This report also briefly addressed the funding question. Participants at this workshop proposed a county emergency services tax as one avenue of funding. Banking and insurance surcharges and special sin taxes were considered as sources of revenue. Dedication of a portion of speeding and DWI fines to emergency services was proposed. The importance of dedicating funding sources was identified along with the need for tracking monies to ensure their use for emergency services. The report also suggested that it was the State’s responsibility to provide adequate funding for “catastrophic” hazardous materials incident response. Within the context of “catastrophic” it was also the State’s responsibility to provide personnel, including response coordinators and *dispatchers*.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

# Appendix H

Introduced by Representatives Fallar of Tinmouth, Baker of West Rutland, Brennan of Colchester, Brown of Walden, Chen of Mendon, Clark of Vergennes, DePoy of Rutland City, Donaghy of Poultney, Krawczyk (Albert) of Bennington, Nitka of Ludlow, Pillsbury of Brattleboro, Rogers of Castleton, Shand of Weathersfield and Smith of Morristown

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Public service; public safety; dispatch services; local criminal justice entities, fire departments, and emergency medical service providers

Statement of purpose: This bill proposes to require the state police to provide dispatch services without charge to local law enforcement agencies, fire departments, and emergency medical service providers upon request. The bill proposes that the additional cost to the department of public safety of providing such services would be paid by the universal service fund.

**AN ACT RELATING TO PROVISION OF DISPATCH SERVICES TO LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES, FIRE DEPARTMENTS, AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE PROVIDERS**

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. 20 V.S.A. § 1875 is amended to read:

§ 1875. RADIO COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

(a) The commissioner shall establish a communication system ~~as that~~ will best enable the department to carry out the purposes of this chapter. This shall include a radio set furnished, on written request, to the sheriff and state's attorney of each county on a memorandum receipt.

(b) ~~The~~ Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, the commissioner may charge to all users of telecommunications services managed, maintained or operated by the department for the benefit of the users a proportionate share of the actual cost of providing the services and products inclusive of administrative costs. Such charges shall be based on a pro rata allocation of the actual costs of services or products, determined in an equitable manner, which shall be representative of services provided to or system usage by individual units of government, ~~including state, local and federal agencies or private nonprofit entities~~. Such charges shall be credited to the Vermont communication system special fund and shall be available to the department to offset the costs of providing the services.

(c) The commissioner shall ensure that the state police, on a 24-hour basis, provide dispatch, transfer, and relay services free of charge to any local law enforcement agency, municipal or volunteer fire department, or nonprofit emergency medical service provider requesting this service. The cost incurred by the department for providing this service shall be paid from funds received under chapter 88 of Title 30.

Sec. 2. 30 V.S.A. § 7503 is amended to read:

§ 7503. FISCAL AGENT

(a) A fiscal agent shall be selected to receive and distribute funds under this chapter for the Vermont telecommunications relay service, for the Vermont lifeline program, for enhanced 911 services, for local first-response dispatch services, and, subject to further legislative authorization, to reduce the cost to customers of basic telecommunications service in high-cost areas.

Sec. 3. 30 V.S.A. § 7511(a)(6) is added to read:

(6) To pay the costs attributable to local first-response dispatch services in the manner provided by section 7516 of this title.

Sec. 4. 30 V.S.A. § 7516 is added to read:

§ 7516. FIRST-RESPONSE DISPATCH

The fiscal agent shall make distributions to the department of public safety to reimburse it for the cost of providing dispatch services to local law enforcement agencies, municipal and volunteer fire departments, and nonprofit emergency medical service providers pursuant to 20 V.S.A. § 1875(c).

---

Published by:

**The Vermont General Assembly  
115 State Street  
Montpelier, Vermont**



[www.leg.state.vt.us](http://www.leg.state.vt.us)

# Appendix I

This appendix is not available electronically.