

# Joint Survey Committee for Chittenden County Public Safety Services

Colchester Town Hall, 781 Blakely Road

Colchester, VT

6/28/17 8:00-10:00AM

## Draft Meeting Minutes

### 1. Call to Order/Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 A.M. Present: Chair Aaron Frank (Colchester), Vice Chair Joe Colangelo (Shelburne), Steve Locke (Burlington), Pat Scheidel (Essex), Kevin Dorn (South Burlington), Rick McGuire (Williston), Jessie Baker (Winooski). Also Al Barber (Hinesburg), Brad Larose (Essex), Jeffrey Barton (Colchester), Ann Janda (Shelburne), Irene Wrenner (Essex), Zachary Borst (UVM), Dawn Francis (Colchester), Lee Krohn (CCRPC).

### 2. Agenda Approval

Motion by Dorn to approve the agenda; seconded by Colangelo and approved unanimously.

### 3. Public Comment

It was noted that the Colchester Selectboard had appropriated \$150,000 into a dispatch enterprise fund, looking toward dispatch collaboration with South Burlington in the near term.

### 4. Approval of Minutes from 5/24/17

Motion by Locke to approve as presented; seconded by Baker and approved unanimously.

### 5. Technical advisory group update

Larose and Barton described the Police Chiefs' effort to clarify and differentiate dispatcher duty lists - what may need to stay local, and what can go to regional dispatch. DELTAWRX did initial work based on national models; while a starting point, this had to be modified for our local needs. The Chiefs worked to identify all tasks currently done by dispatchers; then categorized accordingly. Important to note that dispatchers are an important conduit for all information needed by officers on scene; dispatch work continues through a call, it does not end with resources dispatched or resources arriving on scene. Each community will have to determine the types and levels of service desired/needed/to cover local needs, in addition to the regional dispatch center. The Chiefs were thanked for their work, and were asked to continue this, by clarifying a vision statement and context for the full range of services desired/expected/needed, and why.

From a systems perspective, building the regional system out incrementally was seen as sensible. Municipalities that are ready can join together sooner, systems can be built, tested, and be operational; and others can join over time. It was noted that dispatching is hard work, qualified dispatchers are hard to find, Colchester is training 3 new dispatchers now, and towns are competing with each other for staff. It was also noted that a CAD system, as now being evaluated by Burlington, can speed up and automate many dispatcher tasks...saving minutes with technology, and improving effectiveness and efficiency of dispatcher work.

While the conversation evolves about local duties to be retained and hours of staffing to be provided at the local level, we should also consider this an opportunity to resource other local needs, even those outside of public safety, in addition to resourcing functions previously completed by dispatchers.

While no promises can be made about cost savings, the Colchester/Milton partnership offers a tangible example of that. Based on the need for 5.5 persons needed to fully staff one position 24/7/365, by working together, Milton/Colchester fill their needs with eight staff, where ten or more were needed when running separate municipal dispatch centers. Both towns are satisfied and wish to continue; discussions are now underway to integrate South Burlington into a larger operation.

## **6. Update: Communications with Dispatchers**

No new information at this time.

## **7. Update: Current Cost Compilation/ Calls For Services Definition / Revenues**

A proposed definition was presented that all would use for “call for service”. It is important to have a consistent approach, as funding formulas will eventually use this as a cost basis. Frank reviewed a wide array of data he has compiled and analyzed regarding current and proposed costs and revenues, along with proportions of calls received and calls for service from and for each municipality. Questions were raised, and discussion followed, regarding how to quantify improved levels of service (i.e., faster dispatch/response time) anticipated with a regional dispatch/PSAP center.

## **8. Union Municipal District Agreement (Charter) Drafting**

Charter drafting: minor changes suggested by legal counsel were incorporated; these were technical/legal, not substantive. Document is nearly ready to send to the Attorney General from the attorney’s perspective. The Committee wants to complete the funding formula document to assure consistency and share both documents with legislative bodies in early fall before the AG review. Much of the document is legal boilerplate, borrowed from the Central Vermont Public Service Authority, and they borrowed much of it from the standard list of AG requirements.

Question raised re: section 22...and not allowing the 5% of the voters/petition approach to bring the agreement to a local vote if it were opposed by a majority of the local legislative body. (Under the proposed charter, only the legislative bodies can bring the issue before the voters). It was explained that the members of the Joint Survey Committee were appointed by the legislative bodies and the appointees explained that they would bring the agreement and funding formula back to the legislative bodies for their comments and that the legislative bodies would determine whether to allow the charter to be voted on. It was further explained that if the idea cannot garner the support of the legislative body, support, it doesn’t have a chance with the voters. Further questions about section 22: Must the charter specify a floor vote vs. Australian ballot? Can a city with a charter vote on this by a council itself? Need to check with legal counsel on these as well as consider any conflict with labor law. Need to keep this moving forward and get to legislative bodies late summer, before fall budget season and other priorities dominate. It was agreed to hold a July meeting after all. Looking ahead to future public discussions, Janda offered to create a simple summary of the proposed charter, and rationale.

## **9. Funding Formula and MOU Drafting**

Frank reviewed proposed funding strategy and agreement: when join, pay the same as in current local budget, presuming normal annual increases...continue on current funding pattern...assess full costs, then transition to a cost per call for service based approach. Funding formulas include a ‘smoothing’ approach to help avoid rate shock if a steep cost increase to one or more municipalities were to result in a given year.

The organizational process and structure were reviewed again. Local/regional data were used for illustration and comparison. It is difficult to use national models for cost/call... as there are different ways to define call for service.

The proposed model does not bill County Sheriffs for service (they are currently dispatched for free during the day by Williston, and at night by Winooski); if charged, would just bill back to the municipalities, so there is no point in doing so.

Local example: the CCTA story... as they added in communities and grew from five Chittenden County members to serving eight counties, they accepted current budgets without a formula and provided better service and reliance on property decreased by 69%.

#### **10. Funding & Expense Report**

No report at this time.

#### **11. JS Committee and Management Matters and Communications**

Next steps were reviewed. It was noted again that Colchester and South Burlington are presently pursuing dispatch collaboration now. Shelburne would be the next likely candidate to join in, and then it can be a PSAP...at that point, may need an executive director. The plan is still to bring the charter to each town meeting next year. Joining the regional dispatch authority does not commit funding. Funding is only committed when a funding MOU is approved by each legislative body. If a municipality joins, then they will have a seat on the board. The charter requires the financial commitment within a specified timeframe after being asked or the municipality would, over an extended time, lose voting rights and later membership.

#### **12. Next Meetings**

Continuing with the fourth Wednesday schedule to maintain momentum and progress; thus, 7/26 and 8/23, both from 8-10 AM at Colchester Town Offices, Second Floor, Champlain Room

#### **13. Adjournment**

Motion by Colangelo to adjourn at 10:15 A.M.; seconded by Dorn and approved unanimously.