

MEMORANDUM

To: Burlington City Council
Colchester Selectboard
Essex Selectboard
Milton Selectboard
Shelburne Selectboard
South Burlington City Council
Winooski City Council
Williston Selectboard

From: Charlie Baker, Executive Director
Aaron Frank, Chair of Chittenden County Regional Dispatch Governance Committee

Date: February 2, 2017

Re: Regional Dispatch - Request to Name Representative to Joint Survey Committee

On behalf of the Regional Dispatch Governance Committee, we are requesting that your municipality take action to “appoint a representative to a Joint Survey Committee for Chittenden County Public Safety Services as the initial first formal step in evaluating the creation of a regional public safety dispatch service as a union municipal district subject to municipal votes as early as March of 2018.” We will come to your meeting to review this and discuss if you desire. See the attached presentation for an introduction to the discussion.

Each of your municipalities currently operates dispatch services and has participated in a technical study about regional dispatching that was recently completed. In order to explore the next step in creating a union municipal district, state statute requires each of the participating municipalities to form a Joint Survey Committee.

The [study](#) recommended a single countywide dispatch operation to:

- Provide redundancy staffing for major emergencies
- Efficiently address cross community mutual aid by utilizing the closest public safety resource
- Increase training, quality assurance, better support, and career opportunities for dispatch staff
- Provide better support of fire and rescue staff in the field
- Co-locate 911 and dispatch, as is done in Shelburne, in order to decrease emergency services response times up to 5 minutes, or 90 seconds on average

Concurrent with the study a Regional Dispatch Governance Committee of eight public safety chiefs, eight municipal managers, and CCRPC staff studied governance structures for regional dispatch. After eight meetings, and consultation with legal counsel, the committee recommended a union municipal district, as permissible under [24 VSA Ch. 121, Sub. 3](#). CSWD and CWD are examples of union municipal districts in our region.

Advantages of this structure include:

- Ability to enact and enforce ordinances for alarms or false 911 calls
- Lower cost municipal borrowing rates and ability to qualify for grants as a municipality
- Government immunity
- Local voter approval to establish the district (no need for a state-approved charter)

Now that a governance structure (union municipal district) has been identified, the next step is to create a “Joint Survey Committee.” This Committee is required by state statutes prior to forming a district. We are requesting strong consideration that each municipality’s appointee to this committee be familiar with this work and can represent your municipality with a broad perspective. We have also constituted a committee comprised of public safety chiefs and staff to handle technical and operational issues.

Critical next steps include:

- Appoint Joint Survey Committee (February 2017)
 - Draft Charter
 - Engage dispatchers as a group
 - Determine software, radio, telecommunication, and space needs
 - Refine operating costs, capital costs; draft budget, draft assessments (Fall 2017)
- Survey Committee Selectboard/Councils determine if there will be a citizen vote to join
 - Provide public info, engagement and outreach (January-February 2018)
 - Include appropriate budget amounts in municipal budget
 - Town Meeting votes on membership (March 2018)
- Re-assess operations based on votes in each community (March 2018)
 - Hire director and initial staff (April 2018)
 - Begin dispatch operations (July 1, 2018) and incrementally expand operations thereafter
 - Complete Consolidation (December 31, 2019)

Therefore, we request that your municipality take action to “appoint a representative to a Joint Survey Committee for Chittenden County Public Safety Services as the initial first formal step in evaluating the creation of a regional public safety dispatch service as a union municipal district subject to municipal votes as early as March of 2018.”

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact us with any questions. Charlie Baker, cbaker@ccrpcvt.org, 735-3500 or Aaron Frank, afrank@colchestervt.gov, 264-5502.