

Regional Dispatch Q&A from the Joint Survey Committee

To keep dispatchers and police departments informed about the effort to explore, and if approved, implement regional dispatch, the Interim Joint Survey Committee being formed has developed these very basic questions and answers. Please also view the [video](#) of the public presentation that gives significantly more detail on the possible implementation of a regional dispatch operation. Please note that this is an evolving process. There may be some questions that cannot be answered at this time. We will do our best to keep the various stakeholders and interested parties apprised of progress and to update information as we are able.

What is the Joint Survey Committee?

Currently, the leadership of the following municipalities - Burlington, South Burlington, Shelburne, Colchester, Essex, Williston, Milton, and Winooski - have been discussing the creation of a **union municipal district** with all dispatch and 911/PSAP operations under one roof in Chittenden County. As described below, the Joint Survey Committee is the entity that performs the groundwork for the formation of this entity.

What is a union municipal district?

A Union Municipal District is a legal entity, which is defined by Vermont law, and allows different communities to join forces for specific purposes, such as combining dispatch services. Current examples are Green Mountain Transit, Champlain Water District, and Chittenden Solid Waste District.

How is a union municipal district formed?

An agreement between the municipalities will be drawn up and there will need to be an affirmative vote from citizens within cities/towns must vote to join.

How will the union municipal district be governed?

This district would have a Board of Directors for governance, and an Executive Director who would be in charge of operations.

What is the role of the Joint Survey Committee in the formation of the union municipal district?

As a precursor to community votes on establishing a union municipal district, an exploratory board known as a Joint Survey Committee must be created and committee members are in the process of being appointed now by the Selectboards/City Councils of each of these cities and towns.

The purpose of the Joint Survey Committee will be to develop the organization to the point that the affected City Councils or Town Selectboards have enough information to call a vote of their community's citizens on the formation.

This work of the Joint Survey Committee includes at a minimum: determining current costs, developing a charter with a mission, authority and responsibilities; creating a draft budget; and calculating proposed assessments for member communities and fees for nonmembers. In order to draft the budget, the Committee will have to examine and analyze details such as: demographics, geography of

real estate, radio systems, assessment of available computer aided dispatch systems and telephone systems, and assessment of personnel needs and functionality. The Committee will also likely develop protocols and draft agreements regarding common dispatch procedures.

If the Communities Decide to Move Forward, What Can We Expect Next Steps to Be?

Prior to beginning operations, the communities that decide to move forward with a public vote must obtain commitments to fund an interim Director; find space in which the district will operate; integrate communications systems; hire and train employees; develop operating procedures; plan for each public safety agency's integration; develop backup and redundant systems and location and testing plans. There are other things that will need to be done, and other plans to make, as the outline of the district's operations becomes more detailed.

How Will the Public and the Communities Be Informed of Progress?

This committee will follow public meeting laws and publish agendas and minutes, which can be found [here](#). A more formal union municipal district board can only be established after a charter is drafted and reviewed and the voters in cities and towns agree to vote to join the union municipal district, which could occur as early as 2018.

What will happen to the current dispatch positions if a regional entity is created?

As a general matter, the union municipal district would work diligently to recruit and retain experienced dispatchers as any good employer would. We have a knowledgeable, skilled and dedicated workforce in our municipal dispatch operations and intend to recruit from the current talent pool from the communities involved.

When will we know about possible pay and benefits?

We do not know at this time. We need to resolve a great many issues regarding governance and funding before we can answer specific questions about staffing, pay or benefits. Until communities actually commit to joining the union municipal district, we will not be able to determine available resources or exact staffing needs. After communities join, a specific onboarding plan for staff and dispatch services will be initiated and we will have a pay and benefit package to offer in order to attract and retain a quality workforce.

If I am a Dispatcher and want to work for the new entity, will my commute change a lot?

We haven't started looking for space yet, so this will be dependent on the location of the facility. A common location for the county, assuming all seven communities who operate dispatch now wind up joining the district, will change the commute for some. However, parking, access, and central location are among the location considerations that will be evaluated.

Will police officers still receive background information from dispatchers while in the field?

At this point, we do not foresee a change in this practice.

How will police departments handle the administrative tasks that dispatchers currently perform?

This will be a matter for Police Chiefs to work on with Town Managers.

If I have a comment or suggestion, who can I contact?

You may send comments to Ann Janda at ajanda@shelburnevt.org. We will consider your suggestions as we go forward. We thank you for your interest in this project and we look forward to a continuing dialogue with citizens, employees, and leaders of the impacted municipalities.