



CHITTENDEN COUNTY PUBLIC SAFETY AUTHORITY
Board of Directors Meeting
February 26, 2019, 8:00am
Colchester Town Hall, 781 Blakely Road
Outer Bay Conference Room

MINUTES

In Attendance: Board Members: Jessie Baker (Winooski), Kevin Dorn (South Burlington), Richard McGuire (Williston); and Darren Adams (Milton). Others present: Charlie Baker, Justin Couture, Kathryn Clark, Jan Wright, Geoffrey Urbanik, Deborah Chamberlain, Cole Hayes, Kyle Blake, and Caroline Earle, Fraternal Order of Police (Winooski)

- 1. Call to Order** | K. Dorn called the meeting to order at 8:03am. The Board members introduced themselves to the audience.
- 2. Agenda Approval** | Adams made a motion to approve the agenda and Baker seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.
- 3. Public Comment** | Kathryn Clark had a question about the merger between South Burlington and Colchester. Dorn responded on behalf of South Burlington that they are hoping to get the full consolidated dispatch off the ground by this time next year. Didn't want to distract from that effort. She asked if Milton will still have voting rights on the CCPSA even though they will be getting dispatch services in FY20 from St. Albans. There is no timeline for when Milton will work out their investment. Clark asked about the timeline for start-up. Dorn noted that he is pushing for the end of the year, but it will likely take longer.
- 4. Approval of Minutes from February 12, 2019** | J. Baker moved, Adam seconded. McGuire noted a minor change on page two. All in favor with those changes. Motion passed.
- 5. Treasurer's Report on Payments / Monthly Financial Report: Board Acceptance** | There has been no significant change. Payment from Burlington is still outstanding.

Dorn had the CCPSA go into recess awaiting the arrival of the consultant.

- 6. Introduction and discussion with IXP Consultants** | The consultants arrived at 8:45. Kevin Kearns and Michelle Kessler from IXP introduced themselves and provided an introduction. Their work focuses on consolidation. Kearns's background is in fire service, emergency management, and communications center. Kessler's background is in communications centers. They have worked on a lot of these projects noting that about 80% of issues are similar and 20% are unique. They have scheduled meetings at each communications center this week. They are also meeting or have met with police, rescue, and fire chiefs.

Kessler explained that she worked for Phoenix and was a 911 center supervisor including working with the regional communities on services. She was a dispatcher and 911 operator.

Dorn introduced the CCPSA board and asked if there were questions from the board. McGuire asked about the timeline noting the anxiety of current dispatchers. Kearns observed that they bring their experience from other situations. Consolidations can be scary and can get into analysis paralysis. Can't

wade into cold water, need to dive in. These efforts can die if they take too long. However, you need to work within your situation. The sooner you can get going the better. He noted an example that was just focused on money and forgot that they were working on improving service. Keep the focus on why we're doing this and move as expeditiously as possible. The governing body needs all of the information possible to make a decision. There will be time between making decisions and executing decisions. There will be things that change between those points. Once you decide to move ahead the full schedule of actions will be known. This planning phase has a lot of unknowns.

J. Baker noted the importance of the connection between municipal managers, public safety staff, and the public. She asked, what other issues should we be keeping in mind during this process? Kearns replied that they will provide a concept of operation for moving forward. He noted a big challenge in having to do some things different in a regional center versus how things are done in each local center. The concept of operations needs to work for the police, fire, and rescue agencies. Those agencies need to feel comfortable. A challenge now is that you don't have a regional radio system. Need to be careful that this phase doesn't take too long.

Dorn highlighted the preceding discussions to form a public sector dispatch center. At the last meeting, the CCPSA committed to continued employment of dispatchers. Kearns noted that this is a major issue in every project. Dorn expressed the expectation that the consultant team listen to the dispatchers this week. Kearns noted that he's been involved since the beginning. He was previously here looking at current operations. He is anxious to get into the communications centers to see how things really work.

Dorn opened it up for questions from the audience. Clark asked how much time Kessler spent as a dispatcher. She was a dispatcher for 10 years then supervision after. Kearns had three years as a dispatcher. Clark asked if 3-4 hours will be enough time. Kessler replied, yes, as long as everyone is open in sharing with the consultant. Kearns noted that it probably isn't a good use of time to have to meet with every dispatcher. Clark wondered if you get a comprehensive view from 3-4 hours especially from day to night shifts. Kearns noted they have seen those differences and believes their methodology is sound. Clark asked about IXP managed service delivery. Kearns noted that the consulting side is separated from the operations. He noted that they don't produce canned reports. They will dig in to understand local needs and circumstances. He knows their recommendations work in real life because they have seen them implemented. Recommendations are based on what works for the local operations. Clark asked if they'd seen a situation where dispatchers leave and the staffing levels reduce. Kearns noted this is always issue. It is sad when they do. The CCPSA has tried to alleviate that fear. Clark asked if IXP then proposes to provide managed services. Kevin noted that IXP is here as a consultant not to operate. The CCPSA asked IXP about the possibility of an interim executive director. Kearns noted that that is not a recommendation from IXP. Baker clarified that the managers are used to a model with a board, with a manager. The board will be a publicly run entity by the CCPSA. All dispatchers will be offered employment. IXP will provide recommendations. CCPSA will only ask for an IXP interim director if CCPSA decides that is the best course. It was clarified that CCPSA will retain hiring authority. Clark asked about the lack of clarity about the application process. Will there be a review process? Baker said that of course there will be review because this is a public entity, however, we aren't there yet.

Clark asked about what the training processes are for switch over. Kearns responded that the approach they see most often is that there is training in existing centers and that combining happens in a sequential process. This places a burden on the system because it will take more time during the transition phase. This is a tough time because there are more hours required for the training. This is part of the reason you need to move expeditiously. If it takes too long, you lose the effect of the training, you need to diversify the staffing on start-up. Shift adjustments will happen to balance the experience. Training will happen both before and after the transition. There will be a second transition to become a 911 center.

Clark asked if they will be meeting with the police chiefs this week. Kearns noted that this has already happened.

Clark asked about sharing channels. Kevin noted that there is no typical. This is one of the bigger challenges here.

Earle provided the following observations: You are here in a consulting capacity to provide recommendations on consolidating. They are not evaluating the centers. They are formulating a plan for consolidation. She noted that it would be appropriate to figure out your communication with the board, noting that you were late today.

Earle noted that being defensive won't go over well here. There is no need to debate with a dispatcher asking questions. People should expect to get direct answers and respect. Make sure to have empathy for those people who are in the jobs now and are going through this for the first time.

How many times have they been governed by collective bargaining? Kevin responded, most of the time.

K. Blake asked about the Colchester and South Burlington possible merger. Dorn noted that over the last 18 months there have been discussions about this idea. Colchester has a recent situation with Milton leaving their center which causes a financial issue for Colchester. Dorn noted that it was decided to focus on this regional consolidation rather than a Colchester/South Burlington merger soon. This will be dependent upon the recommendations of the consultant. Kyle wanted to make sure that service to firefighters doesn't suffer during this effort. Kearns noted that the transitions, if sequential, may happen over weeks or months.

7. Next Meetings:

- Monday March 25th 8:00-9:30AM Colchester Town Offices, Third Floor Outer Bay Room
- Monday April 29th 8:00-9:30AM Colchester Town Offices, Third Floor Outer Bay Room

8. Executive Session: (if needed) |

9. Adjournment | Dorn adjourned the meeting at 9:40.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlie Baker
Assistant Secretary