

CENTRAL VERMONT PUBLIC SAFETY AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF JULY 20, 2017 MEETING

BOARD PRESENT: Tom Golonka, Doug Hoyt, Kim Cheney, Sam Dworkin, Donna Bate, Mike Smith

Pace Aumand, Executive Director

GUESTS David Rubalcaba, Carrie McCool, Daniel Fratinni, Laurie Hedin, Caroline Earl Esq.

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 6:30 PM BY THE CHAIR

The agenda for the meeting and the minutes of the meeting of July 6, 2017 were approved by the Board.

Aumand gave a review of his report dated July 20, 2017, reference to which is made as part of these minutes.

Aumand supplemented his report with following information.

1. He met with Chiefs Facos and Bombardier who ventured no new ideas for how to proceed. Each believes that one stand-alone center must be established for an effective merger of dispatching functions is to occur.
2. Aumand has been named to the VLCT Policy Committee concerning volunteer fire and rescue matters. An agenda for the committee is in the formative stage and will relate to communications but no policy has clearly been stated. Expected by November.
3. Aumand did some investigation on interactive video devices so a member of the public could communicate by that means in either Barre or Montpelier with an on-duty dispatcher at another facility if one was not present. Cheney suggested Trevor Thorpe 371-5170 at VSECU would be a good resource.
4. Aumand noted and Golonka confirmed, that the Dispatcher Executive Committee is a committee of the CPSA Board and is subject to the open meeting law, and its meeting must be warned, minutes taken, and the law followed.

5. Aumand received an oral opinion from Attorney Paul Gilles that Capital Mutual Aid is a municipality and is eligible to join CVPSA for dispatching purposes only, by a vote of its members. A vote of each member Town would not be required.
6. The fund balance is \$22,522 as of June 30, 2017 the amount reserved by not used for dispatcher training.
7. Installation of the telephone bridge between the cities is proceeding, no completion date has been established. Anticipated by the end of July.
8. Golonka stated his intention to present CVPSA request to City Councils to cede dispatching authority in September 2017.
9. Dispatchers and Board members will Meet September 25 to complete discussion of attitudes and plans between each group.

GOLONKA OPENED THE MEETING FOR DISCUSSION BY DISPATCHERS PRESENT WHO UNANIMOUSLY OPPOSED MERGER OF THE TWO FACILITES. REASONS GIVEN WERE

- No benefit was perceived to occur by merger without creation of single center.
- Even a perfect video hook- up to enable a person at a facility no staffed by a dispatched to communicate with one that is, would not get administrative work such as working on parking tickets or jail monitoring accomplished.
- Personal availability of dispatchers at each facility 24/7 is a comfort to the populations of each City.
- Montpelier facility is not large enough to accommodate a merged facility.
- People with mental health issues frequently contact dispatchers for information and security concerns. Interaction via video would not be as effective as in person communication, even though contact is separated by glass.
- Dispatching can be a high stress job, and requirements for 24/7 staffing are a disincentive for many applicants. Therefore, it is important to retain existing staff.
- In Barre, now that fire fighters are in the same building there is a better relation and understanding of mutual needs as they have gotten to know each other.
- Police officers know the dispatcher routine and can help out in emergencies.

- Earle suggested dispatchers consider a time table of gradual merger of functions with a set time within 3-5 years to construct and staff a stand-alone dispatching center.
- One dispatcher stated the Board did not “respect” dispatchers as evidenced by Paco Aumand not talking directly to that person in group meeting.
- Dispatchers complained the Board did not “respect” them, and were ignored because details of the proposed merger were not forthcoming and they were not routinely consulted.
- Dispatchers complained they were being asked to walk into an “unknown”.
- One dispatcher expressed the opinion that since any municipality using the system could leave the merged facility and make other dispatching arrangements at the end of an existing dispatching contract, the proposed system was unstable and caused anxiety among them.
- Dispatchers have not been made aware of seniority, pay and benefits under a new system
- Dispatcher “culture’ among public safety workers who depend on each other is like family and it cannot be changed.

RESPONSE Golonka, Hoyt, Bate and Aumand responded in general with these points

To improve regional dispatching requires stability that Membership in a consolidated entity could provide. To acquire needed equipment to make the community safer such as CAS and dedicated radio channels capital would be required which means a bond issue which the authority has power to request. New technology is essential bring Public Safety to its highest functioning

Common practices, training, and supervision for dispatches would enhance performance

Dispatching functions managed by a single Board with only one responsibility coupled with detailed knowledge of dispatching issues, instead of a city council with endless competing demands for attention and budget items would improve working conditions and service to the community.

The Authority cannot discuss pay and benefits with dispatchers since it does not have authority to hire and manage employees and is bound by labor laws. Nevertheless, the Authority has promised to hold dispatchers harmless if merger occurs.

At 8:36 it moved to adjourn, seconded, and voted to do so.

Respectfully Submitted, Kimberly Cheney, Secretary.