

Pepperell, Ashby, Townsend Regional 911 Emergency Communications District Planning Committee

03/20/2019 Townsend Fire Department

Members present:

Pepperell Communications Director David Stairs
Pepperell Fire Chief Toby Tyler
Pepperell Police Chief David Scott

Ashby Chief of Police Fred Alden
Ashby Fire Chief Michael Bussell
Ashby Selectman Michael McCallum

Townsend Fire Chief Mark Boynton
Townsend Deputy Police Chief James Sartell

Members Absent:

Townsend Fire Captain Michael Grimley

Other parties present:

Kate Federoff (Townsend Legal Counsel)
John Hume (Montachusett Regional Planning Committee)
Karen Chapman (Montachusett Regional Planning Committee)

Director Stairs called the meeting to order at 0905

Motion was made by Michael McCallum to accept the minutes to the 03/08/2019 meeting; seconded by Chief Tyler; passed unanimously with Chief Scott abstaining

Introduction of Kate Federoff (Townsend Town Counsel) who provided discussion on the difference of forming a Dispatch District vs an IMA.

IMA – An IMA is simpler to establish.

- Can be established utilizing the standards established by the state regulations
- Operates under the organizational structure of the Host Community (Town of Pepperell)
- A physical change of location of the dispatch center may affect an IMA
- Dispatch employees would belong to the Town of the host community
- Funding and budget would be determined by the host community
- Determination of the organizational structure
- Provides the Host Community with more authority to affect funding and staffing levels
- Administrative support could be received from the existing Town Hall staffing and operations

Dispatch District – Is slightly more complex.

- District would require advance funding and operates as an independent entity
- Would provide more flexibility if a physical change of location for dispatch were to occur
- Dispatch employees fall under the direction of the created Dispatch District

- Creation of a district may provide more long-term stability and lessen a political instability factor
- Planning is required for administrative support functions i.e. FMLA questions or other services

Counsel confirmed an IMA could be initially created but that could morph in to a District at a later date.

Discussion of concerns with an IMA that the host community's financial structure could be determined by person(s) other than the Director. Questions were specifically presented.

- Q. Can the host community (or individual) make cuts to the Communications budget in an IMA type of agreement?
- A. If established in the IMA, the agreement is a binding and must be adhered to as previously determined.
- Q. Can an IMA exceed three (3) years?
- A. An IMA can exceed a three (3) year period but should include an exit strategy. This may include a one (1) year notice to the parties involved.

An executed IMA will bind the parties to fund the project for at least one year unless a modification to the IMA is agreed upon. The terms of exiting from the IMA must be articulated within the IMA. A possible example to review is the Mansfield-Easton-Foxborough agreement.

The initial creation of an IMS should include;

- The organizational structure – Who has authority of the employees (i.e., Chain of command).
- What is the mechanism to address concerns – i.e. how will SOP's and Financial determinations be made
- Staffing levels – How the determination is made on the number of personnel required (min staffing levels?). Staffing level determinations should be determined by the "Committee"
- Cost Structure – Based upon equal cost 1/3 vs. based upon call volume
- Representation – Each community has equal representation or based upon another metric
- Exit strategies including timelines and articulated processes. Extended Exit Terms should be implemented
- Initial Budget – Process and mechanism to create the initial budget for the Comm Center

Questions were raised about Grant funding and whether there is any difference whether an IME or District is entered into. This requires further inquiry.

Recommendation of the Committee is that a "Board" be established consisting of nine (9) members of the three communities in the following manner;

- Police Chief from each of the member towns, or their designee
- Fire Chief from each of the member towns, or their designee
- A designee determined by the Board of Selectmen from each of the member towns.

A quorum would consist of 5 members to hold a meeting.

Discussion of how cost breakdowns

- Physical structure housing the host community – Maintenance & repairs of the building would be the responsibility of the host community
- Equipment – In the event of a exit/separation – Equipment would remain in the town where located
- Budget Preparations – A budget will be determined by the Board
- Grant Funds – The determination of use and distribution of funds/equipment should be determined by the Board.

Other Discussion topics

- Capital expenditures – Equipment would remain with the host community pending specific articulated terms in and created exit agreement.
- The cost community should maintain the radio infrastructure.
- The member communities would be responsible for maintenance/repair of equipment such as portable radios, mobile radios and mobile data terminals (MDTs). Although separate agreements can be created where if agreed upon, the host community could take on these tasks

Townsend Counsel indicated she would take the input from this meeting and work on a draft which will be presented to the committee at a future meeting.

Karen Chapman (MRPC)

Provided a draft request for quote to the members present. This draft will be distributed seeking quotes for the scope of work relevant to the Regional Dispatch Study. Ms. Chapman confirmed that the DLTA Grant was approved however the amount has not yet been determined. Further information will be distributed when available.

Next meeting was scheduled:

To Be Determined at Townsend Fire Department. Mr. Stairs will post next meeting and distribute via email when determined.

Motion to adjourn made by Selectman McCallum seconded by Chief Bussell. Motion passed unanimously.

Adjourned at 11:15 hours.