

**Public Safety Sub-Committee Meeting  
Minutes of September 1, 2015  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room, Town Hall**

**Present:** Jim Duggan, Town Manager, Joseph DiRocco, Jr., Selectman, Jay Donovan, NMCOG, Tom Kennedy, CTC, Inc. and Recording Secretary Shannon Rowe Beaulieu

**Present for Dracut Fire Department:** Chief Brouillette, Deputy Chief Patterson, Leo McMahon, Mike Siegler and Retired Chief Leo Gaudette

**Present for Dracut Police Department:** Chief Richardson, Deputy Chief Chartrand and Mike Kenyon

Mr. DiRocco opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

Discuss the Regional Emergency Communication Center (RECC):

Mr. Duggan introduced Jay Donovan from NMCOG and Tom Kennedy, CTC, Inc. and stated that 9 Communities asked NMCOG to review entering into an RECC.

Mr. Duggan stated that some Communities opted put and discussed the RECC being a growing concept throughout the State and United States.

Mr. Duggan discussed the RECC increasing the amount of Dracut Dispatchers to one additional Dispatcher and stated that the estimated cost savings would be \$190,000.

Mr. Duggan discussed the most updated state of the art equipment that the RECC will have.

Mr. DiRocco stated that there is not a lot of savings for the Fire Department and discussed the 4 full time Dispatchers being moved to the fire trucks.

Mr. Duggan stated that the levels in the Fire Department will not decrease and discussed the need for 3 more individuals for the Fire Department to come to a complete level.

Mr. Duggan stated that if it wasn't for Health Insurance costs he would want both Departments to get up to their full numbers.

Mr. DiRocco discussed there not being a big savings in the Fire Department and discussed the Verizon equipment used.

Mr. Kennedy discussed the required updating of the 911 system by 2016.

Mr. Donovan stated that the State pays for all RECC equipment and the cross over to the RECC.

Mr. DiRocco stated that there is no guarantee for the money.

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Deputy Chief Patterson discussed the State funding for an RECC compared to Town funding.

Chief Brouillette stated that he looked into updating the existing equipment and received a quote for \$80,000.

Mr. Duggan discussed the state of the art equipment and training for Dispatchers and the increasing of one position.

Mr. Duggan stated that there is no guarantee current employees will carry over to the RECC but the positions will carry over.

Mr. Donovan stated that the Tewksbury Town Manager stated that his priority would go to his current Dispatchers.

Mr. Donovan stated that the RECC would be set up with 21 Dispatchers, 4 ½ Supervisors, 1 Executive Director and 1 Administration Assistant.

Chief Richardson stated that he would do all in his power to keep his current Dispatchers.

Mr. Kenyon stated that they only have 4 full time Dispatchers at the Police Department.

Mr. Kenyon asked how all other calls are going to be handled besides the 911 calls.

Mr. Kennedy stated that all calls will go to the RECC.

Mr. Donovan stated that currently all wireless calls go to the Essex RECC and there will be a possibility to move calls to the new RECC after one year.

Mr. McMahon stated that this would be a bargainable issue and it is very difficult to add comments due to current bargaining. Mr. McMahon did question the proposed Dispatcher numbers and stated that they now have 8 Dispatchers between Police and Fire and they are only proposing 6 Dispatchers going to the RECC.

Mr. Duggan explained to Mr. McMahon that they are counting bodies for Dispatchers and they are looking at positions.

Chief Richardson discussed how he would handle walk in traffic at the Police Station and discussed the possibility of the need to hire people at a lower rate of pay to handle the walk in traffic.

Mr. DiRocco asked then what are we really saving?

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Chief Brouillette discussed the walk in traffic at the Fire Station and stated that the Secretary is there during business hours. Chief Brouillette stated that Firefighters would be at the Station unless they are out on a call.

Chief Richardson stated that there is an Officer at the Station that would be available to help people.

Mr. DiRocco asked who would be responsible for the prisoners at the Police Station? Mr. DiRocco stated that he cares about Dracut and wants what is best for Dracut.

Mr. Kenyon stated that the Record Keepers make more money than the Dispatches.

Mr. Duggan discussed the training and updated equipment at the RECC and stated that it is not all about dollars and cents.

Deputy Chartrand stated that by joining the RECC they are not going to experience a lot of personnel savings in Dracut but the issue is getting updated equipment that the Town does not have fiscal backing for. Deputy Chartrand stated that he does not want to go backwards with communication.

Chief Richardson stated that his telephone system at the Police Station was purchased in 2007 and is hanging on by a shoestring.

Mr. Kennedy discussed equipment, CAD system, etc. Mr. Kennedy stated that the RECC provides funding for a CAD system.

Chief Gaudette discussed infrastructure and each Community's formula. Chief Gaudette discussed the Governness per Community.

Deputy Chief Patterson stated that the cost would be covered by grants for infrastructure.

Mr. Kennedy stated that every Community received 1 vote and stated that there would be an Operation Committee and a Finance Committee.

Mr. Duggan stated that Lowell opted out of the RECC because they wanted a weighted vote.

Chief Gaudette stated that with a professional job description the RECC will hire qualified Dispatchers.

Mr. Kenyon asked where would harassment, restraining orders, etc. records be kept?

Mr. Kennedy stated that the hard copies would be kept at the RECC but that is both of the Chief's call.

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Mr. Kenyon asked about radios and would there be digitalized frequency in cars, etc. and who pays for the upgrading?

Mr. Kennedy stated that the RECC does what is best for all Communities.

Mr. Kenyon asked what if the RECC does not get the money, then the Town has to spend the money for the upgrades?

Deputy Patterson stated that part of the RECC upgrade will be radio equipment upgrades for car to car, etc.

Mr. Kenyon asked if data entry goes to the RECC as well? Mr. Kennedy stated yes.

Mr. Kenyon asked if another Dispatcher, not from Dracut, would end up with calls at the RECC?

Mr. Kennedy stated that the Chief's and Executive Director would handle the protocols.

Mr. Kenyon stated that there could be one day that no one from Dracut would be dispatching at the RECC.

Mr. Donovan stated that they would integrate the Dispatchers.

Mr. Kenyon stated that Collective Bargaining Agreements would need to be changed.

Mr. Kennedy stated that the RECC becomes a public entity so the Dispatcher would be leaving their jobs and going to a new job.

Mr. McMahon stated that this is a bargaining issue which is not something that could be done at this meeting.

Mr. DiRocco asked about long range savings and asked the Town Manager if he looked into that? Mr. Duggan stated that he does not have a crystal ball but the RECC's have progressed in a positive way and the regionalizing concept is growing.

Chief Brouillette stated that joining the RECC is a matter of public safety and his end goal is to have 10 Firefighter units.

Mr. Kenyon asked who pays the Executive Director's salary?

Mr. Donovan stated that the State pays for 2 years of the Executive Director's salary and stated that there are 7 RECC centers in Massachusetts.

Mr. Donovan discussed how call volume and population are how the assessments are handled.

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Deputy Patterson stated that he is a proponent of the RECC because it has been shown they can work if they are set up correctly. Deputy Patterson stated that the Dracut having Governance is huge and there is 1 vote per Community.

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.