



*Maxine Goodman Levin*  
*College of Urban Affairs*

Prepared for:  
**City of Parma**

Prepared by:  
**The Center for Public Management**  
**Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs**  
**Cleveland State University**

August 23, 2011

**Case Studies  
for  
Consolidated  
Public Safety  
Dispatch  
Center  
Feasibility  
Study: The  
Next Steps**





## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

List of Figures.....	4
List of Tables.....	4
Acknowledgments .....	5
Executive Summary .....	6
Introduction .....	9
Overview .....	10
Case Studies.....	24
Appendices .....	84

*This report was researched and prepared by the staff of the Center for Public Management, Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University. Project management and oversight was provided by Daila Shimek. Principal authors were Daila Shimek, Scott Winograd, and Kimberly Renee Vining. Editorial and methodological support was provided by Claudette Robey, Andrew Batson, and Fran Stewart. For additional information, contact Daila Shimek, Project Manager, at 216-687-9221.*

**ABSTRACT:** *This report includes case studies of consolidated dispatch centers in the United States. Each case study includes descriptions of the governing and operating structure, consolidation process, funding and fee structure, and the successes, challenges and lessons learned by each entity.*

*The results suggest that, although the experiences among consolidated dispatch centers varied, the elements that should contribute to a successful transition are strong leadership, communication with affected employees, ability to compromise, consistency in treatment of employees, development of standard operating procedures, stakeholder inclusion, and beginning consolidation with a clear plan that treats all participants as equal partners.*

**Key Words:** *9-1-1 communications, 9-1-1 dispatch, consolidation, emergency dispatch, merger, public safety, shared services*

### **List of Figures**

Figure 1: Map of Case Study Consolidated Dispatch Centers .....	11
Figure 2: Allegheny Co. Emergency Services Organizational Structure .....	25
Figure 3: Chagrin Valley Dispatch Governance Structure .....	31
Figure 4: Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Organizational Chart (Charleston County Organizational Chart, n.d.) .....	36
Figure 5: East Central Dispatch Center Governance Structure .....	42
Figure 6: Essex Regional Emergency Communications Center Governance Structure .....	47
Figure 7: Guilford Metro 9-1-1 Organizational Chart .....	53
Figure 8: Liberty County Public Safety Communications Organizational Chart .....	57
Figure 9: NORCOM governance and organizational structure .....	62
Figure 10: Northwest Central Dispatch System Organizational Chart .....	66
Figure 11: Northwest Central Dispatch System Fee Allocation Formula .....	67
Figure 12: Placer County Sheriff Communications Division Organizational Chart .....	70
Figure 13: Rice and Steele Consolidated 911 Center Organizational Chart .....	76
Figure 14: San Juan County Communications Authority Organizational Chart .....	80

### **List of Tables**

Table 1: Reasons for consolidating .....	16
Table 2: Governance and operating structure .....	17
Table 3: Consolidated centers by number of full-time dispatchers and call takers .....	18
Table 4: Staffing .....	18
Table 5: Financial information .....	20
Table 6: Consolidated dispatch center 2009 calls for service .....	21
Table 7: Community character of case-study dispatch centers .....	22
Table 8: Demographic and general information .....	22

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The Center for Public Management (PM) would like to acknowledge the contribution of the following public safety professionals, who provided information on behalf of their respective organizations.

Paul Anderson, Former Director, East Central Dispatch Center

Cindy Barbera-Belle, Executive Director, Northwest Central Dispatch System

Tim Boyer, Assistant Director, Rice and Steele Consolidated 911 Center

James Brosius, Chief, Chagrin Falls Police Department

Thomas Dubas, Consultant, Essex Regional Emergency Communications Center

Kathleen Fenley, Information Technology Analyst, Placer County Sheriff's Office

Chris Fischer, Executive Director, North East King County Regional Public Safety  
Communications Agency

Lori Lambert, Project Officer, Charleston County

Jim Lake, Director, Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center

Lisa Mariola, Network Administrator, Chagrin Falls Police Department

Mark Nelson, Technology Manager, North East King County Regional Public Safety  
Communications Agency

Wesley Reid, Director, Guilford Metro 9-1-1

Sheri Rogers, System Administrator, San Juan County Communications Center

Gary Thomas, Assistant Chief, 9-1-1 Communications, Allegheny County Emergency  
Services

Thomas Wahl, Director and Chief, Liberty County Public Safety Communications

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Articles on jurisdictions that have consolidated or are considering consolidating services appear weekly, perhaps daily, in newspapers across the country. Consolidating services is viewed as a mechanism for realizing greater efficiency and cost-effectiveness, employing economies of scale, and, in the case of emergency dispatch, providing a higher level of interagency coordination and service. Entities and the citizenry expect better service in terms of faster response times and fewer errors due to standardized training, call handling, and dispatching protocols. Consolidation contributes to improved service levels through enhanced coordination and interoperability and consistent communications equipment and technology. Pooling of funds enables a consolidated center to offer better training and certification opportunities for dispatchers. A training and certification program, particularly one provided through an organization representing professionals in the field, can also reduce liability due to its standardization. For capital costs, consolidation enables costs for the most current technology to be spread among a pool of participants. Consolidation, through its ability to spread the costs over multiple communities, can even make equipment upgrades more practical. Entities that choose consolidation have also had greater access to federal and state funding for public safety communications equipment and other start-up costs, largely because they present the application in terms of equipment purchases enhancing interoperability among jurisdictions.

Consolidations are not without challenges. Many of these challenges present themselves during the consolidation process; others after consolidation has occurred. Prior to consolidation, interested parties must get beyond the perception that a larger, consolidated center will present challenges because dispatchers may be less familiar with local landmarks and streets. As interested jurisdictions move toward a consolidation agreement, there needs to be a consensus on the type of consolidation arrangement they will undertake. For example, communities may enter into a contract for service with one of the participating jurisdictions serving as the provider. If this arrangement is selected, the agency providing the service may seek input from the participants on issues such as standard operating procedures, organizational and reporting structure, and methodology for allocation of dispatch center costs among participants. The jurisdictions considering consolidation may also develop a governance structure, such as a council of governments (COG). If a COG is chosen, there are a variety of decisions the group must make including determining how dispatch center costs will be allocated among participants, where the center will be located, what the governing (e.g., representation on the policy board) and organizational structures will

look like, what standard operating procedures will be used, and how the transition will affect employees of existing dispatch centers.

Even with adequate representation in the governance structure, an entity may have less control over quality of service and costs in a consolidated entity. Once merged, a jurisdiction will likely need to route concerns through the chain of command or follow a specific set of procedures to resolve issues rather than deal directly with dispatchers. As a result, quality concerns may not be resolved as quickly. Although a merged entity's representatives may agree to an overall budget, some communities may need their respective legislative bodies' approval for their share. If legislators do not agree with their representative's view on how funds should be allocated, what happens then? In addition, when an entity leaves the merged organization, the costs will likely increase for the remaining participants because maintenance, operations, and capital/equipment may stay the same, but these costs will be split among fewer participants.

To assist the city of Parma, in partnership with Brooklyn Heights, Cuyahoga Heights, Garfield Heights, North Royalton, Parma Heights, Seven Hills, and Valley View, in moving toward consolidating a public safety dispatch center, the PM conducted case-study research on the experiences of other consolidated centers. Participants were asked to provide information on the organization's governing and operating structures, funding and fee structure, and consolidation experience, and share their perception of the organization's successes, challenges, and lessons learned.

## **Successes, Challenges, and Lessons Learned**

The interviews with the consolidated centers yielded insights from their experiences, which centered on governance and administration, staffing, and capital and technology.

### **Governance and Administration**

- Consider what other centers have done to consolidate and learn from their experiences.
- Do not move forward too quickly with the consolidation even though financial constraints for participants may be a concern. Begin consolidation with a clear plan in place, including a governance structure, mission, and goals/expectations, and have a plan that treats all participants as equal partners.
- Invite stakeholders to participate. Stakeholder inclusion is essential to successful consolidation. Greater participation leads to greater buy-in.

- Hire a center director early in the consolidation process and let him or her be a part of the decision-making process.
- Establish standard operating procedures (SOPs) and policies prior to opening the center.
- Let potential participants know how the center will operate (SOPs), what is expected, and how costs will be allocated.

### **Staffing**

- Keep employees informed of the consolidation process and its status and deal with employee concerns early on. Lack of communication leads to uncertainty.
- Give employees an avenue to provide feedback on their working environment and on issues such as dress policy.
- Develop standardized pay scales and benefit offerings for employees.
- Start with a new organizational structure when consolidating multiple centers.
- Do not automatically offer positions to employees at the existing centers. Make everyone go through the hiring process and hire the most qualified.
- Train all employees on new systems and standard operating procedures.

### **Capital and Technology**

- Use a single computer-aided dispatch (CAD) platform; do not try to patch systems together.
- Consolidate radio frequencies where possible.



## **INTRODUCTION**

The Center for Public Management was engaged to assist the city of Parma, in partnership with Brooklyn Heights, Garfield Heights, North Royalton, Parma Heights, Seven Hills, and Valley View, with the next steps toward consolidating a public safety dispatch center. This project was partially-funded by an Economic Development Contingency Grant that the city of Parma obtained from the Ohio Department of Development.

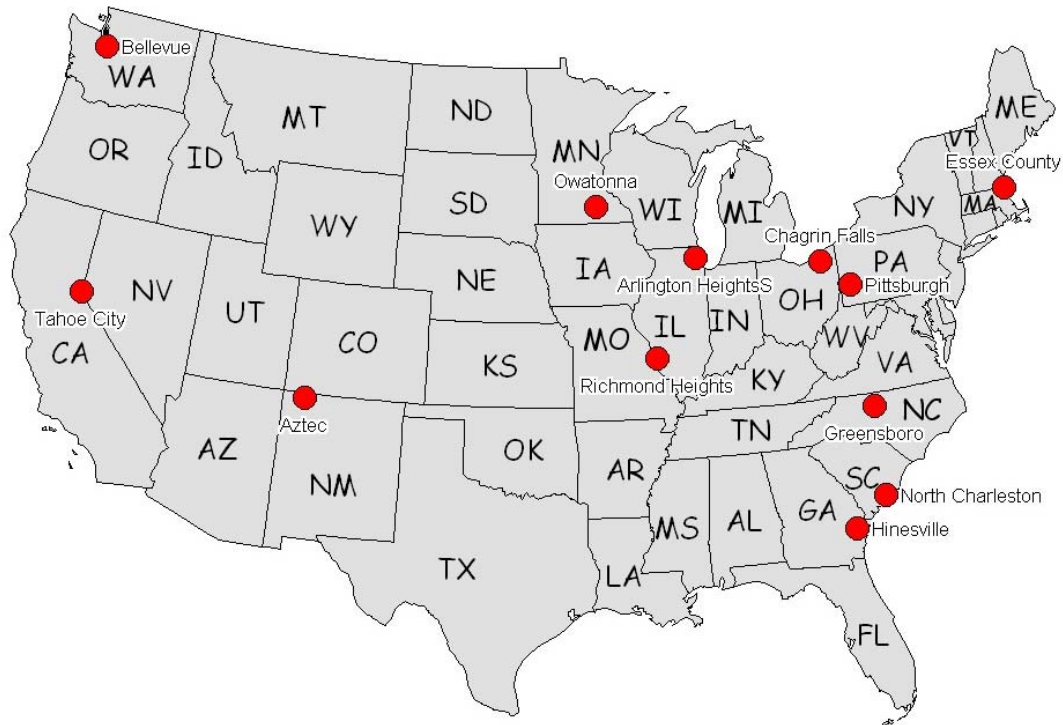
To achieve this, the PM facilitated dialogues with the leadership and public safety leaders and stakeholders of the jurisdictions, conducted research on implementation experiences of other consolidated centers (case studies), designed the protocol to guide all facilitated sessions, developed a financial profile for the group and for each participating community, identified key elements to be included in an intergovernmental agreement, designed a viable human resources strategy, and identified the labor management relations issues that may impact the consolidated dispatch center.

This report represents the case study component of the analysis. It can be used as a guide for outlining a process for consolidating public safety dispatch centers. The report identifies consolidated centers that may serve as a resource for those looking to consolidate. It is not only useful for those looking to consolidate, but may also serve as a resource for an existing dispatch center in identifying “best practices” for operations or governance.

## **OVERVIEW**

The PM conducted case study research of 12 consolidated dispatch centers across the United States. These centers were self-selected (volunteers) from a group of subscribers to the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials International's (APCO) PSConnect's "eGroups." Participants were asked to provide information on the organization's governing and operating structure, funding and fee structure, the organization's consolidation experience, and share their perception of the organization's successes, challenges, and lessons learned. Information was obtained via phone interview and in written correspondence. Case studies were conducted of the following consolidated dispatch centers (see Figure 1):

- Allegheny County Emergency Services, Pittsburgh, PA
- Chagrin Valley Regional Communications Center, Chagrin Falls, OH
- Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center, North Charleston, SC
- East Central Dispatch Center, Richmond Heights, MO
- Essex County, MA
- Guilford Metro 9-1-1, Greensboro, NC
- Liberty County Public Safety Communications, Hinesville, GA
- North East King County Regional Public Safety Communications Agency, Bellevue, WA
- Northwest Central Dispatch System, Arlington Heights, IL
- Placer County Sheriff Emergency Services, Tahoe City, CA
- Rice and Steele Consolidated 911 Center, Owatonna, MN
- San Juan County Communications Authority, Aztec, NM



**Figure 1: Map of Case Study Consolidated Dispatch Centers**

This section of the report provides highlights of this research. Table 1 through Table 8 illustrate the general characteristics of each case study dispatch center.

## **Case Study Centers' Consolidation Experiences**

Below are the highlights of the experiences and recommendations of the centers in the case studies.

### **Allegheny County 9-1-1 Communications (Pittsburgh, PA)**

Consider optimal size (what is the greatest number of communities that are likely to participate) and plan accordingly. This forward thinking will enhance cost-effectiveness and provide for the ability to expand, even in times of stagnant revenues.

To further enhance its application for National Academies of Emergency Dispatch (NAED) accreditation/reaccreditation, Allegheny County 9-1-1 Communications (AC911)

has incorporated a dispatch steering committee and dispatch review committee for each discipline (police, fire, EMS) into its structure (NAED, 2004). It also uses NAED's dispatch protocols and quality assurance programs.

### **Chagrin Valley Regional Communications Center (Chagrin Falls, OH)**

Chagrin Valley Regional Communications Center found that a service provider/end-user structure was challenging and could ultimately lead to a loss of subscribers. Specifically, end users wanted to have a voice and a vote in CRCC's operation and planning. The police chief of Chagrin Falls posited that, because county governments are pushing toward dispatch regionalization, more and more regional dispatch centers will be created in the near future. This will create a greater risk of losing current subscribers to competitors. The chief indicated that it is best to get ahead of the regionalization trend by creating a co-owner relationship with CRCC's end users; this will alleviate competitor risk and ensure continued buy-in of its members.

### **Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center (North Charleston, NC)**

One of the main challenges Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center (CCCC) faced was caused by consolidating too quickly. The director noted that consolidation occurred more quickly than had been planned because of financial constraints experienced by many of the municipal members. This caused CCCC to begin consolidation before a clear consolidation plan had been designed. Consequently, CCCC has endured some growing pains in many operational areas. For instance, CCCC is still working to develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the center. As of this writing, each municipality retains its own SOPs, which is challenging for both dispatchers and the CAD system.

### **East Central Dispatch Center (Richmond Heights, MO)**

The center's former director recommended choosing or constructing a building and location design that incorporates the physical realities of day-to-day operations.

### **Essex Regional Emergency Communications Center (Essex County, MA)**

Essex Regional Emergency Communications Center (RECC) is still in the process of consolidation, so a discussion of consolidation successes and lessons is somewhat premature; however, RECC's consultant indicated that the biggest challenge of consolidation efforts to date has been "parochialism in local government" and

stakeholders who want to guard their authority and that this “makes it difficult to get consensus.”

RECC places enough of a priority on training, certification, and accreditation that its draft intergovernmental agreement specifies its intent in each of these areas:

- Bring all personnel up to Association of Public Communications Officials (APCO) (or equivalent) certification prior to beginning operation of the RECC. In addition to APCO certifications, the agreement also specifies first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), automated external defibrillator (AED), and any state-mandated certifications (Essex County RECC, 2009).
- Create all policies and procedures with an eye toward compliance with Commission of Accreditation for Law Enforcement Association (CALEA) standards (Essex County RECC, 2009).

RECC indicates that training, certification and accreditation will “allow for a reduction in insurance rates and will lessen the opportunity for frivolous lawsuits to be filed against the center. This recognition will also increase dramatically the stature the center will have among its peers nationwide (Essex County RECC, 2009).”

### **Guilford Metro 9-1-1 (Greensboro, NC)**

The director recommended that centers looking to consolidate invite all participants to collaborate and agree on the consolidated center’s operations (including SOPs) and management. Many of Guilford Metro’s challenges were overcome through negotiation and collaboration. The director stressed that it is important to create a forum where ideas can be exchanged and to keep an open mind to new ideas.

### **Liberty County Public Safety Communications (Hinesville, GA)**

High dispatcher turnover has been one of LCPSC’s biggest challenges. The center’s director and chief attributed this turnover largely to the close proximity of another dispatch center that offers higher wages. [Keep this in mind when developing a wage structure, as the center may become a training ground for nearby centers if compensation and working conditions are not sufficient.]

The director and chief also indicated that all participating communities worked together to set the goals for the center and that this type of stakeholder inclusion is essential to successful consolidation.

**North East King County Regional Public Safety Communications Agency  
(Bellevue, WA)**

NORCOM's upper management shared a number of insights and advice for those looking to consolidate, based on their own experiences: establish a governance structure first and then develop a clear mission and accompanying expectations and policies. Also, ensure union representatives are involved in consolidation discussions early.

**Northwest Central Dispatch System (Arlington Heights, IL)**

Northwest Central Dispatch System's executive director suggested that dispatch entities wishing to consolidate hire a director who has great interpersonal skills and is strong-willed, proficient, diplomatic, decisive, technologically adept, and able to prioritize tasks. She also suggested that it is important to provide training to all incoming employees so they have the information needed to function at the same level and to establish a payroll structure that provides for pay equity.

**Placer County Sheriff's Communications Division (Auburn, CA)**

Placer County Sheriff's Communications Division's information technology analyst said that the multidisciplinary implementation committee was a success and beneficial to the overall implementation process; she said that having this broad scope of experts and stakeholders kept the process moving and helped develop many creative solutions. She recommended that those considering consolidation create and convene a pre-consolidation committee to map out the new dispatch center's organizational chart and decide fundamental personnel decisions first. This includes determining the hierarchy of personnel and job responsibilities such as structure, titles, salary, benefits compensation, hiring practices, and length of probationary periods.

**Rice and Steele Consolidated 911 Center (Owatonna, MN)**

The assistant director said to conduct a detailed assessment of service levels and protocols in each jurisdiction before consolidation and establish clear and realistic expectations and specific performance metrics. The assistant director also suggested a pre-consolidation job audit of dispatchers so that the non-dispatch duties currently performed are clearly defined and accounted for in the cost analysis.

### **San Juan County Communications Authority (Aztec, NM)**

The San Juan County Communications Authority's system administrator indicated that it is important to train the supervisors on leadership and effectiveness, and to make sure that employees have the opportunity to provide input and voice their concerns. That, along with taking the time to explain the implications of consolidation to the employees, will result in employees being more receptive to change.

### **Characteristics of Consolidation**

Of the 12 case studies, 10 consolidated voluntarily. Only Allegheny County and Placer County were mandated to consolidate. The general theme in terms of reasons for consolidating was to save money. Northwest Central Dispatch System in Arlington Heights, Illinois, indicated that consolidation would enable participants to afford the latest technology. Chagrin Valley Regional Communications Center in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, is already consolidated but is changing its structure from a service contract model to a council of governments model in which each participant will have a voice and a vote. Guilford Metro 9-1-1 (Greensboro, NC) did not provide its reasons for consolidating.

Table 1: Reasons for consolidating

	financial	avoid duplication of operating costs	avoid duplication of equipment costs	share resources	increase effectiveness	other
<b>Dispatch/Communications Center</b>						
Allegheny County Emergency Services, Pittsburgh, PA	x	x	x			
Chagrin Valley Regional Communications Center, Chagrin Falls, OH						x
Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center, North Charleston, SC	x	x	x			
East Central Dispatch Center, Richmond Heights, MO	x	x	x			
Essex County, MA	x	x	x			
Liberty County Public Safety Communications, Hinesville, GA	x					
NORCOM, Bellevue, WA	x	x	x			
Northwest Central Dispatch System, Arlington Heights, IL	x			x		x
Placer County Sheriff Emergency Services, Tahoe City, CA	x					
Rice and Steele Consolidated 911 Center, Owatonna, MN	x	x	x			
San Juan County Communications Authority, Aztec, NM	x				x	

NOTE: The Essex County dispatch center is not yet operational.

## Governance and Operating Structure

There are two primary governance structures among the case studies. Six of the consolidated centers are stand-alone entities, while five are either a county department or operated by a county department. Guilford Metro 9-1-1 (Greensboro, NC) is a city department that reports to an executive board.

Most (9) of the consolidated centers have policy boards with each entity having one representative. The exceptions are Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center, (North Charleston, SC), Rice and Steele Consolidated 911 Center (Owatonna, MN), and



**Consolidated Dispatch  
Center Feasibility: Case Studies**

Placer County Sheriff Emergency Services (Tahoe City, CA). Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center has two county officials, two representatives from the fire association, and two representatives from its largest members. Rice and Steele Consolidated 911 Center has two per county and one for each of the three largest municipalities. Placer County Sheriff Emergency Services does not have a policy board.

For the purposes of this report, an operating committee is a group that provides input and may make decisions on operational matters but does not make policy decisions. Seven of the consolidated centers have at least one operating committee.

Table 2: Governance and operating structure

<b>Dispatch/Communications Center</b>	<b>Type of governance structure</b>	<b>Policy board members</b>	<b>Operating committee</b>
Allegheny County Emergency Services, Pittsburgh, PA	department of county government	1 per entity	yes
Chagrin Valley Regional Communications Center, Chagrin Falls, OH	stand-alone entity created by COG	1 per entity	yes (technical advisory)
Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center, North Charleston, SC	department of county government	2 county officials, 2 reps from fire assoc., 2 representatives from largest members	yes
East Central Dispatch Center, Richmond Heights, MO	stand-alone entity created by agreement	1 per entity	yes (police and fire)
Essex County, MA	department within the county sheriff's office	1 per entity	yes (police, fire, and finance)
Guilford Metro 9-1-1, Greensboro, NC	city department, reports to executive board	1 per entity	no
Liberty County Public Safety Communications, Hinesville, GA	department of county government	1 per entity	no
NORCOM, Bellevue, WA	stand-alone entity	1 per entity	yes (fire, police, joint)
Northwest Central Dispatch System, Arlington Heights, IL	intergovernmental cooperative, have same powers as the governments that formed them	1 per entity	yes
Placer County Sheriff Emergency Services, Tahoe City, CA	operated by county sheriff's department	no	no

## **Consolidated Dispatch Center Feasibility: Case Studies**

<b>Dispatch/Communications Center</b>	<b>Type of governance structure</b>	<b>Policy board members</b>	<b>Operating committee</b>
Rice and Steele Consolidated 911 Center, Owatonna, MN	stand-alone entity	2 per county, 1 for three largest municipalities	no
San Juan County Communications Authority, Aztec, NM	stand-alone government agency	1 per entity	no

NOTE: The Essex County dispatch center is not yet operational.

## **Staffing**

Staffing varies among the consolidated centers (see Table 3 and Table 4). Size of dispatch staff varied from six full-time dispatchers to 196. Most of the case study centers had between 11 and 75 dispatchers and call takers. The majority (8) did not use part-time dispatchers. Of the four that did, the number ranged from one to 49 part-timers.

Table 3: Consolidated centers by number of full-time dispatchers and call takers

<b>Number of full-time dispatchers and call takers</b>	<b>No. of centers</b>
< 10 FT	1
11-25	4
26-50	2
51-75	3
76-100	1
>100	1

Only Allegheny County (Pittsburgh, PA), NORCOM (Bellevue, WA), and Northwest Central Dispatch System (Arlington Heights, IL) have unionized dispatchers. Non-dispatch staffing is described in Table 4.

Table 4: Staffing

<b>Dispatch/Communications Center</b>	<b>Number of dispatchers</b>	<b>Types of non-dispatch staff</b>
Allegheny County Emergency Services, Pittsburgh, PA	196 FT; 49 PT	multiple managers and administrators
Chagrin Valley Regional Communications Center, Chagrin Falls, OH	6 FT; 2PT	not applicable

**Consolidated Dispatch  
Center Feasibility: Case Studies**

<b>Dispatch/Communications Center</b>	<b>Number of dispatchers</b>	<b>Types of non-dispatch staff</b>
Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center, North Charleston, SC	25 FT call takers; 46 FT dispatchers; 8 shift supervisors; 4 floor supervisors	GIS coordinator, administrative assistant, training supervisor, quality assurance supervisor, operations manager, 911 coordinator, administrative services coordinator, deputy director
East Central Dispatch Center, Richmond Heights, MO	20 FT; 0 PT; 4 FT shift supervisors	operations manager
Essex County, MA	14 FT; 0 PT; 4 FT supervisors	human resources/training supervisor
Guilford Metro 9-1-1, Greensboro, NC	90 FT; 0 PT	not applicable
Liberty County Public Safety Communications, Hinesville, GA	22 FT; 0 PT	not applicable
NORCOM, Bellevue, WA	72 FT; 0 PT	5 departmental managers with support staff
Northwest Central Dispatch System, Arlington Heights, IL	73 FT; 2 PT	radio system manager, radio technician, IT manager, database/GIS analysts
Placer County Sheriff Emergency Services, Tahoe City, CA	29 FT; 0 PT	dispatch services manager
Rice and Steele Consolidated 911 Center, Owatonna, MN	15 FT; 1 PT	GIS coordinator, administrative assistant
San Juan County Communications Authority, Aztec, NM	27 FT; 1 PT	not applicable

## Financial Information

Half of the consolidated centers rely on revenues from some form of a 9-1-1 fee. According to the National Emergency Number Association (NENA), subscribers to wireline (connected by cable or wire) and wireless phones are assessed 9-1-1 fees. Some states are also moving toward, or are already assessing, 9-1-1 fees on “pay-as-

you-go” plans and voice over internet protocol (VoIP) service. These fees are collected by telecommunications providers and submitted to either state or local agencies (NENA, 2007). These funds are distributed within the state/county to pay for the 9-1-1 system and to supplement Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) operating budgets (NENA, 2007). The method of distribution of these fees varies by state. For example, some require jurisdictions to apply for funds; others have a formula based on the number of telephone subscribers residing in each community. Some states have restrictions on how the funds may be spent (e.g., 9-1-1 equipment purchase and system maintenance only).

Of those levying a user fee on participants (8 of 12), three allocate cost strictly based on call volume, two base the formula on population, and one bases the formula on both call volume and calls for service. San Juan County Communications Authority (Aztec, NM) allocates 44% of its costs to the county and 44% to the city of Farmington. Because of their relatively smaller populations, the remaining member-cities (Aztec and Bloomfield) pay only 6% each.

Table 5: Financial information

<b>Dispatch/Communications Center</b>	<b>Current funding sources</b>	<b>Basis for cost allocation</b>
Allegheny County Emergency Services, Pittsburgh, PA	9-1-1 wireless and landline fee, county general fund	N/A
Chagrin Valley Regional Communications Center, Chagrin Falls, OH	grants, state 9-1-1 fee, user fee	call volume (total calls)
Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center, North Charleston, SC	grants, user fee for first two years; county to assume financial responsibility in third year of operation	N/A
East Central Dispatch Center, Richmond Heights, MO	user fee	call volume (total calls)
Essex County, MA	state 9-1-1 grant, user fee	population
Guilford Metro 9-1-1, Greensboro, NC	grants, state 9-1-1 fee, user fee	call volume (total calls)
Liberty County Public Safety Communications, Hinesville, GA	9-1-1 fee, funding from county, grants	N/A
NORCOM, Bellevue, WA	user fee	calls for service
Northwest Central Dispatch System, Arlington Heights, IL	user fee	call volume (total calls) and calls for service
Placer County Sheriff Emergency Services, Tahoe City, CA	9-1-1 fee on phone service	N/A

<b>Dispatch/Communications Center</b>	<b>Current funding sources</b>	<b>Basis for cost allocation</b>
Rice and Steele Consolidated 911 Center, Owatonna, MN	user fee	split between two counties based on population
San Juan County Communications Authority, Aztec, NM	county emergency communications and emergency medical services gross receipts tax; user fee	44% county; 44% Farmington; 6% Aztec; 6% Bloomfield

N/A means not applicable/available.

NOTE: The Essex County dispatch center is not yet operational.

## Demographic and General Information

Table 8 provides general and demographic information on the consolidated centers. The oldest center, Chagrin Valley Regional Communications Center, began operating in 1963, followed by Northwest Central Dispatch System in 1972. Liberty County Public Safety Communications and San Juan County Communications Authority began operations in the 1990s. Seven of the centers began operating some time during the 21st century; Essex County is projected to open in 2012.

The number of calls processed by dispatchers ranged from 32,000 (Chagrin Valley Regional Communications Center) to 440,000 (Guilford Metro 9-1-1) annually. As shown in Table 6, 33% of these centers received between 100,001 and 200,000 calls per year, while 25% had between 400,001 and 500,000 annual calls.

Table 6: Consolidated dispatch center 2009 calls for service

<b># of calls for service</b>	<b># of centers</b>
<100,000	2
100,001-200,000	4
200,001-400,000	2
400,001-600,000	3

In terms of community character, the case study centers described themselves in a variety of ways. Seven indicated at least some rural component and seven had at least some suburban characteristics.

Table 7: Community character of case study dispatch centers

<b>Character</b>	<b># of centers</b>
Urban and suburban	1
Mostly urban and suburban	2
Urban and rural mix	1
Suburban	2
Suburban and rural	3
Mostly rural	2
Rural	1

The number of jurisdictions or entities served varied considerably. Most handle police or sheriff and fire/EMS. San Juan County Communications Authority handles a more diverse group, including San Juan County Sheriff; police, fire and EMS for the cities of Farmington, Bloomfield and Aztec; state probation and parole office; state park agencies; and U.S. Dept. of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management rangers.

Table 8: Demographic and general information

<b>Dispatch/ Communications Center</b>	<b>Operating Since</b>	<b>Annual Calls for Service 2009</b>	<b>Square Mileage</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Number/Types of Entities Involved</b>
Allegheny County Emergency Services, Pittsburgh, PA	2003	447,376	745	mostly urban and suburban	130 municipalities in Allegheny County; includes 89 police departments, 166 fire departments, and 43 EMS departments
Chagrin Valley Regional Communications Center, Chagrin Falls, OH	1963	32,000	N/A	suburban and rural	8 communities
Charleston County Consolidated 9-1- 1 Center, North Charleston, SC	2008	395,460	917.4 (county)	urban and rural mix	16 municipalities
East Central Dispatch Center, Richmond Heights, MO	2004	125,000	17	suburban	6 communities
Essex County, MA	projected 2012	N/A	TBD	rural and suburban	6 communities

**Consolidated Dispatch  
Center Feasibility: Case Studies**

<b>Dispatch/ Communications Center</b>	<b>Operating Since</b>	<b>Annual Calls for Service 2009</b>	<b>Square Mileage</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Number/Types of Entities Involved</b>
Guilford Metro 9-1-1, Greensboro, NC	2007	440,000	650	urban and suburban	most of Gilbert County, including the cities of Greensboro and High Point.
Liberty County Public Safety Communications, Hinesville, GA	1991	103,000	511	suburban and rural	3 police, 1 sheriff, 8 fire departments, 1 EMA and 1 EMS
NORCOM, Bellevue, WA	2009	174,000	1,400	mostly urban and suburban	19 agencies
Northwest Central Dispatch System, Arlington Heights, IL	1972 but added 3 in the last 3 years.	410,000	126.4	suburban	11 communities
Placer County Sheriff Emergency Services, Tahoe City, CA	2010	160,000	1,506	mostly rural	entire county, excluding four small cities
Rice and Steele Consolidated 911 Center, Owatonna, MN	2000	60,000	960	mostly rural	2 counties (18 agencies)
San Juan County Communications Authority, Aztec, NM	1994	250,000	5,500	rural	San Juan County Sheriff; police, fire and EMS for the cities of Farmington, Bloomfield and Aztec; state probation and parole office; state park agencies; and U.S. Dept. of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management rangers

N/A means not available. NOTE: The Essex County dispatch center is not yet operational.

## **CASE STUDIES**

This section of the report provides detailed summaries of the case study consolidated dispatch centers.

### **Allegheny County 9-1-1 Communications (Pittsburgh, PA)**

Unless otherwise noted, this case study summary is based on information obtained during interviews with Gary Thomas, the assistant chief of 9-1-1 communications for Allegheny County Emergency Services (ACES), conducted on November 29, 2010, and January 18, 2011.

Allegheny County 9-1-1 Communications Center (AC911) is located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, near the Ohio border. It provides dispatch services for 130 municipalities in Allegheny County, including

- 89 of the 115 police departments,
- 166 of 203 fire departments, and
- 43 of 52 emergency medical service (EMS) departments.

The area is primarily urban and suburban, covering 745 square miles and servicing a residential population of 1.5 million. Of the 1.3 million calls in 2009, 447,376 calls were emergency/9-1-1; the rest were nonemergency calls.

#### **Structure and Operations**

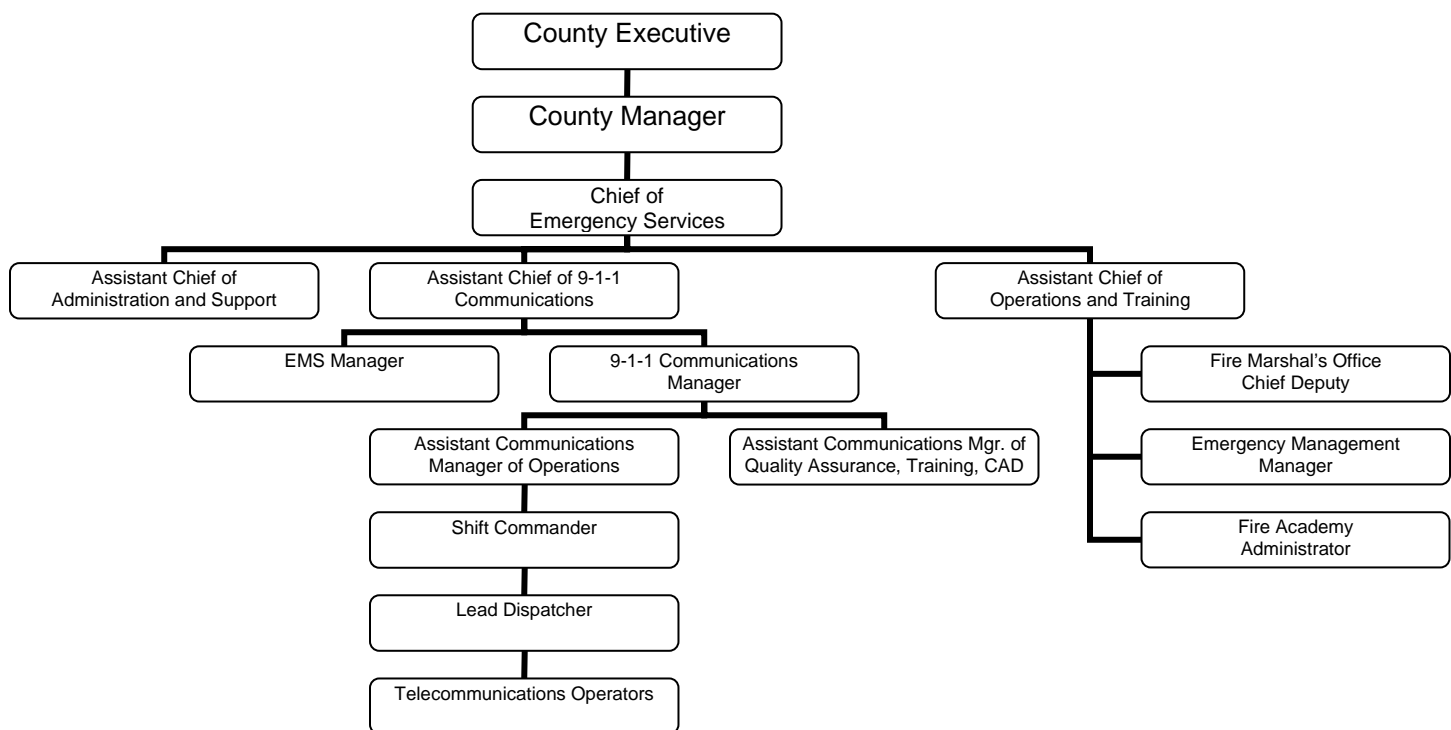
AC911 is a division within the ACES department of Allegheny County government. Consequently, the elected county executive has ultimate authority over ACES and AC911. As shown in the organizational chart (Figure 2), the chief of emergency services oversees the department's functional areas: administration and support, 9-1-1 communications, and operations and training. The 9-1-1 communications manager directly oversees the day-to-day operations of dispatch services.

There are four layers within AC911's management structure. Reporting to the 9-1-1 communications manager, there are two assistant communications managers; one



oversees operations, and the other oversees quality assurance, training, and the CAD department. The next layer is shift commanders, who report to the assistant communications manager of operations. There are usually four shift commanders per shift. Finally, each shift has lead dispatchers who report to the shift commanders.

The responsibility for dispatching lies with telecommunications operators (TCO). There are 49 part-time TCOs and 196 full-time TCOs, with approximately 66 to 74 per shift.



**Figure 2: Allegheny Co. Emergency Services Organizational Structure**

Although the chief of emergency services makes decisions for ACES and AC911, he or she has multiple advisory communications working groups representing police and fire, and one representing EMS. These communications groups were instrumental during the consolidation; however, a dispatch steering committee and dispatch review committee for each of the stakeholders groups (EMS, police, and fire) are in the process of being formed. These will also be advisory in nature. When the process is complete, the communications groups will be dissolved.

The concept of a dispatch steering committee and dispatch review committee for each discipline (police, fire, EMS) is derived from the National Academies of Emergency Dispatch (NAED) accreditation criteria (NAED, 2004). To further enhance its application for accreditation/reaccreditation, AC911 uses NAEDs dispatch protocols and quality assurance programs.

To maintain a good working relationship between the dispatchers' union and AC911's management, the assistant chief for 9-1-1 communications and the assistant 9-1-1 communications manager meet periodically with union officials (the business agent, the shop steward, and the assistant shop steward). This creates a forum for discussion and provides an opportunity for management to inform the union of potential changes that may affect union members.

Most dispatchers employed by AC911 came from regional centers that were consolidated to form AC911. Prior to consolidation, all dispatchers from these centers were offered dispatch positions with AC911; not all dispatchers, however, accepted. AC911 hired externally to fill all remaining positions.

There were originally two different unions representing employees at the regional centers. Since Service Employees International Union (SEIU) had a larger membership among employees, it became the representative of AC911 telecommunications operators but it was willing to accept the terms of the other union contract, as those terms were more favorable. Employees of the regional centers were already county employees, so there was no issue with regard to loss of leave. Pittsburgh's dispatchers were permitted to carry over five weeks of vacation when they joined AC911 because they were transitioning from being employees of the city to being county employees. As new county employees, they would normally not be eligible to immediately take vacation time. Seniority for each employee is based on the day the employee began working at AC911. Due to the way in which seniority was handled, there was some tension among employees because it affected employees' standing in bidding for shifts and days off. For example, at a regional center, an employee with 10 years of service may have had the greatest seniority. Once consolidated, there may have been employees with more than 10 years, thus affecting that employee's standing with regard to seniority.

Even though some of the regional centers had the same union, each center had its own collective bargaining agreement. As a result, some dispatchers were paid more than other dispatchers with the same level of experience. To address disparate compensation levels, dispatchers whose wages were higher did not receive a raise until the lower wage employees “caught up” through salary increases.

### *Funding and Fee Structure*

ACES’ estimated 2011 budget is approximately \$20 million. The county receives the 9-1-1 surcharge for all landlines in the county and a portion of the wireless 9-1-1 surcharge. The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency collects and distributes the proceeds from these surcharges. The distribution of the wireless 9-1-1 surcharge to counties is allocated based on applications for funding from the dispatch centers. Because the county uses general fund revenues to cover any shortfall between the center’s expenses and the 9-1-1 surcharge revenue, there is no charge for communities to participate in the county center. Prior to merging, the county reimbursed regional centers at \$3 per 1990 population (Zopf, 2005).

### **Consolidation**

Consolidation can occur for a variety of reasons, including state mandates or costs savings. The AC911 consolidation was motivated largely by a desire to save money and avoid duplication of equipment and operating costs. Additionally, Mr. Thomas noted that there was pressure from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to consolidate.

Discussions about consolidation started in the 1990s when the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania began to encourage consolidation of Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) (Public Safety Emergency Telephone Act, 4 Pa. Code § 120b, 1992). The merger of dispatch functions in Allegheny County began in 2001 when the Mon (Monongahela) Valley and Southwest Regional dispatch centers joined with the county (Lyons, 2005). It was not a participatory process, (e.g., one involving stakeholder groups) but rather an administrative one. In 2003, local dispatch centers were consolidated into five regional PSAPs. By 2006, all regional PSAPs, along with the city of Pittsburgh, were co-located, one at a time, into AC911 (Sherman, 2006).

AC911 achieved co-location by dedicating an assigned area in which each jurisdiction operated independently with its own policies, procedures, and, in some cases, its own software and equipment. For example, when the Pittsburgh dispatch center co-located, it had a different CAD system version that did not communicate with AC911’s. Some centers brought sentinel systems, logging recorders, National Crime Information Center

(NCIC) files, and other assets purchased with 9-1-1 funding to the new center. Also, upon co-location, the regional centers turned over their Federal Communications Commission (FCC) licenses to the county.

AC911 is now transitioning from a co-location to a complete consolidation, in which it will use uniform policies and standard operating procedures for each first responder agency (fire, police, and EMS). AC911 upgraded its CAD system in August 2010 and is transferring Pittsburgh to the new CAD system version used by the rest of the center. The new CAD system will enable dispatchers to take calls from across the county.

The county has a separate merger agreement with each of the original regional centers and the city of Pittsburgh. Any center interested in joining AC911 today must send a letter of interest to AC911. There is no formal agreement, contract, or resolution for the joining center. Upon joining, each new community is required to comply with AC911's operational policies and procedures.

In order to satisfy the FCC requirement that the county make 9-1-1 the universal emergency number for all telephone services (FCC, 2011), the county hosts the customer-premises equipment (CPE) and CAD equipment.<sup>1</sup>

### **Successes, Challenges, and Lessons Learned**

Mr. Thomas shared the following thoughts:

- Consider what other centers have done to consolidate and learn from their experiences.
- Let potential participants know how the center will operate and what is expected of each.
- Deal with employee concerns early on to avoid the building of resentment.
- Develop standardized pay scales and benefit offerings for all incoming employees to prevent disparate compensation packages.
- Establish seniority based on the date of hire at the employee's originating center rather than when he or she joined the consolidated center.

---

<sup>1</sup> CPE refers to communications or terminal equipment connected to the telephone network ( telephones, routers, and switches) (Cyber Telecom, 2011; Littelfuse, Inc., 2011; NENA, September 2010).

- Base each employee's position in the hierarchy on his or her experience and performance.
- Establish standard operating procedures for the center.
- Use a single CAD platform.
- Consider optimal size (what is the greatest number of communities that are likely to participate) and plan accordingly. This forward thinking will enhance cost-effectiveness and provide for the ability to expand, even in times of stagnant revenues.
- Do not move forward too quickly with the consolidation. Be thoughtful in planning every aspect of consolidation.

Mr. Thomas indicated that physically locating dispatchers from various jurisdictions in the same space has allowed for improved quality of service through improved cooperation and communication among the dispatchers, particularly in large-scale emergencies. He also noted that, by reducing the number of voice and data circuits, consolidation has reduced county dispatch costs.

Dealing with the consolidation of radio frequencies proved to be challenging, according to Mr. Thomas. Initially, the county did not have the operational control of the radio frequencies of participating communities. Operating on different radio frequencies required AC911 to have one TCO to monitor each frequency. Now there is control over participating jurisdictions' frequencies, and they are able to combine multiple departments on one frequency and eliminate one position for each frequency dropped.

### **Chagrin Valley Regional Communications Center (Chagrin Falls, OH)**

Unless otherwise noted, this case study summary is based on information obtained in an interview with Lisa Mariola, network administrator and administrative assistant to the Chagrin Falls Police Department, conducted on January 25, 2011, and James Brosius, chief of the Chagrin Falls Police Department, on March 4, 2011.

Chagrin Valley Regional Communications Center (CRCC), located in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, has been providing contractual dispatch services to various municipalities since

1963. The center services a population of 17,139 and logged 43,500 calls for service in 2010. Recently, CRCC and its clients decided to change their relationship from that of service provider and end-user to equal-share co-owners. In February 2011, the Chagrin Valley Dispatch Council (CVD) was created and its bylaws drafted. CRCC will continue to provide dispatch services for eight political subdivisions (seven police and two fire departments) listed below:

- Chagrin Falls Township police,
- Orange Village police,
- Village of Bentleyville police,
- Village of Chagrin Falls police and fire,
- Village of Hunting Valley police,
- Village of Moreland Hills police,
- Village of South Russell police, and
- Village of Woodmere police and fire.

CRCC officials are engaged in informal discussions with other potential participants, but no formal commitments to join CRCC have been made at this time.

### **Structure and Operations**

In early 2011, Chagrin Falls and its seven dispatch service subscribers created a council of governments (COG), as authorized by Ohio Revised Code 167, to “promote ... and coordinate action ... in matters relating to the dispatch of public safety services and the operation” of CRCC (CRCC Intergovernmental Agreement, 2011). CRCC’s governance and operating structures are discussed below.

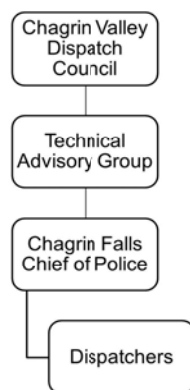
As shown in Figure 3, CRCC will be governed by the Chagrin Valley Dispatch Council (CVD). The council will comprise one voting representative of each member political jurisdiction. The CVD will have the authority to:

- enter into contracts;
- create and implement all staffing decisions;
- purchase, lease, or provide all supplies, equipment, materials, and facilities; and

- accept and raise capital for operation, maintenance, and upgrades.

A technical advisory group, made up of COG member chiefs of police and fire, will make recommendations to the CVD on “staffing, equipment, and operational needs” and will assist in budget preparation and implementation (CVD By-laws draft, March 2011).

The Chagrin Falls Police Department has been designated as the employing COG member. The Chagrin Falls chief of police will handle the day-to-day operations under the control and guidance of the CVD. Chagrin Falls will receive compensation for its services as the employing COG member. The exact amount of such compensation, however, has yet to be determined (CVD By-laws draft, March 2011). Although the Chagrin Falls police chief technically makes all hiring, firing, and staffing decisions, the city has agreed to defer to the will of the governing board in all of the foregoing matters.



**Figure 3: Chagrin Valley Dispatch Governance Structure**

To ensure service quality, CRCC utilizes a comprehensive testing, interview, and training process for its dispatchers. To be considered for employment, CRCC applicants must obtain preset performance metrics/scores on the following tests:

- dispatch-specific profile test,
- psychological,
- intelligence quotient, and
- hearing.

CRCC employs a staff of six full-time dispatchers, three part-time dispatchers, and a chief dispatcher who, in addition to dispatching, serves as records clerk for the

department. Dispatchers report to the chief dispatcher, who reports directly to the chief of police. All dispatchers are trained and certified to perform emergency medical dispatch. Staffing will remain unchanged unless new jurisdictions join the CRCC.

### *Funding and Fee Structure*

As a new COG, CRCC will be funded by a combination of grant awards and COG-member monthly dues. CRCC recently applied for and received a \$250,000 technology grant from the federal Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program. The grant will be used to upgrade dispatch technology and to construct a new dispatch center building.

The total estimated operating and capital costs for the center will be apportioned among COG members based on their percentage of the center's total dispatched calls (calls for service) from the previous year. This apportionment is referred to as monthly dues. Although both nonemergency and emergency police and fire department calls (depending on the contracted service) come through the center, nonemergency calls are not included among the calls billed. Upon adoption of the bylaws, COG members will pay three months of dues in advance, which will be "retained and utilized as working capital" (CRCC, n.d.).

### **Consolidation**

Because CRCC has already been providing contractual dispatch services to the municipalities listed previously, proposed changes focus solely on governance structure. Although CRCC's governing board may implement operational changes or authorize expansion in the future, no such changes are planned at the time of this writing.

### **Successes, Challenges, and Lessons Learned**

CRCC found a service provider/end-user structure was challenging and could ultimately lead to a loss of subscribers. Specifically, end-users wanted to have a voice and a vote in CRCC's operation and planning. Chief Brosius, current police chief of Chagrin Falls, posited that because county governments are pushing toward dispatch regionalization, more and more regional dispatch centers will be created in the near future. This will create a greater risk of losing current subscribers to competitors. Chief Brosius thought that it was best to get ahead of the regionalization trend by creating a co-owner relationship with CRCC's end-users and that this would alleviate competitor risk and ensure continued buy-in of its members.



## **Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center (North Charleston, SC)**

Unless otherwise noted, this case study summary is based on information obtained in an email interview with Lori Lambert, Charleston County project officer, conducted on January 14, 2011, and a telephone interview with Jim Lake, Charleston County center director, on March 30, 2011.

Charleston County has a population of approximately 335,000 and comprises 16 communities, ranging from large urban areas to small rural towns. The center has been operating since 2008. Once consolidation is complete, the Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center (CCCC) will serve 16 municipalities. In 2009, dispatchers handled almost 400,000 calls for service.

In 2006, a multijurisdictional committee of public safety chiefs convened to explore the possibility of consolidating 10 independent county public safety answering points (PSAPs) into one regional center. From those discussions, the Charleston County Communications Feasibility Study was developed. The study, released in April 2007, concluded that consolidating all 10 PSAPs in the county was feasible. In January 2008, after extensive collaboration amongst county municipalities and significant assistance from the county's legal department, an intergovernmental agreement was approved and finalized. Nine dispatch operations entered the agreement in 2008, and one additional dispatch center joined with member approval in late 2009. With just five municipalities left to consolidate and the new center building's construction under way, the CCCC is in the final stages of implementation. By 2013, CCCC will dispatch police, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS) for 16 municipalities throughout Charleston County and in portions of Berkeley and Dorchester counties.

The 14 fire and EMS agencies to be served by CCCC by 2013 are:

- Charleston County
- Charleston County Rescue
- Awendaw Fire
- Charleston
- Folly Beach
- St. John's Fire District
- St. Paul's Fire
- Isle of Palms
- James Island
- Mount Pleasant

- Lincolntonville
- St. Andrews Public Services
- Sullivan's
- North Charleston

There are eight law enforcement agencies to be served by CCCC by 2013:

- Charleston County
- Folly Beach
- Lincolntonville
- North Charleston
- Charleston
- Isle of Palms
- Mount Pleasant
- Sullivan's

### **Structure and Operations**

CCCC operates as a department of the Charleston County government. The director manages CCCC with the guidance and oversight of a multijurisdictional governing board. The center's governance and operating structures are designed to ensure member input and participation.

Although CCCC is a department of the Charleston County government, a consolidated dispatch board oversees operational protocols and procedures and has significant input into the center's budget.

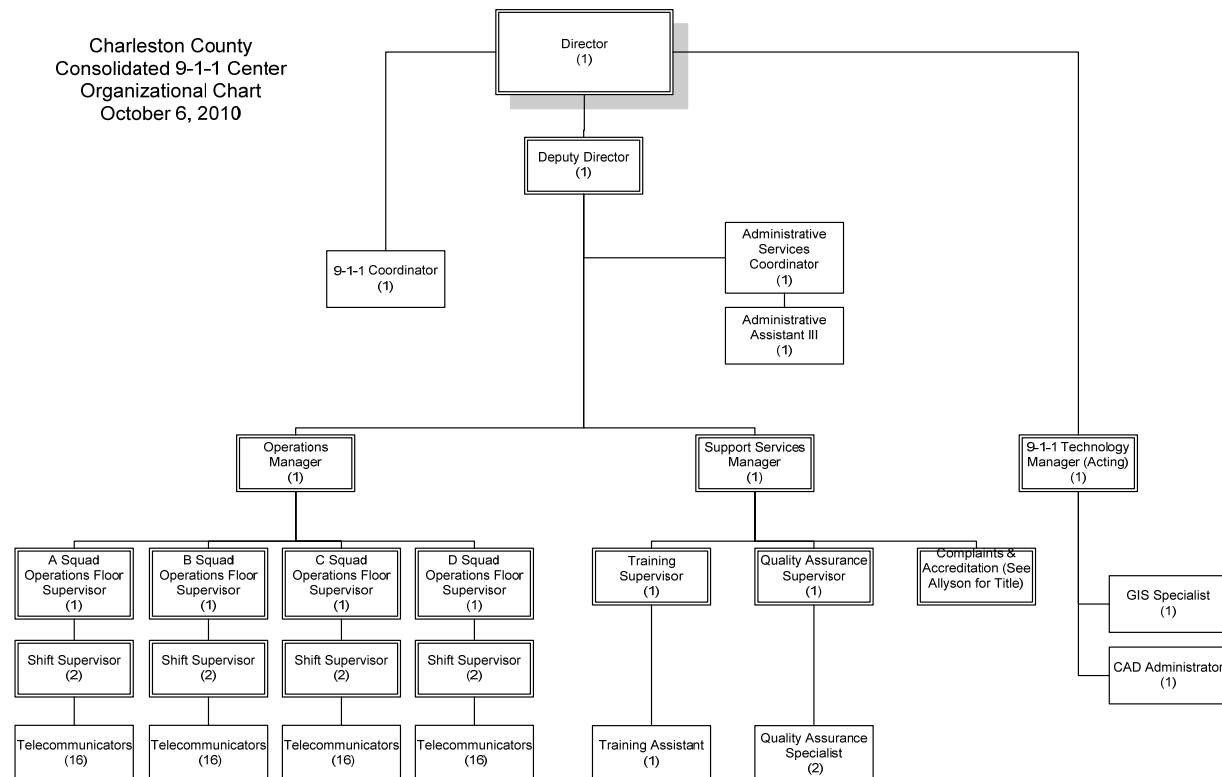
A conscious decision was made to create a governing board of top local emergency response agencies as opposed to elected officials. The consolidated dispatch board comprises the Charleston County sheriff and EMS director, the police and fire chiefs of each of the large municipalities (Mount Pleasant and North Charleston), and two representatives from the Charleston fire chief association. There is also a board position that rotates among the police chiefs of the Isle of Palms, Sullivan's Island, and Folly Beach. In addition, a county administrator and a federal agency representative sit on the board as non-voting members.

Internal user groups provide non-board members a voice, and all member police and fire chiefs are welcome to attend and voice their opinions at board meetings. In addition, several non-board member police and fire chiefs serve as chairs for board committees and workgroups (discussed below).

Board members communicate with the center director both formally and informally and have full authority over operational matters, such as setting criteria for when and how first responders should be sent. The board does not make administrative decisions, nor does it interfere with internal county processes. The director may make interim operational decisions (such as developing SOPs) as long as they are subsequently submitted and authorized by the board. The Human Resources Committee advises both the director and the board on employment issues related to the ongoing incremental process of consolidation.

The dispatch staff of each PSAP joining CCCC is offered a position. This hiring practice will continue as the five remaining municipalities are incorporated into the center. Dispatchers are, however, required to meet certain minimum standards for CCCC employment. To help these dispatchers meet these minimum standards, the center offers a dispatch readiness program. Staffing structure, salaries, schedules and other personnel policies are evolving through the work of the consolidated dispatch board's Human Resources Committee, utilizing input from all participating jurisdictions.

Figure 4 depicts CCCC's organizational and operational structure.



**Figure 4: Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Organizational Chart (Charleston County Organizational Chart, n.d.).**

CCCC began consolidation with specialized dispatch and call-taker functions. It has recently implemented various training and pay programs to achieve both pay-scale equity and cross-training goals. CCCC's training, staffing, and funding practices are discussed below.

The Intergovernmental Agreement guarantees that each jurisdiction's dispatch staff will maintain his or her hourly rate upon transiting to CCCC and that none will be penalized for remaining specialized dispatchers (for fire, law enforcement, or EMS). This policy created a circumstance where some more skilled dispatch employees (e.g., county employees who have handled police, fire, and emergency medical dispatch (EMD) calls) would be paid less than single-skill transitioning employees. To ameliorate this

type of internal pay inequity, CCCC designed a certification program (J. Lake, personal communication, March 30, 2011):

The original organizational design envisioned new employees starting as Dispatch Trainees being trained in four specialized areas: call taking, fire dispatch, law dispatch and [emergency] medical dispatch. Once they completed either call taking or one of the dispatch specialties, they would be promoted to a Dispatcher position. Once they completed the three other disciplines, they would be promoted to a Multi-Function Dispatcher. The Multi-Function Dispatcher is the most valuable position because it can be used anywhere in the Dispatch Center...The Certification Pay plan gives one-step pay increases upon successful completion of training in one of the three other disciplines. The training program is comprised of classroom training and successfully passing tests, as well as training on the floor. Employees are required to maintain their certifications in order to continue receiving a certification pay increase. If they do not maintain their certification, they will lose their increase. They are also required to work in the particular discipline 30% of their time. The amount of time will be reduced to between 10-20% of their time on an annual basis when they have achieved multiple certifications. The first time an employee tells management they will not work in a certification pay area, they will lose their increase. The CCCC has a system, which identifies the amount of time employees work in the different specialties. It is our responsibility to ensure employees are working the designated hours to maintain their certifications and their certification pay increases. (Memo of J. Lake, June 29, 2010).

Mr. Lake indicated that the certification pay program has prevented animosity between dispatchers due to disparate incoming pay scales. Moreover, he noted that the program provides dispatchers with monetary and professional incentives to increase their skill set and become more valuable, skilled dispatch employees.

CCCC utilizes a call-taker/dispatch operational approach. In this approach, a call taker answers an incoming 9-1-1 call, determines its classification (law, fire, or EMS/EMD), and gathers information through a series of incident type-specific questions. While the call-taker gathers information, a computer-generated incident report is sent to a dispatcher, who then relays the appropriate information to law, fire, or medical responders. CCCC believes that this approach is superior because it “allows the call taker to remain on the line with the caller to gather more information and to provide additional scene safety and/or medical instructions while responders are being sent by the dispatcher” (J. Flinn, 2010).

CCCC currently utilizes the following full-time positions to perform its dispatch functions:

- 25 call takers,
- 24 law-enforcement dispatchers,
- 14 fire and rescue dispatchers,
- four EMS dispatchers,
- four multifunction dispatchers,
- eight shift supervisors, and
- four floor supervisors.

CCCC currently subdivides its staffing operations into day and night squads. Two squads operate the day shift and two squads operate the night shift. Each squad is supervised by two shift supervisors who are responsible for ensuring that routine operations run smoothly (e.g., coordinating lunch and bathroom breaks, filling dispatch positions left open due to sick calls). A floor supervisor is assigned to each squad and is responsible for addressing all major issues that arise during a shift (e.g., discretionary decisions affecting the handling of a large incident).

#### *Funding and Fee Structure*

Charleston County fully funded all start-up costs for the consolidated center, including a new facility, which was to begin construction in 2011. Member jurisdictions will share operational costs over the first two years of the fully operational center. Starting in the third full year of center operations, Charleston County will assume full operational costs, estimated at \$10.5 million per year.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Public Safety Interoperable Communications Program awarded the county \$150,000 to perform a study for Next Generation 9-1-1 upgrades. The center has also applied for grants from the Port Security Grant Program, which will (if awarded) help offset the center's technology costs and provide for strategic planning.

#### **Consolidation**

Participants in CCCC decided to consolidate dispatch operations to

- Enhance interoperability and coordination among responding agencies,
- Increase safety for emergency responders,
- Decrease emergency response times,
- Improve communications equipment and technology, and
- Attain national accreditation to ensure recognized best practices are followed.

In February 2008, one month after the intergovernmental agreement was finalized, Charleston County took its first steps toward consolidation by temporarily co-locating North Charleston's 9-1-1 Center with Charleston County sheriff and EMS dispatch. The County Public Services Building temporarily houses the center. Construction of the center's new building should be complete sometime in late 2012. Once dispatch operations move to the new building, the current facility will serve as a backup dispatch operation.

Under the direction of Jim Lake, who was hired as director in October 2008, consolidation has proceeded incrementally. In January 2009, CCCC officially merged the North Charleston and county dispatch administrative functions (e.g., human resources and payroll) and co-located their operations. In January 2010, the center ended co-location arrangements and combined law enforcement, fire, and EMS dispatch, as well as call-taking functions into one consolidated operation. Since then, five agencies (St. Andrews Fire Department, Folly Beach Public Safety, City of Charleston Fire Department, and St. John's Fire Department) have transitioned operations to the center's temporary site. Five more agencies are scheduled to transition to CCCC in 2011. By 2013, CCCC's new building should open and full consolidation should be complete.

Several specialized committees are helping to move the consolidation process along:

- Operations Committee develops internal operational policies, protocols, procedures. All SOPs go through Operations Committee before recommendation to the board.

- Technology Committee develops recommendations for technology needs. It provides input for equipment RFPs and recommends requirements and standards for a law-enforcement records management system (RMS), a jail RMS, field-based reporting, and software for mobile data terminals.
- Human Resources Committee develops training and transition policies. It recommends methods for employees' transition to the center, including required testing and criteria for employment and transfer of accrued annual leave, accrued sick leave, years of service, etc.
- Facilities Committee oversees and provides input on development of programming and design criteria for the new facility, including property purchased, architectural and engineering firms hired, LEED certification, and criteria and recommendations for dispatch furniture.
- Accreditation and Best Practices Review Panel ensures compliance with accreditation and best practice standards. Specifically, it determines whether proposed SOPs meet accreditation and best practice standards before the board approves them.

### **Successes, Challenges, and Lessons Learned**

In recounting the consolidation efforts of CCCC, Mr. Lake provided a number of insights.

#### *Challenges*

One of the main challenges CCCC faced was caused by consolidating too quickly. He noted that consolidation occurred more quickly than had been originally planned because of financial constraints experienced by many of the municipal members. This caused CCCC to begin consolidation before a clear consolidation plan had been designed. Consequently, CCCC has endured some growing pains in many operational areas. For instance, CCCC is still working to develop standard operating procedures for the center. As of this writing, each municipality retains its own SOPs, which is challenging for both dispatchers and the CAD system.

Another challenge CCCC encountered related to staffing. Mr. Lake found that, for many municipal call takers and dispatchers, moving from relatively small dispatch centers to a large and busy county dispatch center was a culture shock. Consequently, CCCC has experienced larger initial call-taker and dispatcher turnover than it would like.



### *Successes*

The interoperability gained from consolidation has been a tremendous success. He noted that it has allowed the center to achieve seamless communication between multiple first-responder agencies, which is key in any major incident. For instance, CCCC recently evacuated multiple communities in response to a quick-moving brush fire. With just one call, CCCC was able to discharge 12 fire departments to the scene. This type of coordinated quick response would not have been possible prior to consolidation.

CCCC's dispatch training program has been a great success. By consolidating and taking advantage of economies of scale, CCCC has been able to develop and implement a training program for its dispatchers that would not have been affordable for each municipality alone.

### *Lessons Learned*

Mr. Lake offered the following advice for those looking to consolidate: develop a consolidation plan early (and long before taking action), and stick to the plan once you have developed it, as veering from it creates problems.

## **East Central Dispatch Center (Richmond Heights, MO)**

Unless otherwise noted, this case study summary is based on information obtained in an interview with Paul Anderson, former center director, on October 28, 2010.

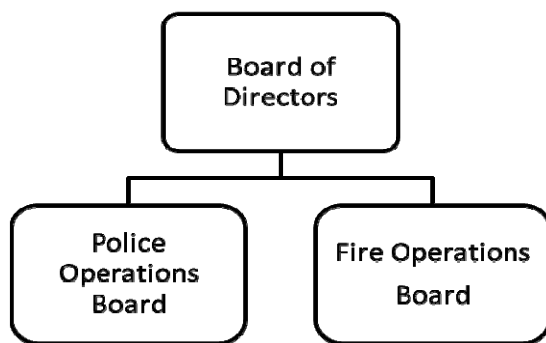
East Central Dispatch Center (ECDC), located in Richmond Heights, Missouri, opened in 2004. It provides emergency dispatch services to a daytime population of approximately 168,000 (72,000 residential) located throughout its six-member municipalities. These cities are Clayton, Maplewood, Richmond Heights, Shrewsbury, Olivette, and Webster Groves. In 2009, ECDC handled 131,155 calls for service for its suburban, 17-square-mile service area.

## Structure and Operations

ECDC is a stand-alone entity (i.e., not a department within a political jurisdiction) governed by a board of directors and two operations committees (see Figure 5), and created by an intergovernmental agreement that designates ECDC as the sole entity responsible for fielding all fire, police, and emergency medical service communications for the member cities (Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement, n.d.). Each member municipality is a party to ECDC's intergovernmental agreement, which is a continuing contract that renews each year. A community can withdraw from ECDC only after one year's notice.

The city of Richmond Heights provides administrative services, such as human resources, payroll, insurance and pension benefits, and banking to ECDC and houses the center in its public safety building.

The general manager runs the dispatch center according to the standard operating procedures (SOPs) created by police and fire operations committees. With the exception of radio-alert procedures, ECDC officials established uniform SOPs. Although the board determines the types and number of positions available at ECDC, the general manager hires staff to fill those positions. These are shown in Figure 5 below.



**Figure 5: East Central Dispatch Center Governance Structure**

The board of directors (the board) is the ultimate governing body of ECDC. Its duties include:

- determining general policy that guides both the operations committees and the general manager,
- hiring and/or firing the general manager and auditors,

- approving bylaw amendments,
- approving new members,
- determining the type and number of positions available,
- approving contracts and purchasing procedures, and
- reviewing and approving ECDC's annual budget (ECDC By-Laws, 2010).

The police and fire operations committees oversee and review any issues arising from operations and administrative functions. Specifically, they create new and assess existing policies and procedures relating to:

- personnel,
- staff training and quality control,
- unexpected capital expenditures,
- equipment maintenance or repair, and
- decisions made by the general manager (ECDC Bylaws, 2010).

In years past, the general manager held ad hoc meetings with the police operations committee and met with the fire operations committee monthly. Recently, the board amended ECDC's bylaws to require the general manager and each operations committee to meet monthly. During these monthly meetings, the general manager responds to any questions or concerns raised by the committees and presents any reports or demonstrations requested. The general manager attends all board and operations committee meetings but does not have a vote.

Currently, the center employs four shift supervisors and 20 full-time public safety dispatchers (there are no part-time dispatchers). A year ago, ECDC hired an operations manager to develop improved performance metrics, evaluations, and standards.

ECDC has relatively informal training and human resources policies. To qualify for a dispatch position, applicants are required to hold an Emergency Medical Dispatcher certification. Once hired, new employees are provided on-the-job training, and required

to attend any applicable telecommunications training classes through the Richmond Heights Police Academy. Although ECDC does follow a progressive discipline policy when necessary, the policy is not a formal one.

### *Funding and Fee Structure*

ECDC pays Richmond Heights for the administrative services and rents the physical space provided according to an agreed-upon fee schedule (ECDC Bylaws, 2010). This fee schedule includes \$1,000 per month to lease space in the city's public safety building, \$3,315 per month for administrative services, and \$40 per month for processing payroll.

The basis for cost sharing is the average number of incidents handled by each member city's police and fire departments, as documented by the (CAD) system for the previous two calendar years. Contract patrols (like car wash or bank details) and administrative (vehicle maintenance or patrol call-ins) calls are excluded from the totals.

### **Consolidation**

ECDC communities consolidated voluntarily in order to take advantage of economies of scale and interoperability. ECDC incorporated all staff from each member dispatch center without requiring them to go through a screening, testing, or interviewing process. In hindsight, General Manager Paul Anderson suggested that it may have been more appropriate to re-evaluate each dispatcher's skill level and force competition through interviews and minimum qualifications. ECDC carried over existing pay scales, seniority, and leave balances for each community's dispatchers. Using the most generous community's standards, ECDC set new vacation and benefit accrual rates, ensuring that all dispatchers were afforded equal or greater benefits upon joining ECDC. After consolidation, ECDC's board formed a subcommittee that merged existing dispatcher salaries commensurate with years of service. No dispatchers lost money, and some had minimal increases to bring them up to the new starting salary of approximately \$33,000 per year.

Prior to consolidation, ECDC trained its dispatchers in various ways. Dispatchers sat with other city dispatch operations so that each group understood the operations of the others. Because the CAD system was new, training staff on the system was ECDC's biggest challenge. However, comprehensive training by the CAD vendor was provided as part of the equipment purchase price. Once dispatchers were familiar with each other's communities and fully trained on the new systems, member municipalities were brought into ECDC two at a time.

After ECDC was fully consolidated, it purchased all new dispatch equipment, while all members continued to maintain their own hand-held and mobile radios.

### **Successes, Challenges, and Lessons Learned**

Anderson shared a number of insights and advice for those looking to consolidate, based on his experiences at ECDC:

- Hire a center director at the beginning of implementation and let him or her be a part of the decision-making process.
- Establish uniform policies and procedures with member agencies.
- Choose or construct a building and location design that incorporates the physical realities of day-to-day operations.
- Develop a clear mission and accompanying expectations and policies at the beginning stages of consolidation.
- Do not patch the CAD system.
- Insist that dispatch applicants meet predetermined minimum standards and qualifications, even if hiring primarily from member municipalities.
- Establish a uniform pay and benefits scale and have the new center buy out any excess leave time so that all employees start at the same level.

### **Essex Regional Emergency Communications Center (Essex County, MA)**

Unless otherwise noted, this case study is based on information obtained in an interview with Thomas Dubas, consultant for the Essex Regional Emergency Communications Center, conducted on September 28, 2010.

Essex County has a total population of approximately 738,984 and comprises 34 municipalities, ranging from large urban areas to small rural towns (Dubas & McGowan, 2009). In 2006, 19 municipalities in Essex County, Massachusetts, commissioned a study to determine the feasibility of consolidating their emergency dispatch functions into one Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). Based on the outcomes of this feasibility study, six of the study participants are in the process of establishing the Essex Regional Emergency Communications Center (RECC) (Dubas & McGowan, 2009). Construction is under way, and the center is expected to open at the end of 2012.

Once open, Essex RECC will consolidate five PSAPs and provide police, fire, and EMS dispatch services for approximately 78,000 people in the following municipalities: Amesbury, Middleton, Beverly, Topsfield, Essex, and Wenham (Dubas, 2010). These municipalities will join the RECC by way of an intergovernmental agreement.

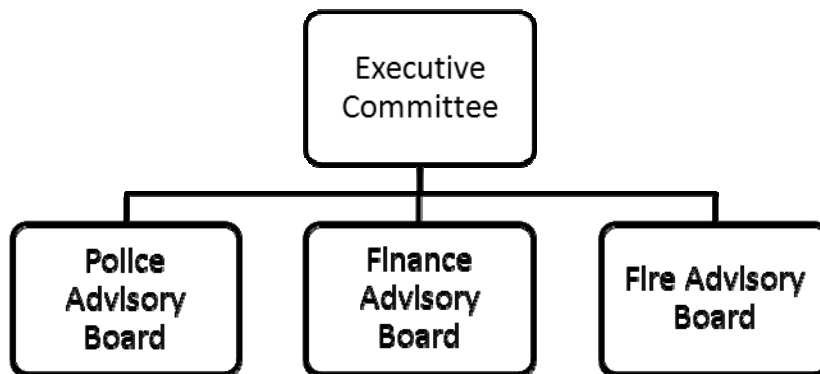
### **Structure and Operations**

According to Mr. Dubas, Essex RECC's governance structure is "designed to promote and maximize input from member communities." The Essex County Sheriff's Department will "oversee, direct, manage and supervise." The RECC director will "hire, set compensation for, supervise, discipline and terminate all RECC staff" (Dubas, 2010). Although the sheriff is ultimately responsible, the RECC director will perform these duties with the advice and counsel of three advisory boards – fire, police and finance -- and an executive committee (see Figure 6):

Both police and fire advisory boards comprise the respective chief of each member community. The fire and police advisory boards will meet quarterly to develop and approve operating policies and procedures for their respective fire and police operations. These policies and procedures will guide and instruct the RECC director in his or her oversight of the RECC (Dubas, 2010).

The finance advisory board consists of the mayor of each member community. This board will meet quarterly to address RECC's fiscal matters and will have the authority to (a) approve budgets, (b) develop the formula to apportion costs, (c) approve the annual operating plan (which consists of, among others, minimum staffing levels, capital-item replacement scheduling, and police and fire response issues), and (d) form a subcommittee of three representatives to participate in the collective-bargaining activities at the RECC (Dubas, 2010).

The executive committee will include the chairs of the police, fire, and finance advisory boards. The executive committee will give final approval on all matters approved by the fire, police, and finance boards. In addition, it will meet with the sheriff and the RECC director monthly and may approve or veto any candidates nominated by the sheriff or RECC director.



**Figure 6: Essex Regional Emergency Communications Center Governance Structure**

Although it will be organizationally tied to the Essex County Sheriff's Department, the RECC itself "will be a stand-alone public safety dispatch center" (Dubas, 2010). The Essex County Sheriff's Department will serve as the "institutional platform" for RECC and will house its equipment, furnishings, and staff until construction of the RECC's new building is complete (Dubas, 2010). The Sheriff's Department was chosen as the center's parent organization because it will allow RECC to utilize "the existing functional structure" and human resources systems already in place (Dubas, 2010).

The director, appointed by the sheriff and approved by the executive committee, will serve a three-year term, which can be renewed for successive terms. The director will:

- manage all aspects of RECC's operations according to its policies and procedures;
- attend all advisory board meetings as a non-voting member; and
- prepare and present an annual operating plan and budget to the finance advisory board for approval.

A quality-assurance and training supervisor will monitor and address all quality-control issues, from monthly response-time and incident evaluations to recruiting and in-service

training (Dubas, 2010). In addition, RECC will employ four dispatch supervisors and 14 full-time dispatchers. Staffing needs were assessed based on RECC's 78,000-person population and 135,000 estimated yearly calls. All RECC staff will be full-time state employees of the Sheriff's Department (Dubas, 2010).

RECC will give each participating community's dispatchers the first right to interview so long as they first pass the skills and psychological tests. To assess an applicant's skills, RECC will utilize a three-hour public safety dispatcher, call taker, and telecommunicator pre-employment testing software created by CritiCall. Applicants who pass the CritiCall test will then be able to interview for open positions. As the director of the Lackawanna County [Pennsylvania] Dispatch Center, Dubas has used the software and has found a high correlation between applicant test success and on-the-job dispatch success. Applicants who are cleared by the interviewer will then undergo physical and psychological tests as well as a background check. Only applicants who successfully complete all of these steps will be offered an open position.

RECC is interested in training its dispatchers in a way that will ensure service quality. In Section 28 of the Draft Agreement for the Joint Provision of Public Safety Communications, Dispatch and Operations Services, RECC specifies how training, certification, and accreditation will be handled:

The intent of training is to bring all personnel up to Association of Public Communications Officials (APCO) (or equivalent) certification prior to beginning operation of the RECC. These include (but are not limited to) APCO Telecommunicator, APCO Fire Dispatch, APCO Police Dispatch, APCO Emergency Medical Dispatch, first aid, CPR/AED and APCO Supervisor (where appropriate), along with any state mandated certifications.

In the organizational stage, all policies and procedures will be created with an eye toward compliance with Commission of Accreditation for Law Enforcement Association (CALEA) standards.

This will allow the RECC to apply for CALEA accreditation within a short period of time after it is on line. Receiving this recognition will allow for a reduction in insurance rates and will lessen the opportunity for frivolous law suits to be filed against the center. This recognition will also increase dramatically the stature the center will have among its peers nationwide (Essex County RECC, 2009).



In addition, each employee will have four months of on-the-job training. Mr. Dubas, the consolidation consultant, is in the process of developing clear performance standards and a detailed progressive discipline policy. The performance standards are expected to help ensure that dispatchers are clear on job expectations. The discipline policy will help ensure that dispatchers strive to meet job expectations. The quality-assurance and training supervisor will monitor dispatcher performance against these uniform standards and implement progressive disciplinary actions when necessary.

In resolving the issue of disparate pay and benefit levels among participating municipalities, RECC will uniformly apply the highest salary and benefit level to all workers of the same tenure and skill levels.

### *Funding and Fee Structure*

RECC has two primary funding sources. A \$6.9 million grant from the Massachusetts State 911 Department will fund RECC's capital and equipment start-up costs (Dubas & McGowan, 2009). To generate the revenues necessary to cover operational costs, RECC will charge each participating municipality \$16.26 per capita, a rate that has been guaranteed for five years (Bray & Fletcher, 2011). Dubas said that consolidation usage rates should be kept simple and that a population-based usage fee is the easiest and best way to allocate cost. Dubas noted that RECC provides a reasonable usage rate as an incentive to remain a member. This allows participating municipalities to acquire better service for less than the cost required to provide it on their own.

### **Consolidation**

RECC communities began investigating dispatch consolidation in response to state efforts to encourage emergency dispatch consolidations (Dubas, 2010). The current six participating communities proceeded because consolidation will allow each to take advantage of new technologies and economies of scale and will provide more efficient dispatch services to citizens than is possible alone (Dubas, 2010).

RECC will proceed gradually in implementing its consolidation. First, RECC will inspect the newly constructed center and new equipment to ensure that they are functioning properly. Next, each supervisor and dispatcher will receive training on equipment, policies and procedures, and Association of Public Communications Officials (APCO) certification-related training. After these steps are complete, RECC will begin providing dispatch services to the three smallest member communities. Once things are running smoothly and RECC is certain that the policies and procedures in place are adequate, RECC will add one more member community each month until all have been assimilated.

## **Successes, Challenges, and Lessons Learned**

Essex RECC is still in the process of consolidation, so a discussion of successes and lessons are somewhat premature. However, Dubas indicated that the biggest challenge of consolidation efforts to date has been “parochialism in local government.” He has found that stakeholders want to guard their authority and that this “makes it difficult to get consensus.”

## **Guilford Metro 9-1-1 (Greensboro, NC)**

Unless otherwise noted, this case study summary is based on information obtained during an interview with Wesley Reid, the director of Guilford Metro 9-1-1, conducted on October 4, 2010.

Guilford Metro 9-1-1 (Guilford Metro) located in Greensboro, North Carolina, consolidated dispatch functions with the cities of Greensboro and High Point in 2007. Its service area spans 650 square miles. Prior to this merger, the county was providing service to nine townships. Ninety dispatchers (called telecommunicators) handle more than 750,000 calls per year; 440,000 of these are calls for service.

## **Structure and Operations**

Although Guilford Metro is a department of the city of Greensboro, the center director reports to an executive board, which includes the Greensboro city manager and the Guilford county manager. This departs from the typical structure of other city departments, which report solely to the Greensboro city manager. The director is responsible for the day-to-day management and operations of the center (Guilford County Interlocal Cooperative Agreement, 2005). Specifically, the director’s responsibilities and authority include:

- overseeing the overall operations of the center,
- serving as the administrative head of the center, responsible for administration, budget, and personnel matters,
- providing oversight of call answering, dispatching, records maintenance, communications, security, and other functions and activities,

- establishing performance standards and complying with personnel and operational policies,
- making employment decisions regarding center personnel,
- reviewing and evaluating proposals from user committees for changes to services levels, performance standards, or procedures for implementation costs, benefits and liabilities, or others matters, and preparing written reports of findings, and
- completing other duties assigned by the executive board (Guilford County Interlocal Cooperative Agreement, 2005).

A 9-1-1 council, consisting of the police chief, fire chief, emergency service directors, and sheriff, meets monthly. It has the following responsibilities and authority:

- recommend strategic goals and objectives,
- implement the mission and goals of Guilford Metro,
- provide input to the director on budgets,
- request reports from the director regarding the recommendations of the user committees and authorize, implement, modify, or deny such recommendations,
- provide direction to the director in the development of user policies regarding the delivery of service and the approval of such policies, and
- provide input to the executive board regarding the performance of the director (Guilford County Interlocal Cooperative Agreement, 2005).

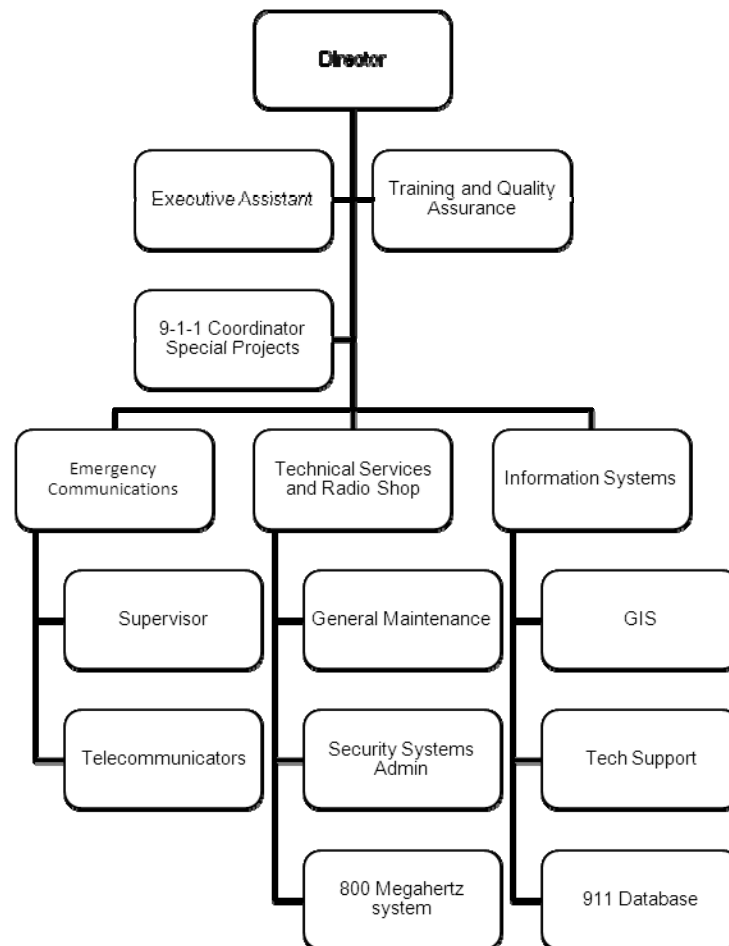
Guilford Metro also utilizes three agency-specific user committees: a fire user committee, law enforcement user committee, and an EMS user committee. The user committees' responsibilities and authorities are as follows:

- Make recommendations in the development of dispatch protocols, procedures, policies, and systems related to service delivery for approval by the 9-1-1 council.
- Make recommendations to the 9-1-1 council regarding general operating guidelines.

- Make recommendations relative to service levels and performance standards of the center (Guilford County Interlocal Cooperative Agreement, 2005).

According to Mr. Reid, the executive board rarely gets involved in the day-to-day operations of the center, which is left to the director, the council, and the committees. In addition, board feedback is usually delivered through the city manager. The director can be fired by a concurrence of both the city manager and the county manager (Guilford County Interlocal Cooperative Agreement, 2005). The city of Greensboro provides the following administrative services for the center at no cost: personnel, legal, risk management, and financial services (Guilford County Interlocal Cooperative Agreement, 2005).

The operating structure of Guilford Metro is depicted in the following organizational chart (Figure 7):



**Figure 7: Guilford Metro 9-1-1 Organizational Chart**

Guilford Metro offered dispatch positions to all consolidating center dispatchers, and its employees are considered employees of Greensboro. Mr. Reid explained that this was a controversial decision because both county and city officials wanted the dispatch employees within their organization. When employees from the city and county were initially consolidated under Guilford Metro, there was a different pay scale for county and city employees. Ultimately, the county said it was willing to allow its employees to be transferred over to the city. The county closed its center, and its employees were hired to work at the new dispatch center (this happened toward the end of 2009). The county employees switched over to the city system, and Guilford Metro provided them with pay raises since city salaries were then higher than county compensation levels. Also, a 20-year employee with the county maintained all seniority upon transfer to the

city system.

Neither city nor county dispatchers from the consolidating centers were unionized.

### *Funding and Fee Structure*

The center was designed to be a self-sufficient entity, financially supported with grants and state-imposed 9-1-1 surcharges (Guilford County Interlocal Cooperative Agreement, 2005). Its annual budget is approximately \$10 million. The center derives approximately \$1.5 million per year from a \$0.60 9-1-1 surcharge on phone bills. The city and county fund the remaining balance of the annual budget. Each year, the director determines the funding percentages each entity must pay based on dispatch call volume. In 2009, the city paid 69%, and the county paid 31%.

### **Consolidation**

Consolidation of Guilford Metro was motivated by a desire to achieve greater operational efficiency through community and agency interoperability. Prior to consolidation, the Guilford County and Greensboro PSAPs lacked interoperability, so incoming calls often needed to be transferred, causing a delay in the dispatch of appropriate public safety units. Mr. Reid reported that consolidation of the two centers has cut the total time of calls in half.

Although Guilford Metro is located in the same building as the city's previous dispatch center, the building was remodeled and renamed. The former county dispatch center retains its dispatch equipment and serves as Guilford Metro's backup location. At the time of consolidation, all of the equipment at the county and city dispatch centers became the property of Guilford Metro's (Guilford County Interlocal Cooperative Agreement, 2005).

### **Successes, Challenges, and Lessons Learned**

Mr. Reid's recommendations to future consolidating communities focused on collaboration and communication. He recommended that centers looking to consolidate invite all participants to collaborate and agree on the consolidated center's operations (including standard operation procedures) and management before the center begins operations.

Mr. Reid noted that many of the challenges Guilford Metro overcame were the product of negotiation and collaboration. He stressed that it is important to create a forum where

ideas can be exchanged and to keep an open mind to new ideas. He said this is especially true for SOPs. For example, the sheriff initially indicated that he was unwilling to standardize car chase policies, but he eventually compromised. Although a challenging endeavor, Guilford Metro was able to develop standardized policies and SOPs by meeting with its user groups, who discussed these issues and came back with recommendations.

Mr. Reid also said it is important to keep employees informed of current happenings and new developments. To accomplish this, he distributes a monthly newsletter to center employees.

Mr. Reid said that the greatest challenge may have been politics; the city and county spent considerable time debating how to consolidate and manage the new center. Deciding how to fund the center was also a challenge. He noted that it is important throughout the process to have “an open mind and a thick skin.”

In terms of successes, Mr. Reid said the consolidation saved money only in the elimination of dual contracts (i.e., software).

## **Liberty County Public Safety Communications (Hinesville, GA)**

Unless otherwise noted, this case study summary is based on information obtained in interviews of Thomas Wahl, the director and chief of Liberty County Public Safety Communications, conducted on September 27, 2010, and November 4, 2010, and an email dated May 12, 2011.

Liberty County Public Safety Communications (LCPSC) is located in southeastern Georgia in an area that is primarily rural and suburban. The 511-square-mile service area includes seven incorporated communities, as well as some unincorporated areas and part of the Fort Stewart Army base. LCPSC's 22 full-time dispatchers handle approximately 103,000 calls annually, 54,700 of which are 9-1-1 calls. LCPSC considers all computer-aided dispatch (CAD) incidents a call for service.

Although the initial consolidation took place in 1991, additional communities have since joined. The 1991 consolidation included 1 police department, 1 sheriff's office, 1 professional (non-volunteer) fire department, 7 volunteer fire departments, 1 emergency management agency (EMA), and 1 emergency medical service (EMS). LCPSC serves the communities of Allenhurst, Flemington, Fort Stewart, Gum Branch, Hinesville,

Midway, Sunbury, Riceboro, and Walthourville. LCPSC currently dispatches for the following departments:

- Eastern District Fire Department
- Fleming Fire Department
- Gum Branch Fire Department
- Hinesville Fire Department (Stations 1 & 2)
- Hinesville Police Department
- Lake George Fire Department
- Liberty Regional EMS
- Liberty County EMA
- Liberty County Sheriff's Department
- Midway Fire Department
- Midway Police Department
- Riceboro Fire Department
- Walthourville Fire Department
- Walthourville Police Department

### **Structure and Operations**

LCPSC is a county department created by county ordinance. The county administrator is the immediate supervisor of LCPSC's director. There is an advisory board, which has the following representatives:

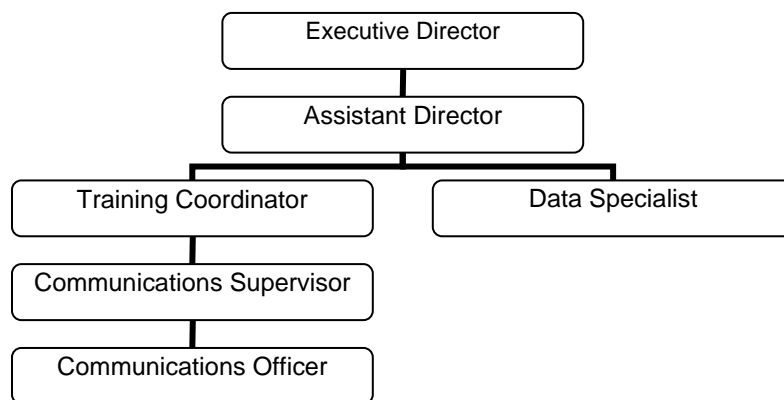
- the county administrator (serves as the chair of the board),
- the county sheriff,
- a representative from the county board of commissioners,
- the fire coordinator (a representative from one of the volunteer fire departments and a county employee),
- a representative from the city of Hinesville's police department,
- the city of Hinesville fire chief,
- the city manager for the city of Hinesville (co-chair),
- the director of Liberty Regional EMS,



- one citizen representative from each incorporated area, and
- one citizen representative from the unincorporated area.

This advisory board meets quarterly to review the status of the LCPSC's operations, staffing, and technology. The board makes recommendations on all aspects of the operations as it deems necessary and appropriate.

LCPSC dispatchers (called communications officers) are cross-trained and required to handle all aspects of incoming calls (police, fire, and EMS) for all communities. LCPSC does not have call-taker positions. Cross-training for all positions simplifies job classifications and allows LCPSC to have one pay grade and one training curriculum. The organization of LCPSC is portrayed in Figure 8.



**Figure 8: Liberty County Public Safety Communications Organizational Chart**

Mr. Wahl suggested several reasons for LCPSC's ability to handle incidents that generate an increase in the number of calls (at times, LCPSC's shift of five dispatchers might field up to 60 calls for a single traffic accident). Dispatchers are experienced and cross-trained. In addition, LCPSC is staffed for the peak times and not the average.

Two contentious issues addressed during consolidation were transference of seniority and leave. Although it did not receive compensation, to minimize conflict with incoming dispatchers, LCPSC agreed to accept liability for employees' leave from the centers being closed. In fact, one employee was permitted to bring in 1,000 hours of compensatory time. Some employees from the consolidating centers eventually left LCPSC because they lost seniority when their communities joined the center. Dispatchers at the consolidating centers were automatically offered positions at the new center. Despite this, LCPSC still had dispatch positions to fill.

### *Funding and Fee Structure*

LCPSC has a few revenue sources, none of which is user fees paid by participating agencies. It receives some revenue from the 9-1-1 charges collected from telephone services with a monthly bill or contract (\$1.50 per month for a cell phone or landline) (Sexton, 2008). However, the total revenues received from the 9-1-1 charges do not cover the center's total costs. Any shortfall is covered by revenue from the county's general fund. A special-purpose local options sales tax (SPLOST), which can be used for capital purchases, is often used as a local match for grants. In 2008, the Southeast Georgia Regional Radio Network (SEGARRN) received a \$7.1 million Public Safety Interoperable Communications Grant, for which LCPSC provided \$1 million in matching funds (SEGARRN, 2011). LCPSC used the grant funds to purchase a new radio communications system to comply with the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) 2011 narrow-banding mandate deadline.

### **Consolidation**

Participating communities were motivated to consolidate to save money. The city of Hinesville and the county administration, along with the sheriff's department, passed a resolution to formalize the decision to consolidate, and the project came together in a few months. New equipment was purchased with funds from a state 9-1-1 charge, with the balance coming from the county's general fund. The centers being closed kept their equipment. Once the new center was ready, the old centers ceased operation.

Because consolidation occurred quickly, there is no formal contractual agreement preventing participants from leaving the center. Mr. Wahl indicated that for many of the small communities, LCPSC's services are very cost-effective.

### **Successes, Challenges, and Lessons learned**

High dispatcher turnover has been one of LCPSC's biggest challenges. Mr. Wahl attributed this turnover largely to the close proximity of another dispatch center that offers dispatchers \$2 to \$3 more an hour than LCPSC offers. Consequently, many leave for the other center after receiving their training at LCPSC. He also indicated that some dispatchers leave because of the job's inherent high-stress environment.

Mr. Wahl shared the following lessons learned throughout the consolidation process:

- Allow participating communities to work together to set center goals. Mr. Wahl said this type of stakeholder inclusion is essential to successful consolidation.

- Establish uniform SOPs before opening the center to avoid dispatcher confusion.
- Make educated decisions by planning before taking any action toward consolidation; carefully research and weigh the benefits and costs.
- Reach out to the people who have already gone through consolidation. The Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) is a good networking resource for this purpose.
- Bring everyone in as new employees to avoid employee benefit and seniority issues.

Mr. Wahl indicated that the original director did a good job at bringing different staff together to function as a team and suggested this as an important quality for a new center's first leader. He attributed the center's success to an inclusive and collaborative environment that considers and weighs dispatcher feedback and opinions (e.g., the adoption of more casually styled uniforms at the request of dispatchers).

### **North East King County Regional Public Safety Communications Agency (Bellevue, WA)**

Unless otherwise noted, this case study summary is based on information obtained in an interview with Chris Fischer, executive director, and Mark Nelson, technology manager, conducted on November 26, 2010.

North East King County Regional Public Safety Communications Agency (NORCOM), located in the Greater Seattle, Washington area, became a legal entity in November 2008 and began operation on July 1, 2009. The service area includes cities, towns, fire service districts, and unincorporated areas covering 1,400 square miles. NORCOM answers 9-1-1 calls and provides radio dispatch services for the following five police and 14 fire departments:

- Bellevue police and fire
- Bothell fire
- Clyde Hill police
- Mercer Island police and fire
- Northshore fire
- Redmond fire

- Eastside fire
- Fall City fire
- King County fire
- Kirkland police and fire
- Medina police
- Shoreline fire
- Skykomish fire
- Snoqualmie fire
- Snoqualmie Pass fire
- Woodinville fire

In 2009, NORCOM fielded approximately 174,000 emergency calls for its suburban and rural mixed service area.

### **Structure and Operations**

NORCOM, a government nonprofit organization authorized by Washington law, was created under an interlocal agreement<sup>2</sup> in accordance with 39.34 Revised Code of Washington (RCW) and 52.26 RCW (NORCOM Interlocal Agreement, 2007). Both NORCOM's governance and operating structures are discussed below.

NORCOM was voluntarily formed as a nonprofit legal entity. It has four boards (see Figure 9) that affect (recommend, create, or change) NORCOM's policy, operating, and staffing decisions. NORCOM'S multi-tiered governance structure was designed to encourage a "highly participatory corporate culture" and secure "operational efficiencies and ... effectiveness." (M. Nelson & K. Reed, 2006).

NORCOM's police operations and fire/EMS operations boards are its first level of governance above its executive director. These operations boards are designed to "promote interagency collaboration and cooperation, information sharing, development of ... operating policy" (Interlocal Agreement, 2007). Each board separately advises the executive director on operational matters affecting its respective agency. Together, the two operations boards make up the joint operations board, NORCOM's next level of governance. The joint operations board meets monthly and advises, informs, and recommends certain actions on an as-needed basis to NORCOM's highest authority, the governing board (Interlocal Agreement, 2007). The governing board meets monthly, consists of one representative from each member agency, is responsible for

---

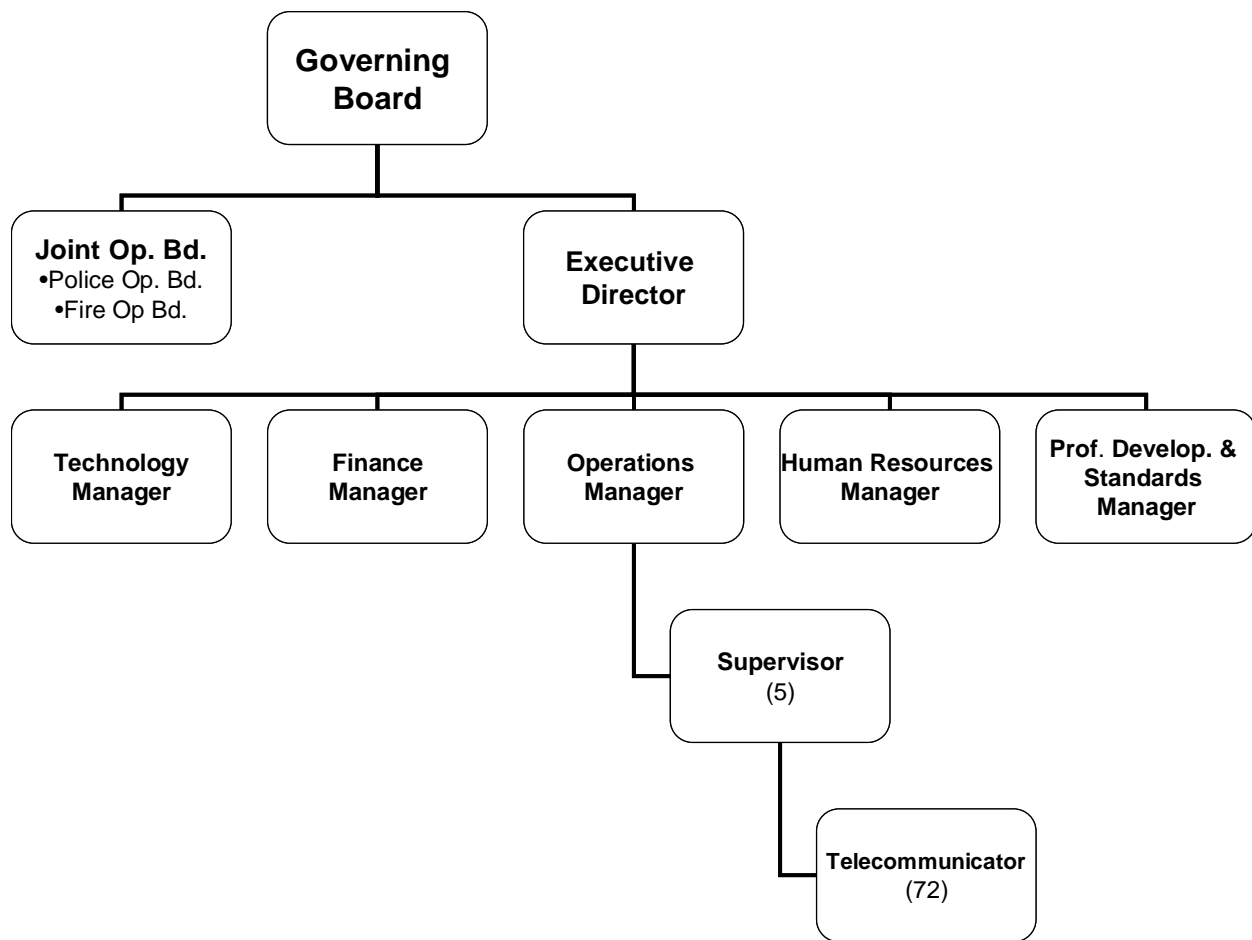
<sup>2</sup> Under 39.34 RCW and 52.26 RCW, local governments may form joint operations of fire districts or regional fire protection services through an interlocal agreement.

NORCOM's overarching policy and budgetary concerns, and appoints and/or terminates the executive director with the advice of the joint operating board (Interlocal Agreement, 2007).

The executive director reports directly to the governing board. The executive director runs NORCOM's day-to-day operations according to the center's policies and procedures, implements approved operating budgets, and fills all staff positions created by the governing board. With the advice of the joint operating board, the executive director also submits proposed changes in NORCOM's policies, procedures, or budget to the governing board (Interlocal Agreement, 2007).

The executive director has a support team of five management professionals in the areas of technology, operations, human resources, finance, professional standards and development. These five managers are responsible for specific areas of NORCOM's operations and keep the executive director apprised of developments or concerns that deviate from NORCOM's statement of operating values and principles, the approved budget, and center SOPs.

Currently, the center employs six team supervisors (dispatch operations supervisors), who report directly to the operations manager, and 72 full-time telecommunicators (dispatchers), who report directly to the team supervisors. The organizational structure is depicted in Figure 9.



**Figure 9: NORCOM governance and organizational structure**

From the initial planning stages in 2006 to present, NORCOM has been unable to reach an agreement with the labor unions involved. Issues of disagreement include training schedules, benefits, and pay rates. Consequently, organized dispatchers are currently working for NORCOM without a labor contract.

NORCOM utilizes comprehensive testing and pre-employment interviews as mechanisms for identifying dispatchers who can make quick and effective decisions under stress, process multiple calls simultaneously, and establish the appropriate priority status of those calls. Specifically, applicants must take and obtain preset performance metrics/scores on the following tests:

- dispatch computer simulation by Ergometrics),

- psychological,
- intelligence quotient, and
- hearing (2009/2010 NORCOM Annual Report).

About half of all applicants fail to pass one or more of the above tests and are not afforded interviews. Once hired, NORCOM's training coordinator provides customized APCO-certified training. All telecommunicators are cross-trained as both call takers and dispatchers for police, fire, and EMS.

#### *Funding and Fee Structure*

NORCOM is funded completely by user fees. It has two types of memberships: principals and subscribers, both of which are assessed user fees based on calls for service. NORCOM principals are part owners of the agency and therefore have a “voice and vote.” Subscribers have no vote but can attend board meetings. Subscribers pay 106% of the user fee assessed to principals.

#### **Consolidation**

To facilitate NORCOM's formation, a steering committee consisting of top government officials from all participating jurisdictions developed a comprehensive implementation plan:

1. Define scope of services to be provided.
2. Recommend a governance structure.
3. Define the relationship between subscribers to and owners of the regional agency.
4. Establish a fee structure for both owners and subscribers.
5. Design an organizational administration model.
6. Identify agency location and the principles for a lease agreement.
7. Quantify staffing levels and cost estimates for agency implementation.
8. Identify a technology strategy for completely integrated computer-aided dispatch, records management, and mobile technology system.

9. Identify start-up and transition costs associated with implementation.
10. Prepare interlocal agreement, by-laws, and articles of incorporation forming NORCOM.
11. Develop an implementation plan, including next steps and a recommended time frame (2009/2010 NORCOM Annual Report).

NORCOM offered jobs to all employees of the two communications centers that were being closed. In hindsight, Executive Director Chris Fischer suggested that it may have been more appropriate to allow NORCOM's management team to re-evaluate each employee's skill level and require staff to compete for positions using interviews and NORCOM's criteria for employment

### **Successes, Challenges, and Lessons Learned**

NORCOM's executive director and technology manager shared a number of insights and advice for those looking to consolidate, based on their own experiences:

- Establish a governance structure first because it will be the foundation from which all other consolidation decisions are made.
- Involve union representatives in consolidation discussions early.
- Hire a center director early in the implementation process so that she or he can take part in decisions such as minimum qualifications, management structure and hiring, and interactions with union representatives.
- Develop a clear mission and accompanying expectations and policies at the beginning stages of consolidation.
- Insist that dispatcher, technology support, and all other applicants meet predetermined minimum standards and qualifications, even if hiring primarily from member municipalities.



## **Northwest Central Dispatch System (Arlington Heights, IL)**

Unless otherwise noted, this case study is based on information obtained in interviews with Cindy Barbera-Belle, the executive director of Northwest Central Dispatch System, conducted on September 24, 2010, and November 19, 2010.

The Northwest Central Dispatch System (NCDS) initially consolidated in 1972 with three communities and added many over the years. Three communities have been added in the last three years. NCDS is located in suburban Arlington Heights, Illinois, northwest of Chicago. The center serves 11 communities: Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Elk Grove Village, Hoffman Estates, Inverness, Mount Prospect, Palatine, Prospect Heights, Rolling Meadows, Schaumburg, and Streamwood. The service area is 126.4 square miles. Seventy-three full-time and two part-time dispatchers field approximately 410,000 9-1-1 and non-emergency calls per year.

### **Structure and Operations**

Participants formed NCDS as an intergovernmental cooperative<sup>3</sup> through the Illinois Constitution and the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act (5 ILCS 2201/1 through 5 ILCS 220/9) by using a venture agreement ((Northwest Central Dispatch System Venture Agreement, 2009). Under state law and the venture agreement, NCDS is generally vested with all powers granted to the participating governments themselves.

NCDS has a board of directors, an executive committee, a police department liaison committee, and a fire department liaison committee. The board of directors consists of mayors of each of the member communities. The mayors have typically appointed the city/village managers as their representatives. The executive committee, which consists of the police and fire chiefs, makes many of the operational decisions, such as emergency fire dispatch protocols. The executive director and NCDS' operational and technical staff meet with the operational staff from the police and fire department liaison committees to discuss new project ideas and to address operational issues and concerns. Ms. Barbera-Belle, the executive director, suggested that this helps the center to run more smoothly.

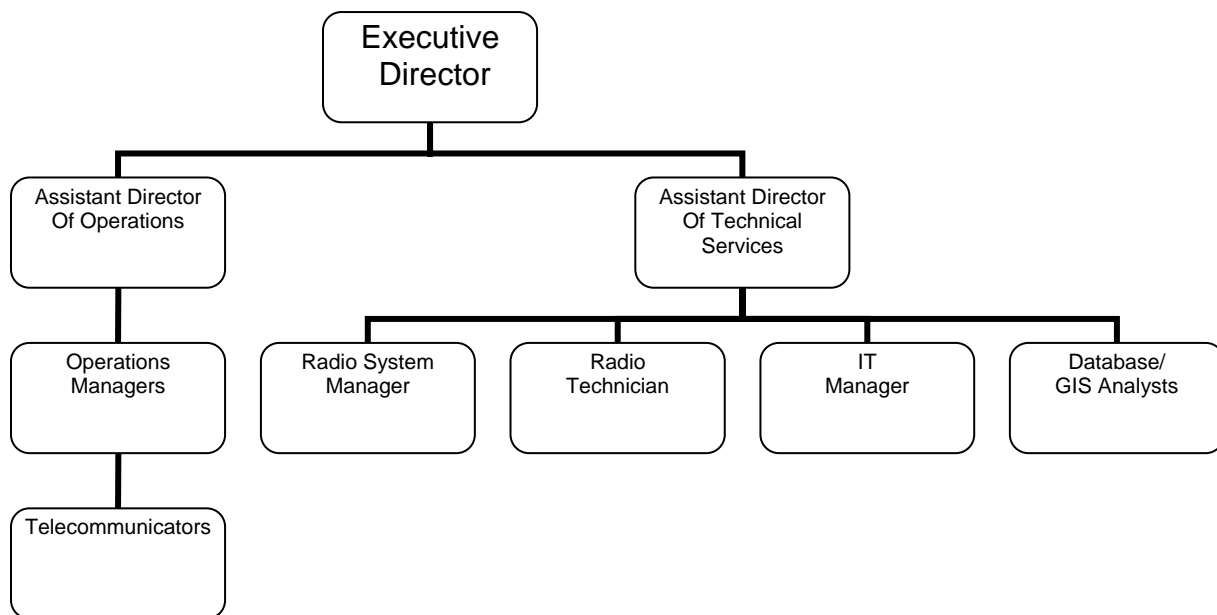
The executive director manages the day-to-day operations of the center. Two assistant directors report directly to the executive director: one in charge of operations and one in charge of technical services (see

---

<sup>3</sup> An intergovernmental cooperative is a sharing, combining, or jointly enjoying of powers by public agencies (the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act, 5 ILCS 2201/1 through 5 ILCS 220/9).

Figure 10). The NCDS utilizes seven operations managers to supervise dispatcher performance. These managers report to the assistant director of operations. Two operations managers are assigned to each shift; one is assigned to training. There are 73 telecommunicators (dispatchers) who cover three separate shifts.

Six technology professionals assist and support the assistant director for technical services: a radio system manager, a radio technician, an information technology (IT) manager, and three database/geographic information systems (GIS) analysts. The organizational chart (see Figure 10) depicts the operating structure.



**Figure 10: Northwest Central Dispatch System Organizational Chart**

NCDS had 14 dispatch positions available when the consolidation was complete. Dispatchers from centers that were being closed did not receive special consideration. If they were interested in obtaining a position at NCDS, dispatchers were required to apply, interview, and test for the position.

As a proactive measure, NCDS held question-and-answer sessions with dispatchers from all centers being closed to discuss the selection process and transition. As part of this meeting, dispatchers were provided with a memorandum that outlined the pay structure and benefits. Because dispatchers with similar experience levels had different salaries, NCDS established a payroll structure that addressed equity in pay for incoming dispatchers. For example, some dispatchers received a raise that put them at parity with other dispatchers with the same level of experience. Seniority, used to prioritize time off or scheduling requests, was based on each dispatcher's first day of employment at NCDS. However, tenure, for the purpose of determining vacation accrual rates, was based on dispatchers' length of service in public employment.

Although dispatchers were not unionized when the center opened in 1972, they did unionize in February 2009. The center is in the process of negotiating its first labor agreement.

#### *Funding and Fee Structure*

Fees are allocated based on total telephone calls (10-digit emergency and 9-1-1) and calls for service. Each community's fee is calculated based on its respective proportion or share of the center's total number of incoming calls (both emergency and non-emergency), and total calls for service, with 75% of the fee determined by the former, and 25% of the fee determined by the latter. Figure 11 depicts the cost allocation formula, where

- TC represents the NCDS's total costs,
- SCV represents a community's share of NCDS' total call volume , and
- SCFS represents a community's share of total calls for service.

The portion of the assessment based on SCV is weighted at 75% and the portion of the assessment based on CFS is weighted at 25%.

$\text{Community fee} = (0.75 \times \text{TC} \times \text{SCV}) + (0.25 \times \text{TC} \times \text{SCFS})$
---

**Figure 11: Northwest Central Dispatch System Fee Allocation Formula**

## **Consolidation**

The founding communities consolidated to increase financial efficiency, share resources, and cut the overall cost of desired technology upgrades. NCDS implemented consolidation incrementally, starting with three police departments, adding a fourth shortly after the center began, and then adding the four fire departments. Since that time, it has added seven police departments and six fire departments/fire protection districts.

When consolidation was complete, the dispatch centers of the participating communities ceased to operate; however, the police departments of the participating communities maintain a front desk for walk-ins. NCDS absorbs equipment and systems (e.g., radio) from new members.

Any agency that wants to join NCDS must adopt the venture agreement and the center's bylaws. The village of Schaumburg joined the center a few years ago. The village's motivation to participate was prompted by personnel issues and an interest in avoiding costly upgrades to its CAD system.

The village of Inverness and the city of Rolling Meadows joined in 2009. For Inverness, it was strictly for financial reasons; Rolling Meadows had previously contracted for police service and then determined that it was more cost-effective to create its own police department. As a result of creating its own police department, the community needed dispatch services.

## **Successes, Challenges, and Lessons learned**

Ms. Barbera-Belle discussed NCDS's experiences and offered suggestions to entities wishing to consolidate:

- Establish a payroll structure providing pay equity for incoming dispatchers.
- Provide training to all incoming employees so they have the information needed to function at the same level.
- Establish a separate agency so that all dispatchers come in as new employees.
- Inform potential participants up-front as to what the intergovernmental agreement requires (i.e., fees)

- Establish an intergovernmental agreement that treats all participants as equal partners. This will enable them to make an informed decision about whether or not to participate.
- Hire a director who has great interpersonal skills, is strong-willed, proficient, diplomatic, decisive, technologically adept, and able to prioritize tasks.

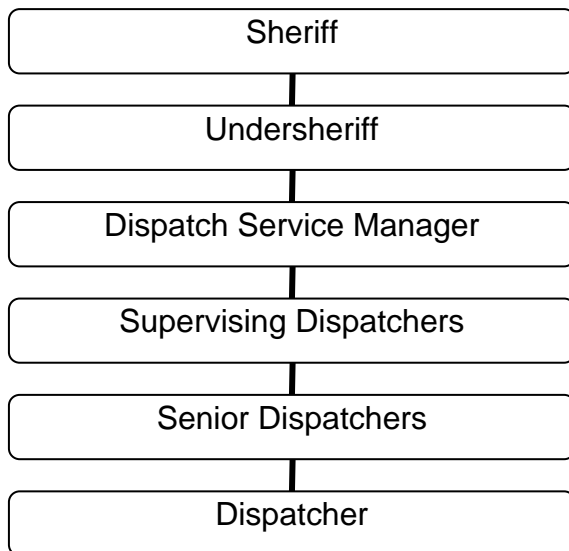
### **Placer County Sheriff's Communications Division (Auburn, CA)**

Unless otherwise noted, this case study is based on information obtained from personal communications with Kathleen Fenley, information technology analyst at the Placer County Sheriff's Office, including an interview conducted on September 27, 2010, and an email dated January 23, 2011.

The Placer County Sheriff's Communications Division (PCSCD) provides dispatch services for all communities in the county, with the exception of four small cities. PCSCD is located about 33 miles east of Sacramento in Auburn, California. Placer County includes a residential population of 5,000 and a daytime population of up to 250,000 on a busy weekend. The 1,500-square-mile, mostly rural, county runs east from the Sacramento County line to the High Sierra Mountains on the Nevada border. The topography ranges from 50 feet in elevation to more than 10,000 feet and contains vast wilderness recreational areas. Placer County mandated consolidation after it conducted a feasibility study.

#### **Structure and Operations**

The Placer County sheriff operates the Communications Division. The dispatch services manager works closely with the sheriff's administrative services captain but answers directly to the undersheriff. PCSCD employs a dispatch services manager, two supervising dispatchers, eight senior dispatchers, and 18 line staff dispatch positions (see Figure 12).



**Figure 12: Placer County Sheriff Communications Division Organizational Chart**

Dispatchers handle approximately 100,000 non-emergency and 60,000 emergency calls annually. Depending on call volume and staffing levels, dispatchers rotate among the functions of call taker and law or fire dispatcher.

#### *Funding and Fee Structure*

Funding for capital is provided, at least in part, through the California Emergency Telephone Users Surcharge receipts. The surcharge is imposed by the state on “amounts paid by every person in the state for intrastate telephone communication services and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services” (State of California, Board of Equalization, 2011). Funding from this source is administered by the California Department of General Services, which provides a funding allotment to 9-1-1 public safety answering points (PSAPs) for the installation and maintenance of emergency communications, also referred to as customer premise equipment (CPE) (Justia US Law.com; City of Elk Grove, 2009). The Department of General Services works closely with each funded PSAP to ensure that all necessary equipment is procured (Report on Funding Mechanisms, 1997; Legislative Analyst’s Office, 2003). The Department of General Services is responsible for repairs and maintenance for the majority of the state’s public safety agency radio systems (Report on Funding Mechanisms, 1997). The surcharge on telephones is also used to fund operating costs of the centers and is distributed similarly through the California Department of General Services.

## **Consolidation**

From 1960 until 2010, there were two county dispatch centers -- one in Auburn, the other in Tahoe City on the north shore of Lake Tahoe. Both centers were primary PSAPs providing emergency medical dispatch (EMD) instruction and dispatching for law and fire. In addition, both performed ancillary dispatch responsibilities for county departments such as Animal Control and the Department of Public Works. Because both centers were part of the same agency, the computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system was accessible in real-time from either dispatch center. The phones (E9-1-1, 7-digit emergency, and business lines) were rerouted through either a manual forwarding process or by switch. Additionally, because both dispatch centers shared access to all radio channels, either center could perform dispatch for the entire county.

In 2007 and 2008, senior county management began exploring cost-saving opportunities throughout the county. In an effort to become more efficient, management began reviewing all county departments. With the technological infrastructure in place, management examined dispatch workload and staffing levels to assess the centers' efficiency, while an independent consultant conducted a consolidation feasibility study for the Tahoe and Auburn dispatch centers. In the Matrix Consulting Group's *Final Report on the Sheriff's Department Dispatch Unit, Placer County, California* (2009), it was noted that the Auburn center could handle the combined call volume of the Tahoe and Auburn centers. The report recommended a detailed plan be developed to consolidate dispatch services from the Tahoe dispatch center into Auburn (Matrix Consulting Group, 2009).

The Matrix Consulting Group report (2009) articulated the then-current structure, staffing, and supervision of both dispatch centers, and policies and procedures related to training, recruitment, retention, and compensation. The report also detailed recommendations for improvement within the new dispatch organizational structure. When the decision to close the Tahoe dispatch center was made, the sheriff's administration created an implementation committee to review and implement the recommendations in the report. Committee members included dispatchers from each center, a Tahoe patrol sergeant, and a representative from each of the following areas: the Placer County Personnel Department, the Sheriff's Office's Human Resources Department, the Sheriff's Office's Information Technology Department, and the sheriff's administration. The committee's three prime objectives were to (1) evaluate how the Tahoe center's closure would impact workflows, (2) design an implementation process to limit negative effects of the Tahoe center's closure, and (3) proceed with the implementation.

The sheriff's administration gave Tahoe center dispatch staff 20-months' notice that the center would be closing and offered the dispatchers positions in the Auburn center. Because dispatch staff members were county employees, those who transferred to the other center did not lose seniority. The county administration decided the center would close by September 2010 or through attrition, whichever came first. A few Tahoe dispatchers left for another agency, and the remaining three were able to find non-dispatch positions within the Sheriff's Office in Tahoe. In May 2010, after an 18-month process, all dispatch responsibilities were transferred to the Auburn dispatch center and the Tahoe dispatch center was closed.

Initial training needs for PCSCD's dispatch staff were minimal. The Auburn dispatch center provided part-time dispatch services to Tahoe over the previous decade, and a few Auburn dispatchers had, at some point, worked in Tahoe. As a result, they were familiar with procedures and with the geography of the area that they would be handling. Auburn dispatchers were (and still are) provided opportunities to ride along with patrol units in Tahoe for geographical orientation and to get acquainted with the patrol staff.

In addition to consolidation of staff, PCSCD needed to transfer, review, and consolidate resources, such as maps, speed-dial phone lists, contacts, gate codes, and pass-down logs. Although the dispatch function would be transferred from Tahoe to Auburn, the Sheriff's Office maintained its office and law enforcement staff in Tahoe. Consequently, the Sheriff's Office installed network printers so the Auburn dispatch center could print in the Tahoe Sheriff's Office, and vice versa. This allows for direct communication with the Tahoe Sheriff's Office. Tahoe dispatch phones were permanently forwarded to Auburn dispatch.

## **Challenges, Successes, and Lessons learned**

### *Challenges*

Ms. Fenley identified the following challenges to consolidation:

- The biggest technological issue was integrating the CAD system with both the agency's record management system and the officers' mobile devices (e.g., radios). Ms. Fenley thought that this came down to having good interoperability.
- It was difficult to establish agreed-upon center-wide operational procedures due to conflicting procedures and employees' reluctance to change.



- The largest challenges were personnel-related. A lack of certainty about the future contributed to apprehension among Tahoe center dispatchers, who were concerned about how the closing of the center would affect their tenure and career paths within the county. The apprehension was further exacerbated because the Tahoe center's closing date changed. Further, although county dispatchers are union members, the union was not involved in the consolidation process.

### *Successes*

Ms. Fenley said the multidisciplinary implementation committee was a success and was beneficial to the overall implementation process; she noted that having this broad scope of experts and stakeholders kept the process moving and helped develop many creative solutions.

### *Lessons Learned*

Ms. Fenley made several recommendations for those considering consolidation:

- Visit an efficiently run consolidated center and find out how it is operated.
- Provide as much information as possible to personnel affected to help ensure a smooth consolidation.
- Create and convene a pre-consolidation committee to map out the new dispatch center's organizational chart and decide on fundamental personnel decisions. She listed a number of related issues that needed to be dealt with first:
  - Determine whether all of the agencies are going to sign a joint powers agreement (JPA) or if one agency will provide dispatch services via contract to the other agencies.
  - Determine the hierarchy of personnel and who will be responsible for what.
  - Get personnel specifications in order, including structure, titles, salary, benefits compensation, hiring practices, and length of probationary periods.

She additionally suggested asking the following questions:

- Will all dispatchers from the centers being consolidated be offered jobs at the new center, or will they have to apply for a position?
- How will you establish seniority?
- If dispatchers have to apply for positions with the consolidated center, what will the hiring and testing process be?
- Will applicants be required to undergo a background check?
- For dispatchers not hired by the new agency, will they be released in a way that makes them eligible for unemployment benefits?

From a technology standpoint, Ms. Fenley thought that the consolidation was quite easy. Redundant systems were already in place and only a few configuration changes were needed on the date of closure. In order for the Sheriff's Office to repurpose the Tahoe dispatch center, all dispatch computer premises equipment (CPE) was removed; radio console equipment became spares for Auburn; the phones were removed and set into storage. The CAD equipment was also distributed to other sheriff's employees.

## **Rice and Steele Consolidated 911 Center (Owatonna, MN)**

Unless otherwise noted, this case study summary is based on information obtained in an interview with Assistant Director Tim Boyer on November 17, 2010.

The Rice and Steele Consolidated 911 Center (RSC) has provided emergency dispatch services to Rice and Steele counties in southern Minnesota for the past 10 years. RSC currently dispatches for 2 county sheriff's departments, 7 municipal police agencies, 9 municipal fire agencies, and 2 ambulance services. The two rural counties combined have a population of 98,000 residents and cover 917 square miles. The residential population of RSC's three cities (Owatonna, Faribault, and Northfield are signatories on RSC's joint powers agreement) ranges from 20,000 to 25,000 each. These communities are positioned approximately 30 to 60 miles south of the Twin Cities.

RSC provides law, fire and ambulance dispatch services for all of Rice and Steele counties. This includes local police and the county sheriffs. Services provided to all

public safety entities in the area include enhanced 9-1-1 dispatch services, records management services, and the purchase and maintenance of all related hardware and equipment. RSC received approximately 60,000 9-1-1 calls in 2009. RSC is governed by a joint powers agreement among the two counties and the cities of Faribault, Northfield and Owatonna.

### **Structure and Operations**

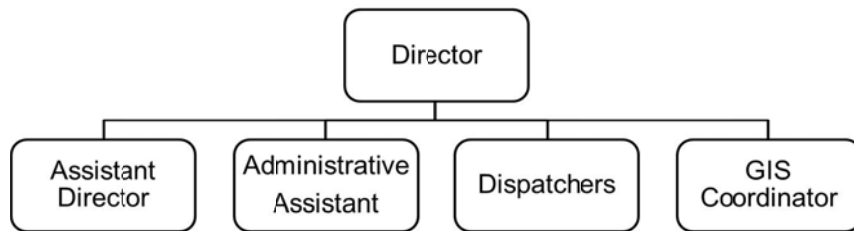
RSC was voluntarily created by a joint powers agreement between Rice County, Steele County, and the member cities of Faribault, Northfield, and Owatonna (Joint Powers Agreement, 2000). Both RSC's structure and operations are discussed below.

RSC is governed by a seven person board of directors consisting of two directors each from Rice and Steele Counties, and one director from each of the three member cities. This includes the representatives from the following organizations or departments:

- Rice County Sheriff,
- Rice County Fire,
- Steele County Sheriff,
- Steele County Fire,
- City of Faribault ,
- City of Northfield, and
- City of Owatonna.

The board is responsible for overarching policies and procedures and budgetary considerations.

Day-to-day operations are run by RSC's director with the support of an assistant director. The operational organizational structure is shown in **Error! Reference source not found..** The director and assistant director hire, fire, and supervise a staff of 15 full-time dispatchers and one part-time dispatcher. In addition, RSC operations are supported by a geographic information systems (GIS) coordinator and an administrative assistant.



**Figure 13: Rice and Steele Consolidated 911 Center Organizational Chart**

The RSC was initially funded by a Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Making Officer Redeployment Effective (MORE) grant. Operational costs are covered by call-volume based user fees and state-assessed 9-1-1 surcharges.

### **Consolidation**

Prior to consolidating, both counties maintained their own dispatch centers, as did the city of Northfield. They ultimately elected to consolidate to take advantage of economies of scale and resulting operational efficiencies due to increased interoperability among first responders.

The decision to create RSC evolved in three phases: feasibility study and analysis, implementation planning, and organizational formation and implementation.

- **Feasibility Study:** In 1993, local county officials applied for and received grant funding to conduct a feasibility study for joint dispatch among Rice, Steele, and LeSueur counties (LeSueur County later dropped out of the study). The feasibility study concluded consolidation was feasible and would result in substantial cost savings.
- **Implementation Planning:** In 1996, the United States Department of Justice awarded RSC the COPS-MORE grant. This grant was used to hire a communications-engineering consultant and complete an implementation plan. The implementation plan estimated capital and operating costs and provided an implementation timeline.

- **Organizational Formation and Implementation:** The five jurisdictions (Rice and Steele counties, plus the cities of Northfield, Faribault, and Owatonna) entered into a joint powers agreement in early 1997. The center opened in 1999.

### **Successes, Challenges, and Lessons Learned**

The following key challenges to consolidation were identified:

- Mr. Boyer indicated that the political bureaucracy between agencies and government entities can be contentious at times. Each agency or stakeholder has its own ideas about how RSC should operate and what services should be provided to its particular agency.
- An RSC report also noted that
  - Operating costs greatly exceeded the original estimates and implementation took longer than expected (Department of Public Safety, 2004).
  - Implementing CAD software was difficult, primarily due to poor planning (Department of Public Safety, 2004).

The following suggestions were made for others looking to consolidate:

- Forgo a multicounty consolidation and focus instead on consolidating within county boundaries. When going cross county lines, there are too many political subdivisions and elected officials to deal with.
- Hire a director with good communication skills and public safety dispatch experience. The director needs to be strong yet facilitate group discussions to form a cohesive single agency.
- Conduct a detailed assessment of service levels and protocols in each jurisdiction before consolidation.
- Establish clear and realistic expectations and specific performance metrics.

- Conduct a pre-consolidation job audit of dispatchers so that the non-dispatch duties currently performed are clearly defined and accounted for in the cost analysis.
- Establish a responsive and trusted method for addressing internal and external complaints.
- Consolidate incrementally. For example, such components as determining radio and CAD systems, consolidating staffs, implementing records management systems, installing mobile data terminals, and remodeling a facility can be broken down into discrete steps and stages so that implementation problems can be more easily isolated and resolved.
- Conduct an information campaign to clarify how the public may be affected by consolidation.

### **San Juan County Communications Authority (Aztec, NM)**

Unless otherwise noted, this case study summary is based on information obtained in interviews with Sheri Rogers, system administrator at the San Juan County Communications Center, conducted on September 23, 2010, and November 9, 2010.

The San Juan County Communications Authority (SJCCA) completed its consolidation in April 1994 after four years of studying and planning. SJCCA is located in the city of Aztec, New Mexico, in a building constructed for the sole use of SJCCA. The largely rural service area in San Juan County is 5,500 square miles and encompasses the cities of Farmington, Aztec, and Bloomfield. There are 27 full-time dispatchers and one part-time dispatcher who handle approximately 250,000 calls for service per year.

The SJCCA provides dispatch services for the San Juan County sheriff, as well as police, fire, and EMS dispatch services for the cities of Farmington, Aztec and Bloomfield. It also provides services to various state and federal agencies in its area, including the state probation and parole office, state park agencies, and rangers from the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management. Some services are provided to the various privately owned areas between the Navajo Indian Reservation and the county, which is not a part of the reservation but is interspersed within reservation land. Kirtland, Flora Vista, La Plata, Cedar Hill, Navajo Dam, and Blanco are unincorporated communities within San Juan County; all public safety functions are

performed by San Juan County departments, including the San Juan County Sheriff's Office.

## **Structure and Operations**

The joint powers agreement (JPA)<sup>4</sup> for SJCCA outlines the general provisions for the SJCCA, including the composition and powers of the board of directors, the powers of the SJCCA, the budget and operating costs (e.g., who approves the budget, sources of funds, allocation per participant), operating equipment and access to communications systems (including responsibilities of participating entities), financial reporting, and termination of the agreement (San Juan County, New Mexico JPA, 2007). San Juan County acts as the fiscal agent and performs fiscal and administrative functions such as payroll, purchasing, and building maintenance. Periodically, San Juan County's human resources staff assists with tasks such as advertising for positions and taking applications; however, the SJCCA pays the county for those services.

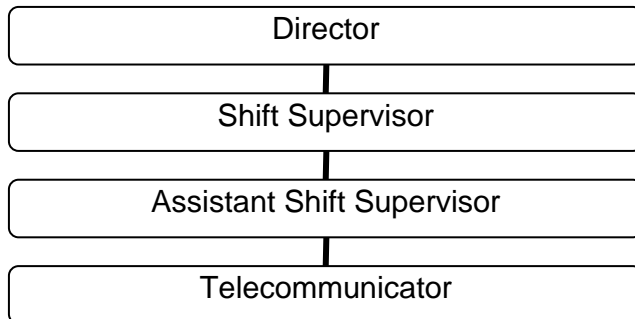
SJCCA is an independent entity governed by a board of directors. The board makes policy decisions, including adopting the bylaws and rules and regulations of the authority (San Juan County, New Mexico Joint Powers Agreement, 2007). The board consists of representatives from San Juan County, the city of Farmington (both the police chief and fire chief), the city of Aztec, the city of Bloomfield, the New Mexico State Police, and a civilian representative appointed by San Juan County. Appointments to the board are made in accordance with the terms of the JPA entered into by the major jurisdictions that SJCCA serves.

There are four types of positions at SJCCA: telecommunicators (dispatchers) and the management team, which consists of assistant shift supervisors, shift supervisors, and a center director (See Figure 14). None of these positions is unionized. The director of SJCCA is responsible for the day-to-day operations, including hiring and terminating employees and developing and overseeing budgets.

Although the director reports to the board, the director is required to submit the budget to the county commission for approval. The county commission has the authority to approve the budget but is unable to make changes without the approval of the SJCCA board. After the budget is approved, it is submitted to the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration.

---

<sup>4</sup> A JPA is a contract between a city, a county, and/or a special district in which the city or county agrees to perform services, cooperate with or lend its powers to the special district or other government entity (ALM Media Properties, LLC, 2011).



**Figure 14: San Juan County Communications Authority Organizational Chart**

Not all dispatchers had experience in handling calls for police, fire, and emergency medical service, so they were trained to dispatch calls across these areas. To enhance their training and familiarize them with the operations of the other centers, the dispatchers visited each center being consolidated.

#### *Funding and Fee Structure*

The region's state representatives and senators helped provide funding (through earmarks) to help cover the costs of consolidation. According to Ms. Rogers, this was probably due to the significant public support and because the project was expected to save money in the long run. The funds were used for start-up costs, such as equipment and the construction of the building.

San Juan County pays for the administrative and operational expenses of the SJCCA using a portion of the revenue generated by the County Emergency Communications and Emergency Medical Services Gross Receipts Tax (the GR tax) (San Juan County New Mexico JPA, 2007; San Juan County NM, 9-1-1 FAQs, 2011). If the receipts from the GR tax are not sufficient to meet the SJCCA's operating budget, the county and cities jointly contribute the amount necessary to meet the SJCCA's operating budget. In that situation, the amount of each entity's contribution is: San Juan County, 44%; the city of Farmington, 44%; the city of Aztec, 6%; and the city of Bloomfield 6% (San Juan County, New Mexico JPA, 2007).

The SJCCA maintains a Capital Equipment Fund that is used to replace obsolete, worn-out or unusable equipment in the communications center. This fund has a balance of \$300,000 (San Juan County, New Mexico JPA, 2007). The New Mexico Department of



Public Safety (DPS) contributes an annual sum of \$75,000 to the fund, which is adjusted to the Consumer Price Index<sup>5</sup> (San Juan County, New Mexico JPA, 2007). If the fund falls below \$300,000, the county and cities provide funds to cover the shortfall according to the same allocation method [mentioned above] used to cover shortfalls in the operating budget (San Juan County, New Mexico JPA, 2007).

## **Consolidation**

Although dispatchers at the centers being consolidated were offered positions at the new center, the SJCCA needed to identify employees to fill management positions. Interviews were held for the supervisor and assistant shift supervisor positions. The SJCCA brought in a director of a neighboring public safety answering point (PSAP) to help with the interviews for supervisors. The SJCCA's original board of directors hired a center director that had experience in consolidating communication centers to help with the actual consolidation process.

None of the centers that were consolidated was unionized; however, SJCCA did have seniority and salary issues to address during the consolidation process. The SJCCA decided to base a dispatcher's seniority, for the purposes of scheduling preferences, on the date he or she was hired as a dispatcher by the previous center in which he or she worked. In order to address the difference in pay scales among the centers being consolidated, SJCCA gave some dispatchers a pay increase comparable to others with their level of experience.

The decision to consolidate was voluntary and came from a desire to be more effective in the handling of public safety calls, as well as to achieve the financial benefits of having a single PSAP. Prior to consolidation, calls that came into the PSAP had to be transferred to the provider of the service that was needed (such as police, fire, or EMS).<sup>6</sup>

SJCCA consolidated using a phased approach. SJCCA initially dispatched for police, fire and EMS for one of the dispatch centers and then provided service to the rest of the cities in the following weeks. This phased approach allowed them to identify and work out issues with a smaller group before bringing in more participants. Most of the

---

<sup>5</sup> All Urban Consumers, U.S. City Average, published by the U.S. Department of Labor.

<sup>6</sup> In recent years, the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration mandated that public safety answering points (PSAPs) had to be consolidated to receive funds for equipment from the 9-1-1 surcharge (Enhanced 911 Rules and Regulations, 10.6.2.15 NMAC (2006)). Each county had to have a plan in place to consolidate into one PSAP by May 28, 2005 (Enhanced 911 Rules and Regulations, 10.6.2.15 NMAC (2006)).

equipment at the consolidated center was new except the CAD system, which was brought over because it was already compatible across users.

SJCCA maintains an unstaffed backup dispatch center in Farmington. In case of an emergency, Farmington firefighters are trained to answer calls until SJCCA dispatchers can arrive.

The joint powers agreement (see Appendix A) outlines how costs are allocated among participants and how parties may terminate their participation in the SJCCA. There are neither incentives for continued participation in the center (beyond cost savings realized by an entity), nor are there any penalties for termination of participation. Agencies are free to leave the center, but they must provide at least 180 days' notice to SJCCA (San Juan County, New Mexico Joint Powers Agreement for Consolidated Communications, 2007). Although a joint powers agreement was signed by all original participants during the creation of SJCCA, the board does not amend this each time a new entity joins; rather, it verbally agrees to provide dispatch services for the new entity.

The New Mexico State Police (NMSP) was involved in the original consolidation and signed the JPA, but it did not join the center until 1996. SJCCA provided dispatch services to the NMSP until 2009, when it withdrew from the center for financial and other reasons.<sup>7</sup>

### **Successes, Challenges, and Lessons learned**

For SJCCA, many concerns arose during its dispatch consolidation process that provide opportunities for reflection and learning. The biggest challenge in the consolidation for SJCCA was getting dispatch staff trained on new systems, equipment, and procedures. For example, dispatchers from the cities of Aztec and Bloomfield were accustomed to using handwritten logs and needed training on the new CAD system. All dispatchers also needed to become familiar with a new radio system and a new telephone system. Ms. Rogers indicated that it is important to train the supervisors on leadership and effectiveness and to make sure that employees have the opportunity to provide input and voice their concerns. That, along with taking the time to explain the implications of consolidation to the employees, will result in employees being more receptive to change.

---

<sup>7</sup>NMSP was interested installing its own automatic vehicle locator (AVL) and computer-aided dispatch (CAD) systems.

From a management perspective, the biggest concern during the consolidation was the location of the center. It took several meetings to get a consensus as to whether all or some of the employees would be brought from the various agencies into the SJCCA. Management also found it challenging to (1) merge staff that was trained on different systems and procedures, (2) get staff to be consistent in implementing the new procedures (e.g., using same 10-code list, same phonetic alphabet), and (3) get staff to operate at the same level of efficiency.

Ms. Rogers indicated that the SJCCA has gained efficiencies in several ways. Having all dispatchers in the same room is particularly helpful in the event of a large-scale event. It facilitates communication and coordination among dispatchers and supervisors. It also eliminates the need to transfer calls as officers go back and forth between frequencies. This consolidation has also eliminated the need to transfer calls between different PSAPs, a procedure that wasted time.

SJCCA learned many lessons throughout its consolidation process that, Ms. Rogers said, have enabled it to provide dispatch services effectively throughout San Juan County.

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Essex County Draft Agreement

Appendix B: SJCCA Joint Powers Agreement

Appendix C: References

## **Appendix A: Essex County Draft Agreement**

**4/22/09 DRAFT  
ESSEX COUNTY REGIONAL EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER**

THE AGREEMENT IS CONSTRUCTED AROUND THE OPTION OPEN TO GOVERNMENTAL UNITS (SEE MGL C.40, S.4A) TO CONTRACT WITH ONE ANOTHER FOR A SERVICE TO BE PROVIDED BY ONE TO MANY. IN THIS CASE, THE SHERIFF WILL PROVIDE SERVICES TO ALL OTHER PARTIES.

### **DRAFT AGREEMENT**

**FOR THE JOINT PROVISION OF PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS, DISPATCH AND OPERATIONS SERVICES**

#### **1. PARTIES**

The Parties to this agreement shall be the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Sheriff's Department of Essex County, Massachusetts ["Sheriff"] and those municipalities and other local, and regional governmental units of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that execute this agreement as authorized by law and pursuant to its terms and conditions ["Governmental Units"].

#### **2. PURPOSE**

This Agreement is entered into willingly by the Parties hereto for the purpose of providing for a regional public safety communication operations center to meet their joint and respective communications needs, which shall include, but not be limited to, expediting timely and efficient responses by police, fire resources ["First Responders"] and emergency medical dispatch services of the participating governmental units and other First Responders providing emergency services on behalf of the Parties.

#### **3. AUTHORITY**

The Parties are authorized to enter into this agreement pursuant to the following provisions of Massachusetts law:

a) The Sheriff, pursuant to Article XIX of the Amendments of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, M.G.L. c.34B and c.40, s.4A and 4D, and M.G.L.

c.37.

b) All other Governmental Units, pursuant to M.G.L. c.40, s.4A and 4D.

#### 4. RECITATIONS

WHEREAS, the Sheriff will provide mutual aid and assistance to member municipalities;  
and

WHEREAS, the Governmental Units require communications and dispatch services to  
meet their respective emergency response and law enforcement duties; and

WHEREAS, the Parties recognize that local and regional emergencies require  
coordination and cooperation to provide timely and effective dispatch of public safety  
First Responders and ongoing communications support during such incidents; and

WHEREAS, the Parties seek to achieve improved levels of effectiveness, efficiency and  
cost control in providing such services,

NOW, THEREFORE, the Parties agree to jointly provide a regional emergency  
communications center under the direction of the Sheriff to render emergency dispatch,  
communications and operations services as appropriate to their joint and respective  
needs.

#### 5. NAME

The collaborative service hereby created shall be known as the “Essex Regional  
Emergency Communications Center” [“RECC”].

#### 6. AGREEMENT

This Agreement constitutes the sole and complete agreement among the Parties  
governing its stated purpose. It establishes a contractual relationship between the  
Governmental Units and the Sheriff, and between and among the Governmental Units  
for the purposes stated herein.

This Agreement may be amended by vote of the Parties as set forth in Section 27  
below.

## 7. TERM

This Agreement shall take effect on the first day of the fiscal year following its adoption pursuant to M.G.L. c.40, s.4A, and execution by the Sheriff and not fewer than four (4) Essex County governmental units. This Agreement shall continue in effect for not longer than of ten (10) years or the number of Parties hereto becomes fewer than five (5).

## 8. FINANCIAL LIABILITY

No Party's financial obligations under this Agreement shall commence until the "Start-Up and Operations Transfer Plan and Budget" (Section 22 below) has been accepted by its executive authority, after a public hearing, and sufficient funds have been appropriated to meet the Party's financial obligation then due.

The financial liability of any Party shall not exceed its share of initial start-up costs, as set forth in the "Start-Up and Operations Transfer Plan and Budget", and annual operating costs as apportioned herein.

## 9. PROVISION OF RECC SERVICES

The RECC shall provide direct services to all municipal Parties to this Agreement and to other First Responders providing emergency services on behalf of the Parties.

The RECC shall not be prohibited from providing incidental indirect services to other governmental units and First Responders providing emergency services in the region, as deemed necessary by the Director to coordinate emergency response by and with the Parties.

The RECC is not authorized to render direct and continuous services to Governmental Units that are not Parties to this Agreement.

## 10. GOVERNING BOARD

There shall be three Governing Advisory Boards: Fire, Police and Financial comprised of one representative from each of the Parties.

The Fire Advisory Board shall consist of the fire chief of each member community. The Police Advisory Board shall consist of the police chief from each member community. The Finance Advisory Board shall consist of the Chief Executive Officer or Chief Financial Officer from each member community.

Each Party shall be entitled to one (1) representative to each Advisory Board.

The Sheriff shall be an ex officio representative to the respective Advisory Boards.

Representatives to the Police and Fire Advisory Boards must be the Chief of a department for which RECC services are currently being performed.

Representatives may not have an employment or any other remunerated association with the Sheriff, the Sheriff's department, or with any other Advisory Board representative.

Representatives shall serve at the pleasure of their respective appointing authorities until they resign or are replaced.

There shall be an Executive Committee comprised of the Chair of each respective Advisory Board.

## 11. GOVERNING ADVISORY BOARD – POWERS

The Financial Advisory Board shall have the authority to:

- a) Approve annual and supplement budgets of the RECC,
- b) Apportion costs to the Parties as prescribed herein,
- c) Approve the annual operating and staffing plans of the RECC and changes thereto,
- d) The Finance Advisory Board shall form a sub-committee of three representatives to participate in the collective bargaining activities for RECC units at the agency level.

The Sheriff as appointing authority would then have the sole duty, obligation and authority to complete the collective bargaining process with the State Office of Employee Relations and the Executive Office of Administration and Finance.



e) Subject to the prior approval of the Board of Selectmen in a Town and the Mayor in a City, approve Amendments to this Agreement (provided in section 27).

The Executive Committee comprised of the Chairs of each respective Advisory Board may veto the Sheriff's nominee for Director, (as provided for in section 17)

The Police and Fire Advisory Committees shall promulgate and approve uniform operating policies, procedures, rules and regulations that govern the development and operations of the RECC,

Each Governing Advisory Board may form such committees and working groups as it deems appropriate and appoint members thereto, provided that no less than one (1) Advisory Board representative is seated on all committees.

Each Advisory Board may exercise any and all authority specified elsewhere in this Agreement, and

Each Advisory Board may delegate its ministerial duties at its convenience to the Sheriff.

## 12. GOVERNING ADVISORY BOARD MEETINGS

Regular meetings of the respective Governing Advisory Boards shall be held on the within the first ten business days of each fiscal quarter at the site of the RECC. Special and emergency meetings may be called by the Chair of each respective Advisory Board, or by a majority of the Parties by written petition to the Chair, to attend to Advisory Board business requiring action prior to its next quarterly meeting.

The Chair shall cause all Parties to be provided with no less than forty-eight (48) hours written notice of all meetings.

Public notices of Advisory Board meetings shall contain the agenda for the meeting. The Advisory Board shall take no vote pertaining to the annual plan and budget or amendments thereto, or the election or recall of an Advisory Board officer, or a veto as herein authorized of any action by the Sheriff, absent notation of such intention in the public notice.

The Executive Committee shall meet monthly with the Sheriff and the Director of the RECC.

### 13. QUORUM

A quorum of the Advisory Board shall be required to convene all meetings. A quorum of the Advisory Board shall consist of the presence of no less than one (1) representative of a majority of the Parties.

A quorum of a simple majority of Executive Committee members shall be required to convene an Executive Committee meeting.

All votes of the Advisory Boards, except those declared without objection as “unanimous”, shall be by roll call. All committee votes shall be by voice.

Any motion offered for action by the Advisory Board shall be deemed adopted when a majority of representatives present and voting votes in its favor, unless otherwise specified herein.

### 14. GOVERNING ADVISORY BOARD OFFICERS

Each of the three Governing Advisory Boards shall annually, at its first fiscal quarter meeting, elect a Chair, a Vice-Chair, and a Secretary/Clerk from among the representatives, who shall perform the duties commonly associated with their titles and as otherwise assigned by vote of the Advisory Board.

Each Party shall cast only one (1) vote for each officer.

Officers shall serve no more than three (3) consecutive years in the same office. The Sheriff may not serve as an officer.

Each Governing Advisory Board shall fill vacancies among the officers by election at its next quarterly meeting following the occurrence of the vacancy. Officers elected to serve unexpired terms shall serve until the next annual election. Any term so served that exceeds one hundred eighty (180) days shall be counted as one year of service.

Each Advisory Board may, by a simple majority vote of the Parties, recall any officer at any time and without cause provided the subject officer, the Parties and their representatives are given written notice of the purpose of the meeting not less than ten (10) clear days prior to the posting of the recall meeting notice. Clear days shall not include Saturdays, Sundays, holidays, the day the notice is given or the day of the recall meeting. No other business shall be conducted at a special meeting called for the

purpose of recall.

Resignations by officers shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary.

Each Chair shall preside at all meetings of the respective Advisory Boards. The Chairs shall perform such other duties as the Advisory Boards may vote. The Vice-Chair shall preside in the Chair's absence.

## 15. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SHERIFF

The Sheriff shall house the RECC, its equipment, furnishings and staff at a secure location suitable to the work of the RECC and under the control of the Sheriff.

The Sheriff shall oversee and direct the creation of the RECC as an operational entity, including all matters pertaining to its facilities, furnishings, equipment and operational policies and procedures.

All RECC staff shall be employees of the Sheriff. The Sheriff shall have sole responsibility and authority to oversee, direct, manage and supervise the operations of the RECC, and to hire, set the compensation for, supervise, discipline and terminate all RECC staff, except as herein provided.

The Sheriff shall have a duty to the Parties to preserve and protect the functioning of the RECC at the level of the annual operational plan and budget under all conditions and at all times; provided, however, that the Finance Advisory Board may by vote, or by prior delegation of authority to the Chair, authorize temporary emergency deviations from the plan as warranted.

## 16. RECORDS AND REPORTS

The Essex Sheriff and the respective Advisory Boards shall ensure the creation and maintenance of complete records of all meetings, decisions, directives, policies, procedures, operations, financial transactions, and all other records and reports pertinent to the business of the RECC.

There shall be an annual report published annually during the first fiscal quarter that comprises all of the three advisory boards' work. The report shall describe the operations and finances of the RECC during the prior fiscal year. It shall also include explanations of any changes in the operational plan and operating budget of the prior

year, a description of both plans for the current fiscal year accompanied by a three (3) year projection of changes to both, and a five (5) year projection of capital costs.

The Finance Advisory Board shall provide for and cause a financial audit of the RECC annually, and a management audit of RECC operations at five (5) year intervals, the first occurring during the second fiscal year after the effective date of this agreement. The Sheriff and the Finance Advisory Board, pursuant to state procurement laws and procedure, shall select the auditing firm.

## 17. RECC DIRECTOR

The Sheriff shall appoint a Director of the RECC subject to veto by vote of the Executive Committee comprised of the Chairs of each respective Advisory Board, provided such action is taken by a unanimous vote of the Executive Committee within ten (10) clear days of written notice by the Sheriff given at a meeting of the Advisory Board. The Sheriff shall provide in such notice, a summary of the qualifications of the subject appointee and an itemized certification that such person has cleared all requisite security and background checks pertinent to the position.

The Director shall be appointed for a three year term, and shall dedicate his full-time effort to managing the RECC and shall, subject to authority granted and duties assigned by the Sheriff, direct, manage and supervise all RECC operations and staff. The Director may be appointed for successor terms. The Director shall attend all Advisory Board meetings and may participate, but may not vote.

The Director shall not serve as the Sheriff's representative to the respective Advisory Boards.

The Director shall prepare and present to the Finance Advisory Board an "Annual Operating Plan and Budget" and all proposed amendments to the plan or budget as recommended by the Sheriff.

The Director shall provide the Finance Advisory Board with timely and accurate responses to questions and requests for further information regarding the plan and budget, and regarding any other matters put forward by the Sheriff.

## 18. ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN AND BUDGET

The Finance Advisory Board shall adopt the "Annual Operating Plan and Budget" by

majority vote of the Parties at its third fiscal quarter meeting, subject to a publicly noticed hearing concluded not less than thirty (30) days prior to adoption, at which a preliminary vote of the Finance Advisory Board representatives is recorded. A copy of the “Annual Operating Plan and Budget” so adopted shall be provided to the executive authorities of the Parties no later than the first Tuesday in February.

The “Annual Operating Plan and Budget” shall delineate all anticipated revenue and costs, including the number, classifications and compensation of RECC staff, all anticipated non-labor expenses and a list of capital expenditures. The plan and budget shall also include detailed three (3) year projections of revenues and costs, and a five (5) year projection of capital costs.

Material deviations from the plan and budget for reasons of emergencies, or otherwise, shall be reported to the Chair in a timely manner and shall be noted on the public notice of the next convened meeting of the Finance Advisory Board, which shall consider the need to amend the plan and budget.

## 19. APPORTIONMENT OF COSTS

The Parties shall share all costs of the RECC proportionately.

Initial costs shall be apportioned among the Parties as set forth in the “Start-Up and Operations Transfer Plan And Budget” (Section 22 below). Initial costs apportionment shall be based on the Parties populations as reported in the most recent federal census.

The Finance Advisory Board shall apportion annual operating costs, including any ongoing debt obligations, in the “Annual Operating Plan and Budget”. Annual operating costs apportionment shall be based on a per capita assessment based on population as reported in the most recent federal census.

## 20. ASSESSMENTS

The Essex County Sheriff shall annually assess on each municipality its proportionate share of the net costs of operating the RECC in accordance with the annual budget approved by the Finance Advisory Board. The Sheriff shall provide estimates of such costs to each municipality on the Cherry Sheet based on estimates for the ensuing fiscal year (July 1) provided to the Department of Revenue by the Sheriff on a schedule determined by said Department. Other non-municipal members may be assessed in accordance with the terms and limits established between that member and the Finance

Advisory Board as a condition on admission to membership. For the purpose of assessing member municipalities the net costs so assessed are defined as total operating costs plus amortized cost to capitalize plus reserve for contingencies minus Commonwealth funds plus gifts and grants.

## 21. PAYMENT OF ASSESSMENTS

Assessments hereunder as to any municipality shall be made and paid pursuant to the Cherry Sheet as approved by the Finance Advisory Board and certified by the Sheriff to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue. Any member not subject to said Cherry Sheet shall be liable in contract and shall in addition to the assessment due, shall be assessed the legal fees and costs reasonably incurred to collect same. The Finance Advisory Board may terminate delinquent members as a member after notice and hearing.

## 22. DEVELOPMENT, START-UP AND TRANSFER OF OPERATIONS TO THE RECC

The Finance Advisory Board shall, within one (1) year of the commencement date of this Agreement, adopt a "Start-Up and Operations Transfer Plan and Budget" for design, development, construction, equipping, staffing and operating the RECC and the orderly transfer of services, personnel, equipment, records and data from the Parties to the RECC. The Start-Up Plan and Budget shall be adopted in the same manner as the Annual Operating Plan and Budget and presented to the Parties for funding.

## 23. ADMISSION OF ADDITIONAL GOVERNMENTAL UNITS

Any governmental unit not a Party to this Agreement may be admitted to the RECC by a majority vote of the Finance Advisory Board upon the governmental unit's acceptance of the original Agreement as amended.

Upon such admission, the total of all capital costs not fully depreciated plus the total of any reserve set aside for future capital costs, shall be reapportioned to all then current Parties as apportioned among the original Parties.

Any new Party shall immediately assume liability for its entire share of capital and operating costs cost as determined by this Section. The Finance Advisory Board shall set the initial assessment for future added communities.

#### 24. WITHDRAWAL

Any Party may withdraw from this Agreement after five (5) years following its date of execution by providing two (2) years written notice and after fulfilling all withdrawal requirements delineated herein.

The executive authority of any Party that has presented withdrawal from the RECC to its appropriate local body for action shall immediately notify the Parties of such pending action.

#### 25. INSURANCE

The Finance Advisory board may budget for, and the Sheriff may maintain, insurance coverage to cover liabilities incurred by the RECC.

#### 26. FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the RECC shall be that of a Massachusetts governmental unit.

#### 27. AMENDMENT OF AGREEMENT

Subject to prior approval of the Board of Selectmen in a Town and the Mayor in a City, the Parties may adopt amendments to this Agreement by approval of the Finance Advisory Board. Amendments adopted by two thirds (2/3) of the Parties shall be binding on all Parties. A Party's failure to comply with an amendment that becomes binding on all Parties shall be considered in default and subject to the obligations of a Party that fails to fully fund its financial obligation.

Proposed amendments shall be considered and acted upon by the Finance Advisory Board in the same manner and on the same schedule as the "Annual Operating Plan and Budget".

#### 28. TRAINING, CERTIFICATION AND ACCREDITATION

The intent of training is to bring all personnel up to Association of Public Communications Officials (APCO) (or equivalent) certification prior to beginning

operation of the RECC. These include (but are not limited to) APCO Telecommunicator, APCO Fire Dispatch, APCO Police Dispatch, APCO Emergency Medical Dispatch, first aid, CPR/AED and APCO Supervisor (where appropriate), along with any state mandated certifications.

In the organizational stage, all policies and procedures will be created with an eye toward compliance with Commission of Accreditation for Law Enforcement Association (CALEA) standards.

This will allow the RECC to apply for CALEA accreditation within a short period of time after it is on line. Receiving this recognition will allow for a reduction in insurance rates and will lessen the opportunity for frivolous law suits to be filed against the center. This recognition will also increase dramatically the stature the center will have among its peers nationwide.

## 29. DISSOLUTION

This Agreement shall dissolve upon the expiration of its term or upon the sum of Parties hereto numbering less than five (5). All Parties at the time of dissolution shall retire all financial obligations of the RECC as if withdrawing.

Continued existence, management and operation of the RECC shall as provided by then current law, be subject to a successor agreement.

THIS AGREEMENT is made by and between the Sheriff and the Governmental Units signatory hereto, each duly authorized.

For the Essex County Sheriff's Department:

Name:  
Title:  
Date:  
As Adopted by:

For the City/Town of <Municipality>:

Name:  
Title:  
Date:  
As Adopted by:



## **Appendix B**

10/08/2010 09:42 5853342863

SJC COMMUNICATIONS

PAGE 02/20

### **SAN JUAN COUNTY, NEW MEXICO**

#### **JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT FOR CONSOLIDATED COMMUNICATIONS**

**RECEIVED**

JAN 19 2007

This Joint Powers Agreement (Agreement) is dated the 11th day of December, 2006, by and between the Board of County Commissioners of San

DFA  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Juan County, New Mexico (County), the City of Farmington, New Mexico, a municipal corporation, the City of Bloomfield, New Mexico, a municipal corporation, the City of Aztec, New Mexico, a municipal corporation, and the State of New Mexico Department of Public Safety (DPS).

#### **HISTORY**

The County and the Cities entered into a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) for Consolidated Communications on March 31, 1992, which was approved by the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) on June 24, 1992. The 1992 JPA was amended by Amendment No. 1 on November 1, 1993, which was approved by the DFA on April 7, 1994. The 1992 JPA, as amended, was restated and amended by a JPA dated May 7, 1996 which was approved by the DFA on June 26, 1996.

**NOW THEREFORE**, the parties agree as follows:

#### **1. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1.1 Pursuant to the provisions of the Joint Powers Agreement Act (Sections 11-1-1 through 11-1-7 NMSA 1978) and the Enhanced 911 Act (Sections 63-9D-1 through 63-9D-11 NMSA 1978), the parties agree that a separate legal entity known as the San Juan County Communications Authority (the Authority) shall be organized and empowered as set forth herein.

1.2 The parties agree that, by execution of this Agreement, they jointly and severally constitute, authorize and empower the Authority as a separate entity, with full powers to enter into contracts, to sue and be sued, and otherwise do all things necessary to carry out the duties delegated hereunder.

1.3 By entering into this Agreement, none of the parties shall be responsible for liability incurred as a result of the other party's acts or omissions in connection with this Agreement. Any liability incurred in connection with this Agreement is subject to the immunities and limitations of the New Mexico Tort Claims Act, Sections 41-4-1, *et seq.*, NMSA 1978, as amended. This paragraph is intended only to define the liabilities between the parties hereto and is not intended to modify, in any way, the parties' liabilities as governed by federal, state, local, or common law and the New Mexico Tort Claims Act. The parties and their "public employees" as defined in the New Mexico Tort Claims Act, do not waive sovereign immunity, do not waive any defense, and do not waive any limitation of liability pursuant to law. No provision in this Agreement modifies or waives any provision of the New Mexico Tort Claims Act.

Any privileges and immunities from liability, exemptions from laws, ordinances and rules, all pension, relief, disability, workers' compensation and other benefits which apply to the activity of officers, agents or employees of any of the parties to this Agreement when performing their respective functions within the territorial limits of their respective public agencies, shall apply to them to the same extent while engaged in the performance of any of their functions and duties extraterritorially under the provisions of the Joint Powers Agreements Act, Sections 11-1-1 to 11-1-7, NMSA 1978.

1.4 The area to which the consolidated communication services shall be supplied shall be San Juan County, New Mexico and the area designated as New Mexico State Police District No. 10 by DPS.

**2. BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

2.1 The Board of Directors shall consist of seven members; provided, however, that in the event a party terminates its participation in this Agreement pursuant to paragraph 9.2 of this Agreement, the size of the Board of Directors shall be reduced by the number of directors the terminating party has the right to appoint under paragraph 2.2 of this Agreement. All members of the Board shall be residents of the County and may be, but do not have to be, a resident of one of the cities. Four of the directors shall be full time employees of any of the following criminal justice agencies:

- A. A Municipal Police Department;
- B. The San Juan County Sheriff's Department;
- C. A City Attorney's Office or the District Attorney's Office;
- D. The District Court, a Magistrate Court or a Municipal Court;
- E. The New Mexico State Police Department;
- F. The San Juan County Detention Center; or
- G. A State or Federal probation or parole Division or Department.

2.2 The members of the Board of Directors shall be selected as follows:

The Board of County Commissioners shall appoint two directors. One of the directors shall be a full time employee of a criminal justice agency (criminal justice position) and one shall represent the county volunteer fire departments (volunteer fire department position). The City of Farmington shall appoint two directors. One of the

directors shall be a full time employee of a criminal justice agency (criminal justice position) and one shall not be employed by a criminal justice agency (at large position). The City of Bloomfield shall appoint one director who is not employed by a criminal justice agency (at large position). The City of Aztec shall appoint one director who is a full time employee of a criminal justice agency (criminal justice position). DPS shall appoint one director who shall be the New Mexico State Police District Commander of District No. 10 (criminal justice position).

2.3 The term of office for members of the Board of Directors shall be indefinite. All members of the Board of Directors shall serve at the pleasure of the entity that appointed them and they may be replaced at any time by formal action of their appointing entity. All directors shall serve until their successor has been appointed and formally taken office.

2.4 In the event of the death or resignation of a director, or three consecutive absences from duly called meetings, the entity that appointed the director shall thereupon appoint a director to replace the vacated position.

2.5 The Board of Directors shall elect one member as Chairman, one member as Chairman Pro-tem and one member as Secretary of the Board. Officers shall be elected every two years. A special election shall be held if there is a vacancy in an office prior to the expiration of a regular term of office.

### **3. GENERAL POWERS OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

3.1 The affairs of the Authority shall be conducted by the Board of Directors.

3.2 The Board of Directors may adopt By-Laws and Rules and Regulations as it deems necessary to conduct the affairs of the Authority.

3.3 Each director, or their representative, shall have one vote.

**4. POWERS OF THE AUTHORITY**

The Authority shall be empowered and authorized to:

4.1 Establish and operate a Consolidated Communication Center to provide emergency and law enforcement communications for the County, the Cities, and State Police District 10.

4.2 Exercise the rights and powers granted to a "local governing body" under the Enhanced 911 Act.

4.3 Contract for the installation and operation of an enhanced 911 system and other emergency and law enforcement communications equipment.

4.4 Pay for such equipment, software, installation of equipment and software, maintenance agreements, and related services by way of a lease, purchase or lease-purchase subject to the provisions of the Procurement Code.

4.5 Administer the funds provided for enhanced 911 services by the Enhanced 911 Act.

4.6 Money received from the enhanced 911 fund shall be spent in accordance with rules adopted by the Local Government Division of the Department of Finance and Administration.

4.7 In addition, the Authority may do any other act as may be necessary to provide effective and efficient emergency and law enforcement communications; including, but not limited to, the contracting with equipment vendors and service suppliers for the purpose of obtaining the benefit of technological developments which the Authority

deems necessary to improve or enhance the quality and efficiency of service to be provided hereunder.

4.8 The Authority may enter into contracts with other governmental public safety agencies to provide communication services at a cost to be determined by the Authority.

4.9 The Authority shall not have the right or authority to force the relinquishment, reassignment, relicensing or use of any radio frequency or frequencies that are presently licensed to any of the parties to this Agreement or any of their agencies.

**5. BUDGET AND OPERATING COSTS**

5.1 The annual budget of the Authority shall be submitted to the Board of County Commissioners of San Juan County and shall not be effective until approved by the Board of County Commissioners. Unless otherwise provided in this Agreement, the County shall provide the funds that are necessary for the Authority's administrative and operational expenses from the revenue generated by the County Emergency Communications and Emergency Medical Services Gross Receipts Tax (the G.R. tax). The Authority shall pay a reasonable fee each fiscal year, to be determined by the Authority's Board of Directors, to compensate the County for the administrative support services the County has provided to the Authority during the preceding fiscal year.

5.2 The County is currently allocating 58% of the G.R. tax to fund the Authority's administrative and operational expenses and 42% of the G. R. tax to fund the ambulance service. The Board of County Commissioners may adjust the percentage of the tax allocated to the communications fund and the ambulance service fund as necessary in the future to meet the funding requirements for both services. If the County Emergency Communications total tax fund is not sufficient to meet the Authority's operating budget

for any fiscal year, the County and the Cities shall jointly contribute the amount necessary to meet the Authority's operating budget. The amount of each entity's contribution shall be determined by applying the following percentages to the total amount of the required contribution:

<u>Entity</u>	<u>Percent</u>
The County	44%
The City of Farmington	44%
The City of Aztec	6%
The City of Bloomfield	<u>6%</u>
TOTAL	100%

5.3 If the County terminates its participation in this Agreement, the County shall, notwithstanding its non-participation, continue to provide the funds set out in this Agreement that are reasonably necessary for administrative and operational expenses.

5.4 DPS shall contribute an annual sum to the Authority's Capital Equipment Fund. The annual contribution will be due on August 1 of each fiscal year. For the fiscal year 2006-2007, the annual sum shall be \$75,000.00. For subsequent fiscal years, the annual contribution shall be the sum of \$75,000.00 adjusted to the most recent Consumer Price Index, All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), U.S. City Average, published by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. If this index is discontinued, the parties agree to substitute another equally authoritative measure of change in the purchasing power of the U.S. Dollar as may then be available in order to carry out the intent of this provision.

5.5 The City of Farmington has purchased a Multijurisdictional Integrated Public Safety Information System (MIPSIS) which is utilized to connect all public safety agencies in San Juan County to one records system. The records portion of the system will be maintained on the computer in the City of Farmington.

5.6 There will be a continuing annual maintenance cost for software, communications circuits and the computer for the MIPSIS computer at the communications center. The County shall pay 33% of the yearly maintenance cost as part of the operating costs of the communications center and 67% of the yearly maintenance costs shall be divided among the using agencies (including County agencies) based upon the number of service calls for each agency during the previous year. If funds are available annually from the G.R. Tax proceeds to cover the entire MIPSIS maintenance cost, the Authority may include the entire amount in its annual budget and no contribution will be required from the participating agencies.

**6. OPERATING EQUIPMENT AND ACCESS TO COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS**

6.1 All of the Communication Center equipment presently installed and subsequently installed in the consolidated communication center facility shall remain in the facility should any of the parties to this Agreement choose to cease its participation in the communications system.

6.2 Each entity shall be responsible for acquiring, maintaining and replacing its own field and in-house equipment used to communicate with the communications center.

6.3 DPS shall provide access to the statewide microwave system to allow the communication center to dispatch the New Mexico State Police. Any and all costs of



connection to and maintenance of access to the statewide microwave system shall be paid by DPS.

6.4 DPS shall pay all costs of the communications center NCIC line. The costs of any additional lines and the costs of any future upgrades and line changes will be negotiated with DPS, but the final decision shall be made by the Authority. DPS will not be responsible for any of the costs of additional lines, upgrades or line changes if DPS provides written notice to the Authority, within 30 days after the Authority's decision, that DPS is terminating its participation as a party under the provisions of paragraph 9 of this Agreement.

6.5 The Authority shall maintain the CAD software for the MIPSIS computer at the communications center and the Authority will be the contact agency with the software company. The Authority shall have full and final authority concerning all security issues for the CAD at the communications center. The Authority shall be responsible for maintaining all files within the computer at the communications center and shall be responsible for all updates and changes. The City of Farmington Information Technology staff shall assist the Authority staff with all major end-user application system updates and changes.

6.6 Each using agency shall have the responsibility of maintaining security on its own files and maintaining the configuration tables in the Records Management System for its own agency. If any party ceases its participation in this agreement (including the City of Farmington), the City of Farmington shall continue to maintain the records portion of the system on the MIPSIS computer in the City of Farmington.

6.7 Any major change to the records system shall be approved by all parties to this Agreement. If a major change to the records system will benefit all parties, payment for that upgrade shall be divided among the using agencies based upon the number of service calls for each agency during the previous year. If a major change will benefit only one agency, that agency shall be responsible for the cost of the upgrade.

6.8 The City of Farmington shall be responsible for system maintenance on the MIPSIS servers. The City of Farmington I.T. Department will be the contact with the software company except as pertaining to CAD. Each using agency shall be responsible for maintenance and replacement of its own equipment within the agency. Each using agency other than the Authority is responsible for maintenance and replacement of in-building wiring within the agency. The City of Farmington I.T. Department shall be the contact with the supplier for maintenance of all telephone lines involved in the records system and the City of Farmington I.T. Department shall be responsible for contacting the appropriate supplier for repairs or installations of telephone lines.

#### **7. FUNDS AND OPERATIONS**

7.1 The County shall be the administering agency and the fiscal agent for the Authority. As the fiscal agent, the County shall manage all revenues, maintain all accounts and receive and disburse all funds on behalf of the Authority.

7.2 The funds of the Authority shall be held in one or more separate accounts and shall not be commingled with the funds of any of the parties to this Agreement. All funds received pursuant to the Enhanced 911 Act shall be utilized and maintained as set out in the Enhanced 911 Act.

7.3 The Authority may invest its funds only in accordance with any applicable laws of the State of New Mexico governing the investment of public funds.

7.4 No party to this Agreement shall have any liability to pay for any debt or other obligation incurred by the Authority unless there is a specific undertaking to do so accompanied by an appropriation approved with the requisite formalities.

7.5 The Authority shall maintain a Capital Equipment Fund which shall be utilized to replace obsolete, worn out or unusable equipment in the Communications Center. The maximum balance to be maintained in the Capital Equipment Fund shall be \$300,000.00. The County and the Cities will jointly contribute each fiscal year the amount necessary to retain the maximum balance. The amount of each entity's contribution shall be determined by applying the following percentages to the total amount of the contribution required to maintain the maximum balance:

<u>Entity</u>	<u>Percent</u>
The County	44%
The City of Farmington	44%
The City of Aztec	6%
The City of Bloomfield	<u>6%</u>
TOTAL	100%

**8. BOOKS AND RECORDS**

8.1 The Authority shall maintain adequate and correct accounts of its funds, properties and business transactions. The accounts shall be open to inspection at any reasonable time by the parties hereto, their accountants or their agents. The Authority shall cause an annual audit to be conducted by an independent certified public accountant

licensed by the State of New Mexico. The Authority shall file a copy of said audit with each of the parties.

8.2 Within ninety days after the end of each fiscal year, the Authority shall prepare and present to the parties a comprehensive annual report of the Authority's activities and finances during the preceding year.

8.3 The Authority shall prepare and present such reports as may be required by law, regulation or contract to any governmental agency.

8.4 The Authority shall also render to the parties hereto, at reasonable intervals, such reports and accounting as the parties may from time to time request.

**9. TERMINATION OF AGREEMENT**

9.1 This Agreement shall continue in full force and effect, subject to amendments, until a majority of the parties have terminated their participation in this Agreement pursuant to paragraph 9.2 of this Agreement.

9.2 Any party's participation in this Agreement may be terminated by written notice from such party to the Authority at least one hundred eighty (180) days prior to the effective date of the notice; provided, however, that all equipment shall remain in the consolidated communication center facility pursuant to paragraph 6 of this Agreement and no funds shall be refunded to the withdrawing party.

9.3 Upon termination of this Agreement by a majority of the parties to this Agreement, the powers granted to the Authority under this Agreement shall continue to the extent necessary to make an effective disposition of the property.

9.4 Upon termination of this Agreement by a majority of the parties, the property of the Authority shall be transferred to the County if the County assumes the duties and

responsibilities of the Authority. If the County does not assume the duties and responsibilities of the Authority, the real property shall revert to the County pursuant to the terms of the lease and the personal property of the Authority shall be divided by the Board of Directors of the Authority among the member entities remaining at the time of termination in proportion to the percentage of each member's contribution set out in paragraph 7.5 of this Agreement. If a member has withdrawn prior to final termination of this Agreement, prior to calculating the final distribution of personal property, the withdrawn member's percentage of contribution shall be divided among the members remaining at final distribution in proportion to the percentage of each remaining member's contribution set out in paragraph 7.5.

9.5 Upon termination of this Agreement, any surplus of money shall be returned to the entities who were parties to this Agreement at the time of termination in proportion to the contributions made.

**10. AMENDMENT**

This Agreement may be amended by the parties from time to time, but any amendment shall be in writing, executed by all of the then parties thereto, and approved by the Department of Finance and Administration.

**11. LIABILITY OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS**

The members of the Board of Directors and its officers shall not be personally liable for any acts performed or omitted in good faith. The Authority shall purchase insurance for the members of the Board of Directors and the Authority against any suit which may be brought against them. The provisions of paragraph 1.3 apply to the Board of Directors and its officers.

**12. SEVERABILITY**

If any one or more of the provisions contained in this Agreement shall be for any reason held invalid, illegal or unenforceable in any respect, such invalidity, illegality or unenforceability shall not affect other provisions hereof, and this Agreement shall be construed as if such invalid, illegal or unenforceable provision had never been a part hereof.

**13. SUPERSEDES ALL PRIOR AGREEMENTS**

This Agreement supersedes all prior Joint Powers Agreements for Consolidated Communications between the parties to this Agreement. On the effective date of this Agreement, the Joint Powers Agreement for Consolidated Communications dated March 31, 1992, as amended by Amendment No. 1 dated November 1, 1993, as restated and amended by the Joint Powers Agreement dated May 7, 1996, shall be terminated by virtue of the parties' signatures on this Agreement.

**14. EFFECTIVE DATE**

This Agreement shall be in full force and effect upon execution of this Amendment by all of the parties and approval by the Department of Finance and Administration of the State of New Mexico.

**15. EXECUTION IN COUNTERPARTS**

This Agreement may be executed in counterparts which shall be effective as if all signatures were affixed to one original document.

**Consolidated Dispatch  
Center Feasibility: Case Studies**

10/08/2010 09:42 5053342863

SJC COMMUNICATIONS

PAGE 16/20

IN WITNESSS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have set their hands and seals by their  
duly authorized officers, agents or representatives.



John Harkardt  
County Clerk  
By: Debbie Halmer, Deputy

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF  
SAN JUAN COUNTY, NEW MEXICO**

By: James C. Henderson  
Chairman

Date: DEC 11 2008

Approved as to form:

Jim Durro  
Attorney for San Juan County

**CITY OF FARMINGTON, NEW MEXICO**

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved as to form:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Attorney for City of Farmington

**CITY OF BLOOMFIELD, NEW MEXICO**

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved as to form:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Attorney for City of Bloomfield

**Consolidated Dispatch  
Center Feasibility: Case Studies**

10/08/2010 09:42 5053342863

SJC COMMUNICATIONS

PAGE 20/20

ATTEST:

**CITY OF AZTEC, NEW MEXICO**

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved as to form:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Attorney for City of Aztec

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
John Denko, Cabinet Secretary

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Legal Counsel

Date: 10/06/06

**APPROVED BY THE DEPARTMENT  
OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Title)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

8/11  
1129107



## **Appendix C: References**

- Booz, Allen & Hamilton. (1997). Report on Funding Mechanisms for Public Safety Radio Communications. Retrieved from <http://www.safecomprogram.gov/NR/rdonlyres/8E12E601-6E30-429E-AFCF-A858CC92734A/0/fundmech.pdf>
- Bray, B. & Fletcher, S. (2011, March 8). *Gloucester Times*. Regional 911 center is a go: Essex, five other towns vote to start construction this year. Retrieved from <http://www.gloucestertimes.com/local/x977543279/Regional-911-center-is-a-go-Essex-five-other-towns-vote-to-start-construction-this-year/print>
- Chagrin Valley Dispatch Council. (n.d.). An Agreement Establishing the Chagrin Valley Dispatch Council, draft.
- Chagrin Valley Dispatch Council. (n.d.). By-Laws of the Chagrin Valley Dispatch Council, draft.
- Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center. (n.d.) Charleston County Organizational Chart.
- Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center. (2007, December 31). Intergovernmental Agreement Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center.
- City of Elk Grove. City Council Staff Report. (2009). Retrieved from [http://www.elkgrovecity.org/documents/agendas/attachments/attachments/2009/01-14-09\\_6.10.pdf](http://www.elkgrovecity.org/documents/agendas/attachments/attachments/2009/01-14-09_6.10.pdf)
- Cybertelecom: Federal Internet Law & Policy. An Educational Project. Customer Premises Equipment Part 68: CPE. Retrieved from <http://www.cybertelecom.org/ci/cpe.htm>
- Dubas, T.K., & McGowan, J.F. (2009). Executive Summary: Enhancing Public Safety: A Collaborative Partnership for Regionalization.
- Dubas, T.K. (2010). Project Overview: A Collaborative Partnership for Regionalization.
- East Central Dispatch Center. (n.d.) By-laws of East Central Dispatch Center.
- East Central Dispatch Center. (n.d.) Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement for

Providing Certain Administrative Services and Housing of the East Central Dispatch, draft.

Enhanced 911 Rules and Regulations, 10.6.2.15 New Mexico Administrative Code. (2006). Accessed on February 9, 2011, from <http://www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/nmac/parts/title10/10.006.0002.htm>.

Essex County Regional Emergency Communications Center. (2009, April 22). Draft Agreement for the Joint Provision of Public Safety Communications, Dispatch and Operations Services. Retrieved from [https://docs.google.com/Doc?id=dd7xd7rw\\_3xdr2zwf4](https://docs.google.com/Doc?id=dd7xd7rw_3xdr2zwf4)

Federal Communications Commission. (2010, January 25). Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau: 9-1-1 Service. Retrieved from <http://www.fcc.gov/pshs/services/911-services>.

Flinn, J.D. (2010, January 7). Charleston County News Release: 9-1-1 Center Takes Major Step Toward Full Consolidation. Retrieved on 5/11/2011 from [www.charlestoncounty.org/News/3073.htm](http://www.charlestoncounty.org/News/3073.htm).

Google. (2010-2011). Comprehensive weekly Google alerts with search terms “public safety dispatch,” “dispatch consolidation,” “regional dispatch,” and “consolidated dispatch.”

Guilford County Interlocal Cooperative Agreement. (2005).

Justia US Law.com. (2009). California Government Code - Section 8592-8592.7 :: Article 6.2. Public Safety Communication Act Of 2002. Retrieved from <http://law.justia.com/codes/california/2009/gov/8592-8592.7.html>

Lake, J.E. (2010, June 29). Memo: Approval of Certification Pay Plan for Consolidated Dispatch.

LAW.COM. (2011). Joint Powers Agreement. ALM Media Properties, LLC. Accessed on March 2, 2011 from <http://dictionary.law.com/Default.aspx?selected=1048>.

Legislative Analyst’s Office: California’s Nonpartisan Fiscal and Policy Advisor. (2003). Analysis of the 2003-04 Budget Bill. Retrieved from [http://www.lao.ca.gov/analysis\\_2003/general\\_govt/gen\\_5\\_cc\\_911\\_anl03.htm](http://www.lao.ca.gov/analysis_2003/general_govt/gen_5_cc_911_anl03.htm)

Littelfuse, Inc. (2004). Customer Premises Equipment (CPE). SIDACtor® Data Book

- and Design Guide. Retrieved from  
[http://www.littelfuse.com/data/en/Application\\_Notes/1CPE.pdf](http://www.littelfuse.com/data/en/Application_Notes/1CPE.pdf)
- Lyons, K. (2005, January 6). County Inching Closer to Central 911. *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*. Retrieved from  
[http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/print\\_289820.html](http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/print_289820.html)
- Minnesota Department of Public Safety. (February, 2004). Public Safety Answering Point Consolidation.
- National Academies of Emergency Dispatch (NAED). (2004). Accreditation/ Re-Accreditation: Application and Self-Assessment. Retrieved from  
[http://www.emergencydispatch.org/sites/default/files/downloads/accred\\_reaccred/NAE20ptsapp.pdf](http://www.emergencydispatch.org/sites/default/files/downloads/accred_reaccred/NAE20ptsapp.pdf)
- National Emergency Number Association. CPE. Retrieved from  
[http://www.nena.org/sites/default/files/20100929\\_MG\\_00-001\\_V14.pdf](http://www.nena.org/sites/default/files/20100929_MG_00-001_V14.pdf)
- National Emergency Number Association (NENA). (2007). Funding 9-1-1 Into the Next Generation: An Overview of NG9-1-1 Funding Model Options for Consideration. Retrieved from <http://www.nena.org/sites/default/files/NGFundingReport.pdf>
- Nelson, M., & Reed, K. (2006). Business and Services Plan Preliminary Recommendations. Retrieved from  
[http://www.norcom.org/docs/historical/NORCOM\\_BusinessServicePlan.pdf](http://www.norcom.org/docs/historical/NORCOM_BusinessServicePlan.pdf)
- NORCOM. (2007). Bylaws of North East King County Regional Public Safety Communications Agency.
- NORCOM. (2010). NORCOM Principal's Assembly 2009/2010 Annual Report.
- NORCOM. (2007). North East King County Regional Public Safety Communications Agency Interlocal Agreement.
- Northwest Central Dispatch System Venture Agreement. (2009).
- Public Safety Emergency Telephone Act, 4 Pa. Code § 120b. (1992).
- Rice and Steele Consolidated 911 Center. (n.d.). Joint Powers Agreement for the Consolidation of Public Safety Answering Points.

- San Juan County Communications Authority. (2011). 9-1-1 FAQ's. Retrieved from <http://sjcounty911.net/index.cfm/sj911-faq/>
- San Juan County, New Mexico Joint Powers Agreement for Consolidated Communications (2007).
- Sexton, E. (2008). State of Georgia 9-1-1 Funding and Grant Programs Update. Presentation at the 2008 Governor's Emergency Management Conference. Retrieved from <http://gcicweb.gbi.state.ga.us/cjis/ori/tacconf/TACConfRef/911Issues.pps>
- Sherman, J.L. (2006, January 17). Last Piece of Allegheny County 911 System Consolidation Put in Place. *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. Retrieved from <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/06017/639154-85.stm>
- Southeast Georgia Regional Radio Network. (2011). About Us. Retrieved from <https://segarrn.chathamcounty.org/Pages/About-Us.aspx>
- State of California, Board of Equalization. (2011). Emergency Telephone Users Surcharge Return. Retrieved from <http://www.boe.ca.gov/pdf/boe501te.pdf>
- Swift Communications. (2011). Final Report on the Sheriff's Department Dispatch Unit Placer County, California. Retrieved from <http://www.sierrasun.com/assets/pdf/SS59828421.PDF>
- The Intergovernmental Cooperation Act, 5 ILCS 2201/1 through 5 ICLS 220/9. Retrieved from <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=92&ChapterID=2>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). 2010 Population, Race, Ethnicity and Occupancy Status for Ohio Communities. Retrieved from <http://urban.csuohio.edu/nodis/2010census.html>
- Wikipedia. (2011). Retrieved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/9-1-1#Funding\\_9-1-1\\_services](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/9-1-1#Funding_9-1-1_services)
- Zopf, K. (2005, March 30). 911 Consolidation May Happen by Dec.31. *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*. Retrieved from [http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/print\\_318580.html](http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/print_318580.html)