



# South Worcester County Communications Center

357 Main Street • Webster, MA 01570 • 508-943-1212  
*Serving the Towns of Webster and Dudley, Massachusetts*



*Gregory Lynskey, Communications Center Director*

*SWCCC Board of Directors*

*Meeting Minutes for January 14, 2021 – Regular Session*

Board Members Present: Chairman Jonathan Ruda, Doug Willardson

Board Members participating remotely: Randy Becker

Board Members Absent: John Marsi

Others Present: Gregory Lynskey, Dean Kochanowski

Meeting Location: Dudley Fire Training Room

- Meeting called to order by Chairman Ruda at 10:01am.
- Chairman Ruda led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Mr. Becker made a motion to approve the minutes from November 12, 2020. Second by Mr. Willardson. Vote: Mr. Becker – Aye, Mr. Willardson – Aye, Chairman Ruda - Aye
- Mr. Willardson stated that Charlton is open to the idea of regionalization. Their Town Administrator and Police Chief are open to discussions with us where as their Fire Chief stated his preference would be to work with agencies along Rt. 20. The Charlton TA suggested reaching out to Sturbridge to see if they would also have any interest. Mr. Willardson stated the overall sentiment of the discussion with both was that they have some interest but aren't ready to move forward with anything. Mr. Willardson suggested potentially using CMRPC to look at the options with the communities. Director Lynskey noted that the FY22 grant cycle is open with a deadline to apply of March 4, 2021. To receive an award under the grant, we would need to have an IMA in place. The exception to this would be for professional services such as a study. He noted feasibility studies are a thing of the past but he suggested that if Charlton or Sturbridge were willing to sign a letter of intent that he believed it would be worthwhile to seek funds for a technology study this year while working to sign an IMA and then utilizing the results of the study in the FY23 grant to seek funding for the technology that would be needed to tie them in. Mr. Becker asked if there are consultants that do those types of studies. Director Lynskey said there are, in fact there are a growing number. Mr. Becker noted that his contact in Oxford was going to have a discussion again with their Town Manager but at this point he has heard nothing back from her. Mr. Ruda suggested the possibility of seeking funding through a Community Compact for a consultant. Mr. Willardson will follow up with Charlton and Sturbridge letting them know the time constraints on this year's grant cycle.
- Director Lynskey stated on a related discussion the Operations Board meeting was cancelled due to multiple chiefs having last minute conflicts. He noted that he had individually touched based with the Webster Chiefs on Mr. Ruda's request to consider regionalized radio channels to open grant opportunities for replacing aging infrastructure. Director Lynskey said there was little to no support from the Webster Chiefs on that matter. Chief Kochanowski asked for further explanation on the idea. Director Lynskey and Mr. Ruda both indicated

## **Board of Directors:**

Jonathan Ruda - Chairman

Doug Willardson - Vice Chairman

Randy Becker - Member

John Marsi - Member

## **Operations Board:**

Dean Kochanowski - Chairman

Michael Shaw - Vice Chairman

Steven Wojnar - Member

Brian Hickey - Member

Gary Milliard - Member

that you would have a single dispatch channel for police and a single dispatch channel for fire with the ability to switch to Ops channels in the event of an incident that was more than a general everyday response. Director Lynskey noted that State 911 rejected money several years back for infrastructure upgrades telling us that it would need to be regional based for them to support the funding. Mr. Ruda added that the Community Compact had criteria related to regional radio networks as well and that could also be a funding avenue. Chief Kochanowski suggested having a joint meeting between the Operations Board and Board of Directors to discuss further. Mr. Becker asked if there were any safety implications. Director Lynskey stated if anything it would improve safety as the dispatchers under regular conditions would be responsible for less radio channels and the likelihood of missing transmissions would be less. Mr. Ruda added that there are safety implications if the infrastructure is not upgraded as it could cause the radio system in Dudley to become unusable. It was decided to invite the Operations Board to the next meeting for joint discussion.

- Director Lynskey stated the installation of the backup radio equipment at Dudley Police is complete and the system is operational. He also noted that he had officially received the grant from State 911 to add a laptop based radio console that could function via cellular connection in the event of a planned event or a temporary evacuation. He stated he had a second quote that he would be sending to Mr. Willardson for a second laptop based console that Mr. Willardson believed he might be able to fund from COVID funds.
- Director Lynskey provided an update on COVID response. He stated that unfortunately just before Christmas two dispatchers tested positive for COVID. Coming during the holiday week with two other dispatchers already on vacation and a position still vacant was quite a challenge but that we made it through it and both dispatchers are healthy and back to work. Mr. Becker asked about dispatchers getting the vaccine. Director Lynskey stated that Harrington was a great partner and was providing the vaccine to dispatchers before the state included dispatchers in phase 1. He stated that about 60% of the dispatchers had received at least their first dose and that several more were working on scheduling an appointment. Mr. Becker thanked the dispatchers for all they have done working through the pandemic.
- Director Lynskey provided a review of the budget through December 31, 2020. He stated there was no concern right now with the status of the budget and in fact he noted there is a surplus in personnel due to the vacancy that has existed for several months. He stated he would likely be requesting that the board consider a special condition again for additional carryover or buyout of vacation time as was done last year since vacations are still on hold due to COVID. The Board suggested considering a buyout option with payout to occur in June rather than July utilizing the unspent personnel funds from the vacancy. Director Lynskey stated this would require an MOA with the union since it would change the payout language which he believed would not be a problem to obtain.

- Director Lynskey provided the board with a review of the assessments that are due for FY21. He noted that we now had 911 call volume data with per community breakdown for CY2019. He noted that the budget was originally developed with 2016 call volume and that the board would need to decide which call volume to use. He noted that the 2019 call volume swings the percentage of split by several points and would cause a notable increase to Dudley and a decrease to Webster. Mr. Becker stated he was in favor of utilizing the data that was available at the time of the budget planning process. Mr. Willardson made a motion to utilize the 2016 call volume for the FY21 assessments and begin using updated data with the FY22 budget, second by Mr. Becker. Vote: Mr. Becker – Aye, Mr. Willardson – Aye, Chairman Ruda – Aye.
- Director Lynskey presented the board with his Year End Report for CY2020. Mr. Willardson made a motion to approve as written, second by Mr. Becker. Vote: Mr. Becker – Aye, Mr. Willardson – Aye, Chairman Ruda – Aye
- Director Lynskey presented his budget proposal for FY2022 to the Board. He noted that the primary increase in the budget was on the personnel side. He stated the most notable increase was a salary reserve of \$16,500. He stated that line was in place due to the fact that the dispatchers contract expires June 30, 2021 and a successor contract is not yet in place. That line accounts for 2.5% increases in straight-time expenses as well as the associated increase in overtime expenses. He stated he believes that line item as budgeted would be sufficient to cover any first year costs along with any costs of other ancillary increases. He noted that he had suggested a salary increase for both himself and the part-time dispatchers based upon salary surveys that were attached. The Board discussed the proposed increase to the director salary. Director Lynskey noted that the board had previously set a goal of 85%-90% of the average for his salary and that with the current fiscal environment in mind he had suggested a salary increase that would put him at 84%. Mr. Willardson suggested that there may be an opportunity to utilize some COVID funds to assist in funding/supplementing the director's salary due to his increased involvement in the COVID tracking in both communities. He stated he would look into that and the board could discuss further at their next meeting. On the expenses side, Director Lynskey noted the subtotal was virtually the same as last year. He noted that the radio console service agreement had increased due to the addition of the laptop based console however that increase was offset by a onetime expense that was in last year's budget. He stated other than those items, there were some small adjustments to the budget that are noted in the budget narrative. He reviewed the assessments based upon CY2020 911 data. He noted that the local appropriation represented a 6% increase as the state 911 grants were assumed to be level funded and that if any increases are received this would offset the assessments. He also reminded the board of the option to utilize some of the reserve toward the budget given the current financial situation surrounding the pandemic. He stated that his estimate shows approximately \$239,000 in reserves. He stated he can have the town accountant confirm that number before the next meeting. Mr. Willardson made

a motion to approve the budget as presented with the Director's salary to be further discussed at the next meeting. Second by Mr. Becker. Vote: Mr. Becker – Aye, Mr. Willardson – Aye, Chairman Ruda – Aye

- Director Lynskey stated that he is seeking to utilize up to \$20,000 from reserve funds to replace the primary server utilized for the dispatch and records software. He said he can defer the discussion to next month since there is another meeting scheduled that several attendees need to attend.
- Director Lynskey stated he wished to very briefly inform the Board that it is his understanding the dispatchers are looking to leave SEIU as their union which would mean the current contract would be allowed to expire before they reorganize with a new union. If this is the case, it is unlikely that negotiations for a new contract would be beginning before July.
- The Board set the next meeting date as February 11 @ 10am at the Webster Police Department Community Room.
- Mr. Willardson made a motion to adjourn at 11:12am, second by Mr. Becker. Vote: Mr. Becker – Aye, Mr. Willardson – Aye, Chairman Ruda - Aye.