

**Kent County Dispatch Authority
Administrative Policy Board**

**Meeting Minutes
May 17, 2007**

Meeting Location: City of Wyoming, City Hall

Members Present:

Peter MacGregor	Cannon Township
Harry Dolan	City of Grand Rapids
Greg Sundstrom	City of Grand Rapids
Jim Valentine	City of Lowell
Michael Young	City of Rockford
Chuck Deschaine	City of Walker
Curtis Holt	City of Wyoming
Art Tanis	Kent County Board of Commissioners
Larry Stelma	Kent County Sheriff's Department
Steve Harper	Michigan State Police #61
Dave Peterson	Plainfield Township

Members Absent/Excused: Joe, Sierawski, City of Grandville

Guests: Bill Doolittle and Laura Lee, 911-Insight; Capt. Young, Kent County Sheriff's Department; Capt. Belk and Ralph Gould, City of Grand Rapids; Chief Garcia-Lindstrom, City of Walker; Chief Snyder, City of Grandville; Senez Rodriguez, KCEMS; Mark Meijer, Life EMS; Mark Herald, East Grand Rapids; Harvey Becker, Michigan State Police.

Staff Present: Jennifer DeHaan, Kent County Administrator's Office

Media: None

Meeting Called to Order 8:02 am

Action Items:

05-17-07-01 **Approval of the Agenda**
To approve the May 17, 2007 meeting agenda

Motion by: Chuck Deschaine
Support by: Peter MacGregor
Unanimous

05-17-07-02 **Approval of the Minutes**
To approve the April 19, 2007 meeting minutes

Motion by: Jim Valentine

Support by: Michael Young
Unanimous

05-17-07-03

Motion to authorize the development of a draft narrative report by 911 Insight

Moved by: Tanis
Supported by: Stelma
Unanimous

04-19-07-03

Meeting Adjournment

To adjourn the meeting of Administrative Policy Board, next meeting to be held Thursday, June 21 at 8 a.m.

Moved by: Sundstrum
Supported by: Valentine
Unanimous

Public Comment: None

Summary of Discussion Items:

1. **Strategic Planning Work Session- Bill Doolittle & Associates** –Bill Doolittle from 911 Insight presented a conceptual plan for 911 in Kent County.

The conceptual plan consists of two call centers whereby call takers would answer all incoming 911 calls (wireless and land line) and whereby local municipalities would maintain responsibility for non-emergency (seven-digit) calls. The conceptual system as described would provide back-up and redundancy and will dispatch all calls to the appropriate dispatch centers. This would reduce the number of transfers; a goal of this Authority.

The conceptual plan included a Wide Area Network (WAN) that could support all operations including IP based protocols as well as VOIP. It was noted that the 3rd party CAD dispatch is still a part of this concept and that the inclusion of some things such as “closest unit dispatch” and AVL were not included in this concept but left up to the dispatching agency.

A discussion ensued about the role of medical responders and the coding of calls. Chief Dolan noted that he had been working with Chief Snyder and that others also had noted that the time it takes to code a medical call may delay the dispatch of the first responders and that there needs to be a way to dispatch the first alert to fire at the earliest time. Bill Doolittle noted that in the conceptual plan presented today, the fire and ambulance providers would be alerted concurrently and that the dispatchers will be medically trained and able to code the call.

Capt. Young asked for clarification as to how this conceptual plan would impact the function and/or consolidation of dispatch. Doolittle noted that consolidation of dispatch was naturally occurring in Kent County but that the cost effectiveness or quality of service did not warrant

total consolidation of dispatch. Chief Dolan noted that the communication between the call takers and the dispatchers would be something that warrants further consideration. Doolittle noted that this plan would not change the operations of the dispatch center but would have more of an impact on the 911 system by enhancing the role of call taking. Doolittle stated that the call takers need to be accountable to the Authority and the Authority would fund the call taking operation and the professional development necessary to get the call takers responding with established standards and by implementing quality assurance reviews which might improve the current call taking function.

Doolittle noted again that this conceptual plan would not impact the non-emergency calls and other functions that current call taking operations complete, such as records, etc. Sundstrum clarified that non-emergency calls would not be changed under the conceptual plan and that the call takers would be responsible for determining if a call were dispatchable. In other words, for those calls to 911 that are non-emergencies the call taker would be responsible for transferring the caller to the appropriate number if it was not a call that could be immediately dispatched. It was noted that this concept when it relates to the consolidation of call taking defines the public service element which would be improved and the public safety element which would be enhanced.

Peterson asked whether or not the non-emergency caller to 911 would be transferred or just receive the necessary information to call elsewhere. Doolittle noted that the circumstances to transfer the call would require standard operating procedures. Peterson noted that this would still enable the call taker to transfer the call to dispatch.

Capt. Young noted that currently dispatchers cannot listen to the radio traffic and the callers at the same time.

Chief Garcia-Lindstrom noted that there are other communities such as Cincinnati and Boston which have tried something similar but may not have achieved the full results desired.

Doolittle noted that the purpose of this plan would be to improve the quality of service by limiting the number of transfers and by developing the most capable call takers for all disciplines would positively impact the service in the field. Doolittle also noted that the complexity of call taking and dispatch is dependent upon the protocol.

Sundstrum noted that the conceptual plan would significantly reduce the transfers, still provide the functional flexibility necessary, and allow for some local control. Tanis noted that under the current operations the call taker sends the call to police, fire, and EMS and that the communication is on-going and that there would be three fewer transfers which accomplishes the task. Sundstrum noted that we would likely not see cost-savings but again this plan might improve the quality of service. Dolan noted that when all you do is dispatch the calls it sets the stage for the consolidation of dispatch in the future.

Mark Meijer from Life EMS noted that currently the call takers conference in the caller with EMS and that no real transfer occurs and therefore no real transfer is removed from the process which might not impact the quality of service as expected.

Capt. Young noted that under the current structure if a wireless call comes into MSP for a medical emergency it is transferred to EMS to assess the med level and then the call is transferred to KCSD, GR, or another local unit of government.

Doolittle noted that this requires discussion and review of calls and details and that there would be substantial planning tasks ahead which would require determination of day-to-day operations, roles and responsibilities, all at a conceptual level. Doolittle also mentioned that through “boundary drop agreements” and the use of a CAD system this would make the decision of whether to transfer the call which would improve the level of service. Chief Snyder noted that the electronic CAD transfer is the key and adding a countywide database would impact the decision making process.

Harvey Becker noted that this system might not solve the problem even with the suggested technology because determining the jurisdiction from wireless calls are complicated. He noted that even a shared CAD system will not fix all the problems but will fix some. Ralph Gould noted that Phase I implementation routed calls based upon the tower that received the transmission and Phase II is intended to have longitude and latitude coordinates but that there is a serious problem with the delay in Phase II. Chief Snyder noted that the conceptual plan presented here solves the problem by properly training personnel.

Doolittle moved forward with the presentation by presenting what a Wide Area Network might look like and indicated that this network would provide the foundation for the technology in the future. Doolittle then presented the 5 capital projects which include: 1) Time Synchronization; 2) Organizational Alignment; 3) Operational Review; 4) 911 System Consolidated Call Taking, and; 5) Computer Aided Dispatch/WAN and radio communication improvements.

911 Insight presented a “pro forma budget” and time line for each of these capital projects.

Chief Dolan noted that countywide there are issues with radio capabilities and wondered whether or not this would be addressed by the Authority. Doolittle noted that a radio report otherwise known as the Kimball Report was completed three years ago and needs to be updated to better reflect a needs assessment for technology. Peter MacGregor noted that his primary reason for being involved in the dispatch Authority is to address radio communications. Curtis Holt noted that he had brought together the Technical Advisory Committee to discuss the issue of radio communications and technology in general. He noted that radio communication is a parallel and concurrent issue but also more costly and that the TAC would need to start addressing the issues. Chief Dolan noted that getting current information would be key to communicating the need to the County Commissioners. Gould noted that the FCC five year requirement is another impetus for the discussion and review. Chief Garcia-Lindstrom noted that the end goal would be to look at it today to improve it today.

Doolittle then presented a conceptual design for the consolidated call taking centers which would include 12 FTE's and also provided some estimated costs. A discussion ensued about the proposed costs and asked that they be reviewed to ensure that they would be reliable estimates.

Jim Peterson asked whether funding from grants had been included in the revenue projections. Doolittle and Ms. Lee noted that grant funding had not been included as a result of four challenges to the Authority: 1) A non-supplanting rule in most federal grants would not allow the County to assess the surcharge or the Authority to utilize the surcharge; 2) grant funding would be a one time capital grant that would provide an unknown impact on day-to-day operating costs; 3) the federal grant would likely require match funding that has not been identified as available, and; 4) the Authority is likely not ready in the planning stages to apply for the grant. Given these reasons, the budget did not include grant options as a reliable revenue resource. Additional discussion ensued as to whether or not the Authority could carry forward revenue from a surcharge or create a spend-down account. It was noted that SB 410 and 411 were unclear in addressing this issue.

The next steps for the Authority include providing feedback to 911 Insight on the conceptual design and to develop a draft narrative to explain the issues and to put a plan up for review/discussion/implementation. It was noted that this would be the ideal program with estimated expenditures and that the Authority, under the conceptual design would not have employees but contract through local jurisdictions for call takers. Curtis Holt indicated that the Authority needs to make a decision to move forward. Mark Meijer of Life EMS noted that it might be good to also ensure that there is no duplication created without enhancing response times and that this may directly impact medical call taking.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Tanis to move forward and request that 911 Insight draft a narrative report of the plan presented by 911 Insight. **The MOTION** was supported by Sheriff Stelma. A discussion ensued about how the narrative would then be presented to the Commissioners and how the Authority might communicate this information through a work session. It was also noted that the findings of the TAC committee may also impact the decisions of the Authority but that the findings of TAC would take much longer and be a work in progress that should not delay the drafting of the narrative. The **MOTION** was approved unanimously.

Doolittle noted that the draft narrative report would be completed in a few weeks and would be distributed to the Authority by Jennifer DeHaan and that comments would be due to Doolittle no later than June 4, 2007.

Miscellaneous: None

Next Meeting: Thursday, June 21, 2007, 8 a.m. to be held at the Wyoming City Hall

Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 10:18 a.m.