

DRAFT

**Walworth County Fire/EMS Study Committee
August 6, 2019 Meeting Minutes
Emergency Operations Center
Waukesha County Communications Center
1621 Woodburn Rd., Waukesha, Wisconsin**

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Dave Nelson at 2:04 p.m.

Roll call was conducted and the following members were present: Vice Chair Dave Nelson, Denise Pieroni, and Bruce Vander Veen. Chair John Peters, James Weiss, and Lowell Hagen were absent.

Others present: Walworth County Administrator David Bretl; County Board Chair Nancy Russell; Walworth County Sheriff's Office Captain of Communications Jamie Green; Gary Bell, Waukesha County Director of Emergency Preparedness; Sherri Stigler, Training and Operations Manager; Kaye Kumbier, Communications Center Specialist

Bruce Vander Veen made a motion, seconded by Denise Pieroni, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried by voice vote.

Denise Pieroni asked for a correction to the May 29, 2019 meeting minutes to change "Sheriff's Office" to "county" on page 2, line 8. **Denise Pieroni made a motion, seconded by Bruce Vander Veen, to approve the May 29, 2019 meeting minutes as amended. Motion carried by voice vote.**

Public comment – There was none.

New Business

- Waukesha County Communications Center Tour

Pieroni asked Gary Bell, Waukesha County Director of Emergency Preparedness, and Sherri Stigler, Training and Operations Manager, to give an overview of the Waukesha County Communications Center (WCC). Stigler said the WCC began operating in 2004, after over a year of planning. Stigler introduced Communications Center Specialist Kaye Kumbier and said she is currently responsible for all technology-related issues. Stigler said the WCC was the culmination of work between the Waukesha County Sheriff's Office and the City of Brookfield and Lakes dispatch centers. The WCC has taken on other departments as operations have progressed. There are currently 50 dispatchers, with typically eight to twelve people working at one time. Employees rotate between working as call takers, law enforcement dispatchers, and fire dispatchers. This allows for Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) to occur while the call is also being dispatched. There are also two supervisors working per shift, with a total of seven on staff, and they assist with issues during shifts. This allows for feedback and assistance immediately. She added that Radio Services is off site, but Emergency Management and Communications services are located within the WCC. Dispatchers work a combination of 8 and 12 hour shifts to total 40 hours per week. They hire groups of 4-8 people twice a year and new employees spend their first six weeks in the training room. During training, they have a basic 40-hour communications course, a week-long geography course, a week learning EMD, a week learning the Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system, along with other miscellaneous trainings in customer service, etc. The training is long but interactive and creative. Once they are out of the training room, they get paired with a Communication Training Officer (CTO) and get daily observation reports and work through all the different positions. The hiring process takes about three weeks and there are a lot of applicants from different backgrounds, as they do not require formal dispatch experience. As a consolidated agency, training is much easier to accomplish. Stigler added the biggest challenge in consolidation was getting people involved who supported consolidation. Kumbier added an important step before consolidation was bringing all involved municipal leaders and chiefs together with

dispatchers and having them write down exactly what they do, what they will provide, and which services should stay local in each municipality. Bell added the WCC does not provide miscellaneous County services not related to 911 communications. He said the budget is \$6.9 million and covers the Communications Center and Emergency Management. Radio Services is supported from an enterprise fund off the tax levy. He added that Waukesha County and Milwaukee County have a great relationship to handle emergency situations and communication. He also said there is a potential opportunity for a regional dispatch center and asked members to consider the possibility of the Walworth County Dispatch Center being set in Waukesha County. Bell clarified the WCC is a department of Waukesha County and he reports to the County Executive. Bretl asked how the budget works for the WCC, and Gary said the Dispatch Operations Commission reports to the County Executive. He said there is no annual fee for municipalities to join, but there is a one-time fee that pays for the building. If a municipality wants access to mobile data, they must pay a license fee. There are currently six Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) in Waukesha County and the WCC provides dispatch for 31 communities. The WCC is also the backup for any agency in Waukesha County, along with the Cities of Milwaukee and Waukesha. In turn, Milwaukee County is the backup for the WCC. Russell asked about the dropout rate during training. Stigler said the national average for new hires is a 50% washout; the WCC is currently at 25%. She added there is more vertical growth potential in consolidated centers than in a small municipality. The structure of WCC also helps with stress for the dispatchers to be able to work together and know there is back up in the case of a massive incident. The WCC is the wireless answering point for the area, so they take in all wireless calls in the area and then transfer City of Waukesha calls to their dispatchers. She said there are around 88,000 total 911 phones calls at WCC per year. Dispatchers also do pre-alert calls for departments, which has decreased response times. Vander Veen asked if some calls could be diverted to Milwaukee County in the case of a large incident and Bell said it is not currently possible; either all of the calls or none of them can be diverted with the current system. Bretl asked about the transition for employees from other municipalities when they join. Bell said they get basic training and then work their own channel at first. They eventually work all the channels as they adjust.

The tour of the Waukesha County Communications Center commenced at 3:02 pm and ended at 4:00 pm. Vice Chair Nelson said it was a great tour and commented the dispatchers really seem to enjoy their jobs.

- Topics for next meeting
 - Wrap-up of the committee/finalize recommendations going forward
 - Progress of Sharon/Darien/Walworth cooperation
 - Feedback on the tour

Public comment – There was none.

Next meeting date and time: The next meeting will be held on Thursday September 19, 2019 at 1:00 pm.

Adjournment

On motion by Denise Pieroni, seconded by Bruce Vander Veen, Vice Chair Nelson adjourned the meeting at 4:11 p.m.

DRAFT

**Walworth County Fire/EMS Study Committee
September 19, 2019 Meeting Minutes
County Board Room 114, Walworth County Government Center
100 W. Walworth Street, Elkhorn, Wisconsin**

The meeting was called to order by Chair John Peters at 1:13 p.m.

Roll call was conducted and no quorum was established. Chair John Peters and Denise Pieroni were present. Vice Chair Dave Nelson, Bruce Vander Veen, James Weiss and Lowell Hagen were absent.

Others present: Walworth County Administrator David Bretl (arrived at 1:22 p.m.); Walworth County Sheriff's Office Captain of Communications Jamie Green; Rebecca LeMire, Village of Darien Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer; Richard Tuma and Sherrill Ornberg, PSAP Concepts & Solutions; Benjamin Pierce, Janesville Gazette

[Recorder's Note: Although no quorum was established, members present discussed various agenda items and no actions were taken.]

Agenda approval – No action.

Approval of August 6, 2019 meeting minutes – No action.

Public comment – There was none.

New Business

- Feedback on Waukesha County Communications Center tour – No action.
- Progress of Sharon/Darien/Walworth cooperative efforts – No action.
- Submission of Committee comments at appropriate County Board Budget meetings in support of the purchase of the Fire Module of Pro-Phoenix and further consideration of budgeting funds to study the establishment of a consolidated dispatch center under the direction of the County Administrator and County Board

Denise Pieroni said this item should be discussed due to the time constraint with the County Budget process. Richard Tuma and Sherrill Ornberg, from PSAP Concepts & Solutions, introduced themselves and gave a brief overview of the workflow study they are currently conducting at the Walworth County Sheriff's Office. The study is not on consolidated dispatch, but is related to the type of study this committee is looking to conduct. Tuma said they have both worked on consolidation with other organizations previously. Pieroni said this committee sent a resolution to the County Board, but it was denied. She asked Chair Peters to submit a letter to the County Board asking for reconsideration of the request. Captain Green expressed concern that even if the Board agreed to fund the study and the study recommends consolidation, will it be possible to get participation from municipal departments. Ornberg said the current study does not include these services in the scope, but lays a foundation for the information this committee is looking for. She then commended Captain Green for his excellent work ethic and cooperation. She believes his focus is on the success of emergency communications and his goals and objectives are on point. Chair Peters also commended Green and thanked Ornberg for her kind words. Bretl asked about the timing of the studies that are currently being done and Captain Green said the workflow study should be completed by December of this year, and the radio study should be done in the first quarter of 2020.

- Committee wrap up and finalization of “Recommendations” document – No action. Bretl suggested dissolving this committee but said there would need to be a quorum present. His office will create a final draft of the “Recommendations” document and present it at a future meeting where all members can be present. He also said he will work with Chief Peters to draft a letter to the County Board regarding reconsideration of the resolution requesting a feasibility study. He invited any interested members to attend the Executive Committee meeting on October 14th at 10:00 a.m., the County Board Public Budget Hearing on October 29th at 6 p.m., and the Budget Adoption meeting on November 12th at 3:30 pm.

Public comment – There was none.

Next meeting date and time: The next meeting date will be decided at a later time.

The meeting ended at 1:54 p.m.

Submitted by Betsy Stanek, Administrative Assistant. Meeting minutes are not considered final until approved at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

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Recommendations of the Walworth County Fire/EMS Study Committee

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(Reserved)

II. BACKGROUND

In response to the requests of numerous towns, cities, and villages located in Walworth County, in 2016 the County Board of Supervisors passed Resolution 31-11/16 establishing the Walworth County Fire/EMS Study Committee. Membership of the committee consisted of three fire and EMS professionals and four government representatives; one each representing town, village, city and county government. The following individuals were appointed to the committee: Lowell Hagen, Whitewater town chair; Jim Weiss, who served as both the Linn town chair and administrator for the village of Williams Bay; and Denise Pieroni, administrator for the city of Delavan. The fire and EMS perspective was represented by: Lake Geneva's Fire Chief John Peters; Bruce Vander Veen, Chief of Sharon Fire and Rescue; and Dave Nelson, an Assistant Chief with the Lauderdale-LaGrange Fire/Rescue department. Dale Wilson, the County's human resources director, represented Walworth County government. The county board eventually modified the structure of the committee to provide a number of alternate members and to create advisory seats for the county's emergency medical directors, Doctors James MacNeal and Steven Andrews. County Board Supervisor Ken Monroe was the county government alternate while Dennis Martin, Fontan's village administrator, was the local government alternate. Fred Schalow, Chief of the Bloomfield-Genoa City Fire and Rescue was the fire service's alternate member. The Study Committee held its first meeting on March 23, 2017.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Walworth County should establish a consolidated-unified dispatch center that operates independently of the Sheriff's Office and which would be responsible for emergency services dispatch.
- B. Until Recommendation A is accomplished: the charter of the current 9-1-1 governing board should be modified to include Fire/EMS and law enforcement professionals and the duties of the committee should be changed to include the following:
 - i. Review protocols and encourage common protocols;
 - ii. Make recommendations to the communications captain;
 - iii. Make recommendations on evaluating customer service levels;
 - iv. Review data and make recommendations on dispatch staff training and quality assurance.
 - v. Develop a unified dispatch protocol for all PSAPS to include, but not limited to, response time standards and required mutual aid protocols.
- C. GPS devices should be installed on all ambulances, including private agencies contracted for service in the County with the capability to be located in real time

by a centralized dispatch center. Protocols should be developed to determine when to dispatch the closest ambulance to respond to the emergency.

- D. Since law enforcement is often first on the scene, encourage all law enforcement agencies to ensure that deputies and police officers receive first-responder training and have basic life-saving equipment in squad cars.
- E. Encourage fire departments and EMS agencies to support the concept of utilizing the ProPhoenix fire module countywide to aid in information sharing, consistent reporting and GPS monitoring of vehicles.
- F. Encourage every agency to assess their response statistics and ability to meet the NFPA response standards. This assessment should identify their strengths and opportunities and be shared with their leadership and local elected officials.
- G. Require all PSAPs to generate reports of response time statistics, by agency, to the Fire/EMS Committee and the Emergency Communications Advisory Committee.
- H. Encourage regional cooperation in evaluating resources and utilizing financial support, if allocated, from the Walworth County budget to facilitate this cooperation.