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TO: Jeff Irwin
Chair, Board of Commissioners

THROUGH: Robert E. Guenzel
County Administrator

FROM: Scott Patton
Assistant to the County Administrator on Public Safety

DATE: September 5, 2007

SUBJECT: Regional Dispatch Committees

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

It is requested that the Board of Commissioners create and appoint members to two groups to discuss, study, and make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners and other public bodies related to the topic of regional and/or consolidated dispatch.

BACKGROUND:

Dispatching occurs at Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), which are operations that answer 911 calls. There are two types of PSAPs – primary and secondary. A primary PSAP is an operation that answers 911 calls directly from the public. Primary PSAPs determine the location of the emergency and the type of service needed. If the call requires resources not dispatched by that PSAP, the call is transferred to a secondary PSAP. In Washtenaw County, there are nine primary PSAPs and four secondary PSAPs. Three PSAPs are both primary and secondary due to dispatching fire service beyond their police boundaries. One of the primary PSAPs is Central Dispatch, which is operated by the Sheriff.

Dispatching consists of three disciplines – police, fire, and EMS (emergency medical services). In Washtenaw County, all EMS calls are dispatched through Huron Valley Ambulance (HVA). HVA is a large operation that supplies EMS services in eight different counties. HVA also has contracts with eight townships and fire authorities in Washtenaw County through which HVA dispatches for their fire services as well. This is done through a cost recovery model.

The fire departments participate in Washtenaw Area Mutual Aid Association (WAMAA), which has established a committee to explore the feasibility of consolidating all fire dispatching. As a part of regional discussions with the Metro Alliance, fire chiefs

recommended a functional consolidation model. However, two barriers inhibit this arrangement in today's environment. The first is incompatible communication equipment. With the upgrade of 800 MHz equipment throughout the County, this barrier will be eliminated. The second barrier is non-consolidated dispatch.

For police, consolidating dispatches has been an ongoing discussion for many years. Police chiefs have not taken a unified stance on the issue in the way that the fire community has. Concerns of police agencies would need to be incorporated into the project plan of the committees.

DISCUSSION:

Throughout the 2008/09 Planning Process, Commissioners have emphasized the value that the Board places on exploring regional approaches to government service delivery. Dispatching is a service that is common among several local units and the time might be opportune for regional consolidation. Participants in the Washtenaw Metro Alliance have also discussed consolidating dispatches. As discussion progresses, the Metro Alliance will be briefed.

It is recommended that the Board of Commissioners appoint two groups to discuss, study, and make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners and other public bodies related to the topic of regional and/or consolidated dispatch. Together, these groups would be charged with developing a conceptual framework to present to Commissioners. The conceptual framework would include a rationale for consolidating dispatches and identify the apparent costs and benefits with doing so. The framework will also narrow the options and identify best practices and case studies. If the Board adopts the conceptual framework, the next step would be a feasibility analysis through which various arrangements would be modeled.

The first group would be a Steering Committee. The Steering Committee would be responsible for guiding policy discussions, identifying success factors, evaluating financial arrangements, and ultimately determining options. If members are unable to attend, they may choose to appoint alternates to act on their behalf. Proposed members for the Steering Committee include:

- Jeff Irwin, Washtenaw County Commissioner and Board Chair
- Mark Ouimet, Washtenaw County Commissioner
- Dan Minzey, Washtenaw County Sheriff
- Gretchen Driskell, Saline City Mayor
- Bob Guenzel, Washtenaw County Administrator
- Roger Fraser, Ann Arbor City Manager
- Ed Koryzno, Ypsilanti City Manager
- Jim Walter, Pittsfield Charter Township Supervisor
- Dale Berry, Huron Valley Ambulance President and CEO
- A township representative, to be appointed by the Washtenaw County branch of the Michigan Townships Association
- Garvin Smith, a citizen's representative

The second group would be an Operations/ Technical Committee. It would be responsible for discussing operational issues that can help inform the Steering Committee and will include representatives from police, fire and EMS agencies.

Proposed members of this workgroup include:

- Greg Bazick, Ann Arbor City Deputy Police Chief
- Jeff Lewis, Milan City Police Chief
- Herb Mahony, Washtenaw County Undersheriff
- Don Dettling, Dexter Area Fire Authority Captain
- Sam Hopkins, Ann Arbor City Fire Chief
- Jim Roberts, Superior Township Fire Chief
- Craig Swenson, 800 MHz Consortium Business Manager
- Jerry Zapolnik, Huron Valley Ambulance Vice President of Support Operations
- Larry Morabito, Ypsilanti Township Fire Chief
- Matt Harshberger, Ypsilanti City Police Chief
- Paul Bunten, Saline City Police Chief
- John Phillips, Pittsfield Charter Township Public Safety Director
- Ed Toth, Chelsea City Police Chief
- Marc Breckenridge, Washtenaw County Emergency Management Director
- Additional members may be identified as the project progresses.

Scott Patton, Assistant to the County Administrator for Public Safety, would act as staff support to both committees.

IMPACT ON HUMAN RESOURCES:

There is no direct impact on human resources. However, if action is taken by the Board of Commissioners to consolidate dispatches, this action will have significant impact on human resources. The degree of this impact is unclear at present but will be identified through a feasibility study.

IMPACT ON BUDGET:

Establishing the committees has no impact on budget. However, the primary PSAPs currently receive County funding through a 4% surcharge on land lines as well as a State disbursement of wireless phone lines. The Board of Commissioners has established the Emergency Telephone District Board (ETDB) to allocate these funds to PSAPs, as well as to oversee the Enhanced 911 plan. If consolidating dispatches proves feasible for the County, the policies established by the ETDB may be impacted.

A second budget that may be impacted is the 800 MHz project. In 2006, voters approved a millage to purchase 800 MHz radios for first responders throughout the County and to create infrastructure to allow these radios to work. Part of the infrastructure includes the construction and leasing of towers to house microwave equipment and connectivity between the towers. Another part of capital purchases deals with the consoles that are used at dispatch centers. The 800 MHz Project Oversight Committee has approved a policy that would purchase the consoles but would make connectivity and maintenance of the consoles a local responsibility.

INDIRECT COSTS:

None.

IMPACT ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS OR OUTSIDE AGENCIES:

There will be no impact on outside agencies as the conceptual plan is developed. If the conceptual plan is approved by the Board of Commissioners, the impact on outside agencies will be detailed as a part of a feasibility analysis.

A RESOLUTION TO CREATE AND APPOINT MEMBERS TO TWO COMMITTEES TO DISCUSS, STUDY, AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ABOUT VARIOUS ARRANGEMENTS FOR DISPATCHING POLICE, FIRE, AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES IN WASHTENAW COUNTY

WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

September 5, 2007

WHEREAS, County Guiding Principle #7 is to “provide leadership on intragovernmental, intergovernmental, and intersectoral cooperation and collaboration aimed at improving services to County citizens”; and

WHEREAS, there currently exists nine primary Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) in Washtenaw County; and

WHEREAS, the Washtenaw Area Mutual Aid Association (WAMAA) has determined that service delivery could be enhanced if fire dispatch were provided on a county-wide level; and

WHEREAS, additional service enhancements and/ or cost savings may be possible by regionalizing service delivery and reducing the number of PSAPs; and

WHEREAS, dispatching consists of three primary disciplines of police, fire, and emergency medical services; and

WHEREAS, there are many arrangements that could ensure that County residents and visitors receive emergency services; and

WHEREAS, these arrangements should be discussed and evaluated;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners hereby establishes a Steering Committee to discuss policy issues related to dispatching services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Steering Committee consist of the following members: Jeff Irwin, Washtenaw County Commissioner and Board Chair; Mark Ouimet, Washtenaw County Commissioner; Dan Minzey, Washtenaw County Sheriff; Gretchen Driskell, Saline City Mayor; Bob Guenzel, Washtenaw County Administrator; Roger Fraser, Ann Arbor City Manager; Ed Koryzno, Ypsilanti City Manager; Jim Walter, Pittsfield Charter Township Supervisor; Dale Berry, Huron Valley Ambulance President and CEO; a township representative, to be appointed by the Washtenaw County branch of the Michigan Townships Association; and Garvin Smith, a citizen’s representative.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that an Operations/ Technical Committee to discuss operational issues associated with dispatching services in order to advise the Steering Committee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Operations/ Technical Committee consist of the following members: Greg Bazick, Ann Arbor City Deputy Police Chief; Jeff Lewis, Milan City Police Chief; Herb Mahony, Washtenaw County Undersheriff; Don Dettling, Dexter Area Fire Authority Captain; Sam Hopkins, Ann Arbor City Fire Chief; Jim Roberts, Superior Township Fire Chief; Craig Swenson, 800 MHz Consortium Business Manager; Jerry Zapolnik, Huron Valley Ambulance Vice President of Support Operations; Larry Morabito, Ypsilanti Township Fire Chief; Matt Harshberger, Ypsilanti City Police Chief; Paul Buntin, Saline City Police Chief; John Phillips, Pittsfield Charter Township Public Safety Director; Ed Toth, Chelsea City Police Chief; and Marc Breckenridge, Washtenaw County Emergency Management Director.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that either committee shall be allowed to expand membership as needed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County provide staff resources to both committees to guide and facilitate discussions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committees shall report back to the Board of Commissioners with recommendations.