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TYPE OF FILING Comment

COMMENTS:

Please find a memo to the Board of Police Commissioners in Stonington back in April. The issue of dispatch consolidation has been around for some time now. Some communities are interested in this while others are not. Stonington is somewhat unique as we have very limited options on consolidation due to our geography. We also police two of the largest tourist attractions in New England in the Mystic Aquarium and Seaport. The Mystic area has a very large tourist population as well. The discussion on consolidation of dispatch has been ongoing for some time now, but there are some overriding questions that have not been answered. Below is a memo to the Board of Police Commissioners in Stonington after a meeting with OSET. Also please find attached the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association stance on this matter. It is my belief that the proposed change in funding formula will adversely affect smaller communities including Stonington. Thank you.

April 1, 2013

TO: Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Chief Darren Stewart

SUBJECT: PSAP (Public Safety Answering Point or 911 answering point) Consolidation proposals

On March 13, 2013, a meeting was held at the PD with a representative from the State's Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications (OSET). In attendance were the Chairman of the Board of Finance Glenn Frishman, Vice Chair of the board of Police Commissioners Mel Olsson, Director of Finance for the Town Maryanna Stevens, First Selectman's representative and also Board of Finance member Sandy Grimes, Captain Desmond and myself. The purpose of this meeting at the request of OSET was to get a feel on what smaller Towns were thinking as far as the possibility of consolidating dispatch.

Much discussion occurred on the pros and cons of such an endeavor. This discussion also included our past conversations with Ledyard and also the fact that we are limited in options due to bordering the State of Rhode Island to the east and the Atlantic Ocean to our South. Also discussed was our unique geographic location with a focus on tourism including covering two of the largest tourist venues in New England. Important questions such as administrative calls (which account for approximately 85% of all calls to a PD) and who would answer these, who would monitor prisoners, who would greet citizens that come into our lobby, who would monitor video feeds into schools during a crisis/incident, and who would assist in our EOC during a storm/crisis were not answered.

Basically, we walked away from this meeting supporting our dispatch center and the fine work that they do. If another community was interested in approaching us to do their dispatching, we would not be opposed to discussing this. Below you will find the latest from the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association and their stand on PSAP consolidation. I hope you find this helpful for the future.

CPCA continues to oppose legislation put forth that will mandate the consolidation of PSAPs. Here is a link to the proposed bill. <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2013/TOB/H/2013HB-06334-R01-HB.htm>

The proposed bill penalizes municipalities with a population of less than 40,000 if they are not part of a regional PSAP center beginning July 1, 2019. The State will no longer fund PSAPs for those size communities after that date.

Here are the reasons we oppose this proposal.

1. This bill only addresses PSAP or emergency 9-1-1 calls. There is no provision for switchboard services for your community. While proponents may talk of cost savings to municipalities you will still have to figure out who will take your non-emergency calls at your PD.
2. There is no funding attached to this proposed legislation that will provide the dollars necessary to facilitate your agency's PSAP merge with another PSAP.
3. Who will monitor other radios that your dispatcher currently monitors, ie., School radios, public works, human services, animal control, etc. Common sense may say that the new communication center will monitor all of your frequencies, but the legislation does not provide for that function.
4. During a severe weather emergency will a regional center have the capacity to handle the exponential increase in calls for service and be able to seamlessly communicate with other town agencies?
5. What will be the Union implications of regionalization?
6. Who will take on the responsibility of entering warrants, sending locates, clearing warrants and auditing COLLECT/NCIC data? In many agencies this is done by the PSAP workers.
7. A regional center will need COLLECT access. Under the current statutory and regulatory structure can such a center lawfully be granted COLLECT access? FBI regulations require a bona fide police official to have control over persons who have COLLECT/NCIC access.
8. How many video monitors exist in your dispatch center? Who will be charged with monitoring all of the video feed to include your prisoners?

As you can see, even if 9-1-1 responsibilities are taken from local PDs we all will need someone to be stationed at HQ to answer routine phone, buzz open doors, monitor video feeds, communicate with schools and other town departments with radios and myriad other duties currently fulfilled by our PSAP employees.