



# Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

**Board of Selectmen Minutes  
Special Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, December 11, 2015  
Colchester Town Hall @ Noon**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** First Selectman Art Shilosky, via teleconference; Selectman Denise Mizla, Selectman Rosemary Coyle

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Selectman Stan Soby, Selectman John Jones

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Fire Dept. Chief Cox, Fire Dept. D Lee, Tolland 911 T Millix, and Clerk T. Dean

**1. Call to Order**

First Selectman A Shilosky called the meeting to order at 12:01 p.m.

**2. Discussion and Possible Action on KX Contract**

Entered into the record is a letter from Kevin McManus and Sean Hoskins

R Coyle moved that the Town of Colchester terminate the contract with KX as of June 30, 2016 at 2359 hours (11:59pm), based on research and work done, seconded by D Mizla. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

**3. Adjourn**

R Coyle moved to adjourn at 12:05 p.m., seconded by D Mizla. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted,

Tricia Dean, Clerk

RECEIVED  
COLCHESTER, CT  
2015 DEC 11 PM 1:34  
Tricia Dean  
TOWN CLERK

11 December 2015

Dear First Selectman Shilosky, and members of the Board of Selectman,

I am writing this morning, to express concern and disapproval, of any actions concerning removing 911 service and emergency communications from Colchester.

I am a 20 year resident of the town, a 19 year member of the fire department, and a 16 year employee of Colchester Emergency Communications, known locally as "KX".

I will preface that all of the neighboring, and not so neighboring dispatch centers have their strength and weaknesses in personnel, operations, and equipment, and this is in no way a shot at any of my fellow 'communications' colleagues who I work with on a daily basis around the State.

The current situation and discussions are all based around finances, and who can do it 'cheaper'. As I mentioned in a prior letter to the First Selectman, there are many bullet points that are 'of value', however do not show up in a RFP or in a line item. Again, are any of these of value or consideration to anyone anymore?

**You will lose** the local the local knowledge. Cohen's (Pond), Mohrlein's (Farm), Marvins (Deer, House, Garage), Jacks, Bacon (Old & New), Blockbuster, Trails and Parks – just to get started..

**You will lose** the personal phone call. "HI" Walt (Chief), Don (Deputy), Ken (Assistant), Paul (Assistant), Danny (Career), Reed (Building), Sean (FMO), KC84, Jones'e, Jim (PW), Dean (Highway), Steve, Phil, Guthrie (Water), - just to get started..

**You will lose** the situational awareness of what's going on – in the neighboring town, with the medics, with how busy the clinic is, if the highway is closed on the way to Backus, and sadly, what exactly is going on with the safety of responders, by being able to community with the State Police face to face – not by a phone call..

**You will lose** the "New to fire department – stop by anytime and see what goes on and how we do it".

*While trying to keep this short*, this is just the tip of the iceberg of thing's that cannot truly be assigned a financial value, but are of utmost importance to residents, responders, and administrators.

KX is overseen and governed by representatives from each town – therefore the future, or the failure of KX is in part to each business partner.

**In closing, please consider the option of convening a group of fresh individuals to address the 'business' aspects of the organization – either saving "KX", or looking on how to rebuild services in and for this community.**

Sincerely,

Kevin McManus – Colchester, CT

PO Box 49  
Colchester, CT 06415-0049

Art Shilosky - First Selectman  
Town of Colchester  
127 Norwich Ave.  
Colchester, CT 06415

Page 1 of 2

December 11, 2015

Dear Mr. Shilosky.:

First let me announce that I am proud to call Colchester my "adopted home town". My family has rich history in the town, which dates back to at least the 1920's. The family legacy includes commercial property owners, large land owners, and past public officials. Of course, the ones I am proudest of are my Great Uncles, who were decorated pilots, fought in the Pacific Theater during World War II, and are honored on stones on the Colchester Town Green. With that in mind, I would like you to understand the passion involved in writing the following plea.

As you know, our town is serviced by a regional 9-1-1 center, appropriately located in Colchester. This service is not to be confused with the State Police's consolidated dispatch center that many have read about in the news. In addition to answering 9-1-1 emergency calls, the 9-1-1 center "radio dispatches": fire; medical responders; ambulances; a regional paramedic service; a local police department; and an array of other emergency services.

While 9-1-1 is now taken for granted, its local history might surprise the people of this day and age. Back in the mid 1970's, local firefighters, town officials, and even private business people came up with the concept to share the cost of 9-1-1 service through a partnership of several small towns. With this combined financial might, and the help of other government funding, the small towns founded a non-profit corporation, and built the infrastructure for a 9-1-1 center. In addition to "state of the art" telephone answering equipment, a customized radio network was also constructed, to communicate with emergency services in a nearly 300 square mile area. The location of this new dispatch center was deliberately placed inside the State Police Barracks in Colchester, CT (Troop K), to allow the quick and efficient (face to face) exchange of emergency information between fire and medical services, and the State Police personnel.

On to the point: there seems to be several rumors about said 9-1-1 center "closing up shop". The rumors have seemed to escalate to the point that some of the company's member towns, and government officials, are scrambling to find alternate dispatch centers. It is this writer's opinion that the mass hysteria, and paranoia based on incomplete information is dangerous. Not only to the company's financial well-being, but to the safety of the public the 9-1-1 center serves.

What the town officials seem to be forgetting is that their 9-1-1 center is a partnership with other towns. The 9-1-1 center was never meant to be a vendor, like a local cable TV service, where "low bid" gets the contract. The towns have made decisions to invest in the region's future. They used their collective financial ability to build a radio system to service the entire region, which allowed fire departments, and emergency services, from several towns to be able to work together. This partnership also brought on an unexpected side effect of drawing the volunteer emergency workers of the towns together. The workers trained together, covered each other's territory, and took pride in being part of a larger family. This bond is something you can't put a price on.

While it is apparent Colchester is looking at Quinabaug Valley Dispatch Center (QV) as an alternate vendor, I would like to point out a few things that might be overlooked. And could cause huge financial liabilities for the town in the future.

1 – Radio infrastructure: How does QV plan on providing radio communications from the Northeast Corner of CT? Yes, a microwave link could be bridged to radio equipment in the town. But, where will that equipment be? And what is the radio coverage?

2 – Where the town of Colchester might have it in the short term plan to annex the CEC Buckley Hill radio tower, has the town considered CEC going into bankruptcy, or foreclosure? One would assume that banks, and/or the government will want to liquidate the assets, to repay outstanding loans.

3 – Has the town considered their stake in future legal liabilities? After all, Colchester IS a partner (the equivalent of a shareholder). One would assume banks and/or the government would name Colchester as a defendant, if bankruptcy, or foreclosure were to happen.

4 - In 1976, the state legislature mandated in Special Act No. 76-83, that:

"[CEC] shall (1) provide a single central location, located within the state police barracks in Colchester, for fire alarm receipt and radio communications services for the entire Colchester region (2) handle all ambulance and police emergency calls within said area by use of a centralized regional switchboard and (3) establish, as soon as practical, and maintain a universal emergency number-telephone facility for said region. Each town in the Colchester region which uses the emergency communications network shall participate in a cost sharing program to assist in financing such communications network...."

Has Colchester considered the fact that the State might take action, as Colchester is ignoring this mandate?

5 – Finally, has Colchester considered any possible legal action against CEC, from taxpayers, that might prevent CEC, and or its partners, from closing shop ("stop orders", etc...)?

In closing, I ask that Colchester hold off on voting on any contracts with other 9-1-1 dispatch centers, until some of these concerns can be answered. I truly believe the liability to Colchester in this matter, could be just as bad as the State Police Central Dispatch was a liability to the State of Connecticut.

Sincerely,



Sean Hoskins

Page 2 of 2