

Members present: Kevin M. McCormick Michael J. Kittredge, Jr.  
Christopher A. Rucho Siobhan M. Bohnson  
John W. Hadley

Mr. McCormick convened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. He explained the purpose of the meeting, which is to have a discussion with the Fire Chief and the Police Chief regarding regionalizing our dispatch operations.

### **Regional Dispatch Discussion**

Police Chief Dennis Minnich and Interim Fire Chief Tom Welsh joined the Board. Michele Randazzo of Kopelman and Paige will also participate in the discussion. The Board's agenda package contains a list from each of the Chiefs delineating the pros and cons of the two options currently being looked at; one with the Town of Holden and the other with the City of Worcester. Mr. Gaumond noted that this is one of the Board's major goals for the year. We have been involved with four studies on regional dispatch and Ms. Randazzo has reviewed some of our agreements. At this time we have three options available. The first is with the City of Worcester, who approached us and the Town of Leicester. The second option is the Town of Holden who has approached us and the third is we could do nothing and stay with what we have. Mr. McCormick opened the floor up to Board questions.

Ms. Bohnson asked if both Chiefs are on the same thought process on the way we should go and if they were, could they give the highlights of why. Both Chiefs indicated that they were. Chief Welsh explained that he sat in on one meeting with Worcester. He also watched what happened in Sterling when Worcester also made a presentation to them. When he attended a meeting with Worcester, from what he read there were going to be 13 towns involved. During the discussion he learned that only the Town of Leicester was involved because they don't have any money and this is the only option they have available. He went to see what Worcester had to offer and the discussion went slow. There was also a lady from the state at the meeting and when she heard the discussion, she said she was of the understanding that the project was not going to occur. Chief Welsh added that Worcester promised to get information back to Chief Minnich and himself. They did get some information, however, not the most important issues. Chief Minnich then spoke with Dave Clemence, the person from Worcester who was leading the project, and Mr. Clemence asked Chief Minnich what Worcester needed to do to make this work. Chief Minnich informed him that West Boylston needed a computer system and a radio system to make it work and that was the last we heard from the City of Worcester. Chief Welsh attended a meeting yesterday and Dave Clemence, was also there and made no attempt to speak with him about how things are going. There has been no communication. When they didn't come back with even a counter offer, Chief Welsh thought we are done with them. We do not communicate with them on a regular basis. In addition, the police chief needs a place to bring his prisoners and he would be running them across the City to a facility. The City received funding to purchase and rehab an abandoned building. Chief Welsh stated that he was not impressed.

Mr. Gaumond clarified that the Worcester deal did not involve 13 towns, however, there was an earlier initiative with Rutland that did. Worcester invited other towns, however, only two were interested. Leicester will not be able to act on this until an override is taken up in October. If the override passes they probably will not join the regional initiative. Mr. McCormick asked the Chiefs if they had to pick a town to go with, with they say Worcester is not viable. Chief Welsh expressed his frustration that he and Chief Minnich gave Worcester two requirements and they never got back to them.

Chief Minnich noted that this has been going on for months and he has two major issues, those being radios and a computer system, which need to be upgraded. He also has a list of questions which have never been answered. With the Town of Holden, Fire Chief Chandler was the Fire Chief in West Boylston and he also knows Police Chief George Sherill. Holden has already regionalized with Princeton. When he and Chief Welsh met with Sterling for an hour and a half they had 20 out of 30 questions answered. They took the same list they asked of Worcester and asked the chiefs in Holden. He feels we are five minutes away from locking up an agreement and we already have Mutual Aid Agreements with them and we have use of their training room. Worcester would not sign a Mutual Aid Agreement with us. With Holden, we would jump on their antenna site and they would have us switch onto INC, their computer system. He does feel the Worcester agreement had

language for a better management of the Center, however, he thinks that could be worked out. It says that the Holden Police Chief has the control of the Center. Chief Minnich would be fine if it were Chief Sheriff but you never know who will be coming in. The other major issue is Holden is up and running in a fantastic facility, completely computerized, and it would be plug our frequencies into Holden and change a couple of things.

Mr. Hadley asked whose dispatchers would be used. Chief Minnich explained that Worcester said they would interview out dispatchers and at the meeting with the Board of Selectmen they said they would hire our dispatchers. Holden is adding dispatchers because they are adding Princeton. They are not promising to hire our dispatchers. It would take one year to get that done. Mr. Gaumond noted that one of the issues with going to Holden would be timing. We would have to time it with the new grant award coming from the state, which does not begin until July of 2014. It does give us time to do the planning. Right now they operate with two full-time dispatchers during the day and one and a half at night time. They are not going to significantly add to their staffing by adding West Boylston calls and there was no promise made to hire our dispatchers. Chief Minnich advised that we are in the pipeline already with the grants. They had funds available on their grant and we took our information and put it in with Holden and Princeton on what we need to regionalize our radio system. They might need to add another antenna site. The grant also includes funds to upgrade our Police Department radios. The complete system is for ease and sharing of information. Any information from Holden and Princeton we would have immediate access to. Holden would try to license additional terminals for West Boylston to use. We asked that it be dealt with in the grant. It is about \$150,000 to make us regional with Princeton and Holden and it is already in the implementation system. Mr. Rucho pointed out that with or without the grant we need to do something with our radios. Chief Minnich reminded the Board that his agreement with the town when the town put money aside for radios was not to spend the money if we could regionalize and the money is still set aside. Holden can talk to us right now.

Ms. Bohnson asked whether they had spoken with Princeton to see if they were happy with their relationship with Holden. The Chief explained that in Princeton the issue was the people didn't want to regionalize. Chief Minnich has talked with their Police Chief about the issues with regional dispatch and they are getting through the issues. Mr. Rucho asked how we would deal with having somebody at our station and whether people can push a button and Holden will answer. Chief Minnich explained that they will pickup a phone and Holden will pick up and you would tell the dispatcher your issue. The building will be monitored and the system will track everything. Mr. McCormick asked about the personal service such as giving out a permit or contact with general people. Chief Welsh advised that the permits are on line. Mr. Gaumond suggested that people could get them at town hall. A lot of people come in for directions and we could put that information out for people to take. Chief Welsh pointed out the fact that his men are at the station from 6-6 and they can give out burning permits. The Officers for the Fire Department will remain at the station as well as the secretary for the Police Chief. Chief Minnich noted that licenses to carry and accident reports are the biggest things. They would have to mail those out or people would have to come by during the day. Chief Minnich feels a telephone with a live person is important and they will handle all the DPW and Water call outs. They are willing to do it all. Mr. Rucho asked how Princeton's was doing not having anyone at the dispatch center. Chief Minnich advised that when you enter their building you come into the police station. Their chiefs are doing the same thing. You pick up a phone and goes right to Holden. Ms. Bohnson asked if we would still maintain the non-emergency number and would it go to Holden and then be filtered. Chief Minnich explained that it would ring so many times at the police station and then Holden would pick it up and forward it.

Mr. Hadley asked about response time. Chief Minnich doesn't think they would answer any faster than we do but he doesn't think it would be difficult as they have multiple dispatchers already. Holden could do all three towns with two or three dispatchers. Mr. Gaumond noted that Worcester proposed adding a special dispatcher just for West Boylston 24-hours a day. Chief Minnich advised that Holden has three extra dispatcher consoles that are not even using. Mr. Rucho asked how dialing 911 would work. Chief Minnich explained that currently the call comes into West Boylston and if not answered in so many rings, it goes to Boylston. If we regionalize with anybody and you call 911 it would go straight to Holden and they would dispatch it just like they would here. If they get busy then the emergency line would ring somewhere else, maybe to Boylston. Mr. Rucho feels it would be much easier transporting prisoners to Holden. Chief Minnich advised that they have a

brand new training room, and the cars have mobile data terminals so we can talk to Princeton and Holden.

Mr. McCormick agrees that the Governing Agreement should be amended. He also thinks Worcester does not really care about West Boylston too much.

Motion Mr. Rucho to pursue regional dispatching with Holden and try to work on the Governing Agreement and tell Worcester we are no longer interested, seconded by Mr. Hadley. Ms. Randozza recommends West Boylston have a three-way conversation with Holden and include Princeton when discussing the agreement. Mr. Rucho suggested having separate agreements, one Holden and Princeton and the other Holden and West Boylston. Ms. Randozza explained that you have one agreement that specifies certain things with the town. When it comes down to cost sharing it could be disproportionate. Mr. Gaumont suggested telling Worcester we are going to be putting their proposal on the back burner at this time. Mr. Rucho asked the Chiefs if they heard anything from Worcester since the meeting the Board of Selectmen held with Worcester and the two chiefs. Chief Minnich had one conversation with their finance officer and heard nothing back. He added that the cost estimate we talked about during the first meeting in Holden was in the area of \$10,000 more. We do not have the numbers from Worcester either. He added that he has been hearing Holden dispatchers for years and he trusts Holden as they have a very good service.

With no further business to come before the Board, motion Mr. Kittredge at 8:00 p.m. to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Rucho, all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved: August 7, 2013

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Nancy E. Lucier, Municipal Assistant

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Kevin M. McCormick, Chairman

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Christopher A. Rucho, Clerk

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John W. Hadley, Selectman

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Michael J. Kittredge, Jr.

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Siobhan M. Bohnson, Selectman