

DRAFT

**Walworth County Fire/EMS Study Committee**  
**February 15, 2018 Meeting Minutes**  
**Walworth County Sheriff's Office – Sheriff's Meeting Room**  
**1770 County Road NN, Elkhorn, Wisconsin**

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The meeting was called to order by Chair Dale Wilson at 1:00 p.m.

Roll call was conducted, and a quorum of members was present: Chair Dale Wilson, Vice Chair John Peters, Dave Nelson, and Bruce Vander Veen. Denise Pieroni, Lowell Hagen and James Weiss were absent.

Others present: Dr. Steven Andrews-Aurora Health Care; Dr. James MacNeal and Dr. Sean Marquis-Mercy Health; Walworth County Administrator David Bretl; Sheriff Kurt Picknell; Undersheriff Kevin Williams; Captain Jamie Green; Village of Darien Administrator Rebecca LeMire; Elkhorn Fire Chief Rod Smith; Ashley Vickers-Mercy Walworth EMS

**Dave Nelson made a motion, seconded by John Peters, to move item 8.a on the agenda for consideration before the first public comment period, and to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried 4-0.**

**Bruce Vander Veen made a motion, seconded by Vice Chair Peters, to approve the January 18, 2018 meeting minutes. Motion carried by voice vote.**

**Public comment** – There was none.

**New Business**

- Discussion with Walworth County Staff regarding Communications Center and tour  
Chair Dale Wilson said the Sheriff's Office would give a background of the Communications Center and then open up the meeting for questions from the Committee. County Administrator David Bretl noted he would be taking on a broader role in the meetings because Chair Wilson has taken on interim oversight of the Public Works department. Bretl said the Committee has been meeting for nearly a year, and it is not feasible for this committee to design a new 911 countywide communications center. He advised the Committee to focus on fire and EMS services and the role of dispatch and develop options and recommendations for improved efficiencies and service. Sheriff Kurt Picknell introduced Captain Jamie Green, who supervises the County's communications Center. Picknell encouraged input and questions from the Committee.

Captain Green said there are currently 18 (plus a new hire in training) communications officers. Each shift is staffed with five communications officers and one supervisor. Minimum staffing is three officers. A 911 records clerk also performs dispatch duties when needed. Each communications officer receives 16 weeks of training, including the Association of Public Communications Officials (APCO) Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) course. If needed, an APCO Public Telecommunicator Course is provided by internal staff. The Communications Division supports 13 police departments, 6 marine patrols, 13 fire departments and 12 rescue departments. Communications answers all wireless 911 calls, landline 911 calls and all non-emergency phone calls. In 2016, there were a total of 24,842 911 calls; of these, 18,952 calls were wireless 911 calls. An average of 62.5 calls are received each day, not including administrative non-emergency calls.

The APCO EMD program allows communications officers to provide immediate medical treatment instructions to callers who are reporting incidents involving medical distress. While the instructions are being provided, emergency services are summoned and respond simultaneously to the care provided over the phone. In 2016, there were approximately 5,959 calls which resulted in some level of EMD, an average of 16.3 EMD calls per day. Communications officers are required to receive 12 additional hours of EMD and public safety training each year. Through their Quality Assurance program, the emergency medical directors review all of the life safety calls. Each officer undergoes a review of 52 random life safety calls, and beginning this year, quality checks are also being performed on non-EMD calls. Approximately 90% of the call load is law enforcement

related. Green said a comparison to Rock County's services isn't equitable, because Walworth County has 60,000 less residents, and Rock County also has large full-time fire/EMS providers.

Last year, a bridge was created with the City of Whitewater on 911 calls, whereby calls are routed first through the County dispatch and then to Whitewater for answering. In case of a line break, the County can handle the overflow of calls. The City of Delavan is on Computer Assisted Dispatch (CAD) and serves as backup to the County's system. If the County system malfunctions, calls can be switched to Delavan and a communications officer will be sent to Delavan to assist. Green said in addition to technology upgrades, additional staff has been hired and communications officers are better trained in vital disciplines involving dispatch. In 2015, the department upgraded its entire radio system. Effective March 1, communications officers will each have a separate radio channel to monitor, which will assist them to take more comprehensive notes on calls and provide consistent information for responders. During second shift, which is the busiest call time, overtime has been posted to cover peak periods. Separate call taker positions similar to Rock County could be considered in the future if call volume warrants.

Capt. Green encouraged dialogue from all users of the system. One of the Division's goals is to streamline individual department protocols, the number and variety of which creates extra steps for dispatchers during emergency situations. A radio assessment study is being conducted, and Green said a single frequency communication system would be ideal, but is not achievable in the near future. Undersheriff Kevin Williams said through communication with fire and EMS departments and EMDs, and as a result of study recommendations, many improvements and efficiencies have been achieved to date. He said a uniform statewide standard for training and education for dispatchers needs to be developed to ensure quality of service. NextGen 911 is the next challenge, a system whereby text messages and videos from cellphones could be received into dispatch centers. Sheriff Picknell said in November 2017, the Sheriff's Office went through a three-day comprehensive review of their division standards and programs and received accreditation from the Wisconsin Law Enforcement Accreditation Group (WILEAG). To remain accredited, reviews of each division at the Sheriff's Office are required annually.

Picknell asked for input from the Committee. Dr. MacNeal said Walworth County's dispatch center provides exemplary service; however, he expressed concern about multiple frequencies and limited information provided to emergency responders. Bruce Vander Veen said there needs to be a central system to identify where emergency vehicles are located at all times for timely and efficient service provision. Chief Rod Smith said some of the individual protocols were put into place by departments to assist dispatching, but it has expanded to the point of being a burden to the communications officers. Vander Veen said he has served on the 911 Governing Board for ten years, and is still unsure of the Board's function and authority. Bretl agreed, adding that Rock County's advisory board is comprised of broader representation from involved departments and agencies and seems more effective in providing recommendations to resolve service issues.

Discussion was held on the ProPhoenix software capabilities and automatic vehicle locators (AVL). Dr. MacNeal commented that private providers should be required to have AVL and be on the dispatch system in order to be eligible to provide emergency service. Green said that the Sheriff's Office hosted a meeting concerning ProPhoenix capabilities and only three departments attended; more buy-in is needed before it can be successful, and the Sheriff's office would be willing to host the servers.

At 2:30 p.m. Captain Green led a tour of the Communications Center and gave an overview of operations and duties. Attendees were able to witness first-hand the crucial importance of the communication officers' role in public safety.

At 3:05 the Committee reconvened for further discussion. Dr. Sean Marquis said development of standard policies for medical response need to be developed and monitored. John Peters said that the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) divisions are not allowed to set protocols regarding medical response. Chair Wilson suggested perhaps the 911 Board could make recommendations concerning response policy. Discussion occurred on ALS responders and whether departments should have sole discretion to choose a provider, or whether after a first call and no response, dispatch should make the decision. Chair Wilson thanked Captain Green for sharing his knowledge and encouraging dialogue.

### **Unfinished Business**

- Follow up on survey instruments

This item will be discussed at the March meeting.

- Letter updating departments on the progress of the study

Chair Wilson asked for feedback on the draft letter. There being none, he will insert updates based upon current input and send members a copy of the revised letter.

- Discussion regarding 911 Governing Board

Bretl said he believes the 911 Governing Board was created with the 911 enhancement. Discussion ensued concerning representation on the Board to make it more effective. John Peters said the various county agencies should be approached for their input on who should serve. Peters added that individual work groups could be formed from the Board to work on proposed resolutions to individual issues. **Dave Nelson made a motion, seconded by Bruce Vander Veen, to recommend reorganization of the 911 Governing Board, to be comprised of two representatives from fire departments, two representatives of EMS, two law enforcement representatives, county EMS medical directors and the chair of MABAS Division 103, or a designee. Motion carried 4-0.**

- Discussion regarding next steps for Study Committee

Bretl suggested the Committee begin work on developing a report on priorities and best-practice recommendations. Survey responses from the individual departments can be analyzed to identify the common and most urgent concerns, such as recruitment and retaining of staff, expansion/consolidation of dispatch services, collaboration between departments, etc. Recommendations as to funding needs and potential sources also need to be addressed. Consensus was to review data on the survey responses and discuss staffing and minimum response times at the next meeting. Dr. Marquis recommended discussion on departments contracting for private providers at a future meeting.

**Public comment period** - There was none.

**Confirmation of next meeting date and time:** Wednesday, March 14, 2018 at 1:00 p.m. in County Boardroom 114 at the Walworth County Government Center

### **Adjournment**

**On motion by John Peters, seconded by Dave Nelson, Chair Wilson adjourned the meeting at 4:20 p.m.**