

# WESTCOMM

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MARCH 1, 2024 11:00 A.M.

GOOGLE MEET INFO: <HTTPS://MEET.GOOGLE.COM/RJY-JIFY-GMS>

PHONE: 1-331-308-0599 PIN: 329 675 755#

### **In Attendance:**

Lyn Simmons, Longmeadow Town Manager

John Beaulieu, Chicopee

Erin Hastings, Executive Director, WESTCOMM

JoAnn Kupiec, Admin. Assistant, WESTCOMM

Tom Christensen, Town Administrator, East Longmeadow

Stuart Beckley, Town Administrator, Ware

Jennifer Wolowicz, Town Administrator, Monson

Lee Rich, Senior Architect, Kaestle Boos

Riana Burton, Socotec AE Consulting, LLC

Adrian Rutkowski, Superintendent, DA Sullivan

Ryan Gagne, VP of Construction, DA Sullivan

1. Meeting called to order 11:04 A.M. Present were Lyn Simmons, John Beaulieu and Tom Christensen, Jennifer Wolowicz, and Stuart Beckley. 5 Present.

2. Approval of meeting minutes: A motion was made by John and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tom to approve the minutes as written from the meeting held on 12/22/23. A roll call was done, 5 yes, motion passed.
  
3. Old Business: Building Project update: GC Introductions – Individuals from DA Sullivan were present to introduce themselves to the Board of Directors, along with the Architect from Kaestle Boos and the Assistant Project Manager from Socotec AE Consulting, LLC.

The groundbreaking is still on schedule to be held on Thursday March 14, 2024 @ 11:00 A.M. Trucks from DA Sullivan will be there for photo ops. John Beaulieu will have a pile of dirt delivered. The SPRAC meeting has also been set for March 14<sup>th</sup> regarding a safe plan review, this review has been set up for 9:00 A.M.

A representative from D.A. Sullivan stated the contract will be executed soon and all signs are showing things are moving forward. D.A. Sullivan will start procuring Sub Contractors. They started to put together the permit application, but wanted the Board to understand the site review plan needs to happen first, but believes that will be submitted by the end of next week or perhaps the following week.

The Architect is currently working on a contract with Erin and Socotec. They are meeting on 2/29/24 for a site plan review. Working on contract and expecting it to be completed soon. Until the contract is complete the Building Committee will not meet.

Bond update: Working with Hillside and Locke Lord – they have been given everything that was asked for. It's been finalized and out for sale by March 12<sup>th</sup> at the Finance Committee Meeting.

Board of Directors needs to confirm that Locke Lord will give direction on what needs to be done? The Board of Directors meeting being held on March 12, 2024 will be combined with the Finance Committee meeting.

FY 25 Budget update: It has been submitted to the State for review.

FY 22 Audit – Wendy is working with Marcum on questions regarding budget to actuals. They will be meeting on Monday 3/4/245 to give answers to these questions.

Solicitation for FY 23 Audit: The Scope of Services has been sent to 3 different Companies. There have been no responses yet. The Board of Directors will reach out to their contact and send the RFQ to their Audit firms.

Ethics and Conflict of Interest Statement: The position was reposted, only 1 person applied. HR reached out to this person, and there was no response, so HR made an offer to Jeffrey Hastings, the only other person who applied for the position back in February.

A motion was made by John Beaulieu and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jennifer Wolowicz to approve the Disclosure by Non-Elected Municipal Employee of Financial Interest and Determination by Appointing Authority as Required by G.L. c. 268A, § 19. A roll call was done, 5 yes, motion passed.

WESTCOMM will keep documents like this in the shared file. Tom feels unsettled with this decision, hopes personal feelings don't get in the way of an objective vote. Jennifer does not prefer to hire family but Erin did what the Board asked her to do by re-advertising the position. Lyn had questions on budget items pertaining to salaries. Concerns included Union Negotiations, etc. Erin explained the Board of Directors has final say on contracts. Erin is not making the final decision on scheduling & Union negotiations. JoAnn enters the payroll, Erin only approves it. On the complaint process with family members hired, this will go through the same process as every other complaint. Stuart believes there is sheer conflict with Erin being involved with Union negotiations. The Board of Directors can set parameters around this if they felt it was needed.

There are two separate Union contracts, one for Dispatchers and one for Supervisors.

A motion was made by Stuart and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tom, move to accept the Disclosure but to amend the motion to limit or exclude participation in negotiations with the unit affecting the relative. A roll call was done, 5 yes, motion passed.

Once voted the Chair needs to sign.

Erin will look into whether the Conflict of Interest needs to be updated periodically.

Goals: The goals will be used in when reviewing the Executive Director and perhaps will be used in the executive session that will happen at the April meeting.

4. New Business: Finance report – There is no report at this time.

Operations report – The met and talked about a new policy on how to get recordings from the shared channel. Erin will send the minutes to the Board of Directors.

IT report – There is no report at this time.

Executive Directors update - Since the last Board meeting, Westcomm Admin staff had the opportunity to meet with several members of the Longmeadow Police Department. They had voiced some concerns with dispatchers' performance and issues with the radios. The concerns were very similar to the ones that Monson had voiced last month. We were able to bring their concerns to the dispatchers and set clear expectations about performance. It also gave us the opportunity to educate the department about regionalization and radio systems. We held follow up meetings with members of Monson Police, an additional meeting with the Monson Police Chief and a follow up meeting with the Longmeadow Police Chief. All acknowledged that the dispatchers' performance had noticeably improved. Regarding the issues with the radios, we had the vendor thoroughly check each site to make sure everything was working properly. They found one mobile radio that Longmeadow had stated missed an important call actually had physical damage to the radio causing it to default to a different setting. The radio was replaced. LPD also had concerns about reception in the station. The vendor has

provided a quote for speakers in the station and we are adding an antenna to the tower at the station to improve reception. We have a follow up meeting scheduled with LPD on April 2nd.

### **Communication processes**

Last month Erin spoke about the Field Feedback Forms that the responders have access to in order to send in an inquiry into a call or acknowledge outstanding performance of a dispatcher. In the month of February, just over 12,000 calls were entered. We received nine Field Feedback inquiries. Out of those nine, four were determined that the dispatcher did nothing wrong. (Five out of 12,000 is a 0.04% error rate)

We have started providing the departments with a flow list on how to reach out to Westcomm with inquiries:

Field Feedback Forms:

Field feedback forms are used to inquire about a call or send kudos to a dispatcher about a particular call. They should be sent to a supervisor for review before being sent to: [Feedback@westcomm-ma.gov](mailto:Feedback@westcomm-ma.gov)

Radio Issues:

If you experience radio issues please document the time, location, radio (portable/mobile) and issue and send it to: [Support@westcomm-ma.gov](mailto:Support@westcomm-ma.gov)

IT Issues:

IT/CAD issues should be sent to your local IT AND [Support@westcomm-ma.gov](mailto:Support@westcomm-ma.gov)

## **Hampden County Sheriffs**

The Hampden County Sheriffs had a total of 54 calls in February. All 54 calls were entered under the new agreement with the Chicopee Police Department. The Sheriff provides a two man patrol to Chicopee Monday through Friday on day shift. The primary focus is for paperwork service but they are available to respond to and/or initiate calls if necessary. All traffic is handled on the same channel as CPD. These are calls that would have been handled by CPD if the Sheriff did not handle them.

## **Hiring**

We have one new supervisor and 6 dispatchers starting mid-march. This brings us to 37 out of 41.

## **Development Grant**

The State 911 Development Grant application is due Thursday, March 7th. We are applying for \$1.5 million dollars towards construction/BAN repayment. We will also apply for the amount of the assessments, some tri-band radios, in car repeaters and the cost to update Ware's Vision 21 Box Alarm system.

## **Radios**

Erin again addressed the main concept of regionalization is to share resources. Those resources can be personnel, computer aided dispatch programs, and radio systems. Westcomm has invested millions of dollars into a new radio system to replace the end of life systems that existed in the member communities. As a result, departments have to share channels with other departments that they may or may not do routine calls with. Westcomm asks for the Boards' support in getting behind this idea. With budget restraints affecting every municipality, the more resources we can share, the more cost effective it becomes. With that being said, the more units we can put on one channel, the less dispatchers we have to hire. Primary channels should be considered "guarded channels" which means they should be monitored 24/7. When a dispatcher is

responsible for more than one channel, neither channel is considered guarded and becomes a responder safety issue. We all need to work together towards radio sharing and radio discipline to make this work. Erin believes the only way this succeeds is from the top down. We need the Board along with the Chiefs to understand the importance of this and promote it down through the rank and file. Westcomm could literally put all five communities on one channel and the channel would not be saturated. For example, Springfield handles roughly 400,000 calls per year and run them all on one channel, compared to our 150,000 calls on three channels.

The Board of Directors thanked Erin for attending the Community meetings to answer questions and bring insight to WESTCOMM.

5. NEW Business not reasonably anticipated within 24 hours: None at this time.
  
6. Vote to enter into Executive Session in accordance with MGL chapter 30A, Section 21 (a) (3), to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body , and if the Chair so declares, not to reconvene in Open Session.

Roll Call was done, 5 yes, motion passed.