

**MEETING OF THE  
WESTCOMM BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**AUGUST 18, 2025 11:00 A.M.**

**WESTCOMM**

**645 SHAWINIGAN DRIVE, CHICOPEE MA 01020**

GOOGLE MEET:

[HTTPS://MEET.GOOGLE.COM/HJT-EYVT-YDG](https://meet.google.com/HJT-EYVT-YDG)

PHONE: 1-260-327-1068 PIN: 988 906 087#

In Attendance:

Penny Ryan, Interim Executive Director, WESTCOMM

Tom Christensen, Town Manager, East Longmeadow

John Beaulieu, Chicopee

Stuart Beckley, Town Manager, Ware

JoAnn Kupiec, Admin Assistant, WESTCOMM

Grant Herman, IT Director, WESTCOMM

Mihaela, Miteva, Procurement Officer, WESTCOMM

Anthony Massoia, Dispatch Supervisor, WESTCOMM

Steve Kozloski, Chief, Monson Police

Greg Wallace, Dispatch Supervisor, WESTCOMM

Lisa Ricardo, HR Director, WESTCOMM

Jennifer Wolowicz, Town Manager, Monson

Tyler Allen, Goosetown

Marlyn Velazquez, WESTCOMM

1. Meeting called to order 11:09 A.M. A roll call was done, and present at the meeting were Tom Christensen, Stuart Beckley, and John Beaulieu, Jennifer Wolowicz, 4 present, 1 absent (Lyn Simmons)
2. Old Business: Building update: Penny provided an update on the new building, stating that the goal is to be fully operational by September 16<sup>th</sup>. It was noted that DA Sullivan is picking up a lot of the sub-work, and while there are still some minor issues like HVAC, neither the BDA system nor the sump pump for the

elevator shaft will delay operations. Thanks were extended to everyone involved in the building project for their hard work.

Radio System Update: Tony reported that a technician has been working almost full-time on inventorying and mapping the radio network, preparing for the switch to an isolated network. Tyler Allen from Goosetown confirmed significant progress in getting new code plugs out and subscribers updated. Tyler also mentioned that they are working with Grant to prepare for the move, with testing scheduled for the current or next week.

It was highlighted that a significant effort to consolidate WESTCOMM'S scattered equipment and radios, noting that about \$300,000 worth of equipment was found and is now being inventoried. Tyler Allen confirmed that the found radios are current models, up to date, and will be supported for several more years. The found equipment is usable and will help complete outstanding projects. Tony discussed the long-term goal of unifying different radio frequencies and types into one large trunking system. The need for all Regional agencies to adopt common standards was discussed. Also noted the Sheriff's department and other areas are currently on a conventional system, but the plan is to convert them to the trunking system for better coverage for all agencies.

Tyler Allen projected that the existing trunking system's backend network should be rebuilt and stable within the month, with preventative maintenance scheduled afterward. Tylers estimated that the main trunking side should be good within approximately four months. A key challenge is obtaining power for on radio site, which is currently leased by an out-of-business cell phone company.

Changing the future of WESTCOMM Organizational Restructuring Proposal: Penny presented a proposal to convert a single janitorial position into two part time employees, allowing WESTCOMM to stay within the existing budget line item while also budgeting for supplies.

A motion was made by Tom Christensen and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jennifer Wolowicz to transfer \$ 44,720 from the Janitorial expense line item (5241) to the new part time Janitorial payroll account (5110-900). A rollcall was done, 4 yes, motion passed.

Penny discussed proposal for additional positions, including an Operation Manger, Training and Community Engagement Specialist and an IT Technical Specialist. She noted that the Operations Manager position is already in the budget, and the money for the pay increase was found within the existing budget.

Strong support was expressed for hiring an additional person to assist Grant with IT responsibilities due to their current workload and upcoming projects like the Hexagon CAD Project.

Tom raised concerns about relying on an uncertain grant for funding positions, stating that while the ideas are sound, not all the money is guaranteed. John Beaulieu expressed confidence that as more communities join WESTCOMM, State 911 will redirect PSAP money to the Regional Dispatch center, helping to cover costs. It was acknowledged the financial prudence of the Board Members and their need to report back to their constituents.

It was explained that PSAP money, previously given to individual communities, would be redirected to WESTCOMM upon their Regionalization, with incentives also offered to towns that join. It was clarified that State 911 money goes into a Support & Incentive Grant, with WESTCOMM being the only entity in the state to receive 75% reimbursement. It emphasized the need for the state to take a stronger stance in mandating regionalization to overcome local reluctance.

The Board mentioned that the current year's budget increased by 16% over the previous year, which they deemed unsustainable for future fiscal years. Penny acknowledged the need for fiscal responsibility and stated that they have thoroughly reviewed the budget to be mindful of spending. She explained that some budget changes, such as elimination two supervisor positions, were made to manage costs, especially with the shift to 12 hour shifts.

Penny noted a widespread sense of optimism regarding WESTCOMM, attributing it to the completion of the new building and the strong attendance at its grand opening. She emphasized the physical presence of the building has made the regionalization concept real to potential partners, suggesting a shift from previous unsuccessful attempts to attract new members.

Penny explained that joining WESTCOMM offers Communities significant financial and operational efficiencies, particularly in technology costs and dispatch services. Penny also highlighted that a standalone Community can no longer afford the annual technology expenses required for public safety services. The State's push for regionalization and the tightening of budgets for single PSAP'S, positioning WESTCOMM as a beacon for Western Massachusetts.

The Board of Directors discussed creating new positions to support WESTCOMM's anticipated growth. They clarified that the Operations Manager

position was already approved in the budget, and the immediate need was to create the IT Technical Specialist and Training and Community Engagement Manager positions. Penny Confirmed that the funding for these roles was already allocated within the budget and could be internally reallocated.

A motion was made by John Beaulieu and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Stuart Beckley to create the IT Specialist and Training and Community Engagement Manager positions. A roll call was done, 4 yes, motion passed.

A motion was made by John Beaulieu and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jennifer Wolowicz to accept the future plans presented by the Interim Director, aiming to facilitate the organization's growth and accommodate additional Communities. A rollcall was done, 4 yes, motion passed.

3. Staff Ride-A-Longs: Penny proposed staff ride-a-longs to improve dispatchers' understanding of incident locations and appropriate call routing. This initiative aims to educate dispatch staff on asking the right questions to avoid misdirected calls and ensure efficient resource deployment.

Sheriffs' Assessment: A meeting with the Sheriff's Department was scheduled to review their current agreement and assess if WESTCOMM had met it's obligations, with the goal of establishing a fair new agreement.

IT Update: Grant provided an IT update, stating that the technology in the new building was mostly complete, with wireless installation underway and a smooth migration process for data being the main focus.

Finance Update: None at this time will have an update for the next meeting.

Operations Update: None at this time, their next meeting is scheduled for 8/29/25.

Interim Executive Director's Update: Penny stated WESTCOMM completed a six week classroom training program for 8 new trainees, who are now undergoing on-the-floor training. Penny emphasized the comprehensive nature of the training, which exceeds state requirements, and praised the trainees' and staff's dedication. The organization is also actively recruiting more staff and has received an unprecedented 8 internal applications for Supervisor positions, indicating a positive shift in staff morale and a desire for growth within the organization.

Penny reported on WESTCOMM' swift response to a fire at Cataldo Ambulance's call center, which destroyed their server room and backups. WESTCOMM absorbed Holyoke's medical calls without strain, demonstrating the resilience and improved reputation of their staff, which led to Holyoke reaching out to WESTCOMM first for assistance.

4. New business not reasonably anticipated within 24 hours: Hexagon Project will last 24-48 months. Policy and Procedures need to be re-visited and needs to be looked at and updated every year.

The regular meeting schedule will resume on the second Thursday of each month, with the exception of September 11<sup>th</sup> due to it being a public event date. The BOD decided to meet on September 4, 2025, and will revert to the second Thursday for subsequent months. JoAnn will send out a meeting schedule to all Board members for a six-month period.

5. Adjourn: A motion was made by John Beaulieu and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jennifer Wolowicz to adjourn the meeting. A rollcall was done, 4 yes, meeting adjourned at 12:52 P.M.