

MEETING OF THE WESTCOMM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

APRIL 28, 11:00 A.M.

WESTCOMM

645 SHAWINIGAN DRIVE, CHICOPEE MA 01020

GOOGLE MEET:

<HTTPS://MEET.GOOGLE.COM/FBC-FIWT-HJU>

PHONE: 1-662-565-5212 PIN: 410 940 300#

In Attendance:

Penny Ryan, Interim Executive Director, WESTCOMM

Tom Christensen, Town Manager, East Longmeadow

Lyn Simmons, Town Manager, Longmeadow

Stuart Beckley, Town Manager, Ware

Mayor John Vieau, Chicopee

JoAnn Kupiec, Admin Assistant, WESTCOMM

Mihaela, Miteva, Procurement Officer, WESTCOMM

Anthony Massoia, Dispatch Supervisor, WESTCOMM

John Beaulieu, Chicopee

Mike Meaney, IT Specialist WESTCOMM

Grant Herman, IT Director WESTCOMM

Lisa Ricardo, HR Director, WESTCOMM

John Rigney, Chief, Longmeadow FD

Tyler Allen, Goosetown Communicationsw

Luke Waldhart, Prepared Live

Teri McDonald, Prepared Lie

Robert Stocks, Chief, Longmeadow PD

Mark Williams, Chief, East Longmeadow PD

1. Meeting called to order 11:05 A.M. A roll call was done, and present at the meeting were Tom Christensen, Lyn Simmons, and Stuart Beckley. 3 Present, absent were Jennifer Wolowicz, and Mayor John Vieau.

Mayor Vieau joined the meeting at 11:07

2. **Meeting Minutes Approval:** A motion was made by Stuart Beckley and 2nd by Lyn Simmons to approve the minutes as written from the meeting held on 3/24/26, a roll call was done, 4 yes.

A motion was made by Stuart Beckley and 2nd by John Vieau to approve the minutes as written from the meeting held on 3/27/26, a roll call was done, 3 yes. Lyn Simmons abstained from the vote as she was not present at the 3/27/26 meeting.

3. **Old Business Building and Update:** The building is expecting a certificate of occupancy to be issued by the end of the week, which will allow Westcomm to be fully operational under a permanent Certificate of Occupancy (CO). There are ongoing issues with some exterior doors, possibly due to heaving or sand, and an email was sent to all parties to address this. Additional work is required in the server room to resolve communication issues between two units.

Radio Update: Avtec Consoles and Fire Station Alerting (FSA) Rollout: The new Avtec dispatch consoles are scheduled to be cut over on Tuesday of the following week, after converting one of the VP gates at the end of the current week to ensure stability. Concurrent with this work, pre-wiring for the FSA system, which is network stable with built configs, will begin at various fire stations, starting with Chicopee. Tyler Allen estimated that the FSA installation will take approximately a day to a day and a half per station.

Radio Update: System Maintenance and Portable Portal: Following the console and FSA work, the week after next will focus on Ztron FSA work, and by the end of May/beginning of June, preventative maintenance and grounding enhancements will begin at the sites. The portable portal is operational, and a bug with the email server has been resolved, providing a centralized way to share information among the communities, Westcomm, and Tyler Allen's team. Additionally, redundancy is being built into the Zetron system so that control stations can act as a backup in case of a network failure.

District Agreement Review Timeline: The subcommittees of the board were originally tasked with providing input on the district agreement by May 31st. Given the meeting schedule, Tom Christensen requested that the revised timeline for subcommittee input be adjusted to the next board meeting, tentatively set for the 26th of May.

Sheriff's Department Membership Discussion: Anthony Massoia stated the Sheriff's Department was in contact with WESTCOMM and stated they made a commitment to WESTCOMM and plan to proceed with joining as originally planned. Tom Christensen noted that a vote for recommendation to the Sheriff's Department would likely occur at the next meeting, although there is no explicit time constraint in the agreement. A concern was raised regarding which budget number to use and the lack of a clear-cut assessment procedure for non-municipal organizations joining the district.

Assessment Formulas for Non-Municipal Agencies: The district agreement task force is currently debating assessment formulas to manage non-government and non-public safety agencies, such as the Sheriff's Office, that might join Westcomm. The task force's next meeting on May 22nd will include Penny and Anthony to ensure that the floated ideas for assessment are feasible before

presenting a recommendation to the operations committee for a vote on the same day as the next board meeting. John Vieau suggested inviting the Sheriff or a designee to the next board meeting to discuss their current status and intention to join Westcomm.

- 4. New Business: Prepared Live Presentation and Non-Emergency Call Handling:** Teri McDonald and Luke Waldhart presented the Prepared system, which uses an advanced, human-sounding bot to handle non-emergency calls on the 10-digit business lines. The bot is highly customized, building "intents" to manage specific call types (e.g., noise complaints, power outages) and will escalate calls directly to a human dispatcher if keywords related to unsafe situations are detected. The system will also provide an insight summary of the information collected by the bot to the dispatcher when the call is transferred, helping to speed up the process.

The Prepared system will free up dispatchers from handling non-urgent business calls, which are estimated to be triple or quadruple the volume of 911 calls, though current manual tracking methods may underreport the true volume. The goal of the system is to augment, not replace, dispatchers, allowing them to prioritize emergency situations while still providing answers to routine queries. Once ready, Westcomm plans to start with a limited number of calls as a beta test and will conduct an information campaign, so the public is not surprised by the new system.

IT Update: A maintenance check on a station was requested, as the last maintenance was in September/October. A concern was raised that the shelter at the site was unsecured, with both the chain link gate and the door unlocked, despite the tower being a critical hub for the radio system. Michael Meaney stated that Westcomm should be the sole access point for the tower to protect their assets and that a log should be kept of when people enter and exit the building.

Finance Update: Mihaela Miteva suggested implementing the financial policies and practices for Fiscal Year 2027 and requested they be added to the next meeting for a vote after the finance committee reviews them. The search for a municipal treasurer is ongoing, and Penny Ryan requested assistance in finding a candidate or a firm that could contract the service, as no interest has been received. Mihaela Miteva mentioned a consultant, Mark Abrahams, who might be able to provide advice or leads.

Penny Ryan confirmed that Westcomm has purchased the Vadar software system, which will go into effect after July 1st, and they will inquire about accounting services provided by Vadar during an upcoming meeting. Although other regional dispatch centers are also struggling to find treasurers, Penny was hesitant to move back to remote work arrangements but agreed they should be open to short-term solutions to "keep the lights on".

Operations Committee Update: Chief Williams updated the board, reiterating their appreciation for Teri McDonald's presentation and thanking Penny and Anthony

for hosting the Western Mass Chiefs of Police meeting in April. The meeting allowed many Chiefs to tour the facility and showcase Westcomm's capabilities.

Executive Director's Update: Six new dispatchers are currently in the training program, and the new internal training curriculum has proven beneficial, giving them a "leg up" in the telecommunicated course. Dispatchers participated in two days of ambulance ride-alongs with National Ambulance, which was considered a "game changer" for their understanding. Additional training includes a talk on volunteer versus staff fire departments and a recent supervisor training that reinforced best practices.

The Hexagon system implementation is moving forward and is still slated for spring of next year. Tony and Penny will be attending a two-day leadership program next week through the Mass Chiefs Association, focusing on peer support. Plans are also moving forward to send people to training for the World Cup event, which involves State 911 creating an Emergency Service Zone.

Penny gave an update on Nation Public Telecommunicators Week, it was extremely successful with a Carnival theme all week.

5. **New Business Not Reasonably Anticipated:** None at this time.

6. **Adjourn:** A motion was made by Lyn Simmons and 2nd by Stuart Beckley to adjourn the meeting. A roll call was done, 4 yes, meeting adjourned at 12:04 P.M.