JOINT MEETING OF THE WESTCOMM BOARD OF DIRECTORS, OPERATION COMMITTEE & FINANCE BOARD

JUNE 23, 11:00 A.M.

WESTCOMM

645 SHAWINIGAN DRIVE, CHICOPEE MA 01020

GOOGLE MEET:

HTTPS://MEET.GOOGLE.COM/IIX-CVBO-SDH

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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
Brian Horn, Goosetown Communications
Robert Stocks, Chief, Longmeadow PD
Mark Williams, Chief, East Longmeadow PD
James Martinez, Chief, Ware FD
Jennifer Wolowicz, Town Manager, Monson
Matt Cross, Chief, Chicopee FD
Nick Gasperini, Chief, Monson PD
Brian Harris, Chief, Monson FD
Christopher Beecher, Chief, East Longmeadow FD
Doug Sanford, Deputy Chief, Chicopee FD
Greg Wallace, Operations Manager, WESTCOMM
Eric Watson, Interim Chief, Chicopee PD
John Rigney, Chief, Longmeadow FD
Bill Schwartz, RTIC Director, Chicopee PD
Kim Collins, Town Accountant, East Longmeadow
Kim D'Amato, Town Accountant, Ware
Ian Coddington, Town Accountant, Longmeadow
Marlyn Velazquez, QA Coordinator, WESTCOMM
Doug Lambert, Captain, Chicopee PD

1. Meeting called to order 11:03 A.M. A roll call was done, and present at the meeting were Tom Christensen, Jennifer Wolowicz and Mayor John Vieau, and Lyn Simmons. 4 present, absent was Stuart Beckley.

2. **Meeting Minutes Approval:** A motion was made by Jennifer Wolowicz and 2nd by Lyn Simmons to approve the minutes as written from the May 26, 2026, meeting. A roll call was done, 3 yes, 1 abstention (Lyn Simmons). Motion passed.

   Stuart Beckley joined the meeting at 11:08 A.M.

3. **Old Business: Building Update**: John Beaulieu confirmed that the final building update for Westcomm is complete, with all punch list items finished and all equipment in working order. Warranties are now in effect, and the team was thanked for their patience and contributions to this project.

   Radio System Updates: Brian Horn provided a status report on the radio infrastructure, noting that the last of the FSA screens will be installed today. Connectivity testing for stations three and four is underway, and implementation of radios for Ware has been signed off and is beginning in their vehicles. Additionally, the project to supply power to Coffey Hill is back in motion following previous delays.

   District Agreement and Finance Committee Suggestions: Ian Coddington clarified that financial policy recommendations presented were specific to the Finance Committee's discussions from the previous week. The board discussed the necessity of updating the district agreement, particularly regarding potential amendments related to the membership of the Sheriff's Department and the need for clearly defined dates within the agreement.

   Assessment and Budgetary Structure: The board discussed the current assessment model, which utilizes a 25% portion of the total budget not reimbursed by State 911, split among member communities based on call volume and population. Anthony Massoia noted that for the FY27 budget, the total amount to be divided is approximately $298,700,000. Discussions centered on ensuring this structure accurately reflects member usage.

   Strategic Competitiveness and Membership Minimums: Anthony Massoia raised concerns regarding the 10% minimum assessment fee in the district agreement, noting it hinders the ability to onboard smaller agencies and effectively makes Westcomm less competitive compared to other regional centers. The Board agreed that while the current model exists, it requires review to prevent potential members turning away, and they plan to dedicate time to a deep dive into these amendments at the July Board of Directors Meeting.

   Sheriff's Department Membership Vote: Following affirmative recommendations from both the Operations and Finance committees, A motion was made by Mayor Vieau and 2nd by Jennifer Wolowicz to affirm the Sheriff's Department as a full member of the district, with an effective date of July 1, 2026. A roll call was done, 5 yes, motion passed.

4. **New Business: IT and Personnel Updates**: Grant Herman provided an update on the project to regionalize fire station alerting, which is expected to be completed in the next one to two weeks. Additionally,

   Finance Update: it was announced that Kim D'Amato will be retiring at the end of the current fiscal year, and the Board expressed their gratitude for their contributions to the Finance Committee.

   Ops Update: Hexagon CAD System Concerns: Chief Williams and Chief Stocks discussed concerns raised statewide regarding the implementation of the Hexagon CAD system, specifically regarding deliverable timelines and perceived vendor pressure from State 911. A listening session with EOPS clarified that State 911 is not mandating specific vendors and acknowledged that global events like the World Cup have caused delays at the SEMRECC site.

   Hexagon System Status and Implementation: Michael Meaney and the technical team emphasized that they are performing thorough due diligence, including weekly workshops and configuration work. Greg Wallace demonstrated that the CAD system is currently semi functional, allowing for the building of response plans, mapping, and dispatching. The team expressed confidence in the ongoing progress, noting that they have not experienced the same data migration "hiccups" seen by other agencies.

   Hexagon Compliance and Timeline: Robert Stocks addressed concerns regarding Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) compliance, Anthony Massoia confirming that Hexagon passed the required certification. Michael Meaney projected a potential go-live date for March for full implementation, noting that the project is currently in a staged development phase.

   Sheriff's Department Weekend Lockup Policy Change: The Board discussed a sudden notification received by Police Chiefs stating that the Sheriff's Department will discontinue housing prisoners on weekends due to staffing and budget concerns, effective July 1st. Members expressed significant disappointment regarding the lack of notice, noting this creates an immediate operational and financial challenge for police departments, particularly smaller communities .

   Proposed First Due Platform for Fire Services: Tony presented a proposal for the "First Due" software platform to regionalize records management for fire departments. The platform covers fire, ambulance, inspections, permitting, and invoicing. The estimated total annual cost is approximately $132,755, with 75% being eligible for state reimbursement, potentially reducing the cost to about $32,000, which would be split among participating agencies. The board noted this could be a cost-effective improvement and plans to review the numbers further.

First Due Platform Implementation: Discussions were held regarding the migration to the First Due platform for records and ambulance operations, which could reduce software costs from approximately $58,000 to $16,000. The team plans to follow chapter 30B to ensure compliance with the Uniform Procurement Act. While there is interest in implementing this for the FY27 budget to avoid higher costs, the team needs to confirm procurement timelines and the status of a potential 75% state reimbursement.

Executive Director Update on Staffing and Training: The Executive Director reported that five dispatchers are moving through training, with completion expected by the end of September. The agency is actively interviewing candidates for positions starting August 3rd. The implementation of a Training and Community Engagement Coordinator, Stephanie, has significantly accelerated the training process and improved documentation efforts.

Staff Positivity Challenge: To counter the high percentage of daily negative thoughts faced by responders, the agency implemented a "positivity challenge" for all staff. Participants were tasked with posting one grateful thought daily in a Google chat for 21 days. With 98% buy-in, the challenge was deemed successful, and participants will be rewarded with five dress-down days.

Community Engagement Initiatives: The agency continues to expand community outreach, including educational presentations. A presentation regarding dispatchers as "superheroes" was delivered to over 300 students at Agawam Public Schools, receiving positive engagement. The team is also coordinating to attend upcoming "National Night Out" events.

Accounting Software and Treasurer Position: The organization is transitioning from QuickBooks to Vadar accounting software effective July 1st. To fill the Treasurer's vacancy, the team proposed contracting with Aponte and Aponte to provide Treasurer and accounting services. While the $48,000 cost exceeds the $36,000 budget line, it was noted that funds could be transferred from personnel services to the operating budget to cover the difference. Support was voiced for this vendor provided there are safeguards to maintain the separation of duties.

Retained Earnings and Financial Status: Based on an analysis of accounts and projected reimbursements, Westcomm is estimated to have approximately $1.3 million in retained earnings. The Board discussed utilizing these funds for capital expenses, though they acknowledged the need to verify these figures against audited financial statements.

Vehicle Purchase Request: The administration requested the purchase of three vehicles—a civilian explorer and two public safety Tahoes—for a total of $169,874.50. These vehicles are intended to support infrastructure, allow staff to reach radio sites, and provide redundancy. While some members expressed support for the purchase due to "leftover stock" pricing, others questioned the need for three vehicles and suggested the possibility of sharing underutilized resources.

Financial Oversight and Audit Challenges: The Board emphasized the necessity of relying on audited financial statements before making major spending decisions. The organization is currently facing delays in receiving audits from CBiz, a concern echoed by other agencies. It was determined that any expenditure from reserves must undergo review by the finance committee before final Board approval.

Union Contracts and Adjournment: The Dispatch and Supervisor union contracts were successfully ratified, effective for three years. These contracts were budgeted for, and the ratification process was completed.

5. **New Business not reasonably anticipated within 24 hours**: None at this time.

   Lyn Simmons left the meeting at 12:45 P.M.

6. **Adjournment**: A motion was made by Jennifer Wolowicz and 2nd by Stuart Beckley to adjourn the meeting. A roll call was done 4 yes, meeting adjourned at 12:50 P.M.