

DELAWARE COUNTY 911 BOARD  
MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 3, 2009  
DELAWARE COUNTY EOC

In attendance at the meeting was: Tom Homan, Steve Lutz, Commissioner Tommy Thompson (for Commissioner O'Brien), Sheriff Davis, Chief Martin, Chief Bernans (for Chief Honeycutt), Chief Morris (for Chief McIntire), Chief Donahue and Chief Farmer.

Absent: Chief Vest and Bill Shively

Also in Attendance: Bill Swatsworth (Kimball Corporation) and Gloria Rose James

- I. Chairman Homan called the meeting to order at 1:08 p.m with the Pledge of Allegiance.
- II. Reading and Approval of Minutes
  - A. Motion to approve the minutes of January 20, 2009 as presented by Chief Morris, seconded by Chief Miller, and passed unanimously.
- III. Committee Report
  - A. Technical Committee – None
  - B. Standards and Protocols – None
  - C. Administrative –None
- IV. Unfinished Business
  - A. Kimball Corporation - Chairman Homan stated that Bill Swatsworth has been working a little over 1 ½ weeks. Last week he was called back to the office to finish a previous project he had been working on.

Bill Swatsworth stated that since the last meeting, he has pulled John Webb from Kimball in to assist with the project. John has been reviewing the policies and procedure manuals. Bill stated that he has begun conducting interviews. As far as the task contracted, Task I (Communication Center Analysis) work has begun. Task II (assisting with hiring a new Director), Bill has received the information used on the previous hiring process. He has drafted a sample letter that is being reviewed at the corporate office. He hopes to deliver it by the end of the week.

Bill plans to meet with the various established committees. Much work has been spent in the Communication Center conducting reviews and analysis. Bill stated that he is scheduled to meet with the Technical Committee after this meeting. Bill has also reviewed the Memorandum of Understanding between the City, County and Sheriff. Bill believes that gray areas still exist

on the management structure. This would include what goes to the 911 Board, what goes through the County Commissioners and what is handled with the County Administration.

- B. Chairman Homan stated that he received a letter/position statement from the Delaware County Fire Chiefs’.

Chief Donahue stated that the letter was distributed at the previous meeting with a brief explanation. Chief Donahue stated that these positions have been provided to all of the County Commissioners. The first position is the County Fire Chiefs have strong feeling of apprehension and opposition to a 911 Communication Center run under the Delaware County Sheriff or any other end user. The Board provides an equal balance of end users and all should be equal partners. Second position is that the Fire Chiefs recommend that the current 911 Board be granted the full authority to oversee and lead a state-of-the-art 911 Communication Center. The third and final position is that the Fire Chiefs strongly advocate the development of a truly consolidated 911 Communication Center, encompassing all the fire/EMS agencies, law enforcement and the Sheriff’s Department. Chief Donahue stated that the County Fire Chiefs’ are very supportive of the consolidation, the 911 Board and this letter is further providing a vote of confidence as the 911 Board moves forward.

Sheriff Davis stated that he understands that 911 Board does not have the authority and serves only as an advisory board. He further stated that only the Sheriff or the County Commissioners are authorized to run 911 Communications. Sheriff Davis stated that his office has been contacting Sheriff Offices throughout Ohio and identifying the successes and failures. From this information, they will be putting together a synopsis. Sheriff indicated that this is not about power, but serving the public. He believes there is a check and balance as he is opening up the Sheriff Office by stepping up to the plate, opening up to criticism and the potential failure. He believes that everyone will make it work. If it doesn’t work, he would be willing to give it back to the 911 Board. Sheriff Davis stated that we all need to work together, but understand that it is a growing process.

Chairman Homan stated that 911 Board was composed so that no governing body had control, all were represented. This MOU was reviewed by the County Prosecutor.

Chief Donahue stated that the question is - if the Commissioner can sign authority to the 911 Board.

Chief Bernans stated that he believes the County Commissioners, by resolution, can provide the authority to the 911 Board.

Sheriff Davis stated that if it was that simple, it would have been done.

Chief Martin asked what he envisions with the 911 Board.

Sheriff Davis stated that he foresees the Sheriff reporting to the 911 Board.

Chief Donahue asked if the 911 Board gave direction, would the Sheriff follow this direction if he did not agree with it.

Sheriff Davis stated that the 911 Board would need to let him run the 911 Communication Center. There already exists checks and balances. This would not be a part-time gig, as many retirees who may take the position may consider. He would be willing to sign a decree that states that the 911 Board could take the system back by a majority vote.

Chairman Homan stated that the lawsuit involves the communication side, which is separate than the 911 side.

Sheriff Davis states that the County has stated that they have a letter that reportedly states that the Sheriff gave up the Communication system several years ago, but cannot produce this.

Chairman Homan stated that this is an important issue. Chairman Homan read excerpts from the Memorandum of Understanding that was signed by the County, City and Sheriff. This included the excerpts relating to potential rulings concerning the Sheriff lawsuit.

Sheriff Davis stated that he is willing to handle both 911 and communication. All need to understand that mistakes will be made. The existing operation has had nothing but challenges.

Chairman Homan stated that the fiduciary responsibility of the 911 Communication system is under the County Commissioners.

Commissioner Thompson stated that the idea of a board that was developed several years ago, when he was a City Councilmember. The purpose was to overcome turf wars. He has real concerns, that after many years we are still gambling with the safety of the people. It is time to move forward.

Chief Bernans agreed with Commissioner Thompson's comments, to let the 911 Board run the Center. All the people serving on the 911 Board have been placed or designated to that position as a result of the trust placed upon them by the public. He stated that the 911 Board needs the authority to operate. It is time we get on with this. He appreciates Sheriff Davis's comments, but he keeps saying if I win the lawsuit. The Board needs to run the center.

Chief Martin asked Bill Swatsworth what he has seen as the model 911 communication system.

Bill Swatsworth stated that the Center was run or operated under a Board. This Board was fiscally responsible to a Board of County Commissioners. Under the Board, operating groups are established (fire/EMS and law enforcement) to develop SOPs and provide direction. Bill stated that Lucas County has an unusual system that is owned by the County and is controlled by the Sheriff. An emergency services committee, consisting of the Sheriff, EMA, EMS and representatives from 911 manage the system.

Chief Martin asked how many centers Bill has reviewed. Bill stated that he has reviewed over 90 centers.

Chief Martin asked with these, what were the biggest issues seen. Bill stated that the biggest issues were the turf wars between jurisdictions. He stated that in his review, there is a concern with the amount of disciplinary action being taken against the dispatcher. The biggest problem he sees is what jurisdiction to dispatch, ultimately delaying responses.

Chief Bernans stated that when this is the case, send both jurisdictions. He has not seen a problem with that.

Bill stated that a whole lot of small questions lead to larger problems. This 911 Board plays a vital role in developing the 911 communication system.

Sheriff Davis stated that he feels the 911 Board is important. With him overseeing it, he expects to reach out to the Fire Chiefs, since he knows very little about the fire service. Sheriff Davis stated that he is not aware of any squabbling between fire and law.

Bill stated that any reference to this is based on historical issues he has seen while working in the field. This is why the 911 Board is important.

Chief Bernans stated that if we have dispatchers that have large files due to discipline, there is probably bigger issues with the employee. He is sure the dispatchers are sitting on edge right now. Concerns of their future and who they will be reporting are a few. Further, they have been told not to think, but to do what the computer system tells them. Bill stated that he is reviewing these issues.

Chief Farmer stated that we have the Priority Dispatch that can ensure the proper level of response.

Chief Donahue stated that the dispatchers are only as good as the information that is provided to them. He has seen a person injured call turnout to be a

cardiac arrest. When reviewed, the dispatcher did everything right, but the information provided to them was incorrect.

Chairman Homan stated that the City is not going to consolidate until these questions and issues are completed. Once consolidation occurs, it is done. He stated that these many issues and comments is why Kimball is present. Chairman Homan recognizes the Chiefs position statement, but doesn't know if any formal action is needed at this point. He believes Kimball needs to complete the report and we need to get a full-time director in place.

Chief Martin stated that he had two comments. The first is unity. Unity in what role the board will play. He has concern with the Sheriff stating that despite the Board giving direction, the Sheriff will have the ultimate decision. The second concern is with the representation of all facets of communication. This board should be the guiding force.

Sheriff Davis stated that the 911 Board currently has 3 people to convince – the County Commissioners With the Sheriff overseeing, he will listen and learn from this 911 Board.

Chief Donahue stated that he believes that the County Commissioners are going to defer to the 911 Board the operation, and they do not want to deal with the day-to-day operation.

Sheriff Davis stated that he decided that he would follow the 911 Board, if the 911 Board provided the direction and a 2/3 vote or greater.

Gloria Rose James stated that she has never seen the turf wars commented previously. She stated that the City CAD tells exactly whose jurisdiction the response is. The majority of confusion on behalf of the dispatchers is based on not being able to determine the correct address.

Commissioner Thompson stated that in 2001 he was told that the identification of a callers location would be automatic with the CAD that was purchased.

Bill Swatsworth stated that the landline issue is currently good. It is a problem with the Phase II cellular system and identifying the location to within 50 meters.

Gloria stated that many times callers on cell phones are not aware where they are at, and it is difficult to identify this information.

Bill Swatsworth stated he saw a recent accident take 4 callers to identify the location.

Chairman Homan stated that the information from Kimball will be very beneficial.

- C. Personnel - Executive Session pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Sections 121.22 (G) (4) personnel. Motion by Chief Farmer to move into Executive Session. Seconded by Chief Martin. Motion Approved at 2:35 p.m..

Motion by Steve Lutz, seconded by Chief Farmer to come out of Executive Session at 3:15 p.m.. Motion approved.

V. New Business

None

VI. There being no further business before the Board, meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

VII. Next meeting is scheduled for February 17, 2009.