

**LEGISLATIVE ARKANSAS BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE ON LOCAL 911 SYSTEMS  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2016  
MINUTES**

The Legislative Arkansas Blue Ribbon Committee on Local 911 Systems met Tuesday, February 16, 2016 at the University of Arkansas Community College at Hope, Hope, Arkansas.

Legislative committee members present: Senator Linda Chesterfield, Senate Chair, Representatives Scott Baltz, House Chair, and Charlotte Douglas.

Non-legislative committee members present: Brianna Fields, Emergency Responder, Joel Hoggard, Consumer Member, Shelby Johnson, Director, Geographic Information System, David Maxwell, Director, Arkansas Department of Emergency Management, and Chris Villines, Executive Director, Association of Arkansas Counties.

Other legislators in attendance: Representative Brent Talley.

**Call to Order**

Senator Chesterfield called the meeting to order.

**Opening Comments by Committee Co-Chairs – Senator Linda Chesterfield and Representative Scott Baltz**

Senator Chesterfield said the Committee needs to visit areas around the state to ensure citizens in those areas are served well. Representative Baltz thanked Representative Brent Talley for arranging the meeting and welcomed attendees to the meeting.

**Consideration of the Minutes of June 17, August 6, August 26, August 27, and September 29, 2015 [Exhibit C, C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4]**

The minutes of the June 17, August 6, August 26, August 27, and September 29, 2015 Committee meetings were approved by acclamation.

**Welcome to University of Arkansas Community College at Hope by Chancellor Chris Thomason**

Chancellor Chris Thomason welcomed the Committee to the campus. He described Hempstead Hall, a 65,000 square foot multi-use facility, as a partnership between the College, the City of Hope, and Hempstead County; which during its second year of operation, has received 57,000 visitors. The school recently instituted the RAVE Mobile system on the campus.

**Overview of the Emergency Response System in Hempstead County**

Haskell Morse, County Judge, Hempstead County, said Hempstead County is one of the first counties in the state to institute RAVE Mobile Safety. Judge Morse said the City of Hope and Hempstead County have a partnership, in which the county maintains the equipment and the city oversees and provides the 911 dispatchers. Judge Morse discussed data associated with the 911 system:

- Hempstead County's 2016 budget for the 911 system is \$260,000
- The City of Hope spends \$300,000 annually for dispatchers
- Hempstead County spent \$127,000 in 2015 on new equipment

- In January 2016, Hempstead County received 1,230 calls to 911, 1,095 were made by cell phones
- The County receives approximately 40 calls per day, or 1.65 calls per hour

Cathy Aaron, 911 Coordinator, Hempstead County stated that the funding is allocated from landline telephones had dropped approximately 50% over the past two years, when compared to wireless funds.

J. R. Wilson, Chief of Police, Hope Police Department, said the Hope Police Department is responsible for the administration of the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), which provides dispatching services for the Hope Police Department, Hempstead County Sheriff's Office, Hope Fire Department, and approximately 17 rural fire departments. The City of Hope receives \$300,000 annually for operation of the 911 system, and receives 50% of wireless 911 funds. Hempstead County retains the remainder of 911 funds, and other special annual payments, to cover the coordination of the 911 system and capital equipment purchases. Chief Wilson asked the Committee to focus on building a 911 funding mechanism, as the current funding structure is insufficient. He then stated that because of a lack of standards, many PSAP administrators have established training requirements within their agencies. The Hope Police Department requires dispatchers to obtain:

- One Association of Public Safety Communications (APCO) course in telecommunications
- The Arkansas Crime Information Center (ACIC) level one and two courses
- A telecommunicators course through The Arkansas Law Enforcement Training (ALET)
- Monthly scenario training through Police Legal Sciences

Chief Wilson said that approximately 142 hours of training are required for dispatchers. The Department has also developed a dispatcher policy manual. He asked the Committee to create standards through the legislative process and explore regional agreements to reduce costs. Chief Wilson said the county is responsible for the 911 mapping. The City purchased mapping sources from a third party vendor, NCW Consulting for overlays, into which the City enters mapping data.

### **Overview of the Emergency Response System in Nevada County**

Dale Booker, 911 Coordinator, Nevada County, said that Nevada County established its 911 system in 2002. He said the Nevada County digital system was developed directly with the Nevada County Judge. The County maintains the equipment and receives its funding from cell phone and a data line tax, and the City of Prescott pays half of salaries of the 911 dispatchers. Mr. Booker said funding is the biggest challenge.

### **Overview of the Emergency Response System in Howard County**

Judy Hockaday, 911 Coordinator, Howard County, said she worked with Shelby Johnson, with the GIS office, and developed the mapping for the 911 system for Howard County.

Sheriff Bryan McJunkins, Howard County, gave an overview of the County dispatch center and its operations. The dispatch center was developed in 1997 with four telephone lines dedicated to the 911 system and several telephone lines referenced as mobile lines. He said there are four municipalities in Howard County with individual police departments, sheriff's departments, fire departments, and emergency management services, and the county dispatch center provides 911 services to all of the departments.

### **Emergency Preparedness in the Hope School District**

Bobby Hart, Superintendent, Hope School District, discussed emergency preparedness from the school's standpoint. Mr. Hart said the Hope School District instituted the RAVE panic button in Fall 2014. The district has two teams for emergency preparedness. One team consists of school personnel and school leadership from all four school campuses. The group leaders perform table top exercises to ensure all check lists are in place, including a list of all personnel. There are also school crisis teams, which conduct table top exercises on an annual basis on each campus. The school district employs a school resource officers and a district safety coordinator. Two major challenges for the school district is adequate number of personnel and training.

#### **Update on Panic Button Alert for K12 Schools**

Ted Mullenix, Mullenix and Associates, said the RAVE Panic Button is now 100% online for all K-12 public schools in Arkansas. An additional 276 auxiliary and support locations are also covered by the RAVE Panic button, including school district offices, sports arenas, preschools, cooperatives, and administrative buildings. The Rave Panic Button in Arkansas Public Schools covers:

- o 1,242 school campuses
- o 8,207 buildings
- o 5,659 landline phones
- o 37,946 panic button users (staff, district emergency contacts, first responders)
- o 108 PSAPs use the Rave Panic Button in support of schools

#### **State of 911 in Arkansas [Exhibit J]**

Michael DeRose, Director, Emergency Communications, Benton County, discussed 911 funding and suggestions to improve the state of 911 in Arkansas. He said that in order to improve the level of service, it may be necessary to consider consolidation or regionalization of PSAPs. He said there are five PSAPs in Benton County, which could consolidate. He said Arkansas provides 24 hours of training to 911 dispatchers, and suggested increasing the time to a 40 hour class, in order for dispatchers to qualify for nationally recognized courses. One example is APCO, which requires a minimum of 40 hours of introductory dispatch training for their classes.

Senator Chesterfield recognized David Maxwell for a motion. Mr. Maxwell made a motion to create a workgroup for the purpose of creating working documents to facilitate the work of the 911 Committee. A second was made by Chris Villines. The motion carried.

Senator Chesterfield announced the Committee Co-Chairs would appoint members to the subcommittee and forward the information to entire committee.

Mr. Maxwell suggested the 911 Committee schedule its next meeting in Little Rock and invite telecommunications companies in the state to testify, along with the Arkansas Public Service Commission.

Senator Chesterfield told committee members notification will be made once a meeting date has been selected.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.