

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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MAINE COMMUNICATIONS  
SYSTEM  
POLICY BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT 2010

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# MAINE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM POLICY BOARD

**“The mission of this Board is to ensure the provision of a professional, high-quality, cost-effective, and reliable public safety emergency communications system that provides our citizens a prompt and appropriate response to calls for service.”**

## HISTORICAL SYNOPSIS

### ENABLING LEGISLATION

The 121<sup>st</sup> Legislature passed LD 1683, An Act Relating to the Establishment of a Central Maine Regional Public Safety Communication Center, as Public Law Chapter 678. Title 5 MRSA § 12004-I, sub-§74-D establishes the Maine Communications System Policy Board within the section for “Advisory Boards; Boards with Minimal Authority.” The primary responsibilities and powers of advisory boards and boards with minimal authority include the responsibility and authority to advise state agencies, review policies and procedures, conduct studies, evaluate programs and make recommendations to the state agencies, the Legislature or the Governor. Title 25 MRSA § 1531 through 1533 describes the membership of the Board and its powers and duties, as well as the duties of the supervisor for the communications unit within the Department of Public Safety.

### POLICY BOARD ORGANIZATION

The Board is comprised of 15 members representing the following:

- Commissioner, Dept. of Public Safety
- Chief, State Police
- Chief Information Officer, Dept. of Administrative & Financial Svc.
- Executive Department
- Towns < 5,000 Population
- Towns between 5,000 – 15,000 Population
- Towns > 15,000 Population
- Counties
- Police Chiefs
- County Sheriffs
- Fire Chiefs
- Emergency Medical Services
- Representative of Users of the System
- Non-supervisory employee of DPS Communications Bureau
- Citizen

The Board has organized sub-committees for the following subject areas: Technology, Human Resources, Budget and Operations. The current acting chair of the Board is Robert Devlin, Kennebec County Administrator.

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## POWERS AND DUTIES

The Board is charged with establishing policies, procedures and standards for the cooperative use of the Department of Public Safety's communications system for PSAP services, i.e. the answering of E911 calls by a Public Safety Answering Point, and/or for emergency communications dispatch services by municipal, county and state governmental entities; for formulating a budget for the Department's communications unit; for developing an implementation plan to accommodate the *voluntary* consolidation of the various governmental communications systems in Maine with the Department's communications system; and, for designing an appropriate communications unit within the Department.

This year the 124<sup>th</sup> Legislature passed Public Law, Chapter 617, LD 1813, An Act Relating to the Recommendations of the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability Regarding Emergency Communications Services. A section of this law modified Title 25 MSRA Section 1531. This section identifies the makeup of the Communications System Policy Board, which had identified that three representatives from participating municipalities, having a specific population, be named to the Board. This new law changed that condition by removing the requirement that the municipality be a participating agency, and that they fall within a specific population number. The Board's Acting Chair has been in communication with the Maine Municipal Association (MMA) for recommendations to fill those three Board Positions.

## POLICY BOARD WORK AREAS

### Technology Subcommittee

The Bureau of Consolidated Emergency Communications and the Office of Information Technology are sharing a \$5.625 million Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Technical Grant. The purpose of this grant is to enhance their ability to provide a more interoperable service for our public safety community. In pursuit of that goal, the Consolidated Emergency Communications Bureau had a Needs Assessment Study performed by MACRO Corporation in 2008 for the purpose of reviewing the Bureau's Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. This Needs Assessment strongly recommended that the Bureau replace its existing Computer Aided Dispatch system, which lacked the ability to provide interoperability.

As a result of that study, the Department moved forward in contracting for Project Management services and began work on the development of a Request For Proposals (RFP) for the new CAD system. The Project Manager, working with Business Analysts, staff members from this Bureau and the Office of Information Technology, developed Functional and Technical Specifications which were incorporated into an RFP that was advertised in January 2010. Following the review, evaluation and scoring of responses to that RFP, an award was made to xwave US Inc. The contract is currently being negotiated and the implementation phase will begin soon.

In October the Bureau filled a newly created position of "Public Safety Dispatch Systems Administrator." This individual will be the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) Systems Administrator and will work closely with the Bureau's Project Manager and the xwave project team during the training and implementation phase of the new CAD system.

The purpose of the COPS Grant is to achieve interoperability, and in doing so we will be working with the Maine State Police, the Administrative Office of the Courts, and other stakeholders, as they develop their "data broker" program. This program is intended to provide a means of data transfer between programs of various agencies and various vendors. By working with them, our CAD product will be capable of transferring call data from our system to the Kennebec County Sheriff's Department CAD System, as well as to the Maine State Police Records Management System and set the ground work for interoperability with other agency's systems.

### **Budget Subcommittee**

The 124<sup>th</sup> Legislature heard LD 1813, An Act Relating to the Recommendations of the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability Regarding Emergency Communications Services, which resulted in the passage of Public Law, Chapter 617. This Public Law modifies Title 25 MRSA, Section 1535, Fees for public safety answering point services and dispatch services. The passage of LD 1813 removed the requirement for an adjudicatory proceeding before the Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC) for the setting of the Bureau's rates to its users. The bill returned that rate setting authority to the Communications System Policy Board through its Budget Sub Committee, and that Sub Committee has developed a new rate structure for municipal users, based on incremental costs of adding users to the system.

Public Law, Chapter 617 also authorized the Emergency Services Communications Bureau at the Maine Public Utilities Commission to fund our Bureau for two legislatively authorized supervisory positions at the Augusta RCC for one year. These positions had been approved by the legislature; however, during the PUC rate case, they were not authorized to be funded through the established rates.

Some of the agencies that had been users of the Bureau's Communications System have moved to other service providers. Agencies that continue to utilize the services of this bureau are listed below:

### USER LIST

MUNICIPAL		COUNTY
Albion	Parsonsfield	
Belgrade	Pittston	Kennebec
Chelsea	Portage Lake	
China	Porter	
Cornish	Randolph	<b>STATE</b>
Eagle Lake	Reed Plantation	Maine State Police
Farmingdale	Readfield	Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
Fayette	Rome	Maine Turnpike Authority
Gardiner	Sidney	Fire Marshal's Office
Hallowell	Unity Plantation	Marine Resources
Hiram	Vassalboro	Department of Environmental Protection
Limington	Vienna	Maine Drug Enforcement Agency
Litchfield	Washburn	
Manchester	Wayne	
Mt Vernon	Windsor	
Oakfield		

## **Operations**

As a result of the reduced number of municipal customers, call volume and revenues have decreased. To compensate for those changes, staffing levels has been reduced. This has resulted in schedule changes in each of the centers to ensure adequate shift coverage and to reduce expenses to keep within the revenue received from the user community.

The Bureau continues to conduct user group meetings, although less frequently than when the consolidation first began, as the policies have been reviewed by the users and adjusted to accommodate the general needs of the first responders. We will continue to monitor our policies and keep them up to date with the needs of the communications community and user groups.

The 124<sup>th</sup> Legislature passed Public Law, Chapter 219, An Act To Promote Public Safety Answering Point Efficiency, which directed the Emergency Services Communications Bureau (ESCB) at the Maine Public Utilities Commission to conduct a review of the effectiveness and efficiency of the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) community before any further reduction of PSAPs could occur. L. Robert Kimball was contracted by the ESCB to conduct this study, and as a result of the study, has submitted a report to the ESCB that has recommended that they consolidate to "between 15 – 17" PSAPs.

A group of Senators from the Kennebec County area made a request of the Government Oversight Committee, that the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA), review the PSAP and dispatching services provided by Central Maine Regional Communications Center located in Augusta. This report was completed and submitted to the Government Oversight Committee, the Utilities & Energy Committee and the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. Some of the issues that were questioned by the Committee and addressed in this report were: the transfer and announcement of calls; standardization of call handling; review of supervisory roles and staffing patterns; customer satisfaction; and, cost structure for the user community.

The Bureau has taken action in some of these areas to modify policies so that we are more in line with a "best practices" model. Our call transfer and announcement policy was adjusted in cooperation with other center Directors at a Communications Policy Board meeting. With regard to supervisory roles and staffing patterns, the Bureau has added two new Supervisors to CMRCC as identified earlier in this report.

The concern over customer satisfaction is being address through a more aggressive quality assurance program. Each Supervisor is to spend three hours of their shift reviewing audio recordings of Operator's telephone and radio conversations and scoring them against the Bureau's Quality Assurance Policy and providing feedback to each of the Operators.

The concern over the rates and rate shopping as identified in the report is beyond the control of the Bureau for this period, as the rates were established as the result of an adjudicatory proceeding before the Maine Public Utilities Commission. However, as explained above, the Communications System Policy Board has been given the authority to set the rates, and the Board's Budget Sub Committee is currently working on them.

The Bureau worked in cooperation with the Maine Criminal Justice Academy and a number of social service organizations in the development of the Sliver Alert Program. This Silver Alert Program was the subject of LD 1610, which was passed into law as Public Law, Chapter 583, by the 124<sup>th</sup> Legislature. This program deals with the public broadcast notification of missing senior citizens who may be suffering from an irreversible deterioration of intellectual faculties such as dementia, or similar condition. Individuals between the age of 19 and 59 years of age, who may be suffering from these same conditions are also covered by this notification process. Its purpose is to broadcast information on these missing individuals so that the public may assist in locating them as quickly as possible.

E911 Calls      Dispatched Incidents

Gray  
Augusta

Orono  
Houlton

Total



## COMMUNICATIONS POLICY BOARD MEMBERS

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Respectfully submitted,

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