

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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MAINE COMMUNICATIONS  
SYSTEM  
POLICY BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT 2011

Prepared January 2012

# **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.

The 124<sup>th</sup> Legislature passed LD1813, An Act Relating to the Recommendations of the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability Regarding Emergency Communications Services, as Public Law Chapter 617. Part of that law was to modify the makeup of the Policy Board. Rather than three municipal officials coming from communities within a given population range, the new law identifies, “...3 members representing municipalities...” 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 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
- Towns
- Towns
- 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.

#### 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.

### **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 for their services has been signed and during 2011 extensive work was accomplished in the planning and preparation for the implementation of this new 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.

At the close of 2011, this project has seen two of the three computer servers installed, administrator training was conducted for the system administrator as well as site administrators for the Bureau. Additionally, training has been conducted for the Office of Information Technology staff that will be involved in the setup, breakdown and maintenance of this equipment.

We anticipate a “go live” date during the middle of March 2012, which will be followed by system acceptance immediately following.

### **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 it 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	STATE
Albion	Parsonsfield	
Belgrade	Pittston	Kennebec
Chelsea	Portage Lake	
China	Porter	
Cornish	Randolph	
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	Masardis	
Ashland	Ft. Fairfield	

## **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 Bureau has taken action in 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. This Bureau has also worked with representative from municipal and county PSAPs and the Emergency Services Communications Bureau to develop a uniform method of handling and transferring E911 calls.

	E911 Calls	Dispatched Incidents
Gray	153,659	40,053
Augusta	70,777	65,572
Orono	63,763	35,966
Houlton	12,746	18,051
Total	300,945	159,642

## COMMUNICATIONS POLICY BOARD MEMBERS

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Municipality (vacant)

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Respectfully submitted,

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