

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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MAINE COMMUNICATIONS  
SYSTEM  
POLICY BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT 2008

Prepared January 2009

# **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 (Appendix A) 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 into 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

In October of 2007, the Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC) designated Central Maine Regional Communications Center (CMRCC) at the Department of Public Safety as the only Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) in Kennebec County. As CMRCC began to sign contracts for providing PSAP service with agencies in Kennebec County, we contracted with Information Management Corporation (IMC) to provide a pass through program so that we could transfer the Automatic Number Identification/Automatic Location Information (ANI/ALI) data to those agencies that were decommissioned as PSAPs. In the beginning of 2008, the PUC established a grant program for this type of service, and the Department applied for and received funds to provide for the data transfer program. This capability was installed in both the Augusta and Gray RCCs, thereby transferring this important information.

The Consolidated Emergency Communications Bureau had worked early this year with a Project Manager from the Office of Information Technology in the development of a Project Plan for proceeding forward with the COPS Technical Grant for the purchase of a Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system for the Bureau. As part of that process the Department contracted with MACRO Corporation to provide a Needs Assessment Study of the communications centers to identify alternative for proceeding with the process. As a result of that study, the Department is moving forward in contracting for Project Management services to begin work on the development of a Request For Proposals (RFP).

A large part of the COPS Grant is to achieve interoperability, and in doing so we will be working with the Maine State Police as they develop their "data broker" program. This program is intended to provide a means of data transfer between programs of various vendors. By working with them our CAD product will be capable of transferring call data from our system to another agencies system.

## **Budget Subcommittee**

The Budget Subcommittee began the year looking at a rate adjustment for the Bureau's users. As part of the process, it was suggested that the rate structure and process be changed from a per capita method to a call volume method. It was recommended that each agency pay a flat fee for having Operators available, then a percentage fee based on volume.

The Subcommittee also discussed the fund balance that may exist at the end of Fiscal Year (FY). After some debate, it was determined that an amount of five percent (5%) fund balance was acceptable. What had yet to be decided was the method of returning any excess to the users.

These two items of discussion had to be set aside when the Legislature passed Public Law 2007, Chapter 622. This Public Law directed the PUC to establish an adjudicatory proceeding for the setting of the rates charged by the Department for its PSAP and dispatch services to its user.

The Commissioner's Office and Bureau Director have been very involved with members of the Attorney General's Office in the development and filing of information and budgetary figures with the PUC on this case, which should be decided in mid January 2009.

## **Operations**

As mentioned earlier, in October 2007, CMRCC became the only PSAP in Kennebec County. With the decommissioning of Kennebec County Sheriff's Department Communications as a PSAP, the Kennebec County Commissioners chose to close the County Communications Center, and have CMRCC provide the dispatch services for the Sheriff's Department. This also resulted in a number of communities in Kennebec County contracting with CMRCC or another communications center for the dispatching of local fire and emergency medical services.

The signing of contracts resulted in an increase of call volume, both in call taking, as the only PSAP in Kennebec County and the moving of dispatch services from Kennebec County. Based on the increase in revenue, the Department submitted a Financial Order creating new temporary positions within CMRCC. These new positions were for five Emergency Communications Technicians (call takers) and two Emergency Communications Specialists (call taker/dispatchers).

The closing of the Kennebec County Communications Center also resulted in the relocations of the Kennebec County Warrant Repository. This function was moved to CMRCC, causing the movement of over 5,000 warrants to CMRCC.

In May 2008, the Bureau also signed a contract for fire dispatch services with the Town of Oakfield in Aroostook County. The Oakfield Fire Department also provides fire services to the Towns of Dyer Brook, Benadicta and Smyrna.

Each month the Augusta and Gray RCCs have been holding user group meetings, where representatives from the various local agencies can meet and talk with the Supervisor of their respective RCCs. The Supervisors have also been in contact with representatives from the State agencies they provide dispatch services to, and have held quarterly meetings for them.

This year saw a changes to the Policy Board, in that some of the vacant position had been filled (see attached Board Member list).

Below are listed the total E911 calls received by each center and the total number of dispatched incidents by center, these totals are for all law, fire and emergency medical services calls.

	E911 Calls	Dispatched Incidents
Gray	181,464	67,637
Augusta	73,889	47,766
Orono	47,836	31,740
Houlton	18,080	25,540
Total	321,269	172,683

## COMMUNICATIONS POLICY BOARD MEMBERS

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representative

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ESCB, representing users of the communications  
system

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Police Chiefs representative

### **Chief Mark Kimball**

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Fire Chief, Fire Chiefs representative

### **Col. Patrick Fleming**

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Municipality of over 15,000 (vacant)

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DPS, Communications Bureau  
Director  
(non-member)



## USER AGENCIES

### MUNICIPAL

Acton	Masardis
Alfred	Monmouth
Aroostook	Mt. Vernon
Arundel	Newfield
Ashland	No Berwick
Augusta	Oakfield
Belgrade	Oakland
Chelsea	Parsonfield
Cornish	Portage Lake
Dayton	Porter
Eagle Lake	Randolph
Farmingdale	Readfield
Fayette	Rome
Ft. Fairfield	Sidney
Gardiner	Shapleigh
Hiram	Unity Plant
Island Falls	Van Buren
Kennebunk	Vassalboro
Lebanon	Vienna
Limerick	Washburn
Limington	Waterboro
Litchfield	Wayne
Lyman	Wells
Manchester	West Gardiner
Mapleton	Windsor
	Winthrop

### COUNTY

Aroostook  
Kennebec

### STATE

Maine State Police  
Inland Fisheries & Wild Life  
Maine Turnpike Authority  
Fire Marshal's Office  
Marine Resources  
Department of Environmental Protection  
Maine Drug Enforcement Agency

Respectfully submitted,

Cliff Wells  
Director  
Bureau of Consolidated Emergency Communications  
Department of Public Safety