

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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MAINE COMMUNICATIONS  
SYSTEM  
POLICY BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT 2009

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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 (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

The Bureau of Consolidated Emergency Communications and the Office of Information Technology are sharing a \$5.625 million dollar Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Technical Grant, which is to enhance their ability to provide a more interoperable service for the 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 of providing interoperability.

As a result of that study, the Department had 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. During this year our Project Manager, working with Business Analysts, staff members from this Bureau and the Office of Information Technology, have developed Functional and Technical Specifications that are being incorporated into an RFP that should be posted in the first quarter of 2010.

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 another agencies system, as well as to the Maine State Police Records Management System.

## **Budget Subcommittee**

In the beginning of 2008, the Budget Subcommittee began 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 call 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 a 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.

During the end of 2008, the Commissioner's Office and Bureau Director had been very involved with members of the Attorney Generals Office in the development and filing of information and budgetary figures with the PUC on this case. On January 22, 2009 the Maine Public Utilities Commission issued their order which set the rates for the Bureau's services to state and local agencies. Following that decision the Bureau began distributing its new contract to the users under the rate and guidelines of the PUC Order (Docket 2008-225). This Order resulted in a number of agencies seeking PSAP and dispatching services for a lesser cost, thereby reducing the number of agencies the Bureau provides services to.

### **USER LIST**

<b>MUNICIPAL</b>		<b>COUNTY</b>
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 user base, there has been a reduced call volume and reduced revenue, which has also reduced the staff of Operators at the Bureau. This has resulted in schedule changes in each of the centers and a reduction in expenses to keep with the revenue received from the user community.

The Bureau continues to conduct user group meetings, although less frequent than when the consolidation first began, as the polices 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 at the Maine Public Utilities Commission to conduct a review of the effectiveness and efficiency of the Public Safety Answering Point community before any further reduction of PSAPs could occur.

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 request was refined to compare it to other PSAP and dispatch services provided to the public safety community of the Kennebec County area. These two studies are still underway and are expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2010.

	E911 Calls	Dispatched Incidents
Gray	157,434	94,672
Augusta	65,607	87,159
		27,770 (Kennebec SO)
Orono	49,444	58,835
Houlton	14,579	32,475
Total	287,064	300,911

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Vacant

Municipality of under 5,000

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Respectfully submitted,

Cliff Wells

Director

Bureau of Consolidated Emergency Communications

Department of Public Safety