

**WALDO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT SESSION
(SPECIAL SESSION)
MAY 10, 2016**

PRESENT: Commissioners William D. Shorey (Chairman), Amy R. Fowler and Betty I. Johnson.

Present from the County of Waldo:

Communications Director Owen Smith
Waldo County Sheriff Jeffrey Trafton
Chief Deputy Jason Trundy
Sergeant James Greeley
Lt. Matthew Curtis
EMA Director Dale Rowley
Dispatch Supervisor Michael Larrivee
Dispatcher Misty Lewis
Dispatcher Gabrielle Rossignol
Rusty Bell Yankee Communications
Technology Consultant James Arseneau
County Clerk Barbara Arseneau, to take minutes

Present from various agencies:

Waldo County Fire Chiefs' President William Gillespie
Waldo County Fire Fighters Association President Jeffrey Archer
Morrill Fire Deputy Chief David Wight
Liberty Deputy Fire Chief Tobey Kress
Morrill Fire Chief Patrick Scribner
Frankfort Fire Chief Jeffrey Anderson
Prospect Fire Chief Tim Terry
Stockton Springs Fire Assistant Chief Vern Thompson
Searsport Fire Chief Andrew Webster
Montville Fire Fighter Doug Thomas
Montville Fire Chief John York
Montville Fire Fighter William H. Spaulding, II
Searsport Police Chief Richard LaHaye
Belfast Police Chief Michael McFadden

Call to Order: Commissioner Shorey called the court session to order at 6:00 p.m. He had all introduce themselves, asked that the discussion remain civil. He explained that Chief Bill Gillespie came to meet with the County Commissioners during a recent court session and the Commissioners realized that the subject matter needed to be discussed at a separate meeting so that those involved would have an opportunity to speak. He then asked Bill Gillespie to speak.

B. Gillespie stated that the reason for this meeting came after the last meeting of Fire Chiefs – 17 of the group. Discussion centered on continuing with IamResponding, Spillman, etc. B. Gillespie inquired about the County's decision to move off of the tower on Mt. Ephraim.

Commissioner Shorey asked EMA Director Dale Rowley to speak to that question.

D. Rowley said he was involved with constructing the new tower.

O. Smith said he would address this question and explained that the basic reason was because Mt. Ephraim had a hostile landlord. The landlord had made a number of threats, was difficult to deal with, signed another lease and in less than a year, was demanding more money. The tower was also not in good shape. It was not in the best interest of the County to stay on that tower.

B. Gillespie asked what the County did to find the best site for a tower.

O. Smith explained that they thought about Dixmont and other sites. They were able to work out a good deal with the Searsport Water District to use their land. That area was tested and it proved to be mostly good except for another few spots. He explained that there had been a meeting about this later, during which he had remained mostly silent. There was a claim that it was not working in some areas but he and those involved with the testing knew better because these areas were tested several times and the test results were that it worked.

B. Gillespie asked what the costs were.

W. Shorey said that the Commissioners made the decision to come off that tower and find a new site. The spot is one they are happy with, and they are putting up a second tower to take care of any other issues.

B. Gillespie said the chiefs had not been “privy” to that knowledge.

W. Shorey said Bill Gillespie was present at that meeting and that he felt that it was Bill’s duty to tell the others.

Searsport Police Chief Richard LaHaye was called on to speak. He said that this matter has been discussed over and over at the Board of Director’s meetings, and finished with, “Enough is enough is enough.”

B. Gillespie said that he had no more questions.

W. Shorey asked why B. Gillespie why he held this meeting when there were no more questions.

B. Gillespie commented that there are problems that they felt needed to be addressed with the Board of Commissioners but that the Board of Commissioners didn’t want to hear those issues.

W. Shorey stated that the Commissioners had heard the issues and that is why cement is being poured for the new tower and the microwave is being waited for. These matters are being addressed.

Commissioner Amy Fowler asked if the new tower would solve some of the problems. D. Rowley detailed the tests that they intend to perform in addition to the testing in North Searsport, West Frankfort and Swanville. He said he also had heard from Frankfort and Winterport that it was working well.

Commissioner Betty Johnson said that it was her understanding that this new tower would alleviate a lot of the problems that had been going on.

Technology Consultant James Arseneau was called on to speak. He stated that during a recent NENA meeting, those present were told that Oxford County had pagers that were not working in some locations. Some of the locations that had CMP meters were causing interference. These meters are a transmitter and a receiver and there are some of those defective meters out there. These do not cause problems in all cases but they have proven to cause problems in a number of cases.

R. LaHaye commented that every single house now has smart meters on their houses. He confirmed what was heard at the NENA meeting.

D. Rowley said he wasn't sure the issue was that, but he had found that in testing, some areas were improved and some worsened, but they are hoping to address the issues with the new tower. He explained that they are re-using the tower that was on the Jail property and are installing it on the site.

Chief Jeffrey Archer stated that he had received an email message calling this meeting a "radio board meeting." He wondered if this meeting was taking the place of another meeting.

R. LaHaye responded that there is no need to have another meeting Thursday. He asked if he could speak to Owen Smith and stated that the IamResponding had been done as "another tool" in the tool box.

O. Smith explained that this was done at the request of the fire fighters. He added that he is tired of Waldo County being compared to Knox County. He explained the CAD system, noting that "Rip and Run" takes the information that 911 delivers to the CAD system and puts it out to IamResponding. This is why they don't have as much information as Knox. Knox doesn't have that interface but is buying it and will have trouble with it. A lot of the calls have 911 information, which is protected by law. He explained that they are working with Spillman on this. This sensitive information is all on the calls for service. He illustrated by asking those present if they would like their daughter's assault being discussed the next day in a local coffee shop because it had been sent out. He added that Knox has a great protocol about IamResponding and added that "it's another tool." He commented that cell service is so lousy that in Belmont the message was received 3 hours after it went out. He said he went to the Commissioners to ask for this tool for the fire departments and the Commissioners approved it. He added that five of the fire departments have not even done anything with it.

B. Gillespie said that "parsing" is the ability as a fire chief regarding what is sent to them, not Dispatch and not Jim Arseneau. He explained that the fire chiefs would eliminate the issues of HIPPA and that that they are not generally going to get the domestic issues. He explained that they are asking for information and we want to see what information Dispatch received. He added that Waldo County has every fire chief sign a waiver and they are responsible for not violating HIPPA.

J. Arseneau explained that when this was in the first phase of implementation in July, they found out right away that it isn't so much the 911 interface – it is ProQA. What happened is at one of the fire stations, one of the passersby passed a window and saw all the information that was on the screen.

Spillman said it couldn't be parsed – it was either all information or just two lines of information. When Spillman sends information, it sends everything to IamResponding and the Fire Chiefs cull it out. Spillman's was instructed to send out the two lines of information. He further explained that it has no way to provide cross streets. In the city the way the numbers are set up, it can do that but not in the smaller towns. He said he has been talking with Spillman and has spoken with Craig Whiting about this particular interface. That information was relayed to Chief Gillespie. J. Arseneau explained that he had been hospitalized the week before, came back to work literally this morning and found out that there is new code. They will turn on full information for Liberty Fire and once it has been figured out as to what needs to be parsed, then it will be turned on for everybody else. He explained that he had literally just started to tweak that as of today. Monitoring is ongoing. The problem is that there is too much information going out. He said that he thought all would agree that nobody wants to see too much information come across. He said they are definitely working to get things in the right direction. With AT&T and Verizon phones, if it isn't set up with addresses the right way, the phone companies will dump some of the messages and they never make it to the device. There are some things you can do to address those issues. Dispatchers don't see a call sign. On the radio, people use the call sign. Dispatchers have to attach the call signs to the names. Some agencies have done this – 15 agencies. Some are not doing what is asked, and only five agencies haven't done anything. He knew others have been reaching out to them.

Liberty Deputy Chief Tobey Kress said he's struggling with this. His understanding was that this was for the fire chiefs to use as a direct request to stop using the radio. Unfortunately, now dispatchers are asking if anyone is responding. He felt it was not Dispatch's tool to tell the fire departments how to use it. He would like to see some strategic planning done and some goal dates for implementation. It would be good to be aware of the progress.

J. Arseneau reminded them that the dispatchers need to tie off – this is a back-up system. If they don't have it on the screen, they can't tell people the information. He explained that they were not trying to spy on anybody, just keep track of things.

Dispatch Supervisor Mike Larrivee said that when dispatchers are sitting there looking at the screen and a chief asks how many are responding, the dispatcher can't tell if the same ones who responded by IamResponding are the same that called in. They can't answer that question.

D. Rowley asked some questions about ProQA.

J. Archer commented that with IamResponding, the computer screens are a tactical thing for the fire chiefs. The positions you see, fireman, firefighter, support, this gives the fire chief tactical information, and he understands what is coming. He doesn't have to keep asking the dispatchers. He said he thought once it's up and running, it will be a great tactical tool. He added that the information is there to help with that. He said that he liked IamResponding, he thought it is being underused and hopes that with future technology and upgrades, it could be a great tool. Some dispatchers don't use it, some use it a lot; for himself, he noted that the fire departments all signed the directive to get off the radio and acknowledge that the trucks are on-scene. He said he had gone door to door talking with all the chiefs. He thought they were doing fairly well with that. He felt that it was regressing the opposite way. He and Bill Gillespie spent a lot of time on the road with that.

R. LaHaye said he would like to make two comments. It was his understanding from the Board that there was still work being done on IamResponding, that they were going to make sure that EMS was on board, that some of the agencies were still not on and that this is a work in progress. To expect this to be implemented right now when they're still working on the goal, they are hashing over and rehashing over things that have been hashed over the last four years. He stated that he has a "screen shot" and illustrated with his cell phone. His understanding is they are going to get there but will not get this overnight. He commented again that they are hashing and rehashing stuff they don't need to keep hashing over.

M. Larrivee said he apologized but hasn't seen one person who he planned on seeing. One department in particular was saying that they were missing a few of the calls and argued that this is the only way they get called because they don't have pagers. He felt that there is a need to determine how this is going to be used – as primary or back up. He said he also spoke with someone who has worked with this outside Waldo County. It took at least two years before they could get it where they want to.

J. Arseneau commented on Chief Archer saying it was a good tool and agreed that it is helpful. If dispatch is called on for information, they don't have it all from some agencies. There is still some work to figure out how the parsing can be done. If the address is correct, it will give the information right to where the fire fighters need to go. The phones do have some idiosyncrasies because settings are different on different devices. He said it will take a while to figure this all out. He acknowledged that all the fire fighters and others in the room are busy and don't work in their agencies as a full-time job.

W. Shorey asked to start in the front left of the room and asked each person for comments. Comments were as follows:

1. I can see both sides. Some texts are received, sometimes they are missed.
2. I agree with that.
3. I agree with that.
4. This has been well explained. I'm not impatient and Owen has explained what is being done.
5. I like IamResponding – you can get text, in the app I get the call and also receive it as an email. I like it that way. I appreciated that Tobey Kress said he would like to see a strategic plan with some dates for implementation. I would like to hear what the plan is.
6. IamResponding is a great asset and a great backup – not a primary tool. There are a lot of holes and a lot of windows. With a pager, you don't record it, and you don't have it.
7. I like IamResponding.
8. I fought for it. It is a tool that they had to go back to and revisit. If they had known, they would have liked to have more input and not the stripped-down version. If I get a fire call versus a missing person call, for example. There are coding issues. They have done two trainings here and offered it to include dispatchers. Sometimes they don't work together. I've tried to get people to do it.

O. Smith expressed appreciation for all the work Bill Gillespie has done to get the departments to use IamResponding, noting that Bill had offered to work with the other agencies and had done it well. O. Smith also acknowledged that Bill is now busier than he was before and can't 'ride herd' on people. He added that if there are 25 things for IamResponding, 5 are for dispatch and the rest are for the fire fighters. It was only during the last training session that he had learned of the capability of the parsing.

Belfast Police Chief Michael McFadden said he believed the problem is a breakdown in communication regarding what stage people are at with the rollout of the implementation. He had recommended a steering committee on this project to report to the Board of Directors and the Waldo County Firefighters to keep them abreast of the project. He didn't think the Board needed to micromanage the implementation of this. It doesn't have anything to do with police work.

Sheriff Jeffrey Trafton felt that a steering committee would be a great idea, and they are still talking about the same issues as they have for many years. He said dispatching is a difficult job, as are firefighting and police work. Communication is key. Former Sheriff Story assigned him, when he came on as Chief Deputy, to repair the relationship between the Sheriff's Office and Dispatch and he felt that this had been accomplished.

The Sheriff's Chief Deputy, Sergeant, and Lieutenant said they did not need to add any comments at this time.

Other responses from Fire and Law Enforcement personnel:

9. It is a great backup. I had a tone that didn't have a message. IamResponding sent it out.

10. I've had a few times that IamResponding has come through in dead areas. When it is your only method, it is frustrating to drive to the scene and find out that it was a standby situation only.

11. I will now have to get a smart phone.

12. There was a problem with IamResponding – there was no message.

M. Larrivee explained that those tones with no message have been impossible to reproduce. Dispatch has asked for technical assistance. Out of 100 natures, 30 to 40 are fire natures. Fire used to be Dispatch's go-to for every other thing. He explained how the calls are made – even if standing by. Dispatchers have to read through the comments to understand the natures.

13. We built the first tower and first pager in the County. Anything you can do now is an improvement. I'd like to thank everybody for trying. There will be mistakes along the way. Good communication will help.

14. Most of the time I receive pages and IamResponding works perfectly. There are certain monitors that have been problematic and inherent problems in a weaker zone. Those in the 50-50 zones have problems. My department is pretty much satisfied. Sometimes the information that is passed on to

them by the dispatchers is because the dispatchers can't get the information from the caller. We have to keep that in mind. Otherwise, they do a tremendous job with what they have to work with. There will always be some problems and working together, we can work them out.

W. Shorey thanked all for the jobs that they do. The Commissioner agree that there is a need to form some sort of organization to keep each other informed on what they are doing. He added that it is a tremendous job that all in those agencies are doing.

A. Fowler said she spoke with one of the heads of IamResponding and he acknowledged that there can be glitches. She expressed gratitude to Jim Arseneau and dispatchers for figuring out what to put on there for information. She felt that communication in the future will continue.

B. Johnson said she agreed and was glad that all came together and while this was all foreign to her, the more she hears it, she understands it better. If all work together and keep communication going until things are working well, that would be the goal.

Rusty Bell of Yankee Communications said he believe they are chasing a system issue. He said he finds it hard to believe that four departments at the same time have nothing working. He can track it when it leaves the building but there is no process to reproduce the issues. He said he knows they will find it but there is not a method of identifying it when it is not occurring. A pager with a weak signal is one thing. Four pages that are not happening, it's a system issue. He explained that he is not "throwing it off as atmospheric or pagers", he just has to see it to fix it. There are so many pieces and links. It's like following electricity or water – how far is it getting before it stops going out. He explained that he comes out every time he is called that there is an issue. He is not ruling it out as just something strange and will keep pursuing it.

D. Rowley commented that there needs to be a list of what's happening and what they're doing so people know what is going on for work. "Get the information out." Some of the things are new issues. Make sure that there is a project with milestones and advertising and getting the information out.

W. Shorey said he knows how frustrating technology is. He illustrated with the new SUV he just purchased having a problem in which the back hatch would not open. He had to go back to the dealership to get it working.

The Commissioners stated that they appreciate all the hard work of the various agencies and will keep the lines of communication open.

NEXT COMMISSIONERS COURT SESSION:

The next regular Commissioners Court Session is scheduled for May 12, 2016 starting at 9:00 a.m. in the Waldo County Commissioners Conference Room.

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to adjourn the court session at 7:09 p.m. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted by *Barbara L. Arseneau*
Waldo County Clerk