

Metacomet Board of Directors Meeting (MECC)

Minutes of Meeting

October 13, 2021

APPROVED NOV 10 2021

A meeting of the MECC Board of Directors was held on Wednesday 10/13/2021. Board members present were Chair Jamie Hellen, Vice Chair Kevin Sweet and Clerk Blythe Robinson. Others in attendance were: Metacomet Executive Director Gary Premo, Metacomet Deputy Director Darrell True, Millville Town Administrator Peter Caruso, Norfolk Fire Chief Erron Kinney, Plainville Fire Acting Chief Richard Ball, Mendon Fire Chief William Kessler, Franklin Fire Deputy Chief James Klich, Franklin Fire Deputy Chief James Barbieri, Millville Deputy Fire Chief Steven Furno, Franklin Police Deputy Chief James Mill, Wrentham Police Chief William McGrath, Norfolk Police Chief Charles Stone, Metacomet Communications Manager Nicole Connors, and Metacomet Administrative Supervisor Padraic Pomeroy. Absent from the meeting: Plainville TA Brian Noble and Mendon TA Kimberly Newman.

The meeting was called to order at 8:15 a.m. by Chair Hellen.

Agenda Item One:

OPERATIONS UPDATE: Mendon/Millville Merger

Executive Director Premo reported that a couple of projects were wrapping up including the fiber project that was scheduled to be completed in the two weeks. The Caliber and Alpine RMS projects for both departments were near completion. A punch list was created and being worked on. Director Premo and Deputy True spoke about struggles with Alpine. Chief Kessler added that the initial training went well, but that there was difficulty connecting with them after they went live. Deputy True added that Alpine has one employee for the implementation process. Chief Kessler stated that he felt that the product is good but the customer service was a problem. Chief Kinney agreed with Chief Kessler that the product was good, but, that getting the company to address errors takes too long and that it puts a burden on the users. Millville TA Caruso suggested inviting the CEO of Alpine to a meeting to discuss the concerns. Chair Hellen stated that he would send them a letter from the BOD about the concerns.

Millville TA Caruso announced that Chief Landry had retired. Acting Fire Chief Roy Liard and Acting Police Chief William Coupe were in place and would be the contacts at that time.

Agenda Item Two:

- A. Approval of minutes, meeting 9/8/2021.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Sweet to approve the minutes from the meeting 9/8/2021. Chair Hellen seconded. A vote was taken. 3 Yes/0 No. 2 absent.

Agenda Item Three:

Fire and Police Operations Committees Joint Workshop

- A. To discuss future collaborative efforts (5-10 years) of projects, equipment/programs, needs, or other matters.

Director Premo stated that at the July meeting it was decided that this meeting would be a workshop with the Fire and Police operations committee. The biggest need that had been discussed by the committee was the need for changes to the fire radio system. Director Premo also reported that the Franklin Police radio system was being worked on with multiple phases. The tower work was being completed simultaneously. Deputy Mill added that phase three would add wire line to dispatch.

Vice Chair Sweet asked about the process of obtaining a common dispatch channel for the four original MECC towns. Deputy True stated that the FCC component of the process could be the most difficult step. The need for a propagation study was addressed. Director Premo stated that he was working on putting this into grant application. Clerk Robinson suggested that the towns pay for the study up front to help shorten the process. Director Premo stated he would begin the process of researching the regional dispatch frequencies.

A discussion regarding alternative CAD software was had. It was noted that SEMRECC is currently having demonstrations by multiple vendors. Director Premo stated that he has been in contact with the Director of SEMRECC about this and he is open to having demonstrations.

Chair Hellen asked how the Police RMS was working for the departments. Deputy Mill stated that when they have problems, they are fixed easily.

Franklin Fire Deputy Chief Barbieri brought up the idea of having dispatch take business calls. He stated that calls go through the phone tree, and then if the caller does not select an option, it goes to the Battalion Chief's cell phone. Norfolk Fire Chief Kinney reported that they do not have the same volume of calls, but that it did happen. Plainville Chief Ball reported that they also receive calls, but they transfer them to the MECC. Chair Hellen asked if the MECC can handle business calls. Director Premo replied that the setup was designed not to handle them. Franklin Police Deputy Mill added that having a desk officer to screen out the calls that do not need to go to the MECC works well. Wrentham Police Chief McGrath suggested the three KP towns could possibly join together to add a central desk officer. Staffing makes them unable to have their own desk officer currently. Director Premo also added that the State 911 public education department will come out to community events to help teach the public about using 911.

Wrentham Police Chief McGrath brought up concerns with service from the MECC. Chief McGrath reported that he felt that initially complaints were addressed by the MECC, but there are still recurring problems. Director Premo and Deputy True reported not having received any complaints in several months from Wrentham Police. Chief McGrath admitted that it had been some time since he had submitted any. He also stated that he had passed that task off to his Deputy. Chief McGrath suggested that Director Premo meet with each shift face to face. Director Premo agreed that this was a good idea and he would look into starting that.

Chief McGrath discussed that a lack of complete information being relayed to officers has caused a lack of confidence in the MECC. He stated that other RECC's use a different model than the MECC and he suggested this change as a possible solution. Director Premo and Deputy True explained the difference in the models and why we operate as we do. Chief Kinney added that he believed that the change from single department dispatchers to a RECC has been a challenge for users.

Deputy True discussed staffing issues, noting that since the MECC opened we have lost 2/3 of the original staffing causing there to be continuous training for new employees. Deputy True and Director Premo talked about recruiting issues and staffing issues across the country. Robinson joined by talking about both sides working together to make this work.

Chief Kessler suggested immediate review during shifts as a possible way to help the operations and communications to work together.

Chief McGrath suggested that the end users meet and discuss their issues. This would not involve administration from either side, allowing for them to feel more comfortable discussing problems with each other. Director Premo agreed that this idea was a good idea and steps to start this would begin.

Norfolk Police Chief Stone spoke about both sides needing to work together, possibly in smaller groups to work on issues. He also mentioned that he does not see staff from other towns coming to visit the MECC.

Chair Hellen asked the status of the voice automated pre-alert system. Deputy True reported that it was being built.

Chair Hellen asked if anyone else had anything to discuss, no further issues were raised.

A motion was made by Clerk Robinson to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Sweet. A vote was taken. 3 Yes/ 0 No. 2 Absent. Meeting adjourned at 10:48 a.m.