



**REPORT TO THE
PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING OF 23 MAY 2012**

SUBJECT FIRE DISPATCH SERVICES FOR CRD ELECTORAL AREAS, METCHOSIN, SOOKE, HIGHLANDS AND LANGFORD

ISSUE

The Capital Regional District (CRD) electoral areas and the municipalities of Metchosin, Sooke, Highlands and Langford have agreed to continue to receive fire dispatch services as operated out of the communications centre at Langford Fire Department and a further contract extension is required while staff establishes the appropriate service agreements and obtain formal consent from the participating municipalities.

BACKGROUND

The CRD has contracted Langford to provide a fire call relay service to the electoral areas and a number of participating municipalities for more than 20 years. The service is provided from a purpose built post-disaster building located in Langford Fire Hall #1.

The CRD completed a review of Fire Dispatch within the region in consultation with all fire departments in 2011. The findings of the review were reported to the Board and circulated to all fire departments to inform them of the performance of fire dispatch within the region as measured against national standards. Based on this report the CRD Protective Services Division worked with the participants that received fire call relay services from Langford to develop the operational requirements and expectations needed to enhance the service to full fire dispatch.

Following the completion of this work in November 2011 all the participating fire departments were asked to provide comments before the work was finalized. During the process the City of Colwood and the Town of View Royal decided that they would not continue to participate and they ultimately issued a request for proposal (RFP) for fire dispatch services which resulted in a decision by the two municipalities to contract with the District of Saanich.

As a result of this decision, staff prepared a report to the Electoral Area Services Committee (EASC) to confirm continuing participation by the electoral area fire departments and requested confirmation from the remaining municipal participants of their interest in continuing as participants of the service.

At the March 14, 2012 meeting of the EASC staff presented the results of the consultation with municipal and electoral area fire chiefs and the Committee endorsed moving forward with a new service model including an arrangement that would continue to see fire dispatch service operated by Langford fire dispatch. In attendance at this Committee meeting to hear the presentation and discussions were representatives of the municipalities of Sooke, Metchosin, Highlands, and Langford.

Following the Committee decision, a letter was sent to the four participating municipalities requesting confirmation that they agree to participate with the CRD to obtain fire dispatch services from Langford. It was also confirmed that they agree with the operational requirements and expectations needed to enhance the service to full fire dispatch at the proposed cost outlined in the approved budget and five year financial plan. The 2012 budget for this service

was approved by the CRD Board in March and will form part of the CRD requisition for the participating municipalities. However, a formal agreement between the CRD, municipal participants and Langford dispatch needs to be finalized.

On April 20, 2012, a letter was received from the City of Colwood directed to the Planning, Transportation and Protective Service Committee and copied to all mayors in Greater Victoria raising concerns about the proposed service arrangements for fire dispatch among the municipal participants and CRD. While there are a number of suggestions in the letter, many of the concerns and issues should be addressed by this report and a response will be prepared following the meeting.

ALTERNATIVES

1. That the existing contract with the City of Langford for Enhanced 911 Call Relay Services be continued on a month to month basis for the remainder of 2012 until a new service agreement is finalized between the CRD and remaining participants for Fire Dispatch Service.
2. That the existing contract with the City of Langford for Enhanced 911 Call Relay Services be continued on a month to month basis for the remainder of 2012 until a new service agreement is finalized between the CRD and remaining participants for Fire Dispatch Service and that staff report back to the Committee with options for alternative service arrangements prior to finalizing the agreement.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

The cost for the remaining participants of the Fire Dispatch Service will increase due to the reduction in the number of participants. The increase in costs was discussed at the March 14 EASC meeting and is primarily attributed to enhanced service levels to full fire dispatch, the replacement, upgrading and maintenance of equipment and a smaller number of participants.

The cost for this service is borne only by the participants. The funds are currently requisitioned pursuant to the authority the CRD has to provide enhanced 911 services, provided that additional services that benefit certain participants, are jointly funded by only those participants.

Operational Implications

Currently there are three fire dispatch centres within the Capital Regional District. A fourth federal fire dispatch exists at the Department of National Defense, but it is outside our jurisdiction.

The service model being recommended will not result in a new dispatch centre and is simply an enhancement of the existing 911 fire call rely service to a full fire dispatch service with an improved governance model. The fire chiefs of the participating departments have outlined their requirements and expectations and have recommended that the CRD implement the improvements to the service. The current 911 call flow chart and agreed on fire dispatch technical and service standards, oversight, review and financial reporting requirements for the service are attached for information. See Appendix 1 and 2. These standards will ensure clear, definable metrics for the delivery of the fire dispatch service.

As part of the Regional Fire Dispatch review there has also been discussion about the direction the City of Victoria will take with its dispatch service. It is anticipated that the City of Victoria Fire Department will either improve their facilities, equipment and technology or partner with an existing service provider. The City of Victoria was aware of the work being undertaken by those receiving fire dispatch service from Langford and received the regional Fire Dispatch review findings and copies of the reports prepared for the CRD.

Records Management System (RMS)

Fire dispatch service utilizes Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) to provide a record of incident calls to be transferred to each participant's RMS. Each local department should maintain an RMS system compatible with the dispatch CAD.

There are a variety of approaches and technologies available to improve records management and one of the products used in our region is Project Fires. Project Fires is a coordinated approach to records management (RMS) supported by a number of fire departments in BC. This partnership approach to ensuring consistency in reporting standards allows more efficient deployment of RMS.

RMS is not currently a part of the service being discussed within the fire dispatch at Langford, but as the service progresses and relationships between the existing dispatch providers are strengthened, this may evolve to be adopted more regionally.

Intergovernmental Implications

The opportunity to modernize and improve the efficiency of different emergency dispatch services in the region through increased regional cooperation and collaboration was one of the key findings in CRD 911 and Fire Dispatch Review. It has been recommended that the CRD, as the 911 authority, should take more of a leadership role in facilitating the process to reach agreement on standards, technology, data management and record keeping in order to improve the resilience of the 911 system and to improve call management and the availability and transfer of information to dispatch centres.

The CRD has responsibility for fire dispatch in the electoral areas. The fire dispatch contract with Langford operates under the 911 authority as an enhanced service agreed to by the participants and as part of the agreement reached among the participants it is intended that the dispatchers will continue to operate from the Langford fire hall.

CONCLUSION

The CRD electoral areas and the municipalities of Sooke, Metchosin, Highlands and Langford have reviewed the information from the CRD's Fire Dispatch review and worked together on the specific requirements and expectations for fire dispatch for their jurisdictions. As a result, the participants have agreed to continue operating as a group, moving from call relay dispatch to full service dispatch, supported by a clarified governance model. In comparison to this CRD service delivery model, other municipal fire dispatch services operate under contract or are direct municipal services.

The recommendation of the EASC and municipal councils was to proceed with the implementation of the new service arrangement under the existing or a new service authority as may be necessary. In order to ensure no disruption to operations, and to allow for all necessary documentation and formal agreements to be put in place, a month to month extension to the current service agreement is required. Once the new agreements are complete, the current

contract would be terminated and the participants would be part of the new service arrangement.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning, Transportation and Protective Services Committee recommend to the CRD Board:

1. That the existing contract with the City of Langford for Enhanced 911 Call Relay Services be continued on a month to month basis for the remainder of 2012 until a new service agreement is finalized between the CRD and remaining participants for Fire Dispatch Service.

ORIGINAL SIGNED

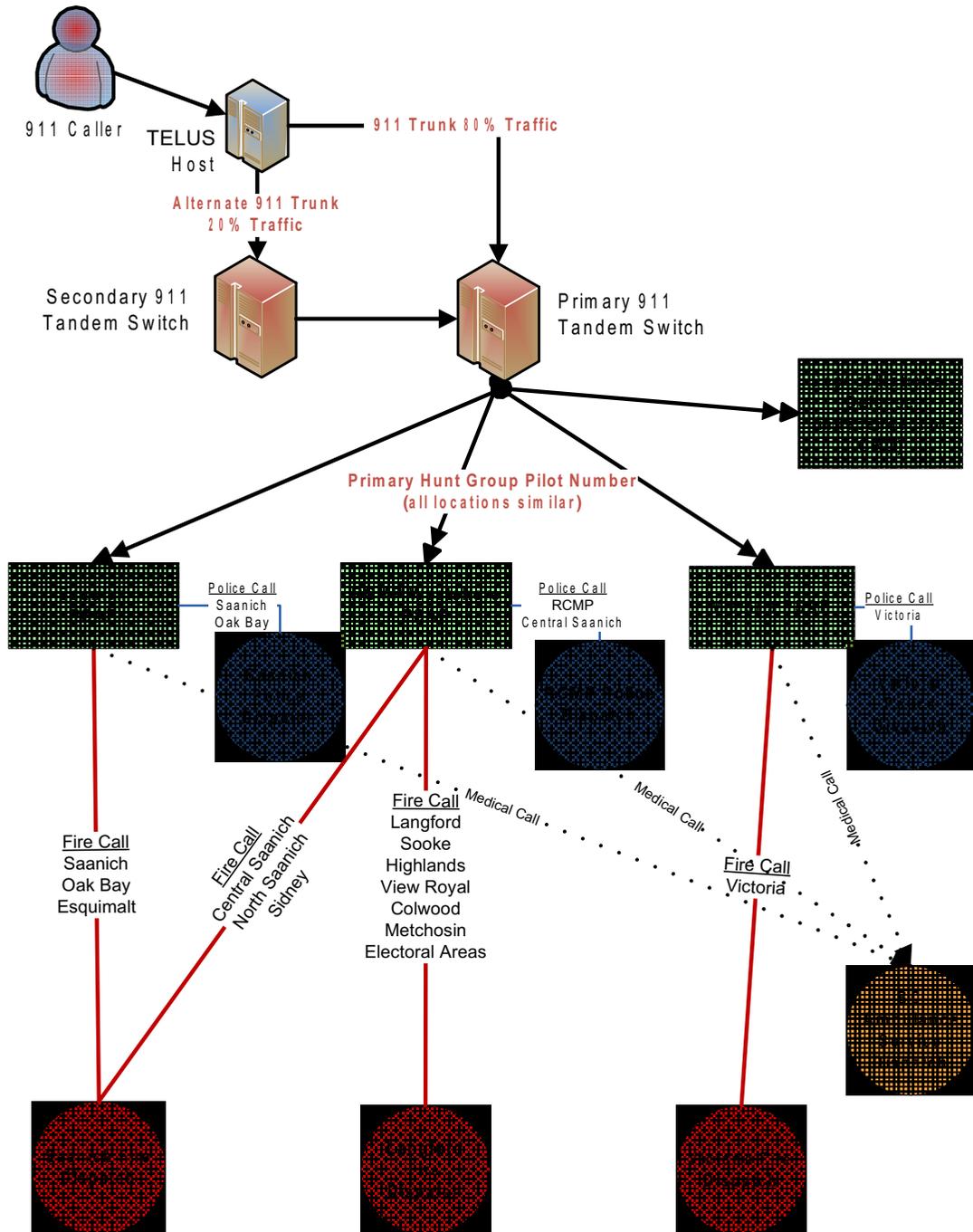
Travis Whiting
Senior Manager, Protective Services

Robert Lapham, MCIP
General Manager, Planning & Protective Services
Concurrence

Kelly Daniels
Chief Administrative Officer
Concurrence

Attachments:
Appendix 1 – 911 Call Answer Flow in the CRD
Appendix 2 – Fire Dispatch Requirement Schedules

911 Call Answer Flow in the CRD



Fire Dispatch Requirement Schedules

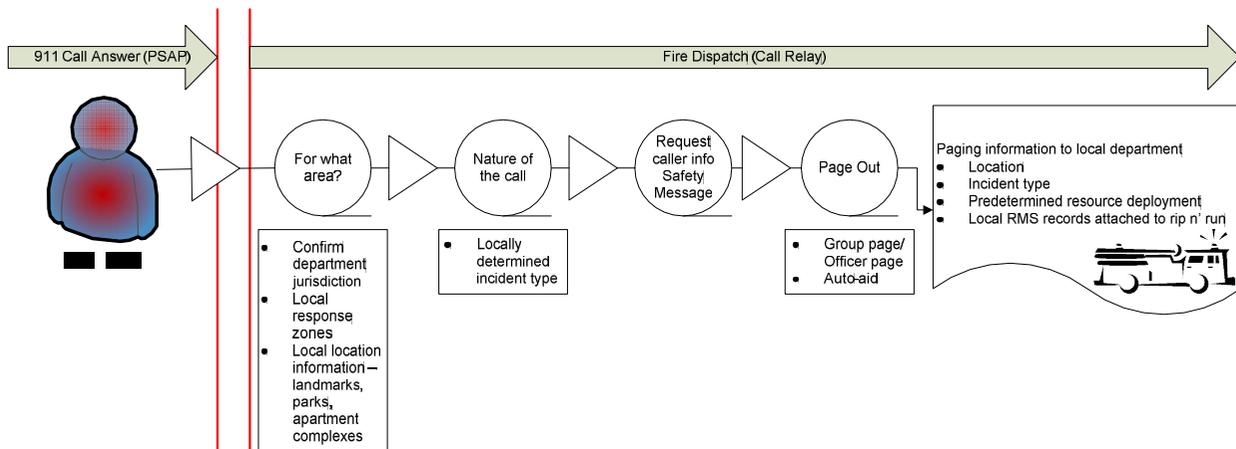
Schedule A

Technical and Service Requirements

The service provider agrees to deliver to each of the dispatch clients the following service components:

1. Call Relay

The process of call relay includes the time from receipt of call from an outside party, being either a 911 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) or other agency or source up until the time that all relevant information has been transferred to the appropriate responding department through the paging system.



Requirements for Call Relay

Standard expectations for Computer Aided Dispatch Systems (CAD) include access to Address Numbering Identification/Address Location Identification (ANI/ALI), local address information, mapping, time stamping and creation of an incident record. Additional to this, the service provider must be able to provide the following information, with the ability for local departments to define based on local requirements:

- Location information
 - Local landmarks, subdivisions, apartment complexes, trailer parks
 - Local response zones, such as hydrant versus non-hydrant, or local areas assigned to a specific hall
- Incident type
 - Customized to local establishing bylaws and service levels
 - Designated by department from a standard list (fire-structure, fire-grass)
- Specific page out options by department
 - Paging levels (group, officer, platoon)
 - Timely modification to page options (holiday coverage, on call coverage)

- Assigned resources to incident types for page (Fire-Structure-Engine 11 respond-Tender1 1 respond-Engine12 standby)
- May include auto-aid calls
- Rip and Runs (information sent to local printers) includes:
 - Incident information: type, location
 - Pre-requested Records Management System (RMS) info (pre-incident plans, location history)
 - Mapping
- Predetermined automatic call out to support agencies
 - Developed by each department based on local needs
 - Includes utility (hydro, gas), other response agencies (police, BC Ambulance Service), public works or others

2. Export of incident records to RMS

If a local department maintains a RMS system compatible with the dispatch CAD, all incident records will be sent to that system at the end of an incident. Any changes to the incident record from the dispatch provider after 24 hours post-incident will be reported to the local department. For departments without a compatible RMS system, incident reports generated by the CAD will be made available upon request.

3. Full Dispatch Support

The inclusion of full dispatch support primarily provides for the dispatcher to remain available to incident command as a resource during the incident.

- During an incident dispatchers will be available to respond to requests from the incident commander for additional assistance or resources.
- For pages where a responder may be working independently (burning complaint, fire investigation) – dispatch will maintain a timer to ensure regular contact and check-ins are made as required by Worker's Compensation Board (WCB) or local safety guidelines.
- All voice transmissions relating to the event, including caller to dispatcher and dispatcher to local department will be logged, time stamped and made available to the local department upon request. Voice logging of operational channels will be dependent on the ability of dispatch to receive the signal from the originating department.

4. Non-Emergency Call Answer

The service provider will provide a 24 hour non-emergency number for local departments to use for after-hours contact by the public to a local duty officer.

5. Local Technology Costs

The service provider acknowledges their requirement to purchase, maintain and replace as necessary any equipment required to provide the service from the dispatch location. Equipment required at the local department to receive the service or information is entirely the responsibility of the local participating fire department. This includes printers, radios, RMS systems, mobile data terminals (MDT) or computers used to receive information from the dispatch provider.

The service provider will provide specifications and equipment recommendations to the local department to ensure compatibility with dispatch for any equipment purchased for the purposes of enhancing the information received by local departments.

Any agreement between a local department and the service provider for the provision of locally deployed equipment falls outside of this agreement and is the responsibilities of those parties to reach an independent agreement.

6. Redundancy

The service provider agrees to provide redundancy to industry standards including:

- Backup power at the dispatch location to National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards
- An agreement(s) for backup from a secondary location(s) to handle call overload or an evacuation of the primary location
- Backup for all major equipment or systems including radios, paging, transmission of rip n' runs and other essential services
- Regular testing of all redundancy systems in place
- Reporting on all testing to be available on request by participating departments

7. Standards and Benchmarking

- The service provider will meet the applicable sections of those NFPA standards relating to fire dispatch, including 1061, 1221, and 1561, as required to perform the services agreed to here.
- Any exceptions to these standards will be clearly identified.
- Call answer standards will be measured and reported on according to NFPA 1221.
- Efforts will be made by the service provider to work with other fire dispatch agencies within the region to provide common reporting standards to allow for performance comparison.

8. Service Development

The service provider will commit to the following to ensure ongoing development occurs to the betterment of the service and in the interests of all participating departments:

- Regular communication with other regional response dispatch agencies including fire, police and ambulance, as well as associated agencies including Joint Rescue Communications Centre (JRCC) and the Emergency Communications Centre (ECC) within Emergency Management BC (EMBC) to ensure coordination of incident information and dispatch protocols.
- Participation in national or provincial organizations such as National Emergency Number Association (NENA), Association of Public Safety Communications Organization (APCO) or 911 Association of BC to ensure the provider is aware of emerging changes in dispatch and 911.
- Maintenance of a formal training program for all staff involved in dispatch to ensure competencies are measured and maintained to standards.
- Process for the sharing of information on changing technology or issues affecting dispatch out to all local departments.

Schedule B

Oversight, Review and Financial Reporting

The service provider agrees to the following protocols for ongoing oversight, review and financial reporting by the participants of this contract:

Oversight

- Monthly and annual reports showing overall dispatch performance versus agreed upon standards and benchmarks will be provided electronically to all local departments.
- Annual reports showing dispatch performance for individual local department versus agreed upon standards and benchmarks will be provided electronically to each department.
- Calls falling outside the standards and benchmarks will have an associated file showing internal review and recommendations from that call, and this information will be provided to the affected department in a timely manner.
- Local departments will have the ability to request a review of a call by the dispatch service provider.
- The service provider's Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) and Dispatch Training programs will be made available to all local departments to provide a full understanding of the provider's operations and performance management.

Review

- Quarterly, the service provider will host a meeting of a predetermined working group to review call records and performance, and to discuss any recommendations made to determine if changes to the operations should be considered.
- Annually, the service provider will host a meeting of all local departments to review the past year's performance and changes being considered for the coming year.
- This annual meeting will include discussion on recommended changes to technology, SOGs or dispatcher training programs that will improve performance against agreed upon standards and benchmarks.

Financial Reporting

- Annually, the service provider will deliver a five year operational and capital plan, providing an understanding to local departments of any planned investment in technology upgrades, and the sustainability of the service to maintain acceptable service levels.
- Major capital or equipment inventories will be maintained showing date of purchase, and planned date of replacement to ensure long term financial planning is in place to support required upgrades or replacements.