

SALT LAKE VALLEY EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

June 16, 2021 Meeting Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Dan Petersen – UFA, Chairman
Mr. Korban Lee – West Jordan, Vice-Chairman
Mr. David Dobbins – Draper
Mr. Doug Hill - Murray
Mr. Gary Whatcott – South Jordan
Mr. Kyle Kershaw – South Salt Lake
Mr. David Brickey - Riverton
Ms. Wendy Thomas - Herriman
Mr. Mark Reid – Bluffdale
Ms. Lisa Hartman - SLCo
Mr. Tim Tingey – Cottonwood Heights
Mr. Scott Harrington - Taylorsville
Mr. Jake Petersen – UPD
Mr. Wayne Pyle – West Valley City

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Ms. Gina Chamness - Holladay
Mr. Mike Morey – Alta
Open – Midvale

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mr. Scott Ruf – Director, VECC
Ms. Beth Todd - VECC
Mr. Clint Jensen – VECC
Mr. Warren James – Bluffdale
Mr. Scott Young – VECC Legal Counsel
Mr. Terry Addison – South Salt Lake
Mr. Troy Carr – Herriman
Mr. Derek Maxfield – West Jordan
Ms. Colleen Jacobs – West Valley City
Mr. Ryan Shosted – Riverton
Mr. Bruce Kartchner – Bluffdale
Mr. Clint Smith – Draper
Mr. Riley Pilgrim – UFA
Mr. John Evans – West Valley City
Mr. Dave Spatafore – Capstone Strategies
Mr. Jon Harris – Murray
Mr. Robbie Russo – Cottonwood Heights
Mr. Jonathan Bridges – VECC
Mr. Eran Bair – VECC
Mr. Andrew Smiley – VECC

In view of the COVID-19 Pandemic, this meeting will be held at virtually via ZOOM, as authorized by the Governor's Executive Order dated March 18, 2020 and affirmed November 8, 2020.

Mr. Dan Petersen called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MAY 19, 2021 BOARD OF TRUSTEE MEETING MINUTES

Motion –

. . . by Mr. Wayne Pyle, to approve the minutes of the May 19,2021 Trustees meeting, the motion was seconded by Ms. Wendy Thomas; the motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments received for this meeting.

VECC PERFORMANCE & PROGRESS REPORT

Scott commented that we took a bit of a hit in May, but we're still not where we need to be. We are at 75% in less than 15 seconds and 78.83% in less than 20 seconds. We are still working through the issues on the call processing times for Fire/EMS and still working with the CAD vendor and one of the analytics vendors to get that report cleaned up. We can see it, but we believe it's reading wrong data to get us a good number. Wayne Pyle requested analysis from Scott as to why we are up or down and not where we want and what's the next level. Scott still believes a big part of our challenge is our phone equipment. We are getting the new state NextGen 911 system installed, and our go live is the week of July 12th. He believes this will give us a new consistent and clear picture of how our calls are being handled once they enter VECC. This goes back to the old legacy 911 phone equipment; we have continual documented instances where we have 911 call takers available, we can see the 911 calls ringing in the phone system and they aren't dropping into the available call takers. And even though the 911 and administrative non-emergency calls are set at different priority levels within the existing phone system, they are still coming in equal. We have corrected this in the configuration in the new phone system and in fact, we're taking the non-emergency calls out of the emergency queue all together. They'll be handled independently, and we should see a good, positive improvement with just the change in phone system. Then we can focus on if it's a staffing issue or a workload issue.

The Center does a lot of administrative non-emergency work that the new phone system will work to mitigate. One of the big things is abandoned 911 calls/hangups. By policy, when we receive an abandoned or 911 call hangup, the call taker must call that number back at least once and, in most jurisdictions, twice, to make sure there's not an emergency. While they are performing those duties, they are unable to answer 911 calls. The new phone system has an abandoned automated call back function. Scott briefed and educated the Operations and Users Boards on it. VECC averages between 12-20% of abandoneds and out of the 26,000-27,000 calls we get a month, 3,000 – 4,000 of these falls into this hang-up category. Abandoned's are made up of numerous different things; people that call 911 and we don't answer quick enough, so they have up and call again, or sometimes the phone on the circuit gets misrouted or dropped but still hits the center. The abandoned system allows an automated call back to the caller, which asks if there is an emergency and prompts them to push 1 which will bring them right into the 911 system. If not, or it's a misdial, they can push 2 and it will acknowledge and log that information and take the call out of the queue. The other nice thing about the new system is that if 911 is dialed, and the call is abandoned and 911 is dialed again, the system will see that 911 incoming and it will take the abandon out of the queue so that we don't have to manage it. Looking around the country at those who have instituted this call back, it's increased their efficiency and knocked out over 80% of their abandoned calls. For us, 80% is thousands of calls a month. West Jordan came online to Versaterm this week and we have kickoff meetings with SSL and West Valley in 2 weeks to come onboard, so we are still managing 2 CAD systems. Scott is hanging a lot of this on the new phone system, and he believes that once the new system is configured properly, we can manage the calls better. He also believes that by configuring the system and making 911 calls the priority, moving the non-emergency into a queue to be managed, he believes we'll see at least a 10% increase in our efficiencies in performance and then we can better analyze what gets us closer to that standard to be consistently in that 90-95% plus answer times which is what the standard is. Korban Lee asked how long after the new phone system comes on before we'll be able to assess it and when does Scott expect the numbers to improve. Scott believes if we do it right, we should see improvement 24-72 hours after the system is fully integrated and online. It will at least give us insight to validate those assessments. It will take about a week to get everything cut over, installed, and transitioned.

Non-Emergency Use of VECC Resources

Korban Lee commented that from the audit and previous meetings, the Legislature is watching VECC very closely. More than anything, the one performance measure they are looking at is the 911 call answer times. After the last Trustees meeting, Korban sat out with some of the call takers and dispatchers for a while and came to appreciate what Scott was just talking about with the administrative calls. They are clogging up the system at times and slowing down VECC's ability to answer the 911 calls as quickly as possible. He wanted to make sure that as West Jordan, they weren't sending administrative calls to VECC. He feels that as a member agency, that's his role and something everyone needs to do to help VECC achieve this improve 911 performance

measure. He doesn't know if this is happening in other cities, but he was worried about it with West Jordan. Korban believes everyone should take a look and assess that, if there are administrative calls everyone can refrain from sending onto VECC, he feels it should be done. Scott briefed the Police Operations that part of the new phone system, to direct this issue, will move the non-emergency calls into a specific non-emergency queue and they will be answered as we can. We are also instituting a phone tree during normal business hours. People calling in will have an option for police, fire, animal control, courts, municipalities, and dispatch. If they select police, it will give each of the member agencies and the number will be routed to that agencies phone system. After hours in the evening and weekends, it'll be configured for us to take these calls in. These calls will also be tracked. Korbin Lee commented that VECC has limited resources and they need to do one thing very well which is the dispatching, particularly the dispatching of the 911 calls. Anything above and beyond that takes VECC's resources away from the main focus. He said that as agencies, everyone needs to make sure they are not contributing to things that are pulling VECC away from the main goal. Wayne Pyle asked how they as Board members ascertain if they are doing this or not and if there was a report that could be generated to show them. Scott commented that everyone uses the same either 4000 or 7000 phone number and it may not be the agency but divisions within the agencies. We know that with some cities where their records division leave early, they will send an email and explain they are forwarding their calls to us, and we have not been in a position to really say no. This is why we took the approach to bring it to the Operations Board, and Scott will follow up with the individual chiefs if there are ongoing issues. Chief Petersen thinks that as Scott talks with Police and Fire Chiefs and we begin to discover and understand the problem on each end, we'll see what comes from that and then decide how to reduce it. The challenge of parking or placing a call into a non-emergency queue for a CT to leave and deal with later is once they answer it, they are not available for the call that comes in at that moment. Using the 911 call taker to deal with a non-emergency event takes them out of the loop for however long that call takes which becomes a concern. Scott also mentioned that one of the things with the new phone system that we can't do today is if there are calls in the 911 queue, we can immediately park a non-emergency call today, the CT's are stuck and cannot manually do it today. We are building in that ability and then we'll train the employees that when there are 3 911 calls coming in, their call will be politely put on hold to be able to deal with the 911 call. With the phone system today, we cannot manually manipulate or manage the incoming calls because of the way the system is configured.

MEETING WITH SENATE PRESIDENT & HOUSE SPEAKER

Chief Petersen spoke with Sen. Harper on the phone and after a few conversations with Dave Spatafore, he believes the Senate President and House Speaker are pretty upset with VECC, mostly due to the numbers trending down. They feel that they've given us 6 months and we haven't fixed it. Chief Petersen has chosen to do, for now, is take himself, Korban Lee, Wayne Pyle, and Jake Petersen to go sit down directly with them to see what is making them feel the way they do and let them know that the Board of Trustees is working on this, and it is a priority. Dave Spatafore mentioned that he and Ashley are setting up a meeting with Speaker Wilson and President Adams, which has been done and they will be meeting at the end of the month. They are anxious to meet and convey their concerns. In addition to Sen. Harper contacting Chief Petersen, Wayne Harper called Dave last week and he had heard that we were meeting with leadership, and he asked what was going on. They had a frank conversation. Today, Dave ran into Rep. Handy and asked about the meeting and requested to be there as he has a stake in this as well. Dave told him to talk to Speaker Wilson and see if he would be able to attend. Wayne Pyle doesn't understand the background of Sen. Harper or Rep. Handy's stake or involvement with this. Dave explained that he believes in 2019, when the Legislature passed SB154, it raised the 911 equipment fee from \$0.09 to \$0.26 per month, and they were the sponsors. They also sponsored the bill prior to that which raised money for both the radio rebuild and the maintenance fees for the radios. When it comes to public safety communication money, these have been the two leaders. After the Audit Committee meeting discussion, a year ago, Pres. Adams, Speaker Wilson assigned the follow-up to that committee to a few Committees which these 2 men Chair. Monthly information has been sent to them about what our numbers are, and they have been a part of this for the past 8 months. Back in December, prior to the 2021 session, when Sen. Harper wanted a bill dealing with VECC and money, he wanted Rep. Handy to sponsor it in the house and then he would be the Senate sponsor. Dave met with Rep. Handy and convinced him that legislation wasn't appropriate at that point in time, and this is why he's been a part of these discussions ever since. Chief Petersen's hope is that they talk about the potential threat or risk is, particularly if we don't see the improvement after the phone system comes in and what we need to deal with. The other challenge we have, which is unique, is we are twice the size of any other center and it's different when you have over 1 million calls coming into the center. He's pushed out a message to larger agencies across the country to find out what they

are doing with times and what are they seeing for those. The data is starting to come in and he will have some of it more available soon. His biggest fear is what the Legislature gives they can also take away and this is the issue he doesn't want to be in the space where we could start losing 911 revenue or have some other course of action, they take based on the performance. Doug Hill believes it's important for everyone to understand what the threats and consequences of VECC failing to meet their expectations. Even if they start taking away revenue, it doesn't solve the problem. It throws all of Salt Lake County into chaos and cities will begin to evaluate whether it makes sense to be part of an organization or break off on their own. They need to understand that hopefully the threats they make don't force us back into a non-unified system again. Chief Petersen shared that Harper feels he's worked hard at realigning some of the funding sources based on call volume and impact and we were a benefactor in that. For him, it's more like the one area where he's made a difference in is the only center not meeting the standard that he wants. Where that fits and how that means, it could just be their frustration, but SLCO is a different animal than any other county in Utah and it's hard to compare a center that receives twice the call volume than anybody else. Gary Whatcott is concerned that they are so deep into this, and he asked who was making up the matrix that we are measuring. Chief Petersen said the metric they are using is based on the APCO/NENA standard of call answering. Gary asked if in Scott's opinion are these the right metrics, we should evaluation. Every local is different, and calls are handled differently everywhere. He hopes we are not working with standards that don't really apply in our application. Scott believes that once we get the common CAD and new phone system done, the APCO/NENA standard is achievable. The larger centers that can hit that number, there is nothing else in their center. It's 911 and dispatching. This is what we are trying to push to is refocusing our core mission of answering, triaging, and processing 911 calls and dispatching the resources. We are reevaluating and pushing out all the work that really should be done by the agencies, either administratively or by officers in the field. Scott's fear is it's not happening fast enough for the Legislature and it's the piece he gets frustrated with. We are doing everything we can to make improvement and get in compliance but some of it is timing. Prior to 2011, VECC was meeting the standard and then 3 things happened. A new phone system went into effect, they introduced ACD, the Automated Call Distribution system, and the Priority Dispatch issue came into play with the endowment. We are trying to undo all this and years of this will take time to climb out of. We are making progress, but again, it's not happening quick enough. This time of year, the amount of 911 calls we take in certain hours of the day, most centers around the state don't take in a 24-hour period. This is also very frustrating for Scott. If we only took 4 calls an hour, we would hit the standard. It's education, but it's education without sounding like an excuse, and we continue to make progress with the technology and the reworking of our workflow gets us there.

CAD PROJECT UPDATE

Scott reported that things are still moving along well. West Jordan Police went live on Versaterm yesterday, June 14th. Their team did a wonderful job. On Monday, the 28th, we have our kickoff meeting with South Salt Lake and on the 29th, our kickoff is with West Valley. South Salt Lake will be the next agency to move in September or October and West Valley will go online by the end of this year. July 1st will be the rebirth of the Taylorsville Police Department, and we are on track there. Scott did have to submit a letter to the UCA requesting an extension through the end of this calendar year to allow us to bring SSL and WVC on board. UCA has been getting quarterly updates and they know we are making progress and are on track. The U of U is joining the project and will come on behind West Valley which won't impact any of the VECC member agencies. UTA has also reached out to possibly look at joining as well. Things are moving in a positive direction.

OPERATIONS BOARD BRIEFING

Chief Maxfield gave the Fire Operations Report. The meeting was last week and mentioned that the subzones have gone live. There will be a meeting on June 18th to try and standardize and get on the same page with responses. We are running into situations where we're getting too many Battalion Chiefs on certain fires and calls. Tech Users reported frustration with SLC's IT side, they have not been attending the meetings and having all the equipment, they should be attending. They are still making moving to the cloud a priority. Scott has tried to stay in front of this and be first in line when it starts to take place. They discussed the CAD and phone system. The biggest thing discussed, they have been having issues with AVL and some instances and some agencies that are struggling with feeling like they get the right unit there and some of the mapping. Chief Maxfield reached out to Denver and Portland, and Chief Evans reached out to Mesa; we had heard they add time penalties to certain things like traffic homing devices or left-hand turns. The feed back they got from all the agencies was pretty much the same, which is they have the capability, but they don't do it. Mesa tried for a

while, but it caused issues with their systems. What they did mention was that in some cases if there is a specific issue, they will go in and adjust the speed limit in the mapping so that a different unit gets sent. In cases like this, we could go in and adjust some of those routes, so it sends a different unit, which in reality is probably faster. Each of the agencies said they would start running some tests on their own with areas they have concerns with. Lin will assist with this and model it. They can also set up time of daytime situations. They are continuing to fine tune it, but things are going in the right direction.

Chief Carr said that Scott did a great job of covering a lot of what was discussed. They mentioned call guide cards and look to be working correctly. If there is any feedback, please get them back to your chain of command to get back with VECC. They discussed 10-code standardization. There will be 30 or so used to save airtime. They also discussed the 9-code which Valley still uses which would be incorporated into this. They clarified high-priority calls and surrounding agencies. If they get an ATL in a surrounding agency, they will hear a warble, so they know it's coming in from a neighboring agency. They discussed guidelines for VECC to clarify when a call is considered cold and not in progress. They determined that probably 20 minutes of a person not being on scene, either a suspect or an involved party that's violent, it's been treated as a cold interaction and then using dispatch judgement beyond that. In Tech Users, it was mentioned that representation in this group is slipping among the agencies, and they asked to please remind their people to attend the meetings. With regards to fireworks and how this will be handled, right now and in the past, we've had agencies give VECC their response models, which involves ATL's and responses. They are hoping for restrictions to come down from the state, but it might be a little late. He just reminded everyone to get your response model in and this will be determined on how your local municipalities handle any restrictions coming up. Chief Petersen said that Chief Cline with Sandy is bringing together all the Fire Chiefs to do a bit of a story on restricting fire works use. The Governor is promoting not using them, but no one is sure he has the authority to ban. There are a number of cities trying to draw a line on the east side from 1300 E and east and then making sure boundaries are reinforced. There will be a BC in the dispatch center to help with the responses. On the 3rd, it will be Chief Ownby from West Valley and the 4th will be Chief James from Bluffdale.

DIRECTORS REPORT

Scott touched on many of the things under the progress report. He wanted to discuss the current employment climate and the effects on the Dispatchers/Call Takers. He included in the packet a memo outlining some of the challenges. As recently as 2-3 months ago, we were excited to be close to full staff and we are now down 18 employees. We lost a few to life changes who have been around for a while. Most of those lost are newer under a year or two on the call taker side and their reasoning is getting jobs with less stress, more money, and more flexibility. Scott wants to start looking at what we can do to focus on recruitment and on retention of the employees we have here. There are places starting at or above what our entry level rate is; some of the national corporations are starting at \$20-\$25 an hour with signing bonuses and flexible schedules. There is a real concern that if we are right about the new phone system and getting on one CAD system, without the people, we won't be able to maintain the performance standards or those expected by the Legislature and industry. We have 6 new CT's starting on the 21st, and we believe we will lose another 2-3 this week, which will bring us to 21, which will put us down to 15. The training is 3-4 months, so it's not a quick turnaround. When you look at what VECC needs and what SLC requires, between the 2 centers, we need just over 50 Dispatchers/Call Takers, and we are competing for the same group within the workforce. In the memo, Scott looked at things like a lateral dispatch program, signing bonuses, a blended compensation model and then as far as retention, fully paid benefits, or a bonus structure. He's not expecting answers today, but he would like us to start looking at things to get ahead of the curve. One of the challenges, which we noticed in the recent budget, is that while \$700k to the overall VECC operating budget is 4-5%, when you adjust it into the assessment models, we are still looking at double-digit increases. He wanted to just put it out there that something is going to give sooner than later. He will continue to evaluate the options and we have some flexibility today. Chief Petersen commented that he doesn't think anyone will be able to guess what will work better than Scott will, but the Board will need to know how much it will cost. Everyone is facing this right now, but he needs Scott to think about what his recommendation will be, implementation time and how much it will cost and then the Board can talk more specifically. Korban Lee asked Scott if has the availability to get salary data on other PSAP centers. Scott does have access to this, and VECC and Weber are the most closely aligned, and at the top as far as entry level. We are not competing with PSAP's, we are competing with the private sector. Weber adopted the Public Safety pension last July, which would cost VECC millions of dollars and is not something that Scott even puts on the table right now. Scott has ideas and has talked with Clint to put some

numbers to some of the things and he'll bring these back next month. Even if all the changes are made, Scott is still very concerned.

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Clint Jensen included the financial report in the packet. On the revenue side, as of May, we are at 85%. The franchise taxes have only been collected through March; there is a 2-month lag. He expects in the next few months to bring in another \$1.9 to \$2 million in franchise tax revenue that we'll apply to this fiscal year, which will get us to 95% of our total revenues for the year. On the personnel expense side, we are running just slightly ahead of year to date at 93%. But on the Admin and Operations expense side, we are at about 83%, putting us combined at 90% with 1 month left in the year. The cash flow statement shows the amounts in checking and savings. The assessments did go out for the next fiscal year, and we had one entity that agreed to pay early which will help us with our cash flow challenge and get us into the first part of the year. He displayed the summary of the checkbook.

Fraud Risk Assessment Report

This is a reporting item required by our State Auditor, to report this to the Board prior to the end of our fiscal year. VECC scored in the low category, 350 points out of 395, which is a good score. This compares to last year's score of 330. The change comes from the organization of a formal Audit Committee, which added 20 points to our score. There are 2 areas where we didn't score: a fraud hotline and having a formal internal audit function. Bruce Kartchner believes we have the ability to use the State's hotline as ours if we choose to do it that way, and then we would get credit for the points. Clint will check into this further.

FY2021 Audit Update

On the audit status, the engagement letter has been signed and we are ready to move forward. They will be here on July 12th to start a pre-audit questioning and field work. The field work will be August 2nd through August 6th with a completion goal prior to October to report back to the Board then.

CLOSED SESSION

Chief Petersen requested a motion to go into a closed session to discuss pending or reasonably imminent litigation.

Motion –

. . . by Mr. David Brickey, to move into a closed session; the motion was seconded by Mr. Tim Tingey; the motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

The meeting went into a closed session at 3:15 p.m.

Motion –

. . . by Mr. David Brickey, to reopen the public meeting; the motion was seconded by Mr. Gary Whatcott; the motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

The public meeting reopened at 3:30 p.m.

There was nothing further to discuss at this meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:31 p.m.