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PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Education Session Minutes



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An education session was held for the Public Safety Communications Commission (PSCC) in the Auditorium at the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) Headquarters, Cheyenne on Wednesday, May 11, 2022. The session began at 11:00 a.m.

The following commission members were present, constituting a quorum.

Mark Harshman, Chairman	Monte McClain, Commissioner
Dwane Pacheco, Secretary	Owen St. Clair, Commissioner
Frosty Williams, Commissioner	Phillip Franklin, Commissioner
Jonathan Downing, Commissioner	Cindi Shank, Commissioner
Matt Carr, Commissioner	Luke Reiner, Ex Officio, WYDOT Director

Commissioners Mike Choma, Kebin Haller, Paul, Bertoglio, and Doug Frank were absent.

The following WYDOT staff were present and participated in the session.

Troy Babbitt, <i>Chief Technology Officer</i>	Aimee Binning, <i>911 Planning Coordinator</i>
Nathan Smolinski, <i>Emergency Communications Manager</i>	Susan Elliott, <i>Executive Assistant</i>
Kimberly Chapman, <i>Commission Secretary</i> (via Zoom)	

Mr. Babbitt started the session by giving a brief history of WYDOT’s involvement in 911 and the PSCC. He also introduced team members Nathan Smolinski, Aimee Binning, and Kimberly Chapman.

Ms. Binning led the presentation on the PSCC’s role in Next Generation 911 (NG911). Topics covered included industry terminology, the history of 911, (local) control of the system, and the role of the PSCC in expanding NG911.

Ms. Binning began by reviewing pertinent terminology. There are 40 emergency communication centers (ECC) in Wyoming and they break down into two categories: dispatch centers and public service assess points (PSAP). While the six dispatch centers in Wyoming do not receive 911 calls, the centers do dispatch resources when needed.

The PSAPs break down into two further self-identified categories: primary and secondary PSAPs. All 911 calls in Wyoming are channeled through a selective router in Cheyenne, and primary PSAPs receive their calls directly from this router. A secondary PSAP receives calls from wireless callers in a community or voice over internet protocol (VOIP) calls, and not the selective router. There are 31 primary and 3 secondary PSAPs in the state. Twenty-two of the 31 primary PSAPs can perform emergency medical dispatching (EMD).

Ms. Binning shared the history of the 911 emergency telephone number. When the public calls 911, they expect to be quickly connected to a telecommunicator who can ask appropriate questions about the nature of the emergency and then send the appropriate resources. In the early history of the 911 service, operators determined the two most critical pieces of information needed to respond appropriately: who is calling and where the caller is located. The Master Street Address Guide (MSAG), the automated location identification (ALI), and automatic number identification (ANI) were all developed and used to help telecommunicators dispatch resources to the appropriate location.

As technology has evolved from landlines to computer-based systems to VOIP calls to cell phones, Enhanced 911 (E911) was developed to ensure the public received immediate assistance in emergencies. Through three phases, E911 ensured that wireless 911 calls were sent to local PSAPs instead of providers, mobile numbers were displayed with each call, and that GPS receivers be placed in phones to allow triangulation between towers.

While E911 improved the system, recent technological advances necessitate further updates to the 911 system. NG911 aims to upgrade 911 systems to allow them to receive more detailed data (videos, images, texts, etc.) and to allow for greater interoperable communication across state lines and jurisdictions.

Although stakeholders have been discussing NG911 since 2015, prioritization and planning did not begin until 2018. During this meeting, it was discovered that Wyoming had missed an opportunity to receive a significant amount of federal funding for NG911 due to a lack of a state coordinator, a state plan, and a governing body to oversee the process. Legislation was enacted in 2019 that allowed for the appointment of a state 911 coordinator, Troy Babbitt. Topic workgroups—comprised of stakeholders at the local level—helped WYDOT develop a state plan in 2020.

Local governments maintain control of PSAP operations and are responsible for development funding, staffing, and reporting requirements for their center. Funding for PSAPs comes from 911 fees collected by telecommunications companies for landlines and wireless phone sales. The Department of Revenue distributes equitable shares of fees collected from telecom companies to each county. Based upon figures from reporting in 2019 and 2020, there is currently a \$5 million deficit between fees collected and expenditures in the state.

There are state and national entities that advocate for 911 systems and telecommunicators. The Wyoming chapters of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) and the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) represent local interests at the state and national levels, and were instrumental in the passage of recent legislation for expanding NG911 in Wyoming. Mr. Babbitt and Ms. Binning represent Wyoming as members of the National Association of State 911 Administrators (NASNA).

Ms. Binning outlined the PSCC's role in expanding NG911 in Wyoming. In March 2022, Senate File 0041—now Senate Enrolled Act 0038—established the PSCC as the governing board for the NG911 buildout. It added two new seats to the board with representation from the Wyoming Office of Homeland Security and Wyoming APCO/NENA. Ms. Binning also shared

information on the types of information that the state is mandated to report to the National 911 Profile Database and the Federal Communications Commission.

According to SF0041, the PSCC will serve as an advisory board that will recommend guidelines and standards for the development, implementation, and maintenance of interoperable public safety communications and data systems. The PSCC is expected to:

- Identify short- and long-term technological and policy solutions,
- Integrate existing, legacy infrastructure into the system,
- Develop and submit recommendations for legislation or state action, and
- Promulgate rules and regulations governing the NG911 system's operation and participation in the system.

In order to assist with the rule-making mandate, Ms. Binning provided the commissioners with the known hazards for NG911. There are several known hazards and they include funding instability, decreasing fees, increasing costs, and a lack of redundancy in the system. Ms. Binning shared some statistics on funding that came from self-reported information on surveys sent out in early 2022. Twenty-seven communities responded and of those 51 percent reported being 100 percent funded by 911 fees, 40 percent split 911 fee funds with another PSAP or agency, and 7 percent receive no funds from 911 fees.

The GIS workgroup was one of the five groups of stakeholders who helped develop the state 911 plan. The workgroup had several recommendations for the PSCC to consider as rules and regulations are developed. The group felt strongly that a set of best practices should be followed and they recommended using the NENA standards. The group also felt that it is very important to offer education, outreach, and training to the people who maintain the system. Another recommendation is to create a state portal where system coordinators could upload and access data. The final recommendation is to develop a maintenance loop in the state portal to allow for data consistency.

Ms. Binning shared more data from the spring 2022 survey on NG911 readiness. The 27 PSAP respondents reported the greatest readiness for computer aided design (CAD), phone systems, and recording functions. Several PSAPs reported less readiness for GIS services and phone trunks (IP based systems).

Ms. Binning and Mr. Babbitt shared priorities for the future as NG911 is expanded in Wyoming. WYDOT staff will work to prioritize partnerships and engage stakeholders as the system is developed and improved. Mr. Babbitt shared that staff will continue to bring relevant topics and issues related to NG911 before the commission.

The session concluded and adjourned at 12:35 p.m.