

---

## Dispatching

1 message

---

**Ron Kumetz** <ron@broadcast-devices.com>

Thu, Mar 31, 2022 at 7:14 PM

Reply-To: ron@broadcast-devices.com

To: Steve Whitaker <whitaker.stephen@gmail.com>

Comments regarding dispatching.

I have over 40 years of experience in the communications and radio/television broadcast industry as well as being involved with the fire service and EMS for over 30 years. I am currently chief of the Alburgh Volunteer Fire Department and do communications work for a number of fire and EMS agencies in Vermont. I have represented the Vermont State Firefighters Association on the VCOMM steering committee and the Public Safety Broadband Network Commission. As a matter of note, I have no financial relationship with any dispatch facility.

The dispatch issue in Vermont has been a subject of discussion and contention for many years. There have been a number of surveys and reports over the years and though the results were similar all were cast aside and ignored wasting time and money.

Dispatching, particularly outside law enforcement, is a hodgepodge of facilities all operating with different business models. While I am not intimately familiar with most, my department and those around me have been dispatched by a private paging service, St Albans PD and now Shelburne Communications Center. We were forced to seek service from St Albans when the service which dispatched us decided it was not profitable and gave us 90 days to find an alternate solution. The GI County agencies were originally charged approximately \$130,000 for 1500 calls per year. When we complained that this was outrageous the cost went down to approximately \$85,000 per year for the same call volume. At this point I started talking to the chiefs of the agencies for which I am the communications provider and found that all of the agencies in Addison County that I spoke to had nothing but positive things to say about Shelburne Dispatch. I will add that they were honest enough to say that Shelburne is not perfect but they are responsive and willing to fix things when they are not right.

We approached Shelburne and found that they had a waiting list. Disappointing on the surface

but in reality a good sign. We found that our call volume would cost the entire county approximately \$46,000 per year which represented a savings of almost 50%. Since that switch a number of years ago we have found them to be efficient, professional and, as promised, they are not perfect but a single call fixes most problems that crop up.

I apologize in advance for the long historical narrative but my point is this: my experience

and that of one report generated by the VT State Police are that Shelburne is the most cost effective facility in the state. They have been doing this for 30 years at a cost of approximately \$33 per call with modest annual increases. They are effective and responsive.

My conclusion is that a dispatch facility can be run at that cost and a review of Shelburne's budget over the past years is a pretty good indicator of how they do it.

I am told that when the surrounding agencies approached Shelburne PD about dispatching

the select board agreed with the caveat that dispatching outside agencies cannot cost the taxpayers of Shelburne anything and that is how the facility is run. The estimated budget for the year is added up, the average call volume for all agencies are added together and the cost per call is determined. Every agency, including Shelburne PD, FD and Rescue are charged the same per call rate which is fair for all.

My recommendation, since everyone cannot be dispatched by Shelburne, is that a team be dispatched to analyze what they do, how they do it and why they have been as successful at doing so at a reasonable cost while other agencies have been unable to do so.

With regard to funding dispatch it is clear to me that there is only one fair and equitable way

to ensure a revenue stream to fund the back end of our E911 system: a telephone surcharge.

Many of the calls we respond to come from renters and even out of state callers neither of which pay the property tax bills which are currently the source of most dispatch funding. While many in our community have limited income or may rely on a social security check, we have other young residents who do not even bother to check what fees they are being charged on their cell phone because losing access to their social media accounts would be

more painful than losing an organ. If the number of E911 calls was simply multiplied by a reasonable \$35 or so per call and the total divided by the number of landline and cellular telephones in Vermont the cost per phone would be negligible.

While I respect Governor Scott's efforts to avoid new taxes and fees, I submit that modifying

the source of the funding is neither and that funding dispatching by redistributing the source

of funding to a telephone surcharge represents a much more equitable means of funding a critical service to Vermonters.

I appreciate you taking the time to read my comments and I am always available to answer

any questions that you might have.

Regards,  
Ron Kumetz, Chief  
Alburgh Volunteer Fire Department

--

Ron Kumetz N1WT  
Director of Engineering

***Broadcast Devices, Inc.***

709 Border Road  
Alburgh, Vermont 05440

[ron@broadcast-devices.com](mailto:ron@broadcast-devices.com) Tel (802) 796-6031

[www.broadcast-devices.com](http://www.broadcast-devices.com)