

**MINUTES – Special Meeting**  
**WINNEBAGO COUNTY EMERGENCY TELEPHONE SYSTEM BOARD**

Rockford Fire Headquarters, 204 S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street Rockford, IL 61104  
September 7, 2022

**I. Call To Order**

Meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m.

**II. Roll Call**

Present: Todd Stockburger, Chairman, Joe Corl, Vice Chairman, Adam Truman, Joel Hallstrom, Don Shoevlin, Gary Caruana, Mike McCammond, Michele Pankow, E.J. Dilonardo and Carla Redd

Guests: Elizabeth Russell, Justin Anderson, Veronica O’Daniel, Sandy Stansell, Jennifer Dey (WCSO), LT. Mike Weber (WCSO), Lafakeria Vaughn (SA), J. Hanley (SA), Rick Ciganek (WCSO), Dave Rickert (WC Adm), Mark Gerwin (RockCom), John Girone (Rockford 911) Att. Galluzzo (LP)  
(Attendance signature sheet included)

Absent: Don Carlson

**III. Introductions**

Chairman Todd Stockburger introduced Cindy Barbera-Brelle, State of Illinois 911 Administrator and Attorney John Kelly, Counsel for the ETSB to ETSB members and asked each to provide an overview of their duties. Ms. Brelle advised the ETSB that in 2015 legislation was passed that called for consolidation of PSAPS and along with that came the call for her role as the 911 Administrator. Ms. Brelle oversees the issuance of orders for 911 systems to operate and has been spearheading the NG911 project for the state, which will migrate PSAPS to the state ESInet. She also is involved in the TC (Telecommunicator) Certification project. Attorney John Kelly advised the ETSB that he knows many of the members having worked as the ETSB’s Attorney for the past couple years. Mr. Kelly advised that he also represents several PSAPs in Illinois and serves on the general counsel for National NENA as well as the Illinois chapters of NENA and APCO.

**IV. Discussions on SAP (Secondary Answering Point)**

**a) Overview/What is a SAP**

Chairman Stockburger asked Cindy Barbera-Brelle to provide an overview for the ETSB. Ms. Brelle advised that according to legislation a SAP is a location other than a PSAP that is able to receive the data, call back # etc. when the call is transferred from the PSAP and in turn they (SAP) complete the process by dispatching police, fire and medical or other emergency responders.

**b) Operating Rules/Regs**

Chairman Stockburger asked if RockCom's operating rules fell into that definition. Ms. Barbara-Brelle advised that a SAP must meet all of the requirements that a primary has to meet. Ms. Barbara-Brelle advised that she had the opportunity to visit both PSAPS and Rock Com prior to the ETSB meeting. She also had Rock Com complete a survey. The only thing she found outstanding was that they are not getting the data. Ms. Barbara-Brelle said currently the call taker either at Rockford or Winnebago receives the call, gets the info and then calls Rock Com to relay that information. Ms. Barbara-Brelle stated that legislation requires that the 911 call gets transferred with the data. Ms. Barbara-Brelle advised that what Rock Com needs to do, if the ETSB chooses to recognize them as a SAP, is to obtain call handling equipment to be able to get the data. Prior to moving on to the funding discussion, Chairman Stockburger recognized Elizabeth Russell for assisting Rock Com with the survey process.

**c) Discussion on Funding**

Chairman Stockburger stated that as he understands it, the ETSB would have the authority and autonomy to say we want to fund in such a way or do not want to fund it. Attorney Kelly has made it clear in the past as to what the ETSB can fund. Stockburger asked Attorney Kelly for his input regarding the funding. Attorney Kelly said that the philosophical question that is raised is whether the ETSB would want a secondary answering point, i.e.; Rock Com as part of the 911 system. If the ETSB decides they want Rock Com as a SAP, then Rock Com will have to follow the legislation and go through the process under the rules of the State of Illinois. Attorney Kelly stated that if the ETSB wants to recognize Rock Com a SAP, then it is his belief that the ETSB should fund them and when they become part of the 911 system, they would be funding through those funds. Attorney Kelly advised the ETSB that first they have to decide whether they want Rock Com as their SAP and if the board says yes, then they are obligated to fund it, which means providing CPE or customer premise equipment to Rock Com. Chairman Stockburger stated that Rockford 911 and Winnebago County 911 are both busy centers. Rockford Dispatches for several fire agencies. Stockburger said the concern for the ETSB is if they don't fund Rock Com in some capacity, then that leaves a lot to be desired for dispatching because he doesn't believe the City can take on additional responsibilities for dispatching. If the ETSB doesn't fund it we might be in a difficult situation because it appears neither the city nor county is equipped to take on any additional dispatching.

ETSB member Michele Pankow stated that she thinks the board needs to separate out the decision as to whether the board wants to proceed with Rock Com as an SAP from the funding part. Either we want to do it and once that is decided then the funding piece would come along with it. Board Member EJ Dilonardo said he is hearing two things in the discussions, first the board has the ability to decide whether or not they want to fund, but then Attorney Kelly said if the ETSB decided they will approve the SAP then the board should fund. Attorney Kelly said the question is whether the board wants a SAP as part of the 911 system. If you decide that you do, Kelly believes that the statute requires the ETSB to fund. Attorney Kelly asked State Administrator Cindy Barbera-Brelle if she sees it that way as well. Ms. Barbera-Brelle concurred. Board member Don Shoenlin stated that funding must be a consideration to see if the ETSB has that money to fund something else. Board member Gary Caruana asked Sandy Stansell

if a SAP was necessary with NG. Sandy Stansell advised members that the NG network is in place to connect 9 counties. Call could inevitably roll over to another PSAP or county if the PSAP or county is unable to take the 911 calls. Stansell advised that the discussion is about two separate things; one if the network can be used to forward calls and the answer is yes but the SAP who handles a smaller group of agencies via their contract dispatches their calls to those entities. Attorney Kelly concurred with Sandy Stansell, that the NG network is a technology which handles the calls via the network. It is a way of moving the call, instead of copper wire you move the calls via the internet. Gary Caruana commented that we have a primary and secondary PSAP, if the board is thinking about funding Rock Com for dispatching fire, why not put those monies into Winnebago County 911 for the dispatch of county fire. Caruana says there is a time delay in dispatching fire, that way, so why wouldn't we make the County 911 center whole and put the money into consoles etc. for the dispatching of fire. Now let's say if we do that would Next Gen be able to handle the centers being down? Sandy Stansell advised yes, that is the basis of the NG network. Caruana stated let's put the money into the current system instead of a piece meal process. Attorney Kelly said that is the question you have to ask; do you need a secondary answering point. Kelly said he heard the comments from the chairman regarding either center's ability to dispatch more agencies at this moment. If you decide that you don't need the SAP you have to be able to absorb the traffic. Caruana said nothing against Rock Com but there is a delay in dispatch. Winnebago County 911 has the room to accommodate this. Board Member Joel Hallstrom asked if we are just talking funding the equipment or funding the operations of Rock Com. The reality is there are 4 or 5 departments dispatched by Rock Com who aren't going to be able to afford the City or County dispatch costs. That is the issue. Attorney Kelly stated that If the ETSB determines that Rock Com is a SAP, the sole funding responsibility is for the 911 phone system at Rock Com. Everything else is discretionary for the board. Cindy Barbera-Brelle says they have already been acting as a SAP for some time. Gary Caruana stated that the time is immaterial at this point. The ETSB must think out of the box to say what is the best way to serve the community, for the greater good and that the calls get answered and handled in a timely way. Caruana said that his center right now could not handle those calls but if it is done the right way, they could. Attorney Kelly said the law that went into effect on January 1, 2016, one of the effects of that law was to eliminate call transfers because of the inherent delay; calls getting dropped etc. The problem in Illinois we don't have necessary support across the state. We just finally go the last county on board with basic 911. Cindy Barbera-Brelle advised that there were 13 counties in January of 2016 without 911 service. Attorney Kelly said the ideal would be no transfers. Board member EJ Dilonardo asked for clarification again on the funding. Dilonardo stated what precludes an SAP for petitioning for asking for additional funding above and beyond for phone equipment, like personal costs, etc. Attorney Kelly stated that would be a likely possibility but again those are discretionary discretions of the ETSB. Dilonardo said personnel would then not be a requirement of the ETSB. Attorney Kelly said no. Caruana asked if the ETSB did approve to fund Rock Com's phone system, could there be a sunset allowing them to build the matrix. Attorney Kelly said it is the ETSB's determination as to whether they no longer need a SAP, the county or the city dispatch center----the ETSB makes that decision. The problem is ultimately the State of Illinois will ask the ETSB if they can provide 911 service as required by law and that is the measure. The ETSB currently has a plan to operate as a system and as things change a new plan has to be submitted to

the state. Based on Mr. Kelly's statement, Gary Caruana stated the SAP then would not have to be a permanent thing. EJ Dilonardo commented that wouldn't the bar be set high if Rock Com was established as a SAP and therefore more difficult to prove to the state that the SAP was no longer needed. Attorney Kelly said no, that would not be the case as long as the ETSB is providing the services as required, affectively with or without a SAP. Dilonardo said that if the ETSB believes that they could then Cindy would be brought in. Cindy Barbera-Brelle said the ETSB would prepare a modification plan, which will be technically reviewed and then it goes to her office for a review report and then she would in turn issue an order. There is nothing she sees that would preclude Rock Com from becoming a SAP. Mr. Kelly advised that if in a year or so the ETSB decides to do away with the SAP, then once again a modification plan would have to be submitted to the state. It would be reviewed and Cindy would make the recommendation on dropping the SAP. Cindy Barbera-Brelle said the report would call out specifics on what is needed. Joel Hallstrom advised that the ETSB needs to know what dollar amount would be associated with making Rock Com a SAP. Todd Stockburger stated that Elizabeth Russell might have a rough idea on the costs. Elizabeth Russell advised that currently each position is around \$25K however there are portable positions that might be less. She didn't have that figure as of yet. Also, there would be network costs to run those positions. Hallstrom said the realty is it makes sense to have the call taker in the same room with the dispatch. It is the best interest for the ETSB to ensure dispatch for the various agencies while the ETSB makes their plans for the future. Hallstrom said the ETSB has to comply with the state for liability issues. EJ Dilonardo asked Ms. Barbara-Brelle is the state would cease operations of the 911 system as it stands. Ms. Barbara-Brelle said no, however since it was brought to her attention and they would issue a letter stating non-compliance. Joe Corl said if Rock Com went away tomorrow Rockford 911 would not have the staff or equipment to handle it. If Rock Com is allowed to be a SAP, how long would they be allowed to get to that status. Gary Caruana restated that his concern is time delay of dispatch. Gary Caruana asked if we say no to the SAP what would be the timeline to get fire dispatch on board at the county. Cindy Barbera-Brelle said it would have to be less than a year. Joe Corl asked when his department is busy, Rockford Fire will call a private ambulance for the call, so when we look at this it is kind of the same thing. What is the difference with private ambulances and the way the SAP dispatches. Ms. Barbera-Brelle says the difference is you are taking the 911 call but you don't have any ambulance ready or available to go to the call and there is a mutual aid agreement and the only way to get that ambulance because you don't dispatch for them is to pick up the phone and call them. Attorney Kelly said the ETSB's responsibility is the receipt of the 911 call, not the dispatch of the call. If the call is being answered at the PSAP and they have to pick up the phone to dispatch that is not an issue for Cindy. If the call goes into Rockford and has to call Rock Com to call an ambulance—that is the difference. Joel Hallstrom says the information is being received over station alerting-doesn't that circumvent any of this? Mr. Kelly said no, it is how that 911 call getting from the PSAP to Rock Com. The data is not going with it. Cindy Barbera-Brelle said Solacomm is moving quickly on installing phones, probably a couple months. Gary Caruana asked Ms. Barbera-Brelle if she would work with the ETSB if they decide to go with fire dispatch at the county, if it took as long as a year. Ms. Barbera-Brelle's answer was within reason. Sandy Stansell asked Ms. Barbera-Brelle if those positions would receive funding back from the state.

Ms. Barbera-Brelle said no. No SAP or dark back up receives funding. Mr. Kelly says some of the network costs might be reimbursed.

Joe Corl said the airport is dispatched by one of the hospitals and they are a fire department and would fall under this category. Board member Michele Pankow advised that any call fire or ems regarding the airport would be answered in the 911 Center. If it is a crash incident, that would be handled by the tower and/or internally at the airport. Supervisor John Girone confirmed that the calls would be answered at Rockford 911. There would never be an incident where you would transfer the 911 call to Med Com.

Todd Stockburger said the next ETSB meeting is September 13, 2022. Don Carlson was the only member not present at the special meeting. Stockburger requested numbers County 911 could be ready within the year to take on fire dispatch.

#### **Questions/Comments from Guests:**

Joe Corl asked if any guests might have comments or questions regarding the discussion. Stockburger called on State's Attorney Hanley for his comments. **Attorney Hanley** commented on the statute in Section 7. that states, *Direct dispatch should be used if possible to shorten the time required to respond and that the State Administrator should minimize the use of transfer relay and referral if possible and encourage back up PSAPS to be able to direct dispatch, transfer or relay other than an answering point shall not be used unless exigent circumstances exist.* Attorney Hanley stated that those

circumstances were discussed in the meeting, that being staffing. Mr. Hanley directed comment to State Administrator Barbera-Brelle stating that we would be in trouble if Rock Com went away tomorrow. Mr. Hanley stated that we have two really good PSAPs with a good track record as such that should be given as much leeway as possible to work this out. We will work to ensure that the people of Winnebago County have the best 911 service as possible, so he would advocate that Winnebago County is given the longest leash as possible to work on this. Rock Com Representatives. **Veronica**

**O'Daniel:** Prior to all this happening Rock Com was having meetings with Central Square in an attempt to eliminate any delays. We are attempting to shorten up response times. Central Square could eliminate the relay, the information would be on the CAD ticket.

All would be funding through Mercy Health. Mercy Health has provided that service at no cost to citizens. **Mark** If we became a SAP how would that work? Would the primary get the call—would the caller be transferred to Rock Com. Ms. Barbera-Brelle said yes, the caller would get transferred. There are two other SAP's in Cook County that are fire and ems only. Their delays are not excessive. What will it cost for Rock Com to get on speed with the phone system. What would the timeline be for Rock Com. Could Rock Com volunteer for funding then what? Ms. Barbera-Brelle said ETSB would still have to decide on whether it was a SAP and send a modification Plan. **Attorney Galluzzo:** There is much training involved, who would oversee that the training is met and who is responsible? Ms. Barbera Brelle said the ETSB and her office as follow up. Ms. Barbera-Brelle stated There is a program is moving forward on TC's meeting minimal training requirements. **Attorney Galluzzo:** What if Rock Com does not meet requirements, can the ETSB move to remove them as a SAP. Cindy Barbera-Brelle said yes but also said she would work with them to get them certified. **Jennifer Fey:** commented and recognized the delay in response for instance a 911 call comes into her center as someone falling down the stairs, so the call is transferred to the SAP for dispatch but then it is

determined after the transfer that someone pushed the victim down the stairs and now

a police response is necessary. The call has to come back to the 911 PSAP. So, there is a delay in response. Ms. Barbera-Brelle stated that most likely that would be rare and a very small percentage of the calls.

**No further public comments**

Board member Joe Corl asked when the ETSB could expect numbers to determine amount needed for funding. Elizabeth Russell stated she would work on that with Solacomm and that there were variations in configurations as far as number of positions needed and whether they go with portable units as well. Ms. Russell said she would look at their call volume as they might be able to get by with two positions based on that.

**Next Meeting and Adjournment:**

The next ETSB meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 13, 2022 at 9am at Rockford Fire Headquarters at 204 S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street Rockford, IL 61104. A **Motion** was made by Gary Caruana to adjourn and was seconded by Don Shoevin. Motion carried.