

## SALT LAKE VALLEY EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

### **OPERATIONS BOARD MEETING** *December 12, 2019 – Meeting Minutes* **VECC Board Room - 5360 S Ridge Village Drive** **West Valley City**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chief Jeff Carr, South Jordan  
A.C. Chad Pascua, Murray  
D.C. Bart Vawdrey, Draper  
D.C. Mark Ownsby, West Valley  
Chief Chris Dawson, South Jordan  
Sgt. Joe Cummings, South Salt Lake  
Lt. Cody Stromberg, Herriman  
D.C. Jeremy Robertson, West Jordan  
Chief Robby Russo, Cottonwood Heights  
Chief John Eining, Draper  
Chief Craig Burnett, Murray  
Chief Colleen Jacobs, West Valley

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Sgt. JD Tazol, Cottonwood Heights  
Travis Trotta, DPS  
Ryan Shosted, Riverton  
John Inch Morgan, SLVECC  
Shelly deJong, SLVECC  
Jeff Monson, SLVECC  
Jonathan Bridges, SLVECC  
Beth Todd, SLVECC  
Andrea Partridge, SLVECC

Chief Robby Russo wanted to show some appreciation to the dispatchers and Cottonwood Heights donated some shirts, sweatshirts, mugs, and gift cards to distribute to the dispatchers on the floor. Shelly deJong thanked him and mentioned that the dispatchers would be very grateful for these gifts. John Inch mentioned that the dispatchers really appreciate the Chiefs coming out to the floor and speaking with them and he encouraged them to continue to go out and visit with them; it makes a big difference.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

##### **Motion –**

**. . . By Chief Craig Burnett; to approve the minutes of the November 14, 2019 Board of Operations meeting; seconded by Chief Robby Russo; the motion passed unanimously.**

#### **USER COMMITTEE REPORTS**

##### **TS Users Report**

Jonathan Bridges wanted to report that the Spillman upgrade is done and they are working on the Versaterm project now. In supporting Spillman, with the upgrade being done, part of the process now is trying to work through issues that come up. Some of the log file on the servers had some issues, however, the beauty of the new system with the new hardware and monitoring associated with it, it's more proactive and they were able to catch the issue to resolve problems quicker. They expanded some hard drive space, cleaned out some of the log files and got the optimal efficiency back into the system. Right now, TS is supporting 2 CADs and supporting them 100%, which he wants it to be known that they are running both systems as effectively and efficiently as possible so that they are not causing impacts to the dispatchers and call takers on the floor.

##### **Police Users Report**

Sgt. Tazoi reported that there was no Police Users meeting this past week, but he wanted to report some experiences they have had since moving from Spillman to Versaterm in terms of holding calls and response times. He had numbers he was going to present showing the drastic increase in pre-dispatch and overall response time, but after looking at it further, it's not a fair comparison. Instead, he wanted to just go over some experiences he's had. There is an understanding that response times are paramount to success in doing their jobs and is something they pride themselves on. He recognizes they are not a big city, but having calls holding is something they don't like to have; they like to respond as quickly as possible. They have noticed a change in holding calls; calls of all different priorities are holding for several minutes before anyone is being notified of them. Some examples include

a hit and run accident where a witness was following the suspect away and it was held for 10 minutes before any information was given out. They had someone sitting in the parking lot next to where this occurred. Another Sgt commented to him that calls are holding and not being dispatched or advised for several minutes; even 30-40. Sgt. Tazoi doesn't know if that is completely accurate. There was a Res. Burg. in progress that held for 3 minutes; officers dispatched themselves and it turned out to be a swat-type incident. Basically, this is their experience over the past month and a half. He is asking for and would be interested in seeing how long calls are being held from the second they come in until someone is notified. He believes there is some type of record put into the call when someone is notified. He would like an idea of how long those are sitting before someone is notified so they can see what's happening. John Inch Morgan felt this was good input coming in and as we look at making these migrating changes, compared to where we are, we will do an investigation over the next 2 weeks and will send out information. Chief Jeff Carr commented that he came out and sat with a Call Taker for an hour or so and one thing he noticed from their perspective is it's different pushing the call from where they work to the Versaterm side versus the Spillman side. It's more duplication of effort. Shelly said that when a Spillman Call Taker gets the call, they put it into their system; they then have to turn around and transfer the call over to a Versaterm person, who has to enter it into that system, which results in a time lapse. Chief Carr believes it's going to get worse until it gets better, with agencies moving to Versaterm, until something is solved on the front end. He suspects this is contributing a little bit to what they are seeing. Beth Todd said there is a plan for this; they were waiting for an upgrade that was completed this week. We will be training the Spillman Call Takers who, now that the upgrade is done, will have access to Versaterm. They will be trained on direct entering calls into Versaterm, rather than entering them into Spillman and then having to transfer the call. It will just take a little while to get everyone trained on this. Shelly also said they had to hold off on this due to the version with Versaterm they were on prior to Tuesday. It must be run on Windows 10 and there were only a few computers out there on the Spillman side that could have the Versaterm CAD on it to be able to direct-enter those calls. Now that they are on version 7.4, as of Tuesday, it can be on all computers, and we can start that process of entering calls in both systems rather than transferring and entering. There are still issues with Pro-QA and it was made crystal clear to Chief Carr sitting with a Call Taker, how ridiculous some of those questions are. They are frustrated with some of this stuff as well. John will be meeting with Pro-QA next week on moving away from that, utilizing some of the essential questions; he'll be exploring all of this. Chief Robby Russo commented that his citizens are very frustrated with the Pro-QA system. He wondered if UPD had a policy as far as dispatchers holding calls before they advise a Sgt. It might not be just technology as much as culture. Shelly said there is a policy, and as we are getting new agencies, they are coming over with some of their dispatchers who are learning the system and new ways of dispatch. One thing we will need to do is look at our protocols and processes and see how we are doing everything and then come up with the best ideas and move forward with that; consistency is the key. Chief Carr said this was one of the things he heard from the dispatchers; the more agencies can get together on these protocols, the easier it is for them to move from channel to channel. John commented that with both systems, this is something we've be talking about for some time about getting a common manual where we can. If we can all be on the same page, it makes it easier for people to move from one console to another.

## **OPERATIONS**

### **Staffing Update**

Because staffing and turnover has been such a conversation, Beth wanted to show progression through the year and then give you current status of where we are now. Shelly will also discuss cross-training. Jeff Monson recapped that on the merger, we tried to prepare and tried to find out how many individuals would be coming over. Staffing was discussed; UPD was authorized 47 individuals for their full-time people; VECC was authorized 81 full time individuals for a total of 128. When UPD came over, they brought 35 individuals and VECC had 79. There were part time employees, UPD had 13 and VECC had 17. Part time employees aren't really counted in the schedule as they fill in for vacations, trainings and other open gaps. On turnover, we have lost up to 50 employees this year. There are a few employees who have submitted their resignation and will be leaving as well. With that, 17 employees left from Versaterm and 33 left from Spillman. Jeff thanked the Board of Operations for the support they have shown VECC and the things they have done to talk with their Trustees. This will help us in the future to be more competitive like some of those other agencies. Money is not everything; it's not the only reason why people leave, and we understand that. We understand we have a lot more to do in culture and other things and we are putting together a plan to take care of this. Our hiring process has changed a little bit; we are trying to hire more frequently as well as hiring laterally. On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, we hired 5 new employees and again on December 16<sup>th</sup>, we will have 5 more. Out of our recruiting process, and this last recruitment, we had 74 applicants. Of those, 25 moved came in and tested and 20 of those were scheduled for an interview; 19 interviewed. From the 19, we found 10 employees we felt would be very good for SLVECC. Going into the next year, we will be looking at how to recruit more effectively. Current staffing, with the separation and hires happening, Versaterm has 30 full time and 17 part time employees. Spillman has 75 full time and 20 part time employees. We also have ongoing cross-training, both on Versaterm and Spillman. Shelly commented that with her 30 full time employees, 7 of them are currently in training, which leaves them 23 full time people, which is probably what is leading to some of the delays.

She asked for patience with the agencies as cross-training takes a lot of work and time. If there are any issues, please bring them to Shelly so that she can address them. She also commented that we have lost people to SLC; a lot are looking to them as the ultimate place to be. We will, through our hard work, and your patience, be the number one dispatch Center. Chief Carr mentioned when he spoke with some people out on the floor; they appreciated what was done with the pay, but there is still an issue of us versus them. You can feel the wall up out on the dispatch floor. The quicker we can get this done so that it's not Spillman side and Versaterm side is very important. The other thing he heard was staffing. The concern, and he saw this, is with dispatchers being asked to take calls while they are trying to watch a fire or police channel. He saw firsthand the challenges with this. He believes we should try and work towards dispatchers dispatching and call takers call taking. It creates a lot of stress for these individuals, and he was this happen. He doesn't believe this is a good practice overall. It was asked, with 75 Spillman and 30 Versaterm dispatchers, how does it compare to the agencies that are with Versaterm versus Spillman. What can be done if there are 50% of the agencies with Versaterm in getting 50% of the dispatchers also with Versaterm. It seems the dispatchers are not being transferred over co-equally. Shelly responded that until the system was updated to 7.4, they didn't want to train people on a system that they would have to retrain. Now that 7.4 is on board, we have more consistency, there will be a huge push to make it 50/50 because we will finally have computers that we can use both systems on. John Inch Morgan commented that as agencies have moved over to Versaterm, we've taken virtually the same dispatchers from Spillman over to Versaterm. As we look at Herriman and Riverton, the first two to move over, the individuals from Spillman were moved over and trained on Versaterm. As far as dispatchers go, there are about 30 on Spillman and 30 on Versaterm, which does not include the call takers on the Spillman side. One thing we must deal with is that there are some people dispatching and call taking at the same time, which you will see more on the Versaterm side right now because that is the way that UPD operated. We are trying to move away from that as we do this migration coming in. New trainings coming in and hiring as many people as we have leaving is the bottleneck. We can hire more people, but we have no place to put them and train them, taking someone else off the floor, and still function efficiently. If you are looking at a minimum of 6 months training before they can solo, this will be a persistent bottleneck going forward. John and Chief Carr have talked about this before, having dispatchers take calls. Dispatchers are only asked to take calls if they don't have radio traffic at the time. Chief Jacobs knows that one of her best dispatchers probably takes as many calls as call takers and still juggles it all very well. If there is a lot of radio traffic, they are not asked to pick that up. There are times where there is down time. If we are receiving a lot of 9-1-1 calls and there is no radio traffic, John's expectation is that they take phone calls. Chief Jeffs replied that what he hears sometimes from the competition is that they don't have to do that. He believes there can be balance with that but he also believes we need to pay attention to what the industry is doing, or at least locally, where our competition is, and make sure we are keeping an environment where people feel comfortable enough that they can do their job. John has assigned the Operation Mangers to look at other dispatch centers to see how they are doing. Salt Lake City has everybody doing dispatching or calling taking the first half of their shift and then the other the second half. There has been resistance with this here, because not everyone is trained on every channel. Salt Lake City has 2 channels and they run everything the same way. The difficulty for us is taking a call taker and trying to train them on all the police channels. The only way to do this is to combine more channels and/or have everyone on the same manual, and then having more people just doing call taking. There are options out there that over the next little while everyone needs to look at. Beth Todd said that the plan for the 5 new hires on the Versaterm side is they will be dedicated call takers. The 5 starting on the Spillman side next week will also be dedicated call takers. Chief Jacobs asked what needs to be done to get a list of what each agency is doing differently. There may be some things that can be fixed rather quickly. John commented that there is a user group that has sat down and looked at certain policies and they have made changes. Maybe a task force should be put together to compare the different manuals we have on the floor and identify which items can be standardized. Chief Carr asked that it be put on the next Users meeting to address and then he would like 3 – 5 items brought to this meeting of things that can be fixed. A lot of the smaller issues are just Operational trainings with their individual people. MDT's are not being used to their full potential and dispatch radio airtime is being tied up with so much unnecessary traffic that could be done by the officer on the MDT if the training takes place. Salt Lake City, with running 80-85 officers, per channel doesn't have much radio traffic at all because they've been trained to utilize their MDT's. It's a cultural shift for us, but it's something that's very possible and something we need to take seriously. This will certainly help the dispatchers feel less stress if we can take some of the load from them, if possible. Jonathan Bridges wanted to also mention that within the organization here at SLVECC, we are in the process of standardizing all our dispatch equipment out on the floor so that we are all working off the same equipment.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY SOFTWARE UPDATE**

### **Versaterm V7.4 Upgrade**

John Inch Morgan reported that this week, Versaterm has been here and at SLC, moving us from 7.3 to 7.4. That should be a step in the right direction as far as the 2 different CADs we have out here. John displayed the presentation that they made to the Board of Trustees on Monday. It goes through and identifies the entities that

are on the Salt Lake City 911 system, the airport being the newest entity on the system. Everything is now mounted on the hardware we purchased for Hexagon rather than having it in the County, SLC and here as well. The idea going through this is the same as we had for the Hexagon project; we purchased with the \$1.2 million servers and placed them in SLC911 and here, and the idea is to mirror that, but the first step was to get everything up and running, make sure we had connectivity and that everything was working well before we duplicate anything. Before this week, we had 3 CADs operating our public safety in the valley. After Tuesday's upgrade, we now have 2. The proposal working through the VCAD process itself is to migrate to 1 system. Once this happens, we will have the ability in both SLC and here to dispatch both police and fire. There are still issues; the CAD process itself pushing to a Versaterm RMS system but also having the ability to push to legacy systems if there are still agencies that choose to do this. As of last Sunday, John was still working with them to perfect the pricing and make sure it is still eligible for the grant. On Tuesday, we merged and went to version 7.4. Because in both Versaterm and Spillman we hadn't done an upgrade in almost 5 years, early this year, our Trustee Board authorized John to go ahead and upgrade both CAD systems so that we could continue to operate. The Spillman CAD was on an ancient server and they were no longer going to support it; it was critical we completed that first. This week, we are taking 2 steps to upgrade to the 7.4 and then in April we will upgrade to 7.6, which is the latest and greatest. The 7.6 will include mobile and other things. Versaterm has agreed to provide the mobile client for virtually nothing; something they volunteered to provide for us. The onboarding through 2020 is looking at Fire coming on all at the same time. Since we operate Fire with all agencies together, everyone will need to onboard at the same time. He displayed the time frame of May – September to get everything together. We won't go live until after the busy fire season. We have also identified all the interfaces, the next step we are working on, and making sure they are functioning. With the Police agencies for the CAD, he displayed the timeline for that. This is a 15-month project and it's about as quick as we can go; it is aggressive to get everything done. The back-office type of work needs to be done first; identifying call signs and equipment and how we will get things out over the air and utilize the software. This will take the greatest amount of time; it will be a dedication from all our agencies and VECC to assign people to get this stuff done. One of the frustrating things with Hexagon was that we did have subject matter experts, we were working on it, and sometimes they were working in silence. This was brought up several times and they promised to fix this. On a side note, the Trustees instructed John in September to start negotiating and begin putting all this together. They still must vote to sign the contract which is scheduled for the January meeting. There is still work to be done, but time is of the essence and we need to move as quickly as we possibly can. Version 7.6 is scheduled for mid-April. As the agencies in the County choose to onboard for their RMS, bringing them on to Versaterm or have that CAD push going forward, they will need to determine exactly where they are going. Chief Carr asked if anyone had any new information from West Valley, SSL or West Jordan. He believes everyone else is planning on going to the Versaterm RMS, but he asked if anyone knew anything more. Chief Jacobs mentioned that West Valley hasn't changed their stance. For those agencies that want to push their records, there is an interface that will be required, and there will be a cost associated. He asked agencies who haven't decided yet to let Beth and Shelly know what their decision will be. John displayed the 15-month timeline; everything will need to be populated. We will be setting up the Training Room with 8 computers and the anticipation is that individuals that need to come in and train can bring in their MDT's and we can enter in a call on the computer and they'll be able to see it and train on it. There are many people to train in order to meet the 15-month deadline.

#### **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR**

Chief Carr commented that Chief Jon Harris will be taking over as the Chairman and a Vice Chair from the police side will need to be elected. He asked if there was anyone who wants to volunteer for the position. Chief Colleen Jacob volunteered, and it was seconded by Chief Robby Russo. She was thanked for stepping up to handle this.

#### **INTRODUCTION OF NEW BUSINESS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

There was no new business to discuss at this meeting.

There was nothing more to discuss at this meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:26 a.m.