

**TOWN OF BOXBOROUGH, MA**  
**Public Safety Communication Committee (PSCC)**  
MINUTES - Wednesday, July 15, 2015 @ 7:30 PM

The initial meeting of the PSCC convened at 7:35 PM at Boxborough Town Hall, Hilberg Room. Present: Members Maria Neyland, John Rosamond, George Elenbaas, Frank Hubley, Malcolm Reid, Jeanne Steele Kangas and Eric Wong. Also: Police Chief Warren Ryder, Lt. Warren O'Brien, Fire Chief Randolph White, and resident Jim Bacharach.

Introductions were made, and contact information was given by PSCC members Mac Reid was chosen as Chairman. The Clerk position will be rotated among members; and Jeanne Steele Kangas volunteered to serve for this meeting.

The Open Meeting Law and the importance of understanding it and obeying it and completing the ethics training was discussed; and the Selectmen's 06/29/2015 charge to PSCC was distributed to members.

Police Chief Warren Ryder addressed the Committee, presented his understanding and reviewed the packet of information distributed to the public. 'Option A' is to have a single point transmitter/receiver at the highest elevation on the Hill Road ridge. The Town owns the Museum property and it's site is the most logical and least costly spot for a new 65' communications pole/antenna. It would provide the best radio coverage at lowest cost. Aesthetics is the down-side. A 45' pole/antenna is a lesser option than a 65' pole/antenna, but could work. Fire Chief Randy White stated that a stand-alone 65' pole is optimal. From the \$415,194 voted for equipment at 2014 Town Meeting, about \$100K has been spent on consoles, to patch the UHF to the VHF.

To connect the base station to the antenna requires a 1" thick coaxial cable which was brought to the meeting and shown by Frank Hubley. Some signal is lost if the antenna is over 150' from the base, but 200' might work. A pole/antenna at the Xmas tree on the Old Common, for example, would be over 500' from the present base station at the Museum.

'Option B' is to have a shorter 45' pole/antenna at the Museum, and connect the base station there via fiber optic cable to the Police Station central and from there via fiber optic cable to the Swanson Road tower. It would cost about \$50K to own the fiber link, and \$7K per month (\$84K/year) to lease with Light Tower Co., the vendor of the fiber optic cable, with a 3 year lease required.

Frank Hubley stated that we could move the transmitter. An outdoor cabinet (a mini-structure) would house it, and would have to be either on the ground or

mounted on a platform, which could be 36" off the ground; but it would have to be secured from possible auto or other accident or interference. The pole that at the Museum now could have the antennas mounted at an angle, to lessen visibility, and the top of the antenna could be as low as 45', which meets the current Zoning Bylaw. Discussion ensued about having a site view there to better understand the Chiefs' proposal to place the new antenna at the Museum.

Discussion ensued about other possible sites along the Hill Road ridge, including other towers already in the area, and where is the highest point in the area. Members viewed a 36" x 48" print of the USGS Topo Map that covers the Boxborough area.

Chief Ryder raised 'Option C': Digital, which has better penetration of buildings than analog, and has the potential for simulcast. However, all surrounding towns are on analog, and for mutual aid we need analog. If we change to digital, we'd lose that. The equipment we're buying is digital *capable*, but analog. The issue with going digital is affordability. Chief White has only 2 portables that are digital capable-the rest are analog. In discussion, Option C appears not to be an option.

What, if any, legislative mandate might be in process or anticipated for public safety communications was discussed. Hubley and the Chiefs stated that the current Federal standard is "P25", but it is not mandatory. We have to be P25 capable now, not have to meet it.

What are other towns doing to achieve single point transmission was discussed; and many have water towers where their antennas are located. DCR has a tower on Prospect Hill Road in Harvard, and it's 70' tall; but other users in the frequency range would conflict and permissions would be needed from the other users, making this possibility unrealistic.

Liberty Fields as a possible site was raised; and if there, a very tall monopole would be needed. Increasing the height of the present two towers was raised, but not feasible due to 'bleed over', where one radio communication interferes with another, rendering both unintelligible.

Next meeting: Friday, July 24 at 8 AM at the Museum, to tour possible sites for a radio antenna. Approved having a PVC pipe mounted temporarily to the present telephone pole at the Museum to show the basic look of a 45' antenna.

*Jeanne Steele Kangas*, Clerk Pro tem