

Regionalization Meeting Minutes

Date: February 8, 2012

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Attendees from Town of Ashby: Peter McMurray, Board of Selectmen Chairman, Doug Briggs, Town Administrator, Chris Haynes, Finance Committee Chairman, Bill Seymour, Jr., Fire Chief, Mike Bussell, Emergency Management Director, Ed Drew, Police Chief and Kathy Bezanson, PFSO. Bill Davis, Highway Superintendent (arrived late).

Attendees from Town of Ashburnham: Ed Vitone, BOS Chair, Larry Barrett, Police Chief and Bill Johnson, Advisory Board Chairman

Regionalization Discussion:

PM introduced himself and made sure everyone knows this is informational only meeting only and no decisions will be made tonight.

Ed Vitone was the facilitator for the meeting.. Rules he suggested were keeping the discussion of each item to a minimum. They will be using a charting method. There are no yes or no answers and all questions and comments are welcome.

All charts will be sent out electronically to both towns in a couple of days.

Why we might consider regionalization: State of the Ashby Building, Cost Savings, Operational Efficiency, Better Career Path and Training for Dispatchers, Technology Enhancement., Additional Grants, Better Working Conditions, Better Services for the taxpayers and Fuel Issues.

Barriers: Loyalty to employees, 2 different counties, no outside presence, loss of equipment and what happens if it fails, unknown if it would work, possible loss of jobs, local knowledge of each town, self rule, loss of control, network availability, land values in town, dispatch time. EV noted that once decision is made and regionalization is done State will not allow it to be reversed.

Cost Savings to Evaluate: Implementation costs, grants available for both towns, fees that will be assessed for use of Ashburnham's 911 system, cost for Ashby implementing grants, radio system, computers, CAD system not used in Ashby, what would be added cost, startup costs, transition costs, who will pay the costs, radio problems in Ashby (dead spots), EV also added dead spots to barriers. Severance packages for employees, network costs, is Ashburnham the best town to merge with?

Other Questions: Who is the best partner, how will we have security with buildings if vacant, clear municipal agreement on who and how, to serve municipal interests, transition of Ashby Dispatchers and seniority will be started with and schedules, liability of dispatch, Matrix System to work with and evaluation of other regionalized towns.

How to share leverage, Ashby needs to change highway frequencies, if so, what is cost, data integration and transition costs, will towns keep own data for each town or will it be combined, who will keep historical data, if regionalization is recommended how to present to taxpayers, if committee is formed both towns need to get same information.

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Each Attendee is allowed 3 votes for each category to give the group focus on what should be addressed first.

Voting:

Barriers:

1. Loyalty to current employees (Ashby Dispatchers and what will be done with them.)

Costs:

- 1 Implementation costs
2. Who Pays?
3. Costs and Fees and potential savings

All items that were most popular should be part of a Municipal Agreement.

How can it be addressed if regionalization doesn't work?

Key Dates and Schedules:

How to form a group: Suggestion of small group to form a committee to work on and report back to larger portion of officials, pertinent information in order to help with decision making. Type of fact finding committee should be formed. Should we go with a company to do the leg work for us? Police Chief from Ashburnham stated not a good idea. It had been tried and their numbers were way off. EV suggested that the most effective way would be for a representative to visit other towns that have already implemented regionalization, ie: (Townsend, Rutland, Oak ham, Hubbardston). State 911 System to come and talk with each Town. State 911 will be coming to Ashburnham tomorrow at 1:00 p.m. Chief Drew and possibly Kathy Bezanson will attend. (Ashburnham Municipal Building). Suggested that Templeton would be a good town to visit. Townsend also has a report that might be of help.

Chief Barrett was asked and he accepted the assignment of reporting on operation costs for the Town of Ashburnham with regionalization.

Doug Briggs will work on cost savings and implementations for both towns.

Ed Vitone will work on drafting examples of Municipal Agreements.

Chief Barrett feels time frames will be an obstacle.

Chief Drew is concerned about time frames.

Ed Vitone states that this has to be perfect for both towns or it won't work.

PM suggested that we get the Senators and Representatives involved.

Grant is available for implantation but, deadline is March 16th. Can we get an extension or will it be available next year? May be able to get more information tomorrow at 911 System meeting in Ashburnham.

Bill Johnson commented on Ashby and Ashburnham being only towns in state sharing a Town Administrator and how that could impact help with costs.

Townpeople will be kept informed of progress and information.

Next Meeting of Regionalization is scheduled for Wednesday, February 22, 2012 at 4:30 p.m. at the Ashburnham Municipal Building.

Meeting ended at 8:45 p.m.