

## ANALYSIS OF HARTFORD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A review was conducted of Resolution No. 3397 passed by the Hartford City Council on October 28, 2014 entitled A Resolution To Improve Emergency Response Time For E911 Calls.

Preliminary research was conducted regarding the facts and circumstances surrounding other Wisconsin agencies that have made a similar request to have wireless 911 calls routed to their agencies from the designated primary county PSAP, most notably the cities of Middleton in Dane County, the City of Muskego in Waukesha County and the City of Franklin in Milwaukee County. Preliminary contacts were made with representatives of each county and each of the police agencies to obtain copies of the actual studies performed.

In the presentation to the City Council on the resolution, there are references made to two recent wireless 911 studies conducted by the cities of Middleton and Mukwonago to support the resolution. It is also stated that Middleton and the Village of Franklin participated in the study recommended in the Hartford resolution and had their wireless 911 calls routed based on the study results.

There was no study located that was conducted by the Village of Mukwonago or its police department. The assumption is that the Administrator was referring to a *Muskego* Police Department study which is referenced in the media.

A request was made to the Hartford Police Department to forward to the Sheriff's Office any studies which were referenced in the presentation to the City Council upon which the resolution was based. No study information from Mukwonago, Middleton or Franklin was provided by Hartford PD.

Hartford PD did forward one document from Muskego and a set of two documents from Middleton.

### **Muskego**

The Muskego document was a copy of Resolution 027-2012 passed by the City of Muskego. Within that resolution, in one short paragraph, it mentions a study completed by the Muskego Police Department over a six month period between January - June 2011 in which it alleged that there was a 72 second delay in transferring wireless 911 calls from the primary consolidated dispatch center in Waukesha County to their city's dispatch center. A copy of the study or its results is not attached to the document provided by Hartford PD.

Chief Craig Moser of Muskego Police Department was contacted. He has advised that there was never a formal study performed. The former Chief of Police had gathered records, analyzed them and determined that the 72 second delay existed. This study is alluded to in several media reports from the time of the dispute and in documents found on the internet that were submitted by Muskego officials over a several year period.

The current Muskego Chief has no record of the study or the research notes. This would suggest that the City of Hartford never actually examined any study completed by the City of Muskego,

nor can they attest to the accuracy or validity of the data, or the relevance of its informal findings to their community.

Chief Moser further advised that the dispute ended without any resolution. The city determined that the legal cost involved in pursuing the matter further was prohibitive. To our knowledge, Muskego was not granted its wireless 911 calls.

The dispatch center has a minimum staffing of 1 dispatcher. There are a total of 8 people qualified to dispatch: some are dispatchers and others are clerk/dispatchers that fill in when a full time dispatcher is off. If there are busy times, if a clerk is available, they help out in the dispatch center, but two dispatchers are not scheduled to work at any one time. Population of Muskego is 24,555.

### **Middleton**

The second set of documents received from Hartford PD consisted of data from a study conducted by the Middleton Police Department and Dane County. This data was collected between December 2006 and September 2007. A copy of the study is not attached to the documents provided by Hartford PD. Looking at documents available on the internet, it was confirmed that some type of study is being referenced to. The data breaks down the origin of calls in specific tower sectors that were in dispute between Middleton and Dane County. The statistics suggest that most 911 calls originated in Middleton.

Captain Steve Britt of the Middleton Police Department was contacted and referred this inquiry to his dispatch supervisor Wendy McKnight. She forwarded the same statistics that were received from Hartford PD, as well as a copy of the agreement between Middleton and Dane County. She also provided some spreadsheets that she had compiled to study the routing of 911 calls. She indicated that she compiled the statistics, but is uncertain whether or not any formal summary was prepared by her supervisors. It does appear that Middleton is receiving some wireless 911 calls based on the results of the testing method specified in the Hartford resolution. As was the case with the Muskego study, it is not believed that the city of Hartford actually examined any study completed by the City of Middleton and they cannot attest to the accuracy or validity of the study data, or the relevance of its findings to their community.

What is clear is that the resolution passed by the Hartford City Council is based not on any resolution passed by a community, rather its language is copied almost verbatim from an *agreement* that was struck between the Dane County Executive at the time and the Mayor of Middleton. It was confirmed with Dane County that the agreement was signed in 2006 and was entitled *Agreement Between The City Of Middleton And County Of Dane For Testing Of Wireless Phase I And II Enhanced 911 Service*. This document was also found on the internet.

Information was obtained from Rich McVicar, a manager at the Dane County Communications Center. The dispute over wireless 911 call routing had been ongoing for years with no resolution. The City of Middleton petitioned the FCC to order the rerouting of 911 calls. They were denied. They attempted to force the cell phone carriers to reroute the calls and were denied. Eventually, the dispute wound up in some type of mediation between the city and county, which also failed. In 2006, the Dane County Executive at the time then struck the agreement with the Mayor of Middleton to break the log jam after the mediation talks were unsuccessful. It is believed that

this agreement was not passed through county committees or the County Board. Mr. McVicar states that some calls were eventually routed to Middleton, but the extent or significance of the rerouting is unknown.

The Middleton dispatch center has a minimum staffing of 1 dispatcher. There are 5 full time and 4 part time dispatchers. There is one position that is a half time dispatcher / half time dispatch supervisor. During busy parts of the day, they schedule two dispatchers but will drop to one if someone is off. Population of Middleton is 17,589.

## **Franklin**

Franklin Police Department was contacted and Communications Supervisor Cindy Manke provided information. The City of Franklin is in Milwaukee County. In mid-2012, Franklin requested that wireless 911 calls be rerouted from Milwaukee County to their city. The process was completed around early 2013.

The request came about because of specific problems that were identified in the handling of 911 calls transferred from Milwaukee County. Franklin began noticing significant delays in transfers. She found that 911 hang up calls were transferred quickly by Milwaukee County, but there was a delay of 3-9 minutes for abandoned 911 calls to be transferred. The case that sparked action was a fire located on Forest Hill Ave. in Franklin that was mishandled by Milwaukee County. Apparently a fire was also occurring on Forest Home Ave. and the Milwaukee County dispatchers assumed they were the same fire and did not transfer the call to Franklin. She also determined that Milwaukee County was mistakenly sending transfers to Franklin that should have been sent to other municipalities in the area.

As a result, Ms. Manke asked for call information from Milwaukee via an open records request. The request was for a total of about 12 specific calls over a 3-4 month period. Ms. Manke stated that she performed the research but it was very limited and specific. There was no comprehensive study conducted by Franklin PD.

Franklin has 4 cell towers delivering 911 calls to the city; two are in the city and two are bordering the city. She obtained sector information from the cell carriers and looked at which sectors covered primarily the city. In their situation, there was little gray area in what the sectors covered. Individual call statistics for each sector were not examined. She drafted a resolution, obtained written consent from the carriers and then sent a request to Milwaukee County. To her surprise, Milwaukee County had no objections and agreed to the rerouting of wireless 911 calls from the sectors she selected. There was no dispute involved.

Franklin PD staffs its dispatch center with a minimum of two dispatchers. They have 14 full time dispatchers on staff. She indicated that they occasionally receive calls for the county which they transfer. She was not aware of any other smaller municipal agencies in the metro area that were receiving their wireless 911 calls. Population of Franklin is 36,310.

## **Conclusions**

- Muskego PD does not receive its wireless 911 calls from Waukesha County.
- Middleton PD receives some wireless 911 calls from Dane County after an agreement was signed between the then County Executive and the Mayor of Middleton.
- Franklin PD receives some wireless 911 calls from Milwaukee County after specific problems were identified with Milwaukee County's dispatch center and the county posed no objection to the rerouting of calls.
- No comprehensive studies of wireless 911 calls and routing were conducted by these agencies, nor would Hartford have reviewed any formal studies.
- The City of Hartford Resolution No. 3397 is based entirely on technical language lifted from the agreement between the then Dane County Executive and the Mayor of Middleton signed in 2006. Hartford arbitrarily changed the call percentage that determines routing decisions from 75% used by Middleton and Dane County to 67%.
- The documents and data examined by the City of Hartford pertaining to wireless 911 call delays are specific to transfer problems alleged by the cities of Muskego, Middleton and Franklin and are not specific to the City of Hartford or the Washington County 911 system.
- At the time the Hartford resolution was passed unanimously by the Common Council, the city of Hartford had not conducted any in-depth study or research into, nor specifically identified any problems with the existing wireless 911 delivery system to residents of their city or to communities within Washington County. Any lack of effectiveness of the existing wireless 911 service in Washington County by the City of Hartford was purely speculative.
- The City of Hartford has not pursued the identical resolution with Dodge County which is in their emergency response area and from which wireless 911 calls would also originate.
- The City of Hartford has not sought input or consensus from the surrounding communities which are directly impacted by any changes to the Washington County wireless 911 delivery system.

Significant changes to our wireless 911 delivery system should be founded on well researched, thoroughly documented, factual and relevant information. By bypassing even the most minimal ground work completed by these other agencies, Hartford has not laid the foundation to suggest, much less demand changes be made to the wireless 911 delivery system in Washington County.

The Hartford resolution is a solution that is in search of a problem.

No changes to our wireless 911 delivery system should be based on the city of Hartford resolution.