

Responses to Resident 1 Questions  
January 2, 2023

Hopkinton has gone live with a public email that allows the residents to ask questions regarding the proposed RECC. I am asking for assistance in answering the following questions from a resident, please respond directly back to me.

1. Dispatchers losing jobs.

According to the study the four towns have 24 full-time dispatchers plus part-timers. The model for the RECC shows 15 full-time dispatchers.

**Question: Will there be layoffs for the current dispatchers? If not, where will they work?**

***Answer: The question is based on information provided in a feasibility study. The structure and staffing of the proposed RECC have not been determined yet.***

The Final Feasibility Report stated that there would be fifteen (15) full-time dispatchers and three (3) working supervisors. All of the full-time dispatchers would have an opportunity to be hired for those (18) positions. The hiring process would be designed by the Board of the Regional Dispatch District once it is established. From prior experience of going through a similar process of a standalone PSAP to a Regional Emergency Communications Center (RECC), we have seen towns hire certain dispatchers for administrative duties where there is an identified need.

2. Operating Platform

Currently Hopkinton Police/Fire are using Pro Phoenix as their operating platform. The three other towns in the RECC study use IMC.

**Question: Can the RECC use two different operating platforms? If not, which one will be used?**

***Answer: An agreement will have to be reached to determine the software. There is software that can interface with other CAD programs, including ProPhoenix.***

The Operations Committee of the RECC will make a decision as to the process to purchase the CAD/RMS software capable of providing the service to a regional entity. This will be based upon the requirements that the committee establishes and the ability to meet state criteria.

3. Employer

**Question: Will the dispatchers no longer be employed by the town of Hopkinton and be employed by the Commonwealth?**

***Answer: The governance of the RECC is unknown at this time.***

The personnel will be employees of the Regional Emergency Communications District, often referred to as a Dispatch District.

4. Renovation of the RECC

**Question: Who will pay for the renovations of the RECC building?**

*Answer: The State 911 Department Development Grant is available to pay for renovations. The Development Grant is a competitive grant and the applications to be awarded funding are selected by the State 911 Department based on a "tiered level".*

*Any renovations of the site selected to be the RECCC will be paid for by the State 911 Development Grant Program.*

*Below is the language from the Development Grants as to what is paid for.*

#### *Regional Development Grants*

*Grant funds may be used by grantees only for the permissible categories of use listed within the specific categories set forth below:*

- Associated with the provision of enhanced 911 service; and*
- Approved by the State 911 Department.*

*Funds may be used for clerical, administrative, or other costs associated with administration of the Program, provided that funds may not exceed one percent (1%) of the total amount awarded to the Grantee. The services shall be specifically identified with the project, and the Grantee shall provide detailed documentation, to the satisfaction of the State 911 Department, supporting the services (including, without limitation, the time and dollar amount of the services).*

*The State 911 Department will allow funding for the purchase or lease of equipment, allowable construction items, and allowable structural improvement items and for debt service on equipment, allowable construction items, and allowable structural improvement items, including without limitation, principal and interest payments on loans, notes, and bonds. The State 911 Department will allow grantees to assign lease, debt service, and/or incremental purchase costs to this grant. However, all funding requested under this grant program shall be for goods and/or services received. Funding will not be disbursed for obligations made without receipt of goods/services. The State 911 Department makes no guarantee of funding from year to year and does not assume any obligation, as guarantor or otherwise, under any purchase, lease, or debt instrument.*

*All technology or telecommunications related goods or services must be compliant with applicable laws, rules, regulations, and standards.*

#### *Security Measures Grants*

*Existing and proposed regional PSAPs and RECCs are eligible to apply for funds for the following allowable items within the transition expenses category:*

- Security measures (such as remote cameras, remote printers, and security doors); and*
- One-time costs associated with the installation of such security measures.*

#### *Equipment Grants*

*Existing and proposed regional PSAPs, regional secondary PSAPs, RECCs, and the Northampton wireless state police PSAP are eligible to apply for funds for equipment associated with the provision of enhanced 911 service that is not directly provided by the State 911 Department and/or equipment to be used to foster the development and startup of regional PSAPs, regional secondary PSAPs, and RECCs or the expansion or upgrade of existing regional PSAPs and/or regional secondary PSAPs.*

*Allowable items to be funded through this grant include, but are not limited to:*

- *Radio systems and consoles;*
- *Computer-aided dispatch;*
- *Records management systems;*
- *Fire alarm receiving and alerting equipment; and*
- *Consultant services in support of equipment.*

*All radio systems shall comply with EOPSS Statewide Inter-Operability Emergency Communications (SIEC).*

*Funds for radio systems may be used to defray the costs associated with the acquisition of radio systems used for police, fire, emergency medical services, and/or emergency management communications.*

*In FY21, the State 911 Commission approved a new criterion for the Transition Award. Below is a chart that explains that Award.*

<i>State 911 Department – Development Grant Program FY22</i>	
<i>Transition Award</i>	
<i>Transition award, payable to the entity that operates a regional PSAP or RECC on behalf of the participants, for each PSAP that is decommissioned on or after July 1, 2018, and becomes operational as a participant in such regional PSAP or RECC, in the amount that represents the greater of:</i>	
<i>the last allocation for the decommissioned PSAP under the State 911 Department Support Grant; or the amount of the assessment or charge allocated to such PSAP for the current fiscal year under the terms of the signed inter-municipal agreement or other equivalent agreement governing the operations of the regional PSAP or RECC.</i>	
<i>Such transition award(s) shall be credited against the obligation of the decommissioned PSAP(s) by the grantee. A decommissioned PSAP may be provided with the credit three (3) times to be applied for in three (3) different grant cycles, or two (2) times to be applied for in two (2) different grant cycles if a transition award was already applied for and awarded in the FY 2020 grant cycle pursuant to grant guidelines in effect at that time.</i>	
<i>After applying for and being awarded a transition award a total of three (3) times, a decommissioned PSAP may be provided with a credit an additional two (2) times to be applied for in two (2) different grant cycles, but the award will be limited the first time to fifty percent (50%) of the greater of:</i>	
<i>the last allocation for the decommissioned PSAP under the State 911 Department Support Grant; or the amount of the assessment or charge allocated to such PSAP for the current fiscal year under the terms of the signed inter-municipal agreement or other equivalent agreement governing the operations of the regional PSAP or RECC, and limited for the second time to 25% of the greater of the last allocation for the decommissioned PSAP under the State 911 Department</i>	

**State 911 Department – Development Grant Program FY22**

**Transition Award**

*port Grant; or ii) the amount of the assessment or charge allocated to such PSAP for the current fiscal year under the terms of the signed inter-municipal agreement or other equivalent agreement governing the operations of the regional PSAP or RECC.*

*Documentation that such credit has been granted in the form of a written acknowledgment from the decommissioned PSAP shall be required prior to reimbursement. ii) the amount of the assessment or charge allocated to such PSAP for the current fiscal year under the terms of the signed inter-municipal agreement or other equivalent agreement governing the operations of the regional PSAP or RECC.*

*Documentation that such credit has been granted in the form of a written acknowledgment from the decommissioned PSAP shall be required prior to reimbursement.*

According to the committee set up to look into potential uses of the Center School it would cost multi millions of dollars to get the Center School up to date to be functionally used.

**Question: Does the state pay for ALL the costs of the renovations?**

*Answer: The Center School Re-use Advisory Group looked into continuing municipal uses at Center School. This is a far larger scope of work than locating a RECC in a portion of the Center School Building.*

5. Upgrades to the Town of Hopkinton

**Question: What will the state replace for the town as far as equipment goes and what would be the time frame?**

- A) New Radio System \$1,250,000
- B) 49 Mobile radios
- C) 96 portables

*Answer: The Development Grant Program will provide the funds for the procurement of radios for the RECC and for the community public safety agencies and to achieve interoperability with the RECC and the member communities. See above use of Development Grant Funds.*

The Chief mentioned at the last Selectboard meeting the radio system is not all 30 years old and has had components replaced.

**Question: Does and would the entire Radio System be replaced by the state if Hopkinton joins the RECC?**

*Answer: We do not know , for now.*

6. Recurring and Non-recurring costs

The \$480,996.63 in recurring costs appears to be the saving from what Hopkinton currently is paying for dispatchers minus what the state will pay. (\$710,008.00 - \$233,011.37).

**Question: Is the state committed to paying 52.94% towards the RECC budget?**

***Answer: The estimate provided by the State 911 Department for the Support and Incentive Grants would continue at the amount provided for the life of the grant. Thereafter, the RECC will have to apply for grant renewal.***

#### **7. Budget**

The outline of the projected FY23 budget shows a budget of \$2,273,260.00. 90.59% of that budget (2,059,260.00) will be going to salaries and benefits. That leaves 9.41% (\$214,000) for maintenance/Admin.

**Question: The budget lists \$54,000 for Technology/IT and Radios. Please explain what this is.**

***Answer: Maintenance and emergency procurement of equipment during the year.***

**Question: Please explain the Maintenance cost? Is that for the upkeep of the technology?**

***Answer: The Maintenance cost is for the upkeep of the equipment generally though maintenance agreements with vendors that also provide a specific response time.***

#### **8. Commitment from the State**

**Question: What is the financial commitment from the state as far as funding for the RECC? Can their funding go down and need to be picked up by the towns?**

***Answer: The State 911 Department has never gone down on their Support and Incentive funds since it was first established. The State 911 Grant applications clearly state that funding is not guaranteed from year to year, that being said for ten, plus, years the State 911 Dept. has offered the grant programs funding has not decreased or ceased.***

**Question: If the state will be replacing the Radio system, mobile radios, and portables what else will Hopkinton be benefiting from the state?**

***Answer: See above use of Development Grant Funds. The State 911 Department will be providing annually Support and Incentive funds that amount to \$1,203,419.00 that currently amounts to 52.94% of the total budget of the RECC.***

**Question: What will be the obligations financially from the Town if they join the RECC?**

***Answer: Hopkinton would pay their share of the cost of operating the RECC taking into account the grants applied for and awarded.***

**Question: Will Hopkinton have to help fund the renovation and building of the RECC in any manner?**

***Answer: No. The State 911 Department pays for the renovations Through their Regional Development Grants.***

#### **9. Commitment from Hopkinton**

Question: If Hopkinton joins this RECC is Hopkinton bound to stay in it or can Hopkinton decide to leave?

*Answer: The Governance Agreement developed between the four communities will define the duration of the agreement. The State 911 Department does not encourage communities to leave a RECC and will identify steps to take prior to coming to that action.*

Question: What is the process if Hopkinton decides to leave the RECC?

*Answer: This will be Identified in the Governance Agreement and guidance from the State 911 Department.*

Question: Is there a time frame Hopkinton is expected to stay in the RECC?

*Answer: See above answers.*

Question: If Hopkinton leaves the RECC after the state pays for the new radio system, mobile radios and portables will Hopkinton be obliged to pay the state back?

*Answer: The State 911 Department will not encourage any community from leaving the RECC after making substantial investments in the towns radio infrastructure.*

Question: If Hopkinton joins the RECC will the 911 system be taken out of Hopkinton?

*Answer: Yes the 911 System will be transferred to the RECC. The 911 system is owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.*

Question: If Hopkinton then leaves the RECC will the 911 system be returned to Hopkinton?

*Answer: This can only be answered by the rationale for Hopkinton leaving the RECC and the steps that the State 911 Department may establish for this process.*

Question: If the 911 system is not returned please explain how the 911 system would work for the residents of Hopkinton.

*Answer: The State 911 Department would ensure that the 911 lines are connected to an established RECC or State 911 Center. The PSAP will need to work with another agency, usually via a Memorandum of Understanding, for that agency to field their 911 calls.*

Further, All of the above answers can not be truly answered until the Intermunicipal Agreement (IMA) is executed. That being said, in IMAs reviewed from functioning RECCs the general practice is there is a financial cost to exit the RECC after the Agreement (IMA) is signed. Most of the cost is relating to reimbursement to the state for the cost of developing the RECC. Those costs can vary greatly depending on what upgrades and improvements that Hopkinton would receive out of the process.

10. Dispatch staffing

According to the study there will be 15 full-time dispatchers hired. The proposed Work Schedule has 5 dispatchers assigned to the day shift, 6 assigned to the evening shift and 4 assigned to the mid shift. There will be a supervisor assigned to each shift. The graphic displayed in the study is confusing and not clear as far as the actual staffing. The Work Schedule shows that a minimum of 2 dispatchers can work the day and mid shifts and a minimum of 3 dispatchers can work evening shifts. The working supervisor will count towards the minimum staffing.

**Question: Currently Hopkinton, Southboro and Westboro have 2 dispatchers working per shift and Grafton has 1. That is 7 dispatchers working to cover the 4 towns in the study. The proposed staffing could reduce that staffing from 7 to 2. What would be the normal staffing for each shift?**

*Answer: The final staffing and structure of the RECC has not been determined yet. The feasibility report assumes that the staffing of the Day and Evening shifts would provide for four dispatchers working with one working supervisor for a total of five for four out of six working days. The other two days would provide for four dispatchers. The Midnight shift would have two or three dispatchers and one working supervisor for four out of six working days. The other two days would provide for three dispatchers. The shift schedule is based upon a four and two schedule.*

**Question: What would be the protocol for filling open dispatch shift shifts?**

*Answer: The RECC will develop a protocol for filling shifts.*

#### 11. Autonomy

**Question: Would Hopkinton give up their Autonomy for the dispatching services for Hopkinton and just have one of four voices?**

*Answer: This will be defined in the governance structure. Based on existing RECCs, Hopkinton could have one vote for the Administration Board and two (each Police and Fire Chief or their designee) on the Operations Committee*

#### 12: Timing

**Question: Are there any time restraints in this study?**

*Answer: Overall, participating towns will determine the timelines. The RECC will be built for the number of communities that sign the Governance Agreement.*

**Question: Can the town slow things down and do more research and get more information before we decide?**

*Answer: If Hopkinton does not join now can Hopkinton join in the future? At a later date, Hopkinton can join if there is space at the RECC at the time of the request and the Board approves the town to join the RECC.*

13. Towns that dropped out

The towns of Hudson and Northborough and the City of Marlborough were originally in this study to join the RECC. They have since dropped out.

**Question: Would you state the reasons those communities dropped out?**

*Answer: There were no reasons given. They chose not to join at this time.*

14. Other RECC that failed

There have been RECC that have failed including our neighbors in Upton, Mendon, and Hopedale.

**Question: Have you contacted those communities to see why the RECC failed them?**

*Answer: Those communities have joined the Metacomet Regional Emergency Communications Center.*

**Question: If you haven't, do you plan on contacting them?**

*Answer: The RECC was Mendon, Millville and Hopedale which was hosted by Mendon. Hopedale left the RECC years before Mendon and Millville chose to join METACommet RECC. Hopedale continues to provide its own dispatch for police and fire.*