



MINUTES OF LEGISLATIVE AND ORDINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
WESTFIELD, MA
TELECONFERENCE
JUNE 9, 2021 at 5:00 PM



Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §20, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the City of Westfield **Legislative and Ordinance Committee** will be conducted via remote participation. Specific information can be found on the City of Westfield website at www.cityofwestfield.org. For this meeting, members of the public who wish to listen to the meeting may do so by tuning into Channel 15 or online at westfieldtv.org. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post on the City's website an audio recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.

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<https://cityofwestfield-org.zoom.us/j/88494746199?pwd=SkVsbDZ0VGJOSXc5M21xTFRNMnRRUT09>

Meeting ID: 884 9474 6199

Passcode: i6Qk6#xq

Dial: 1 646 558 8656

Meeting ID: 884 9474 6199

Passcode: 82062677

1. The meeting was called to order by Councilor Onyski at 5:00 PM.
2. Councilor Onyski called the Roll. The following committee members were present: Chair, William Onyski, James Adams and Michael Burns.
3. Councilor Onyski opened the meeting for public participation. There was no one present to speak.
4. Upon Motion of Councilor Adams, it was VOTED: That the L&O Minutes of June 2, 2021 meeting be accepted.
Motion seconded by Councilor Burns
Approved by Roll Call 3-0
5. Upon motion of Councilor Burns, it was

VOTED: that the Resolution authorizing an intermunicipal agreement with the Town of Southwick for dispatch services REMAIN IN COMMITTEE.

The vote on the foregoing was as follows:

James Adams	Yes
Michael Burns	Yes
William Onyski	Yes

Prior to the vote, Councilor Onyski informed the Committee that Westfield and Southwick were looking to share Dispatch Services for Police and Fire which would be held in Westfield, forming a Regional Dispatch Center. The Public Safety Communications Administrator, Nina Barszcz, who heads Dispatch, has been working on this for a while. She is unable to attend tonight but the committee will discuss what they can and follow up with meetings next week. If this can be finalized, it can potentially be voted on at the City Council meeting on June 17th which would allow the Mayor and Southwick to sign the agreement, freeing up money in the form of state grants. Chief Administrative Officer Karl Stinehart and Selectman Douglas Moglin were present from Southwick.

Councilor Onyski asked if anyone from Westfield or Southwick would like to make a statement. Mr. Stinehart stated Southwick started this process five or six years ago and this was their 4th review of doing a regional dispatch. This situation is much further along and the grants have been filed by Mrs. Barszcz. Southwick also has the same parallel process, ongoing with West-Comm. Southwick wants to conclude these proceedings and emerge with an agreement in principle and have it signed. Westfield City Solicitor Shanna Read and Mrs. Barszcz have been working with Southwick Attorney Ben Coyle on different drafts and the latest draft really embodies a regional approach. Attorney Reed informed the committee that an Intermunicipal Agreement (IMA) is different from full regionalization and that along with Attorney Coyle, they worked out an agreement that met both communities' needs without violating CBAs. There are specific questions for Mrs. Barszcz on radios and technology but the IMA details have been worked out. City Council's approval is required under Chapter 40, Section A, to give the Mayor authorization to sign. Mr. Moglin thanked the Police Chiefs, Fire Chiefs, Mayor Humason, Attorney Reed and Mrs. Barszcz for coming together to work on this. He informed the committee that Southwick and Westfield have tried this before and it's never come to fruition. In talking with Attorney Reed and the state, they learned there was a big difference between an IMA and regionalization. He noted that Mrs. Barszcz was a fantastic help with understanding and working through issues, mostly blocking and tackling operations. He credited both attorneys for coming up with an IMA that was more of a partnership, and thanked Councilor Onyski and everyone else who helped us move this project along.

Councilor Onyski asked Attorney Reed if she would give a synopsis of the IMA for the committee. Attorney Reed stated that Westfield would not be changing location or staffing but taking on the dispatch calls for Southwick. The comments remaining after the last iteration are specifically related to the dispatch piece and were left to ensure they are worded correctly. She reiterated what Mr. Moglin had said about the importance of making sure this was written so both communities had a seat at the table. The term of the IMA is for 3 years and can be extended by written agreement of the parties for 3 additional 2 year terms, for a total of 9 years.

At the end of that, Southwick and Westfield could enter another IMA or, if interested, move towards full regionalization. Mrs. Barszcz would be able to speak more about duties and responsibilities between the communities at the next meeting Attorney Reed highlighted that the hardest part to work out in an IMA is the executive board. Both the Police and Fire Chiefs as well as the Chief Executive Officer or their designee and Mrs. Barszcz will be on the Executive Board. The role of the Executive Board is to review the performance of the center, ensuring everyone is getting the service they need, improvements etc. The Costs are anticipated to be covered by the grant. Mrs. Barszcz will apply for the grant on behalf of Southwick each year. For the first 3 years the State 9-1-1 grant would cover the full cost for Southwick, the fourth year it would cover 50% and the fifth year it would cover 25%. Following that, the costs would be covered by Southwick. Mr. Moglin noted that there was discussion about population changes and whether shares put in by communities would fluctuate. Both parties agreed Southwick would be in the agreement for at least \$100,000, regardless of population or number of involved communities. Attorney Reed echoed that the \$100,000 was the value of the service. Stinehart pointed out that Westfield may have other municipalities reaching out in the future as the State moves towards Regionalization. Attorney Reed applauded Mrs. Barszcz and the Town of Southwick for getting this accomplished. She stated the current IMA is a good working document and should be finalized when you L&O meets again.

Councilor Onyski asked what the 2.17 million dollar grant covers. Mr. Stinehart offered to send a copy of the application Mrs. Barszcz filed with the State to the Councilors. He explained that the funding speaks to the Capital needs Westfield requires and all of the Capital needs Southwick requires to be successfully integrated into the program. IMA's allow parties to come together and allow for funding and types of benefits to be captured that would not be obtainable as a stand alone community. Mr. Moglin stated that over a million dollars of this grant is a radio system for Southwick. Their current equipment was at its functional end of life. A key point, when they started talking about this, was this is going to be a huge game of musical chairs. The cities and towns with stand alone dispatch, are not going to get E911 funding in 10+ years. Westfield is in a better place as a region. If we move forward to create a true Region like West Comm versus an IMA, the money is advantageous for Westfield. Councilor Adams agreed there were financial gains for both Westfield and Southwick. He had spoken with someone from the State who assured him this funding from the State will be available for a long time. This process usually takes 6 months and has been done in 3 months. He credited everyone involved for being able to get it done so quickly. Mr. Moglin agreed with Councilor Adams. He stated the E911 funding mechanism was done legislatively and because of that, it would take an act of legislation to take it away. This grant is important for public safety and they are incentivizing regional dispatch through this funding mechanism and to continue to fund technological improvements at regions such as texting 9-1-1 and face-timing 9-1-1. They are forecasting that the regions are going to get that capability because the funding comes from the State. They will eventually tell the single seats there isn't any money. He noted that Southwick and Westfield Police and Fire do a lot of mutual aid and support each other on many fronts so to work on dispatch was natural. Mr. Stinehart added that there are dozens of regional centers in the Eastern and Central parts of Massachusetts and there are going to be more in Western Massachusetts and it is the trend for many different types of services.

Councilor Onyski agreed that an Intermunicipal Agreement is the way to go. It appears the 2.1 million dollars will cover equipment needs for Southwick and the communication needs between the two communities. He asked if there was still a concern about having someone at the Southwick station to answer questions. Mr. Moglin explained to the committee that Southwick had gone down this path with another entity and they had a play book of what Southwick would need in the event of certain situations. These situations were discussed with Mrs. Barszcz and are detailed in the grant, not focused on in the IMA, except for the coverage of the station in the event of a Double Communications failure. Southwick will be losing dispatch capability and certification when they join the region so a qualified, certified dispatcher will need to be stationed in Southwick until everything is back to normal. There was a lot of discussion with Mrs. Barszcz and State 9-1-1 to make sure Southwick was getting all the accommodations they would have gotten if they had gone with someone else. Currently, Southwick is manned by a dispatcher at any hour. They need to technologically accommodate someone showing up. It's in the grant process, on the operational side and the Executive Board will be able to oversee that. Little things as far as specific details still need to be ironed out. Councilor Onyski noted there was a lot of work to make this fully operational and asked if there was a set start date for the IMA. Attorney Reed explained that there is a blank spot in the last "Whereas" clause, on page 2 of the agreement because it has to be approved by the State 9-1-1 Department. Mr. Moglin explained that they're at the tail end of the grant cycle. Southwick has 2 letters of attestation out there and has been talking to the State. Southwick has budgeted this year to remain status quo for FY '22 which doesn't mean they wouldn't start with this but it's triggered by the start of the grant. The communities can execute the IMA and set a date afterwards. Mr. Moglin stated he was reluctant to withdraw anything from West Comm until all the interest with Westfield was in place. He is hoping we can come out of this with an executed IMA, and then be able to take down the other letter of attestation and notify the State. Mr. Stinehart followed up stating it will take a while to execute; the signed document would need to be submitted, money would need to be granted, time would be needed for the procurement process, technical issues etc. Councilor Onyski confirmed that the actual agreement would be in place for a while before Westfield started answering calls for Southwick, noting they have to work on communication, training and facilities. Councilor Burns thanked everyone for their time and hard work on this project. He asked the group about the time sensitivity of this because the contact from the State hinted at their last meeting that this was time sensitive. Mr. Moglin stated he also believed it was time sensitive but that both Southwick and Mrs. Barszcz have been communicating with the State constantly to let them know where they are in the process. He is hopeful they can start implementation within this fiscal year and if it rolls into the next grant cycle, it was fair trade to make sure it was done correctly. Mr. Stinehart noted they also have to address language in collective bargaining and that there may be reconfiguration of that service. Councilor Onyski informed the committee that they will meet again next week and a recommendation from L&O will be given to the full Council on June 17th. Best case, if we approve for the Mayor to sign the agreement, we could get the Mayor to sign it for a day or two. Mr. Stinehart informed the committee that they carry this on their agenda under old business and the board is authorized to sign it. Mr. Moglin stated they would call a special meeting of the Board of the Selectman to vote to execute the agreement and that he has been designated by the Selectboard as the designee for this and Southwick is going to recommend they execute it based on what they've negotiated

here. Councilor Onyski shared that although they're not on the call, the Chiefs have given their full support and have been working with Mrs. Barszcz and trust her judgement. Mr. Stinehart echoed the same for Southwick.

Councilor Onyski commented on how helpful this meeting was. Councilor Adams echoed what Councilor Burns said about the State mentioning the importance of moving quickly at the last meeting they attended. He said Mrs. Barszcz is very optimistic and deserves credit for all she's done to learn this process. He assured Southwick that she knows dispatch. He reflected on years ago when L&O was funding the Dispatch Center and how this was the intent. He expressed his excitement on another collaboration with Southick and thanked everyone for their hard work. Attorney Reed stated that Mrs. Barszcz is back on Friday and they will go through operational changes that she had discussed with Mr. Coyle. Councilor Onyski went over the timeline and set an L&O meeting for Tuesday, June 15th at 5:00PM. Councilor Adams asked for the breakdown of the grants through the next couple of years to present to the full Council. Attorney Reed said she would get the documents from Mrs. Barszcz. Councilor Onyski thanked Mr. Stinehart and Mr. Moglin for joining them. All parties expressed their excitement for a long and successful partnership.

At 5:45 PM, and upon motion of Councilor Adams, it was VOTED to ADJOURN.

The vote on the foregoing was as follows:

Michael Burns	Yes
James Adams	Yes
William Onyski	Yes

Respectfully submitted,
Kaitlyn Bruce, Scribe for the Legislative and Ordinance Subcommittee

