

# Memorandum

To: Mayor Royalty  
From: Larry Green  
Date: August 8, 2016  
Re: Central Dispatch

The City Council has indicated their desire to stay together with the County for dispatch, and asked the City Attorney to negotiate a new Inter local agreement that protects the City's financial interests and our interest in having some meaningful control over the dispatch service for our Police and Fire Departments. The Nelson County Fiscal Court proposed an Inter local agreement that is similar to the existing agreement, where they keep control of the Dispatch Board, and tax the City taxpayers twice for their dispatch services.

Tim Butler, the City Attorney wrote an agreement that protects the City's interests, and was agreed to by the City Council. It:

- Provides for the City to pay no more than it would pay for dispatch through the Kentucky State Police.
- Gives the City property owners credit for the new fee that the Fiscal Court imposed for 911 services.
- Gives the City a better representative allocation on the Board of Directors.
- Allows for more control over City Fire and Police dispatch protocol.

On Friday, August 5<sup>th</sup>, the County Judge, Mayor and City and County Attorneys met in advance of a special Fiscal Court meeting scheduled for Wednesday, August 10, to try to see if there was room to negotiate. Mr. Butler has sent you a revised copy of the agreement with what the County wants inserted in red. It seems that the City and County are still very far apart.

However, there is an alternative that will solve the differences between the City and the County's positions, and save all of our taxpayers over \$400,000 a year. Bardstown and Nelson County should both contract with the Kentucky State Police for dispatch services.

## **First, the numbers:**

The total budget for Nelson County Dispatch for 2016/17 is \$965,050. The County receives \$173,000 from CMRS from cell phone fees, which leaves a revenue shortfall of \$792,000.

The City received a quote from the Kentucky State Police to provide dispatch services to our Police and Fire Department's 12,197 annual calls for \$157,200. We don't have an exact price from the KSP for the County calls, but at the same price, their 17,633 calls would cost \$227,261, for a total community cost of \$384,461. The combined city and county savings by using the Kentucky State Police would be \$407,539.

Cost of Dispatch - from budget	\$ 965,000.00
Less CMRS \$	\$ (173,000.00)
Local costs for Central Dispatch	<b>\$ 792,000.00</b>
City cost for KSP	\$ 157,200.00
Projected County cost for KSP	\$ 227,261.00
	<b>\$ 384,461.00</b>
Local Cost for Central Dispatch	\$ 792,000.00
Less projected total cost for KSP	\$ (384,461.00)
<b>Community savings</b>	<b>\$ 407,539.00</b>

The Nelson Fiscal Court minutes from May 26, 2016, quote Joe Prewitt as saying, “We know that we need \$1.5 million to do an effective radio infrastructure for law enforcement to get their complaints off my back” This \$1.5 million expense is in addition to the operational costs.

Dispatch is an essential function of any Police Department. Most departments would prefer to have their own dispatch center, controlled by the Chief. However, that is simply not affordable. It would cost at least a million dollars for start-up and hundreds of thousands of dollars a year to operate.

There are two basic problems that must be faced. The County is reluctant to give up or share control over the dispatch that they have had since we went to a central dispatch in 2006, and the City wants some of that control back. The County also does not want to fund the dispatch with a fee that is paid for equally by all of the citizens in Nelson County. Their proposal has each City property owner paying the same as those in the County, plus they would have the City taxpayers pay an extra \$144,000. That is \$121,000 more than we would pay by going to the Kentucky State Police.

So, the solution is for the City and the County to go to the Kentucky State Police and save the taxpayers over \$400,000 per year, plus the \$1.5 million that Mr. Prewitt says he will need to upgrade the current 911 system.

At very least, the Fiscal Court and City Council owe it to the taxpayers to meet with the Kentucky State Police and see what they will provide and what it will cost.

### **The Obstacles:**

Councilman Fred Hagan spoke to Joe Barrows of the Kentucky 911 Board, and reported that the City leaving the Dispatch was something that had never been done, and possibly couldn't be done. However, when I spoke to Mr. Barrows, and AT&T's 911 coordinator for this region of the US, they both said that technically, there is no problem with either separating, or going to KSP together. It is done all the time in multiple jurisdictions.

The Dispatch Director, the EMS Director, the New Haven Fire Chief and the Nelson County Sheriff all say that the Kentucky State Police will not do an acceptable job of dispatching either the City of Bardstown's Police or Fire Departments. They claim the KSP will dispatch their own units before ours, even though the KSP has a protocol in place that prioritizes the importance of calls for service.

I have spoken with County Judges, Mayors, Police and Fire Departments in 6 communities about their experiences with the Kentucky State Police and they were all complimentary, with the exception of some County Sheriffs. There does seem to be a conflict between the State Police and Sheriff's departments. This conflict seems to be as much about turf and who gets which cases as it is about dispatch. County Judges, Mayors, and City Fire and Police Chiefs all seem to be fine with KSP.

Below are the notes from my conversations with various City and County officials.

### **Franklin KY and Simpson County**

Judge Executive, Jim Henderson – This year's President of KACO. The County operated dispatch for the City and County up until 2003. The county paid for it all, since it is a county-wide service. The County continues to pay for it, now that it is being done by the Kentucky State Police. Simpson County has a good relationship with KSP. It saved them \$200,000 out of \$500,000. "There were a few bumps along the road." Good overall, but only as good as the leadership at KSP. When there was a hiring freeze, they were a little understaffed, but it is functional, and worth it for the cost. The cost increases have been marginal.

Simpson County got rid of a lot of the headaches and hassle of personnel, and maintenance and cost of upgrading the technology. There were no problems that affected response. KSP is more business-like. They won't allow wives to call in and ask officers to bring some milk home, for example.

Judge Henderson (as County Judge, not as President of KACO) looks for more regional consolidation, and expects that the legislature will move in that direction. Can see that time when there will be 15 "Mega-PSAPs, with one at each KSP Post, throughout the state. This is because of the economy of scale and the increased cost of technology. KACO and KLC are pushing for consolidation and increased funding.

### **Hart County**

The Hart County Sheriff ran 911 before the County went to KSP.

Sheriff's Department Captain – Heather Childress - Doesn't like their arrangement with KSP Dispatch. She says that they no longer have access to CADs from Munfordsville and other departments. KSP gets the names of roads mixed up. It's so bad that citizens call the Sheriffs on their cell phones rather than call 911. However, the Sheriff would be happy to go to the

Elizabethtown Post 4, if they could. Captain Childress said that it would be a much better situation.

Hart County Judge Executive Terry Martin – Complimentary of the KSP dispatch. Saved money by not having to upgrade to Next Gen equipment. They had problems with information “going out the back door”. Not so with the State Police.

### **Mayfield and Graves County**

Mayfield, KY - Mayor - Theresa Cantrell – The City has been with KSP for 2 years.

Experience with KSP, “very positive” and, “team built between us and KSP dispatchers.

Police Major Keller - Money was a big factor in going to KSP. Upgrading to Next Gen was going to cost them from 1 to 3 million dollars.

Graves County Judge Executive – Jesse Perry – “We are money ahead and more efficient”.

Will save the county lots of money. Initially, the City didn’t want to go to KSP.

There was no problem when Graves County was with KSP and Mayfield wasn’t. This arrangement was similar to the City being dispatched by KSP, and the County going it alone.

### **Taylorsville, KY**

Steve Bivins – City Clerk - “KSP (Post 12) are top notch professionals”, “lack of familiarity with back roads not a problem”. They were contracting with the county, but there was a conflict over cost.

**Owen County** - Sheriff Mark Bess – Use KSP Post 5 – excellent experience, no delays.

Mayor Casey Ellis – “There is always a Captain there if there is a problem” and “There is no better deal – re: cost”

Also mentioned that the information on calls shows up on the police car’s computer screen as it is typed by the KSP dispatcher. No delays.

### **Erlanger and Kenton County.**

Doug Eagler, Assistant Police Chief - Erlanger has its own dispatch, and Kenton County has their own. Erlanger gets about 75,000 calls per years and transfers about 30,000 of them to Kenton County. They have no problem with dropped calls, or with transferring calls to other agencies.

### **Lebanon and Marion County.**

City Police Chief - Wally Brady; City Administrator – John Thomas – City Administrator; and E911 Coordinator; Wes Cox. The City of Lebanon operates the PSAP at a cost of \$277,154 per year. They dispatch 40,000 to 50,000 calls per year, which is 10,000 to 20,000 more calls than the Nelson County Dispatch does. And, it costs us \$965,000 a year. The City of Lebanon charges the County about 30% of the cost of dispatch, even though the County may be responsible for

more than 30% of the calls. However, according to John Thomas, it is worth it because dispatch is vital to the operation of their Police Department.

I also spoke to the following people about dispatch in their communities:

Danville - Ron Scott – City Manager

Lawrenceburg - Todd Sparrow – City operated 911 Coordinator

Vine Grove – Kenny Mattingly – Chief of Police

McCracken County Judge Executive – Bob Leeper

One final consideration is the effect of 911 Dispatch on our ISO fire rating. It appears that going to the Kentucky State Police would improve our ISO rating.