

# Lincoln County PSAP

Public Meetings – June 2022

# Meeting purpose

1. Explain the issues surrounding public safety answering points (PSAPs) in Lincoln County and why they matter
2. Provide potential solutions to those issues
3. Suggest a way forward
4. Get public feedback for finalizing plans

# Background

- Lincoln County has 3 independent PSAPs located in Eureka, Libby and Troy – initially needed and supported by Lincoln County residence
- The cost to run these centers is \$863,524
- The model of having small independent centers in different communities presents many challenges and will not keep pace with evolving community needs and revenues
- A national trend over the past 20 years has been to consolidate centers to overcome these challenges, provide better community service, and better utilize fiscal and human resources

# Challenges with the old model

- Adopting changing technology requirements is expensive and has a steep learning curve
- Adoption of these technologies is not synced – leading to incompatibility of systems and processes
- The fiscal burden is higher than it needs to be due to duplication, legacy system maintenance inefficiencies, etc.

# Why consolidation makes sense

- Greater economies of scale and more efficient use of resources
- Coordinated emergency responses
- Improved agency interoperability – shared protocols
- Elimination of duplicate costs saves taxpayer resources
- Consolidated focus to leverage best practices
- Video from 3<sup>rd</sup> Signal

We want your input ...

## Troy PSAP Consolidation Community Input

1. Luke Miller – With one dispatch how does that effect border control? Question was answered.
2. Mike Pattie – Since the money saved is allocated elsewhere, how is this a money savings? A: Saved money would be available for other county needs, but the expenditure would have to be approved by the voters. Where would Troy police department be dispatched? A: wherever the dispatch center is. Comment: Lost wages will leave the community, which is a hit to the local economy. Loss of a job is a big thing in this economy.
3. Steve Allen – Q: What is the timeframe? A: not sure, assessment done first. Q: Will it be lumped together with the new jail? A: no. Q: Where will it be? A: not sure yet. More planning is needed to determine how to do it successfully. Do we have a notion of what this center will cost? A: not yet. Will there be a separate board? A: there will be a district board. Will a central dispatch cost Troy law enforcement money? A: conversation has not been had.
4. Bob Rice – Concern about getting a dispatch through the canyon. What if it doesn't work? How much will it cost? A: we will do the appropriate due diligence to make sure it will work.
5. Glen Garrison – concern: is there an interagency agreement that has to be worked out? Also, cell service in Troy is very spotty. Q: if Troy is consolidated into Libby, are the 27 mils dropped?
6. Brent – With consolidation, dispatchers can specialize on different call types.
7. Crystal Denton – Are the studies looking at radio and phone? A: Yes. Comment: hope that there are sufficient human resources to be effective. Will there be another meeting when studies are out to educate us again?
8. Reference to Eureka newspaper regarding Libby center needing to backfill Troy. Why? A: due to sickness or dispatchers leaving, there was a need and request made to cover the shortage.
9. DJ – What's the cost? Will there need to be new radios or upgrades? Radio frequencies will be the same – not upgrades needed.
10. Gene Rogers – Radios don't work well now. Why will they work now? Fiber optics was not available then, but now is. Better technology now. Concern: Lack of trust that this won't work. We will prove the concept before proceeding.
11. Bob Rice – there are no numbers on saving – just statements to that effect. What are the numbers? A: we don't have them yet. We're just getting started and including the public the concept as to why.
12. Is the RFP online? No, but it can be put online
13. Kimberly Mole. – In Bull River the current system is not working now. Multiple transfers and need to restate the issue. Consolidation makes sense.
14. Bonnie Larson. -Comment: has worked behind the scenes with county officials. Things have changed. Would hold on to the autonomy for as long as possible. Troy takes care of Troy. We have a safety net with Libby. Both are important. Story of mother. Would not support the consolidation today. Sees it coming though. Would be important to have the communities represented by employees of the system.
15. Travis Miller – comment: has worked at sheriffs dept., grew up in Troy. Having a center in Troy means a lot to the community. They come into the lobby area which is nice. The local area knowledge is valuable and may be lost in consolidation. Currently connections happen very fast. Troy dispatch quality is high. Head dispatcher is great. Personal touch and hands on is important. Very proud of our center.



## Eureka PSAP Consolidation Community Input

1. Silvia Moeller – What is the distance between Libby and Troy (18 miles) but Libby to Eureka is further (67). The distance seems to add what needs to be communicated rather than reducing it. Would not like to see dispatch move to Libby. Too many cases where local familiarity is necessary to do the job. Troy consolidation might make sense. Eureka doesn't.
2. Neil Gardner – Our area is very rural and unique. Most concerns come from west Kootnei. Addresses aren't clear. We'd need to see the plan that shows this will work. Good idea in theory, but likely not practical here. Not buying into the saved \$\$ because taxes are going up significantly.
3. Neil Duram – trooper for state of MT. Flathead consolidated but it cost them more \$\$\$. Not convinced on the savings. Face to face contact is a better. National trends might work in CA, but not here. Consolidation of data is for the govt. to know more about our citizens. Important for us to have our own dispatch center. Radio communication between responders and dispatch in Libby would be critical, but sharing bandwidth is a challenge. Having two centers in the county makes the most sense.
4. Brent Holder – dispatch board. A lot of changes (staffing, systems, etc.) have occurred and we are in a good state. Consolidation might need to occur, and if it does Eureka is a good site for it. Major highway, border, etc. makes it a good place. The dispatch board wants to be part of the discussion. We will be ready to host the dispatch center. Trusts that this decision is not already done and we'll be ready.
5. Josh comment: This will likely take a longer time to work through and do right.
6. Gail Ambrose – lived here 38 years. We've watch it grow and have been for and against things. In this case we're against this. Our dispatchers do a great job – fast, efficient, etc. Last year paid \$1200 for a school that son graduated from 35 years ago. Would rather see younger folks pay the school, and older folks pay for emergency services for community. We've already lost too many services: animal control, justice of peace, etc. Garbage site in Libby cost more as an example. Loss of jobs if we lose dispatchers. We want our dispatchers.
7. Paul Tribble – does consolidation include local PD and other responders? A: No.
8. Scott Fairfield – Red Cross Disaster Action Team Coordinator for Lincoln and Sanders counties. He dispatches for much of the northwest. We need to all work together. Frustrated with lack of communication. Q: what is call volume in 3 sites? A: Last year - Libby 11,000, Troy 2,000 and Eureka ?? Q: who has notification authority? Just an example of what needs to be sorted out.
9. Indigo Canter – we need to remember we're a small community but very heart/super tight. Great technology doesn't address the importance of the great people we have and the relationships. Dispatch is often the lifeline for suicide. If we lose the people that are willing to leave the kitchen table in our community it will be a great loss. We need to keep the local benefits such as close knit communication and service.
10. Rachel Duram – director of operations of ambulance service. A lot of rumors in Eureka – like state is mandating this. That is not true. We hear it's a better idea, but not convinced. If consolidation is so great, why not just give it to Flathead. Commissioners need to look at demographics of the entire county – to make sure our citizens really get the best service available. What we have – improved – might be better than a new unproven solution. We need to work together. Proud of our dispatch center and board – huge progress made. Work together, talk with commissioners, and consider Eureka if consolidation does occur.

11. Diane Hansen – Q: is this something voted on or do commissioners make the decision? A: goes back to the people.
12. Mike McMahon – Technology does scare me. Cost to keep technology current is crazy for multiple sites.
13. Isaiah Williams – fire chief – been involved since 1997 in emergency services. WE do need to keep up with technology, but at same time we want big city services, small town feel and we don't want to pay for it. We have more people but fewer volunteers. Flathead county consolidation almost flopped and took more \$\$ to save it. Grant money buys technology, but it can become obsolete before it's used. Do we want to bus our kids to school in Libby to save \$? We want the dispatch center here.
14. Ron Komac – fire dept chief. Thank you for listening, and hope full transparency occurs and continues. Cons of consolidation were not discussed. Consolidation is not a silver bullet. It looks good on paper but doesn't always translated to real world. Technology always changes, we need to find what works and stick with it long enough. Radio communication will require mountain top repeaters and they need to be maintained. Expectations need to be understood. But we can't provide for all expectations that might be coming from experiences elsewhere.
15. Brent - please send any cons to consolidation you have experienced.
16. Ethel White – original dispatcher here – shared some historical information. We used to have justice of peace, nurse, etc that we don't have anymore. Many things going to Libby because it's county seat. Dispatch in Eureka makes sense and should be considered.
17. Elizabeth Williams – combining Eureka with Libby and Troy doesn't seem to makes sense. Fix the parts that are broken with what we already have. To Make our area communicate to a consolidation in Libby seems more costly. Improving current dispatches might be more cost effective.
18. John Hamilton – Elected board member of ambulance service. Hopes that you are sincere when saying that the decision hasn't been already made. Having responders is as critical and dispatch. Local dispatch knows who the volunteers are and can call around as needed. Would like to have the meeting notes from other meetings.
19. RJ McDole – went through a consolidation there. 8-9 years in. Still battling with the system. Has been good and bad with it. Con: multiple incidents coming in at the same time can overwhelm at times. Either way this goes, we need consistency with protocols across systems. Cost – repeaters/radios change before you get them implemented. Always changing and will continue.
20. Rachel Duram – Can the commissioners make sure procedures, training, etc. is standardized regardless of how many PSAPs we have? A: we'd like to, but the boards have the control, not commissioners.
21. General discussion – the issue of consistency and standardization should occur regardless
22. Julie Flagtwet – been here 7 years. Cost of equipment upgrades is a concern. Text service is better than cell. Will consolidation save more lives than we save now? Would be a good question for the study.
23. Darren – Study will be more about communication, with dispatch as a piece of it.
24. Jared Beisner – New to community – came from ID. Their center handles 44 counties. Geography here is challenging. Redundancy is important – in case a center goes down for some reason.



25. Ann Lane – been here 3 years. Obstacles can be overcome if we are solution oriented. Don't throw things out because they will be hard. Long run costs should be considered.
26. Joshua Pearson – Redundancy is critical – at least in 3 ways. I.e. cell, internet, fiber optic and other methods. System redundancy in all three or a consolidated system is critical.
27. Isaiah Williams – 10 years ago a lot of \$\$ was spent on a mapping system that didn't work as advertised. We can't afford another mistake like that.
28. Joshua Tracy – Concern – contractors or agency coming in to do study – they might have their own agenda. We need great oversight over contractors or consultants. The latest and greatest isn't always the best. Radio communication is challenging no matter how good the technology supposedly is. Redundancy and backup locations are important. If dam goes out (terrorism) where does that leave us?
29. Ron Komac – This meeting was not advertised sufficiently. Direct notification to all agencies is desired for future meetings.

#### **Libby PSAP Consolidation Community Input**

1. Besides county commissioners and law enforcement, there were two citizen attendees with no comments expressed.



Lincoln County  
Commissioner Meetings

DATE: TROY 6/15

PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY

NAME	AGENCY/ORGANIZATION	PHONE
Alexander Halks	TVFD	406-407-2573
Ben McCann	TVFD	406-291-7839
Emily Dupuis	citizen	406 291 2071
Austin Pathe		(406) 300-9693
Michael Pathe		(406) 291-9502
Raylin Pathe		406 291 2689
Gabriel Pedriner	TVFD/TVA	(321)-443-7991
John Chott	McConnick	295-9498
Rick Starks	TVFD	406-702-0531
Saty Shindler	Trustee	406-249-4231
Luke Miller		406-291-2302
Crystal Denton		406-291-1539
Robin Benson		293-2301

Lincoln County  
Commissioner Meetings

DATE:

TROY 6/15

PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY

NAME	AGENCY/ORGANIZATION	PHONE
Ashley Crastley		(406) 334-7124
Karen Ditchey & Tom		(406) 295-7134
PAUL JONES		406-295-9814
DAVID FRENCH		406-295-7306
Bob Welch		406 291-5602
Joyce Welch		406 291-6052
Clinton Taylor		406 291 9250
Susie Taylor		406 293 1929
GEN Fisher		406-334-7050
Gene R Rogers		406-293-1770
Glenn Garrison		406 295 4501
Don & RONDA Young		(406) 295-5086
BONNIE LARSEN		(406) 2954050
Joseph Spivley		406 920-1982
John Driehausch		295-9805
Michael Miller	Troy P.D.	291-9994





Lincoln County  
Commissioner Meetings

DATE:

Troy 6/15

PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY

NAME	AGENCY/ORGANIZATION	PHONE
Jenny Bennett	Lincoln Co.	
Ewan Comella	Troy	
Chera Cole	City of Troy	
BRET ROMNEY	ASCEND STRATEGIKES	
Kanok Lalala	Troy	
<del>Robert Hester</del>	<del>Troy</del>	
DS Welch		
Robert Nelson	Troy	
Melissa Nelson	Troy	
Mason Williams	Troy	
Tim M. Rodin		
Steve Allen		
<del>Scott Hoff</del>		
Katie Davis		
Travis Miller		
Bob Rice		



Eureka - 6/17

Lincoln County

DATE:

Commissioner Meetings

PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY

NAME	AGENCY/ORGANIZATION	PHONE
Toni Jolliff	Eureka Ambulance/Fire	970-623-9277
Alan Wilson	Eureka Fire Department	406-334-0934
Neil Gardner	Town Rexford	406-607-5881
Brent Hopper	Eureka Dispatch Board	406-211-396
ETHEL WHITE	EUREKA Town Council	297-2467
Sheldon <del>W</del> Lecher		
Douglas Letcher		
Kevin Letcher		
Ann Lane		
Jeff Butler		
Julie Flagtwet		406-334-3102
Beverly Cass		406-889-3595
Isiah B Williams	Chief TFSVFD	406-212-1625
Elizabeth Williams	TFSVFD	406-212-6436
Loni Mrgich	Dispatcher	406-211-1323
Rhonda Krieger		406-253-1237



Eureka 6/17

Lincoln County  
Commissioner Meetings

DATE:

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NAME	AGENCY/ORGANIZATION	PHONE	
Craig EATON	EVFD	406-253-0482	Eaton inter n.
Wendy EATON		406-297-2943	
Taryn Van Horn	EVAS	406-291-4644	
Roger Sloatweg	EVFD Can Am r45cur	575-2932-9007	
Mike Hansen	EVFD EVAS LCSO	406-871-0562	
Donna Lowery	Eureka Aerial Dispatch	406-291-3517	
Rita Collins		406-890-0623	
John Hamilton	EVAS BD.	724-344-7029	
RACHEC Duram	EVAS	406-471-2357	
Neil Duram	Citizen	471-2356	
GAIL Ambrose	"	889-3914	
Vicki Horton		889-3546	
Ken Horton		889-3546	
Sylvia Mueller	EVAS gammysyl@aol.com	889-3856	
Jes A Helge	SARS	406-265-2525	
John H. Cuffe		406-293-1847	



Eureka 6/17

Lincoln County  
Commissioner Meetings

DATE:

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NAME	AGENCY/ORGANIZATION	PHONE
Heather Schermerhorn	Down of Eureka	291-2123
Crystal Hill	EVAS-Associate	(406)890-0304
Joshua Tracy	civilian	408-658-5303
Katie Tracy	Eureka Dispatch	310-357-9226
Wendy Chalcraft	EVAS CAN AM	406-291-0370
Dustin Chalcraft	EVFD EVAS CAN AM	406-291-1945
Beverly Livingston		406 297 2385
Jim Dickers	EVAS BOARD	406 260 3030
Storay Langston		406-889-5158
JARED BEISNER	EUREKA FIRE	406-297-5520
SCOTT FAIRFIELD	RED CROSS DISASTER ACTION TEAM	(307)670-0009
Colby Cash	Can-Am SAR	(406) 871-2166
Paul Tribble	civilian	406 750 4790
Debbie Tribble	Civilian	406 871 1393
R.J. McDole	U.S.F.S	406-291-7119
Miranda Helgert	CAN-AM SAR	406-260-7117

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