

SNO-ISLE FIRE COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION

RESOLUTION to UNIFY COUNTYWIDE E- 911 COMMUNICATIONS by CONSOLIDATING PSAP DISPATCH AGENCIES (SNOCOM & SNOPAC)

WHEREAS, SNOPAC and SNOCOM were organized in 1973 as independent public agencies in Snohomish County providing countywide 911 emergency dispatch services. These PSAPs (*Public Safety Answering Points*) operate two separate call centers with their own governance, management, staffs and equipment, and

WHEREAS, public safety services must be efficiently delivered to timely reach growing numbers of people experiencing 911 emergencies. Snohomish County has seen its growing population nearly triple from 265,236 in 1973 to 759,583 residents in 2014. Our County expects to add another 200,000 residents by 2035, and

WHEREAS, SNOPAC and SNOCOM have disparate call areas delineated by a demarcation line dividing 2,087 square miles countywide where more than a one million 911 calls are generated annually dispatched by two organizations to nearly 50 local public safety agencies, including 28 fire agencies with overlapping jurisdictional service boundaries, and

WHEREAS, in 2014-15 the Matrix Consulting Group produced a 3-part study of our two county PSAPs that determined one, unified, consolidated, dispatch agency “would improve citizen/officer safety, eliminate call transfers that result in delayed response, result in significant cost savings, and would promote efficient and cost effective migration to new technologies”, and

WHEREAS, PSAP consolidation could enhance interoperability of communications between dispatch centers of the Washington State patrol, federal law enforcement agencies, FEMA and other emergency disaster recovery agencies by providing uniform, streamlined, cohesive local E-911 dispatch capability, and

WHEREAS, PSAP consolidation would combine human resources that could maximize the value of the dedicated work of 139 highly-trained, local dispatch professionals these two PSAP agencies employ, and

WHEREAS, newly centralized, consolidated dispatch would improve interoperability by leveraging of the existing shared communications and technologies with the Washington State Emergency Services Internet Protocol Network (ESInet); Intrado Viper, Power 911 workstations and with the county Emergency Radio System (SERS), and

WHEREAS, consolidation would reduce emergency dispatch costs by sharing new technology, eliminating redundant systems (e.g., call recording) - requiring less equipment acquisition and IT maintenance, and

WHEREAS, two separately managed E-911 dispatch agencies now engage in different training and operating procedures for: landline call receiving, cellular phone caller geo-identification, locution QA, caller intake questioning, causes repetition and duplication resulting in avoidable delays of emergency responses, and

WHEREAS, PSAP consolidation would enhance public access to utilize more innovations in dispatch communications, such as: *SMART911*, *First Watch* and *Rave School Panic Button*, and

WHEREAS, funding and future governance of a consolidated 911 dispatch agency can be more reasonable, stable, fair and equitable, for all local governments paying for emergency 911 dispatches, and

WHEREAS, consolidated dispatch via a unified countywide E-911 communications system would eliminate call-handling issues between overlapping jurisdictions reducing call-processing time that eliminates duplication of effort. Intra-county routing of cellular and landline traffic by PSAP merger could also be eliminated shortening by 30 to 40 seconds many currently disjointed dispatches. More lives could be saved as the result of quicker dispatches that avoid transfers and go directly to fire and law enforcement service providers, and

WHEREAS, in an era of limited local government financial resources available to meet growing demand for services, public safety agencies must operate in the most effective and economically efficient way. Estimated savings from PSAP consolidation "range from \$1.90M to \$2.68M annually", according to the Matrix study, and

WHEREAS, a single, unified dispatch agency would be best able to effectively and productively utilize the new Computer Aided Dispatch system by integrating its output with a new countywide, next generation emergency wireless radio system (eliminating G gate failures with radio consoles), and

WHEREAS, local fire protection districts and city fire departments have proven models now in place that should be viewed as successful examples for how to consolidate multiple public safety agencies, and

WHEREAS, cohesive and unified management of E-911 communications will improve delivery of fire protection and emergency medical service delivery as well as other vital public safety services in Snohomish County. This can be done while providing for continuing local control, optimum operational effectiveness that avoids unnecessary and redundant expenditures of limited public safety resources, and

WHEREAS, as Fire Commissioners, we are dedicated to providing the best fire and EMS service possible to the citizens we represent. We find that abundant evidence now exists to justify a *serious* intergovernmental effort to consolidate SNOCOM and SNOPAC into one, unified PSAP agency for quicker emergency dispatches and resulting faster countywide delivery of fire, EMS as well as law enforcement services.

Now, therefore, be it resolved, on behalf of the 532,108 Snohomish County citizens whom our 28 fire protection agencies serve, as elected Fire Commissioners, we respectfully urge that the governing Boards of SNOPAC and SNOCOM immediately meet and agree to form a joint group to study and develop a plan for consolidating these two PSAP agencies with the expressed goal of creating one, unified, E-911 dispatch agency operating countywide by 2017.

Voted on and adopted on November 5, 2015 at the monthly meeting of Sno-Isle Fire Commissioners Association.


Chris Greig, President


Steve Lich, Secretary