

**TOMPKINS COUNTY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
MINUTES
November 30, 2006**

PRESENT: D. Austic-T. Ulysses, D. Barber-T. Caroline, R. Dietrich-T. Danby, R. Dolge-T. Newfield, H. Engman-T. Ithaca, S. Farkas-T. Lansing, T. Joseph-County Leg., W. Lynn-V. Cayuga Heights, M. Coles-C of Ithaca, C. Rankin-V. Groton, M. Robertson-County Leg., R. Taylor-V. Dryden, S. Trumbull-T. Dryden, L. Fresinski-V. Lansing, P. Younger-County Admin, M. Lynch-County PIO, D. Lauper-County Admin
Guests: Lee Shurtleff and Beth Harrington of TC Emergency Response

Meeting began at 3:05 p.m.

Review October meeting minutes:

Motion to Accept

Made by: D. Austic

Second by: R. Dolge

Carried unanimously

**Report on Emergency Service Communications
Lee Shurtleff-Emergency Response Services**

Tower Construction: Mr. Shurtleff began his presentation by stating that he was pleased to hear about TCCOG and its efforts in Intermunicipal collaboration. Cooperation is something EMS is striving for throughout Tompkins County with this new 800-megahertz microwave radio communication system. Lee hopes that this group will be an important stepping-stone for supportive issues associated with the communications system. This system will provide radio coverage that goes well beyond emergency response. TCEMS would like to create interoperability within agencies throughout the county.

The tower construction stage of the communications system is about half way completed. The county needed 4 new towers, there were some towers that needed additions and some towers were sufficient as they were. There are generators for each tower inside buildings, before there were some outside. Over the winter they should start putting up some antennas and cabling.

Radio Procurement: Next week Mr. Shurtleff and a few others will be at the Motorola plant for a preview of the radio system. As far as costs go, there are many variables; base or portable, one-way or two-way, mobile data system, highway to highway or dispatch to emergency vehicle, etc. Mr. Shurtleff is working with EMS and other agencies to determine what equipment needs, and costs, are. There is a possibility that the cost of equipment is less than first

anticipated. Some grants have been found to help with funding. We are now moving into a transition period. A lot of education is needed on the differences between the old and new systems. Efforts are being made to keep things in the new system similar to the old system to make the transition as smooth as possible. We will have to wait for full foliage to do testing on the system.

It looks as though we are on track to be operational by the end of 2007. Mr. Shurtleff will be working with Public Safety and feels that this TCCOG would be a good place to work as well. Someone can contact Mr. Shurtleff's office in January or February of 2007 for an update.

Supporting Volunteer Firefighters Lee Shurtleff and Marcia Lynch

Marcia Lynch, Lee Shurtleff and Beth Harrington all have years of experience with EMS and Fire departments, volunteer and paid. Some of the issues with volunteer fire departments are:

- Volunteering is not as popular as it once was
- We have a transient community
- Firefighting and EMS training is very demanding-six months minimum of intense training initially for new recruits, then regular updates after that.
- State mandates and requirements have increased and are costly to the fire departments and, therefore, the municipality in which they exist.
- The number of hours required of a volunteer has increased with the mandates and training requirements

The issue with volunteer firefighters is not necessarily in recruitment but with retention. A community invests considerable time and money into firefighter and/or emergency medical training. There was discussion on a need for incentives, or rewards, to volunteers for the time and energy they expend.

- Health insurance benefits (something the State is looking into)
- Paid time off of work when there is a fire
- Tax breaks

Fire Departments are one of the biggest areas of public spending. Two things that should be discussed for the future are:

1. Mutual Aid-pooling the Workers Comp costs within the County and, not only doing mutual aide for fires and rescue calls but, possible consolidation between fire departments-combining/sharing equipment, expenses and coverage.
2. Local governments working together with Albany on reform from the State level.

D. Barber asked if we were going to have a meeting in December. The next meeting date is scheduled for 12/28. The majority felt we should keep the meeting as is. He suggested that the next meeting be set aside to delve deeper

into the issues of deer management and volunteer firefighting, which the membership was in consensus with.

There was some discussion on having a public service announcement regarding TCCOG and possibly inviting the public to a meeting (January?). C. Valentino volunteered a meeting place for this at the Town of Ithaca. Parking would be available if the meeting took place after 4 p.m. D. Barber will work on the PSA and will be in touch with Administration regarding this issue.

The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Next meeting is December 28, 2006, from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. in the old jail conference room.