



TOWNSEND FIRE-EMS DEPARTMENT

Proudly serving the citizens of Townsend since 1875

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PRESS RELEASE

March 24, 2017

In November of 2016 the decision was made by the Board of Selectmen to join Nashoba Valley Regional Dispatch District 911 Communications center (NVRDD) and close the Townsend Communication Dispatch Center. This decision was made based on the recommendations of Townsend Police Chief Robert Eaton and Fire-EMS Chief Mark Boynton to increase efficiency and effectiveness of communications, meet national standards while reducing cost to the taxpayers.

The cost to continue with our own center, rebuild the infrastructure and hire additional staff to meet national standards were the driving force behind this decision. Estimates to continue with the inefficient standalone communications center despite the state's efforts to regionalize centers equated to doubling the budget from approximately \$500,000 to one million per year and investing \$375,000 into infrastructure.

The transition to NVRDD will afford Townsend several benefits. NVRDD is staffed with a minimum of 4 dispatchers during the day and 3 at night exceeding the Insurance Standards Office (ISO) and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards. When completed Townsend Fire-EMS and Police will be connected to NVRDD by separate and independent fiber optic lines for communications and redundancy. In addition we will have new redundant computer and phone systems connected but independent of NVRDD. In the event of a wide spread power outage Townsend will have the ability to operate independently on our own.

Joining NVRDD will expand our capabilities to access information, share and communicate with surrounding towns. By sharing the cost of a professionally staffed regional communications center that meets national standards we will save nearly \$250,000 per year. This saving and the ability to apply for regional grants will allow us to rebuild Townsend failing radio infrastructure at no additional cost to the taxpayers.

As a result of this decision to join NVRDD which is in-line with Massachusetts 911 goals to reduce the number of 911 call centers that serve only one community NVRDD was awarded \$300,000 in grant funds from the state to facilitate the transition and upgrade Townsend systems.

Shortly after the decision Townsend entered into an agreement with NVRDD located in Devens Massachusetts to provide emergency 911 communications. Over the past four months Townsend and NVRDD officials have been working diligently to put systems, equipment and procedures in place to facilitate the transition.

During the month of December all emergency 911 phone lines along with Townsend Police, Fire and EMS business phone lines were relocated to NVRDD. Since that time all emergency and non-emergency calls for Townsend have been answered by NVRDD. Radio communications were established between NVRDD and Townsend in preparation of them taking over dispatching communicating with Townsend emergency personnel.

During the months of January and February Townsend's street and address information was imported into NVRDD system. Provisions were put in place so NVRDD could view and monitor Townsend Police Department security cameras along with Fire-EMS alarm systems.

On March 28th NVRDD will officially take over dispatching Townsend Police, Fire and EMS units. What this really means is they will officially start talking to emergency units in the field over the radio and dispatching them to emergencies or calls for service. NVRDD has been answering the phones since early December. The majority of citizens have not and will not realize anything has changed. As in the past if you call 911 for an emergency a professionally trained dispatcher will answer the phone, provide assistance and dispatched resources without delay to address your needs.

The only change as a result of joining NVRDD is the Police Station will not have someone available to greet you in person 24/7. Starting on March 28th the Police Station will be staffed from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday to address any needs citizens may have.

The Police station including the lobby is monitored 24/7 by NVRDD using close circuit cameras. During the overnight and on Sundays anyone entering the lobby that is need of assistance will have the ability to communicate with NVRDD dispatchers by simply picking up a phone in the lobby. During these hours officers are typically out on patrol. As in the past when the dispatch center was staffed an officer will be called to respond to the Police Department to address your needs.

NVRDD is in the process of installing a regional phone system for the communities they dispatch. Each of the communities including Townsend will be connected to this system using the fiber optic lines. Soon Townsend Police and Fire-EMS departments will be part of this regional phone system. Phone calls and voice mail can be forwarded to other departments or towns by simply transferring to the extension in the system. Calls from one town to another will be accomplished by simply dialing an extension number.

As part of the transition Townsend will be upgrading to TriTech records management and mobile software systems. TriTech is the premier and most widely used software in the Commonwealth. This will allow us to quickly and easily receive and share information with surrounding towns which utilize the same software.

Mobile Data Terminals (computers) will be installed in Police, Fire-EMS vehicles allowing access to information in real-time and the ability to communicate and share information with surrounding towns from the field. This will give us access to information in the field that is currently not available to Townsend emergency services.

Townsend Fire-EMS and Police are looking forward increasing our reliability and capabilities over the next few months as we transition to NVRDD. We are confident you will not notice any changes in the level of services we provide but ask you to be patient as we go through this transition period.

Anyone with questions or concerns is encouraged to contact Police Lieutenant Giancotti or Fire Chief Mark Boynton.

Police Lieutenant Mark Giancotti at 978-597-6214
Fire Chief Mark R. Boynton at 978-597-8150