



SEN. DEBORAH L. SIMPSON, CHAIR  
REP. DAWN HILL, CHAIR

MEMBERS:

SEN. RICHARD A. NASS  
SEN. JOSEPH C. BRANNIGAN  
SEN. BILL DIAMOND  
SEN. EARLE L. MCCORMICK  
SEN. DAVID TRAHAN  
REP. EVERETT W. MCLEOD, SR.  
REP. BRUCE A. BICKFORD  
REP. DAVID C. BURNS  
REP. PEGGY A. PENDLETON  
REP. MARGARET R. ROTUNDO

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE  
GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

**MEETING SUMMARY**  
**February 26, 2010**  
**Accepted March 19, 2010**  
**With One Correction**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair, Representative Hill, called the Government Oversight Committee to order at 9:38 a.m. in the Burton Cross Building.

**ATTENDANCE**

Senators: Sen. Brannigan, Sen. Nass, Sen. McCormick, and Sen. Trahan  
Joining the meeting in progress: Sen. Diamond  
Absent: Sen. Simpson

Representatives: Rep. Hill, Rep. McLeod, Rep. Rotundo, Rep. Pendleton, and Rep. Burns  
Absent: Rep. Bickford

Legislative Officers and Staff: Beth Ashcroft, Director of OPEGA  
Wendy Cherubini, Senior Analyst, OPEGA  
Matthew Kruk, Analyst, OPEGA  
Etta Begin, Adm. Secretary, OPEGA

Legislators Providing Information to the Committee: Rep. Kenneth Fletcher  
Rep. David Cotta

Executive Branch Officers and Staff Providing Information to the Committee: Maria Jacques, Director, Emergency Services Communication Bureau,  
Public Utilities Commission  
Janet Joyeux, Assistant to the Commissioner, Department of Public Safety

**INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Members of the Government Oversight Committee introduced themselves for the benefit of the listening audience.

## OPEGA FINAL REPORT

### • Emergency Communications in Kennebec County

#### - Public Comment Period

Director Ashcroft said she received written testimony from Rebecca Renaud and referred the GOC members to her testimony in their notebooks. A copy is attached to the Meeting Summary.

Attending and providing written testimony:

- Dawn Fecteau, citizen of Maine

The following individuals presented public comment but did not provide a copy of their testimony:

- Rep. Kenneth Fletcher
- Rep. David Cotta
- Joseph Massey, Police Chief, Waterville, Maine
- Dennis Keschl, Town Manager, Belgrade, Maine
- Lt. Christopher Read, Communications Division, Augusta Police Department

The following is a summary of testimony and comments made during the public comment period.

#### Dawn Fecteau

Ms. Fecteau said she was testifying in favor of OPEGA's Report because in November, 2008 the system failed. Ms. Fecteau described an incident that occurred on November 10, 2008 in which her brother was killed having been run over by two vehicles as he was lying in the road. An hour prior to his being hit, a 911 call was made to CMRCC with a report of a man lying in the road. The transcript showed that the dispatcher made a flippant comment and then dismissed the situation because the man had reportedly walked away. This emergency call was not transferred to law enforcement officials nor was a request for a wellness check ever dispatched.

GOC members thanked Ms. Fecteau for her testimony and for raising the dispatcher training issues which are concerning.

#### Rep. Kenneth Fletcher

Rep. Fletcher said he serves on the Utilities & Energy Committee and they are very concerned with the issues raised in OPEGA's Report and the Kimball Report that was contracted for by the PUC.

Rep. Fletcher brought to the GOC's attention the Maine Communications System Policy (MCSP) Board. The mission of the Board is to ensure the provision of a professional high quality cost-effective and reliable public safety emergency communication system that provides citizens prompt and appropriate response to calls for service. The Board was established by the 121<sup>st</sup> Legislature, 15 members serve on it, including the Commissioner of Public Safety, Chief of the State Police, Chief Information Officer of the Executive Department and towns' police chiefs and county sheriffs. He noted that there are currently some vacancies on the Board. That Board is charged with looking at many of the issues raised, not just with PSAP, but the entire public safety communication system. Rep. Fletcher thought that part of the Board's duties is to look at the organizations, review policies and procedures, conduct studies, evaluate programs and make recommendations. He hopes the Board will be a part of the discussion about how to improve the system.

Rep. Fletcher also noted that when Maine consolidated to 26 PSAPs there were only 3 counties that did not end up with their own PSAPs as part of the county activity. Those Counties are Kennebec, Aroostook and York. Rep. Fletcher said he thinks it may be important to understand how emergency communications are

operating in the 13 county facilities versus what is occurring in the 3 counties that do not have their own PSAP. Rep. Fletcher also referred to the large number of municipalities in Kennebec County that have moved from CMRCC to other providers. He thinks it is very important to understand from the municipalities' standpoint why they have elected to go to another provider of PSAP and what were the actions that occurred within Kennebec County that precipitated that. He felt it was important to get to the root cause of the situation and understand the details so that the Legislature would not apply a solution that would end up with unintended results.

GOC: Rep. Burns commented that it is important for the vacancies on the MCSP Board to be filled.

GOC: Sen. Trahan said he understands there will be an increase in the E-911 surcharge rate and he would like to ensure that some of that money be used for education and training issues.

A: Rep. Fletcher agreed that education/training is critical. He said that in the current law there are specific items the surcharge fund can be used for and the Legislature needs to look at whether the fund is being fully utilized. In the last 6 or 7 years, about \$7.5 million has been taken out of the surcharge fund to help balance State budgets. The U&E Committee is interested in making sure the surcharge fund is used for 9-1-1 purposes. He believes that Committee will be re-assessing whether the surcharge needs to increase and thinks the U&E Committee will also be very interested in looking at whether there are other appropriate uses for the fund.

Rep. Fletcher said he was shocked about the blind transfers and believes they are either a training issue and/or a management issue. He said he heard some discussions about this being due to a lack of resources, but to his knowledge the U&E Committee has never been presented with a proposal for increases that indicated the increases were needed to address these problems. If the request was justified, he is sure the Committee would appropriate the funds accordingly. He explained that the move to have the PUC set rates for the DPS Centers was as a result of the situation in Kennebec County. Municipalities that were former customers of the Center operated by the Kennebec County Sheriff's Office were complaining about having to contract with CMRCC for these services at a cost that was 3-4 fold higher than they had expected. As a result many would not sign the contract. The PUC's rate case found costs included in DPS' budget such as relocating barracks, removing towers, etc., that it did not allow to be covered by rates. Rep. Fletcher said if there is a lack of resources that is causing the State to not be able to train and/or properly manage the call centers, then the U&E Committee would consider that with a great degree of importance and take the proper action.

GOC: Sen. Diamond asked Rep. Fletcher to explain the \$7.5 million sweep of the surcharge fund.

A: Rep. Fletcher said the details are in a report the PUC prepared for U&E Committee and he could make it available to the GOC. Beginning with the 121<sup>st</sup> Legislature, the Legislature has been looking at dedicated accounts to balance the budget. Rep. Fletcher said the amounts swept from the surcharge fund were: \$1,043,406 in 2005; \$3,700,000 in 2007; and \$2,623,253 in 2008. Surcharge funds were intended to be a dedicated resource for 911 public safety answering points but approximately 33% of fund collections have been used for other purposes.

GOC: Sen. McCormick said he was also concerned about the fragmented network. He asked Rep. Fletcher whether there would be fewer problems if the 121<sup>st</sup> Legislature had adopted the one PSAP for all municipalities in Maine.

A: Rep. Fletcher said the current system is not what the Legislature anticipated. The intent was that the consolidation to CMRCC was going to be voluntary based on the hypothesis that the regional communication center operated by the State was going to be so efficient and cost-effective that people would want to sign up for their services. He thinks CMRCC is trying to be efficient and cost-effective, but the reality is that for whatever reasons it turned out to be a high cost provider. Municipalities had to switch to other providers because the financial incentive was so great.

GOC: Sen. Nass asked what Rep. Fletcher saw as the end point.

A: Rep. Fletcher said that in theory the State could go to 2 PSAPs, but then the closeness to the customer is lost which he thinks is also an important aspect to consider. He said the Kimball Report says the next logical step, if done right, would be to go to between 15 and 17 PSAPS, but with that is a caveat that the PSAP and dispatch functions should be consolidated. It is not necessary that person be doing both functions, but you have to have the connection. He said we've also learned that we cannot force consolidation and expect it to work, it has to be a mutual process between the customer and the suppliers.

GOC: Sen. Nass asked what the MCSP Board has done between 2003/2004 and now.

A: Rep. Fletcher said the Board's Annual report for 2009 is out and describes the Board's activities which are related to dispatch functions under the DPS. There are currently 4 vacancies – 3 from the municipalities and 1 fire chief.

Rep. Fletcher said he has read the Board's mission, powers and authority and thinks legislators should be discussing with the members whether the Board has the resources needed and a clear understanding of its objective. The Legislature should be asking whether there is anything the Legislature needs to do, either policy or resource wise, to help the Board to do what it was intended to do.

GOC: Sen. Nass said Commissioner Jordan suggested she did not have the resources necessary to provide in depth training. His understanding is that some of the telephone surcharge designated to the PUC is for training and asked if Rep. Fletcher knew why DPS was not contracting with or using the training that is being paid for through the PUC.

A: Rep. Fletcher said the E-911 surcharge pays for certain training related to the PSAP functions but the law, or rule, has not historically allowed use of that fund for dispatch-related training.

GOC: Rep. Burns expressed concern that CMRCC is one of the busiest RCCs in the State. Stakeholders have pulled out, thus taking revenues out, but there are still both PSAP and dispatch responsibilities at the Center and there are not adequate resources. He thinks the Legislature has to provide the resources for supervision, which OPEGA says is an issue and make sure that the Center has adequate training and staff to handle the calls. If nothing is done, there will be more tragedies like the two the GOC heard at this meeting.

A: Rep. Fletcher said Rep. Burns' comments were right on the mark. There are 10 Kennebec County municipalities still being serviced from CMRCC that are being charged based on their per capita population. However,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of CMRCC's calls are received from wireless phones. He believes whoever is providing that service, the county or CMRCC, has to have adequate resources. The Legislature needs to understand what resources are needed and where so that the proper funding can be put into place, either through the Legislature or through the people who are getting the service.

GOC: Rep. Pendleton referred to page 29 of OPEGA's Report where it talks about the PUC's role in rate setting. The recommendation is that the Legislature could eliminate the requirement for the Department's rates to be set by the PUC and deal with the root causes instead. The Legislature could do something right away with that if it chooses to.

A: Rep. Fletcher described again the history of why the Legislature had directed the PUC to set the rates for the DPS centers. It was a reaction to a problem in Kennebec County that was not solving itself. However, Rep. Fletcher does not believe the Legislature should be having the PUC running rate cases for municipalities who are getting PSAP and dispatch services.

GOC: Rep. McLeod asked if the additional revenues from the planned surcharge increase to 52¢ on July 1, 2010 would go to the operations of PSAP or would it go for other uses.

A: Rep. Fletcher said it is intended for work associated with the PSAP function – staff, Fairpoint contract, training, etc. The fund takes care of various things.

GOC: Rep. McLeod asked if the surcharge fund would be sufficient to provide the proper training that is needed if it was left alone and not swept.

A: Rep. Fletcher said the PUC recently provided the U&E Committee the figures on the fund balance and he believes more is being collected than what will be necessary to cover current planned expenses.

GOC: Sen. Trahan wondered whether the appropriate amount of surcharge was being assessed on cell phones since the use of them has increased so much.

A: Rep. Fletcher's opinion was they did not need to increase the surcharge that already exists on cell phones. Cell phones are just another vehicle to place a 911 call. He noted that there is another PSAP technology on its way, and is part of what is called the Next Gen. There is a generation that does not talk anymore, they text. The current technology does not allow somebody to text and get to a 911 operator but the New Generation of technology will.

GOC: Sen. Nass mentioned that at the briefing before the U&E Committee Commissioner Jordan appeared to have had in writing, her responses to questions asked by the U&E Committee. He said the U&E Committee were asking good questions and wondered if the GOC could get copies of her written responses.

A: Rep. Fletcher said U&E Committee had not received the written response at the meeting, but will be getting it and will share that with the GOC.

Chair Hill and other members of the GOC thanked Rep. Fletcher for attending the meeting and for the information he shared.

GOC: Chair Hill asked Director Ashcroft if OPEGA had interaction with the MCSP Board during the review.

OPEGA: Director Ashcroft said OPEGA learned about the MCSP Board in 2007 when the Office had done some brief research related to PSAP rates. Since OPEGA's review was limited to Kennebec County, and we were already gathering input directly from municipal decision-makers and first responders, it was not necessary to involve the MCSP Board.

GOC: Chair Hill asked for a copy of the Surcharge Fund transfers to General Fund referred to by Rep. Fletcher. (Note: That information was prepared by PUC and copies were distributed to the GOC at the meeting.)

GOC: Rep. Rotundo said she would be happy to provide the background in terms of the decisions that were made regarding the transfer of the funds. The AFA Committee did not take the money lightly. There were discussions with the Chairs of the U&E Committee and careful negotiations that went on regarding those transfers.

GOC: Chair Hill said the GOC recognized that there had been good reasons as to why things were done the way they were in the past. There were problems that people did not foresee but which have materialized and now we need to have everyone work together to make the best system possible. It is not the plan to target and blame any particular group, but rather we are looking to solve a problem.

Rep. David Cotta

Rep. Cotta said the towns he represents are in Kennebec County. OPEGA's Report targets the network fragmentation and he wanted to offer some information on why. When Kennebec County closed its call center, it did so within a shorter time frame than the towns expected or were financially prepared for. The total cost for his towns to purchase all of the services that were formally provided by Kennebec County was \$435,000. For South China, China and Weeks Mills, that was \$14,000 over their budgeted amount. He said it is a very emotional issue for the people in his district because they feel they were blindsided, betrayed and they do not feel that they have a part in the budget process. They feel they are paying more for services they had already been paying for through county taxes because of a State heavy handed approach and a decision made by the Kennebec County Commissioners. They went outside Kennebec County because the services were offered at a lower cost.

Rep. Cotta said he is concerned about the discussion here about using surcharge money to cover costs for the PSAPs taking cell phone calls. Reinforcing CMRCC's Budget to address the costs of cell phone calls is not the only solution. It is technologically possible to be directing cell phone calls to the PSAPs that are local to where the cell phone call originates. US Cellular is currently doing this in some counties. The cell phone costs could be dealt with through re-distributing those calls and he wanted to bring that point to the GOC's attention. Rep. Cotta said raising a surcharge on a cell phone or landline and throwing it into a big pot of money will never get costs containment and efficiency. He said the State uses money until there is nothing left and then the cost shifts down to the municipalities. He would like to make sure that those working within the system look to make it cost effective and just don't put money into a system that will not be the best solution for the State.

GOC: Sen. Nass asked if Rep. Cotta was in favor of a system where State Police were dispatched through a county-run center.

A: Rep. Cotta answered in the affirmative.

GOC: Sen. Nass said he was not sure he would be okay with not allowing the State to have dispatch system for the State Police.

A: Rep. Cotta said that law enforcement personnel attend the same academy and are charged with serving and protecting the same people. In his opinion, the goal is to dispatch whatever resource is needed in a particular situation regardless of the agency that resource works for. He said the fallacy that it has to be a person that works for Kennebec County to dispatch the sheriff assets and it has to be somebody from the State Police Bureau to dispatch State Police assets is flawed.

GOC: Rep. Burns said in his county they share call services and they also receive the calls from two CRCCs, Orono and Machias, and it works fine.

GOC: Sen. McCormick said a lot of the complaints he received in Kennebec County were regarding the unexpected charges and cost for coverage.

A: Rep. Cotta said it developed so rapidly that there was not time to adjust for it, or even understand what was going on, and emergency services are very critical.

Chair Hill, on behalf of the GOC, thanked Rep. Cotta for his testimony.

Police Chief Joseph Massey

Chief Massey shared his concerns regarding the current structure of dispatching in Kennebec County. He said his priority is that the City of Waterville receives the highest public safety services possible, including dispatch services. He believes the key to success is cooperation and collaboration, but feels there was no

collaboration, choices, or options given when the State decided to consolidate PSAPs. Waterville was told they were losing their PSAP, that the function would be located somewhere else in the County and would be provided back to you at \$2.50 per capita. That immediately increased their budget by \$48,000. Other negative impacts of losing their PSAP, was that Waterville lost the ANI-ALI technology and thus the ability to look at the location and number of the call. Most of the meetings he attended prior to the consolidation were mostly discussions about rates and he did not hear a lot of talk about what the other impacts were going to be. Chief Massey said it stuns him that the fragmentation of the system was not anticipated. He said both the Kimball and OPEGA Reports suggest the State should put PSAP and dispatch functions under the same roof and Waterville would still like to have its PSAP back. He referred to the letter to Kurt Adams, Chairman, Public Utilities Commission from Paul LePage, Mayor, Mike Roy, City Manager, John Morris, Police Chief and William Page, Fire Chief all of Waterville dated September 13, 2006, in which the City of Waterville had expressed its concerns with losing their PSAP. He had attached that letter to his comment letter on this report.

Chief Massey said he had issues and concerns regarding OPEGA's Report. They included:

- The development of the Report. To his knowledge, there were no law enforcement practitioners that helped research, assemble and look at the survey questions that were sent out and the data and responses used to develop some of the findings and recommendations in the Report.
- The survey results are not listed in the OPEGA Report.
- Waterville, Augusta and Winthrop did not initially receive a copy of the draft report for comment even though they were also subjects of this review. Waterville only received the draft after a call to OPEGA and his insistence, that in fairness, Waterville should be provided a copy so they could respond.

Chief Massey then summarized Waterville's responses and concerns to OPEGA's Report that are included in the Waterville Police Department's comment letter dated February 9, 2010 that is included at the end of OPEGA's Report.

Chief Massey said he is not being critical of any particular agency. Currently Waterville receives its 911 services from Somerset who is providing outstanding service. However, he has concerns about moving forward in the right direction.

GOC: Sen. Trahan addressed the Chief's concern about stakeholders providing input to OPEGA's survey. He said the intent is for OPEGA to conduct its work independently with staff that are qualified to conduct surveys in the proper manner. Allowing stakeholders to be part of the process of developing survey questions and analyzing results would not provide the desired independence and objectivity. Sen. Trahan said he is interested in fixing the structural problems to eliminate issues like blind transfers. If that means to going back to more PSAPs, that is okay as long as it is in the interest of public safety.

GOC: Sen. McCormick asked Chief Massey if he thought four PSAPs could provide the State with adequate services.

A: Chief Massey said he could not answer that question and would have to look at the New Hampshire model that has two PSAPs.

GOC: Sen. Nass said the Legislature is the one who will be voting to adjust the telephone surcharge and therefore have the associated responsibility of making sure that the money is sufficiently used and the services are efficiently done. He said in his district he heard the same concerns, they did not want to lose their PSAP or dispatch functions and he learned that dispatchers also filled other roles in those towns. He asked Chief Massey what else his dispatchers do.

- A: Chief Massey said Waterville dispatch has administrative duties and also oversees a lot of stand alone programs that are technology based. He gave the example of the “Are You Okay” program where Waterville has a system that automatically dials people who have medical problems or are elderly to check on them. He said for the City of Waterville, if they lose their dispatchers, they lose their institutional knowledge of the organization and the community and the citizens of Waterville lose their ability to walk into the Police Department for assistance and get a real person to help them.
- GOC: Rep. Burns said he shares a lot of the same concerns that Chief Massey raised. He said what is glaring out to him is that not one size fits all. He sees a difference between rural and urban law enforcement, EMS, fire, etc., and he cannot imagine a system that can be built well enough that will meet everyone’s needs. Rep. Burns said what he has concluded from testimony and the Reports is that having the dispatch and PSAP under one roof is really important, but he does not believe that trying to combine services for rural and urban areas is going to work adequately enough to provide the public safety.
- GOC: Sen. Diamond said arguments the Chief made are compelling, but the Legislature also has to consider the cost side of the equation and how can the system be designed most efficiently. The State cannot afford every community having its own PSAP and dispatch.
- A: Chief Massey said he appreciates the Legislature’s difficult challenge but questions whether consolidation really saved any money so far. He agrees that having more than what there is currently may cost additional money, but it is not clear that a significant amount of money was saved by consolidating. Chief Massey said he is not being critical of all the agencies, he thinks they all try to do the best with what they have, but it is his obligation to look at what is best for Waterville.
- GOC: Sen. Diamond said there are examples around the State where combining communities and resources has worked well. Although he understands Chief Massey’s position, the Legislature’s position is to look more global and broad to save taxpayers money in the long run.
- GOC: Rep. Rotundo said although she was not directly involved in the discussions of reducing the number of PSAPs, she knew it grew out of a concern about greater efficiency and trying to save money. She said legislators receive pressure from taxpayers for greater efficiency in government in order to save money, but on the other hand, also providing the services that people need, want and expect. Sometimes people don’t realized you often can’t do both. The reality is that when cuts take place there is often a reduction of service. She said it is also important for the public to understand that everyone struggles with this problem and there is very often a trade-off. She was glad Chief Massey shared what the actions have costs Waterville. She said it is a dilemma and hopes that as decisions are made, they are in the best interest of everybody and are focused on the best way to serve the public.
- A: Chief Massey says he does appreciate the challenges that legislative committees face as they struggle with budget cuts especially during these difficult economic times. The reality is that we may face some losses or decreases in services, but it is important that he try to address those as best he can.
- GOC: Sen. Brannigan said he does not think it is just money. The GOC has heard about changes in technology that are happening in the way people are going to call for emergency help. If they still had 40 plus PSAPs around the State, could it be assumed that all of them would be up on the necessary technology. Sen. Brannigan asked if Waterville lost it dispatchers, would the City pick them up.
- A: Chief Massey said he was not sure the stand City Officials would take in regard to the question.
- GOC: Sen. Trahan said there was a consolidation plan to save money and achieve efficiencies, but apparently the 911 fund had a surplus that was used to help balance the State budget. If it was all about saving money and having better services then how do you explain taking the money.



Sen. Trahan referred to OPEGA's recommendation that there be more standardization of how the phone calls are handled and asked Chief Massey if he supported more standardized protocols. Would Chief Massey suggest that best practices protocols be adopted.

A: Chief Massey responded that he does believe there has been some standardization as a result of the recent mandates that dispatchers be sent to E-911 training and become certified. He also believes best practices should be used to the extent possible but many agencies have different needs and challenges.

GOC: Chair Hill asked what Waterville's budget was for its dispatch function.

A: Chief Massey said it was \$450,000.

GOC: Chair Hill asked if Kimball, the consultant who did the PUC's Report, reached out to him in putting that Report together and doing the research on it.

A: Chief Massey said they had one opportunity to meet with Kimball Associates.

The GOC members thanked Chief Massey for the information he provided to the Committee.

#### Dennis Keschl

Mr. Keschl wanted to highlight a few items regarding how PSAP consolidation had affected the Town of Belgrade. The year before the consolidation took place, Belgrade paid \$15,000 to Kennebec County for PSAP and dispatch services. The year the consolidation was implemented Belgrade would have paid \$32,000 for services offered through CMRCC. Belgrade shopped around and reduced the cost from approximately \$30,000 down to \$21,000. The town's LD 1 limitation that year was \$15,000. If Belgrade would have taken the full menu of services from CMRCC, it would have been more than double the LD 1 limitation they had that year. Currently, Belgrade has its PSAP services through the Somerset County Communication Center and its dispatch services, both fire and EMS, through Waterville at the cost of approximately \$31,000 for the upcoming year. If they were to get the services from CMRCC at this time, it would cost \$42,000. Mr. Keschl said the town is being charged based on the census data from 2000 and he assumes future charges will be based on the 2010 census data. In 2006, Belgrade and 16 other towns submitted a resolution to the Governor's Office, PUC, and the U&E Committee that addressed 3 issues. The costs of providing PSAP services should be totally covered by the telephone surcharge and the model for allocating costs to communities on utilization of the service rather than per capita. The Emergency Communication Policy (ECP) Board had worked for 2 or 3 years on a per capita-based model with the intent to go to a user charge system. Many of the towns would like to see the charges based on use, i.e. the number of times there are calls for assistance.

Chair Hill thanked Mr. Keschl for sharing his information with the Committee.

#### Lt. Christopher Read

Lt. Read supervises the Communications Division of the Augusta Police Department and was there when the State came in and took their 911 equipment. He was opposed to that, however, there was no choice in the matter. He also noted that even with the tech equipment, like ANI/ALI, however, dispatchers still had to fall back on the basics of the job which includes confirming the location of the emergency. He gave an example of when his Division still had the PSAP equipment and the center received a call from a woman having a heart attack at the Department of Motor Vehicle on Hospital Street but the ANI/ALI screen said the call was coming from 210 State Street. Lt. Read said all State employee phones are routed by a Centrex System so no matter where you are calling 911 from in a State facility it shows as 210 State Street. So, it is very important that the dispatcher follows the basics of asking where the person is calling from and what the address of the emergency is.

GOC: Chair Hill asked if the State's system was still operating the same way. Were all State employees' lines still showing as coming from 210 State Street.

PUC: Director Maria Jacques said that this situation exists because of the PBX in the State Office Building Centrex System. She said there is technology that OIT could purchase to correct that issue and it has been brought to their attention, but she does not think it has been corrected.

GOC: Sen. Trahan said he would like a follow-up back to the GOC of what it would cost to fix the problem and an explanation from OIT as to why it has not been fixed.

Lt. Read said shortly after the consolidation of PSAPs a gentleman from Augusta who was in the Gray area dialed 911 on his cell phone. He dialed 911 because his father who lived on Longwood Avenue was disoriented. By dialing 911 in Gray the call went to the DPS Center in Gray, they went through a 3-4 minute conversation so he could tell them where he was, where his father was, and what was going on. Gray transferred him to the Augusta CMRCC where the caller gets asked the same questions and had to relay his story again. CMRCC determined it was an Augusta call and transferred it to the Augusta Police Department which is the center that is the one who is going to send the ambulance. That one call took about 18 minutes.

Lt. Read said one of the reasons Augusta switched to Somerset County for PSAP services was because the SMRCC Director had explained that he was able to provide service at a lower cost than CMRCC because the PSAP employee is only going to be on the phone with the caller for about 30 seconds. He does not need to know much about the nature of their emergency, he just wants to know where they are before the call is transferred. Lt. Read said people want to get to the place that is going to help them the fastest way they can. Lt. Read said blind transfers happen, but they probably are not a significant piece of the puzzle.

Lt. Read offered his observations on how New Hampshire gets by with 2 PSAPs. In his opinion that works for NH because they remember that a PSAP is designed to do one thing – answer the 911 call. The PSAP answers the PSAP call, and transfers it to the dispatch in the town the emergency is in. NH realized they could reduce the number of PSAPs, the number of places that answer that 911 call, but they cannot reduce the number of centers in the communities. Lt. Read said his personal opinion is that putting everything under one roof would be looking for trouble. He believes it would be overwhelming for call center employees to be handling both functions particularly if the call is for a medical emergency and require the EMD protocol to be used.

Lt. Read said one issue that has not been raised is radio communications. If PSAP and dispatch were consolidated under one roof, you still have to communicate with the officers and law enforcement agencies in each town and that involves radio frequencies. When you have people dispatching from multiple agencies, you have to have multiple frequencies and he could see that being a huge problem.

GOC: Chair Hill asked Lt. Read to clarify what he meant when he said he did not think it should all go under one roof, was he talking about all PSAPs be consolidated in one or two centers or referring to the system that the Kimball Report was suggesting of having possibly 16 centers where the PSAP and dispatch are together.

A: Lt. Read said his personal opinion was that you could reduce the number of PSAPs in the State as long as they stick to their function. PSAPs were designed to answer 911 calls and perhaps go through the protocol but dispatching them becomes another issue. He thinks there could be more consolidation in Maine but it should also be recognized that rural and urban Maine are vastly different. Lt. Read gave the example that Augusta dispatches for Hallowell for police, fire and EMS and also for half of Chelsea so he thinks some of the large municipalities may be able to absorb small places around them. He does not know, though, whether that would work for all small towns.

GOC: Sen. Trahan said Lt. Read indicated that blind transfers were few and far between but that is not what he thought he understood about CMRCC. He asked the Lieutenant what his experience was with CMRCC.

- A: Lt. Read said the number of blind transfers decreased significantly when Augusta moved from CMRCC to Somerset County Regional Communications Center.

The GOC thanked Lt. Read for attending the GOC meeting and providing information and answering their questions.

## **RECESS**

The Government Oversight Committee recessed at 12:26 p.m. on the motion of Chair Hill.

## **RECONVENED**

Chair Hill reconvened the meeting at 1:24 p.m.

### **- Committee Work Session**

Director Ashcroft reminded the Committee that there was written public comment in their notebooks from Rebecca Renaud. That letter described Ms. Renaud's personal story which is related to the death of her daughter in a car accident and the concerns she had about how emergency services were dispatched in that emergency.

Director Ashcroft said she wanted to respond to a couple of things brought up in Chief Massey's testimony regarding how OPEGA's review was conducted. She provided the GOC with OPEGA's work plan for the Emergency Communications in Kennebec County's review that described the work steps OPEGA performed to arrive at the answers to the six sets of questions and the sources of the data used in those work steps. She wanted to reinforce that there are often multiple sources and types of information collected and used in forming conclusions and development findings. She said the survey instrument that Chief Massey referred to was just one tool that OPEGA used as a means to get an understanding of what people's issues might be and what was driving their decision-making. It was not anything that OPEGA drew a lot of firm conclusions from on its own. OPEGA followed up on issues mentioned in the surveys through interviews and observations that we made during visits to some of the Centers. Chief Massey mentioned that OPEGA had not included the detailed survey information in the Report. There are a number of reasons why – one is brevity and the other is that generally when we send out a survey we want people to feel free to give whatever comments they have without any fear that they are going to be singled out or known publicly. When OPEGA does include survey results it is always in a summarized format.

Director Ashcroft also noted that the best practices to which CMRCC and SRRCC were compared were provided by OPEGA's consultant who derived them from his considerable experience with high performing communication centers around the country and input he gathered from the national organizations related to emergency communications. She referred the GOC to the list of six best practice elements on page 11 of OPEGA's Report. She noted that they are really elements that are critical to any well run operation and she is not sure which of them Chief Massey would have picked out as not being relevant, but she did want to provide the GOC with a reminder of where the best practice information had come from.

Director Ashcroft said lastly she wanted to address Chief Massey's inference that OPEGA had concluded that Maine should be locating PSAP and dispatch together. She wanted to make it clear that OPEGA had not made any such conclusion. The optimum configuration for PSAPs was covered by the Kimball Study and OPEGA left that for them to address. What OPEGA did note was that when calls are being transferred around, those transfers need to be as seamless as possible and she believes that is what the GOC heard Mr. Miller say at the last meeting. Director Ashcroft said there had been a perception from some of the stakeholders from the beginning of OPEGA's review, that because the Office is attached to the State, we had a foregone conclusion in mind about what we were going to come up with. She wanted to assure everyone that was not the case. OPEGA designs every review from scratch, starting with the questions to be explored and looking at the most objective and efficient approach to getting the answers to those questions.

Director Ashcroft reported that the Emergency Communications in Kennebec County Report was presented to the U&E Committee yesterday. During U&E's discussion that Committee recognized that they only have jurisdiction over the PSAP piece of the system, and acknowledge that the emergency communications system should be treated as a whole. Some of the management or quality issues are more under the jurisdiction of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety (CJ&PS) Committee and she has not yet had an opportunity to brief that Committee. She noted that Rep. Burns is a member of the CJ&PS Committee and he felt CJ&PS did need to weigh in to some degree as it relates to public safety and some of the entities under their jurisdiction.

Director Ashcroft reminded the GOC that there was a short time frame remaining in which to introduce legislation. Another option would be for the GOC to convey, via letter, to the U&E Committee any concerns believed to be under their purview that the GOC would like to see action on.

Chair Hill said there are two things going on. First there are immediate problems with the current system brought to the GOC's attention through the OPEGA report. Second there is the PUC Study that talks about how to change the PSAP configuration and improve it for the future. She hopes the GOC will stay focused on the OPEGA Report and come up with a way to take care of the immediate issues impacting public safety. Since there is a short window of time to introduce legislation, she wants the Committee to make good decisions and handle things appropriately so as not to lose steam. At the same time she feels it is important not to alienate any of the committees of jurisdiction so she would like to work on bringing those committees into the discussion.

GOC: Sen. Trahan said given some of the criticism of OPEGA in the past, he thought the GOC should act as quickly as possible on addressing the report recommendations. The GOC should introduce a bill that includes in it all the recommendations for legislative action, refer it to the U&E Committee and let them decide what they believe they can work on now. Sen. Trahan said he believes the GOC should take control of OPEGA reports, move forward aggressively and try to get recommendations adopted.

A: Rep. Fletcher concurred with Sen. Trahan saying he believes the OPEGA Report was very well laid out as far as recommendations for management action and legislative action. He does not want to commit to anything on behalf of the U&E Committee, but if money is needed for proper training then there may be an avenue to obligate some surcharge money for it before they decrease the rate. He said the full U&E Committee would have to consider that.

GOC: Sen. Nass asked if the GOC has the ability to introduce legislation, can that legislation be referred back to the GOC for public hearing and recommendation to the Legislature.

A: Director Ashcroft said she did not think so. GOC's statute gives authority to introduce legislation at any time but it would be referred to the committees of jurisdiction.

GOC: Sen. Nass said that last year the Legislature created a joint select committee on energy and they received and acted on legislation.

OPEGA: Director Ashcroft said that may be up to the referring bodies. OPEGA's statute does not really address it. Statute says the GOC can introduce legislation but there are not any specifics as to whether the GOC would receive legislation. Typically the GOC has felt like it would be directed to the committees of jurisdiction, but she is not sure whether the GOC is precluded from receiving and hearing a bill.

GOC: Sen. Trahan said the intent was exactly as Director Ashcroft had explained it.

GOC: Chair Hill asked Sen. Trahan if he was factoring into his suggestion to introduce legislation the fact that some changes have to happen now to safeguard citizen's welfare.

- GOC: Sen. Trahan said he could not speak for the U&E Committee so he did not say he wanted the action taken this year, but he thinks the members of the U&E Committee are as concerned about making positive changes as the GOC noting that Rep. Fletcher had talked about the management changes as well.
- OPEGA: Director Ashcroft said that in the past the GOC has written a letter directing an agency to come back at a given date with a report on what actions they have taken and what improvements have been made. That might be an appropriate avenue for addressing the management actions.
- GOC: Sen. McCormick said he might have referred some of the management actions to the Maine Communications System Policy (MCSP) Board but he did not know what the Board has been doing. He asked if that should be considered.
- A: Rep. Fletcher agreed but thought expectations would need to be clearly communicated, both in time and quality of output, and that the Legislature keep track of the milestones that are being reached.
- GOC: Chair Hill asked how often the Board met, how active they really are and if they report to the U&E Committee once a year. She asked if Rep. Fletcher could call them in the next month to talk to them regarding the Report.
- A: Rep. Fletcher discovered that the Board, by statute, is supposed to give the U&E Committee copies of their annual report. He believes the Board meets approximately 10 times a year. Their duties and responsibilities are clearly outlined in the enabling legislation that goes back to the 121<sup>st</sup> Legislature so he would assume that the U&E Committee would be willing to review it with the proper people.
- GOC: Chair Hill asked whether, based on the reports that the Board has furnished to the U&E Committee, it appears that they are aware of the problems pointed out in the OPEGA Report.
- A: Rep. Fletcher said he reviewed the January, 2010 report, which talks about 2009, and did not see any specific reference to the issues raised by OPEGA perhaps because OPEGA's Report was not done. The report talked more about current status and he has not seen an action plan to correct any of the issues that were identified.

Chair Hill recognized Janet Joyeux.

- A: Ms. Joyeux said the Policy Board's report was issued before OPEGA's Report was released so they did not address management actions of the Report. She said the Policy Board is not looking at the day-to-day operations of the Communication Centers, it is charged with setting policy. If you refer back to the legislation, it is specifically talking about Kennebec County and voluntary consolidation of emergency communications in Kennebec County. The Board has a very limited scope and Ms. Joyeux suggested that if the GOC wanted to change the scope they need to include it in their legislation. The charge of the Board does not fit what is being discussed here.

Ms. Joyeux said that prior to the PUC being directed to set DPS' rates, that the budget subcommittee of the Policy Board had a direction it was headed in with regard to rates. The goal had been, after a couple years of operation as a consolidated center, to look at the cost allocation methodology and move toward a two-tiered fee structure. One tier would be a base fee that everyone would pay and then on top of that would be a usage fee based on call volume. The Board's work was interrupted by the PUC rate setting process so the budget subcommittee suspended its work and the process moved to the PUC. If allowed to, the Policy Board could go back toward that direction and look at other methodology. Currently they do not have that authority because the PUC has the authority.

- OPEGA: Director Ashcroft asked Ms. Joyeux if she thinks the Board would be the appropriate body to deal with the rate methodology disparities given the Board's focus and scope in Kennebec County, and the fact that it seems to be related to DPS' Centers. Other than being able to set a different methodology for DPS' Centers, would the Board be able to address anything about the other centers that are serving Kennebec County?
- A: Ms. Joyeux said she did not believe the Board would be the proper entity to do the other centers and thinks the rate methodology is a much bigger policy issue. Cellular phone calls is a large component of that discussion and that is a policy decision. When E-911 was authorized in Maine there were very few cell phones and the decision was made that cellular calls would be directed to the DPS' Centers. They continually have to try to add staff to take care of the escalating number of cell phone calls. State government had been paying for answering cell phone calls until DPS created a separate bureau and pulled the communication function out of the State Police and put it into the Communications Bureau which was set up as an enterprise account. A large portion of the funding for DPS' Bureau of Communications comes from the State Police who receive their funding from General Fund and Highway Fund appropriations and the State Police did not get funded for the full cost of their dispatch services that they needed to pay to the Communications Bureau. Ms. Joyeux said several different legislative committees are involved in determining the budgets for the State agencies that get dispatch services from the DPS Communications Bureau. These committees don't understand what their budget decisions have for implications on the whole picture.
- GOC: Sen. Trahan suggested a user type or surcharge fee through cell phones to pay for the E-911 services.
- GOC: Sen. Nass said the Taxation Committee has been discussing what to do with the telecommunications personal property tax and it may be possible that Sen. Trahan's suggestion could be folded in to a change. He thought this would essentially be shifting the cost from landlines to wireless.
- A: Rep. Fletcher said the Kimball Report included an analysis of the current assessment on phones and how much more the surcharge would have to be raised to cover the total cost for both the PSAP technology and operations. He did not want to commit that is going to be the solution, but thinks that everyone is learning about the different options. Because of the technology changes it may no longer make sense to fund services from a rate based on how many people you have in any specific community. An alternative option would be, once the PSAP configuration is in a highly efficient state, to say that service could be funded directly from the surcharge on the phone or on the user's bill. Those that are benefiting from the service, would be the ones who contribute and pay.
- GOC: Sen. Brannigan said he was not sure the GOC was the committee to handle all the decisions. The GOC has raised the issues and it is the committee of jurisdiction to address those issues and suggested that the GOC introduce legislation and work with the committee of jurisdiction.
- A: Rep. Fletcher said he cannot speak for the rest of the U&E Committee but he has the greatest respect for them and understands their urgency about the matter. They may not all have the same experience from it, but do have the same concerns.
- GOC: Sen. Brannigan asked how the U&E Committee would react to the OPEGA Report.
- A: Rep. Fletcher said the Committee has gone through the OPEGA Report and his sense from many of the questions and reactions is that it was taken very seriously and they understand that they have to move forward and make changes.
- GOC: Sen. Nass said he thought two of the legislative recommendations would go to the CJ&PS Committee, and the recommendations regarding rate setting would go to the U&E Committee.

- OPEGA: Director Ashcroft noted that one of the recommendations was for steps to be taken to assure there was consistency among centers in the way calls are handled. OPEGA observed that the PUC's Emergency Services Communications Bureau might be the entity best situated, given current roles and responsibilities, to facilitate establishing consistent procedure and protocols on dispatch as well as PSAP. If the PUC is going to have this responsibility then clarifying their role in statute would be helpful. The U&E Committee has jurisdiction over the PUC.
- GOC: Sen. Nass said the GOC has been talking a lot about the protocols for emergency medical dispatch and he believes those were developed by EMS, which is part of DPS and those issues may have to go to the CJ&PS Committee.
- OPEGA: Director Ashcroft said the training for the emergency medical dispatch is paid for and arranged for by the PUC through the surcharge.
- PUC: Director Jacques said the rules associated with the EMD protocols developed under the EMS unit which is part of Public Safety. This responsibility was given to EMS because they already had a body in place that regulates EMS providers. The PUC's ESCB has rule making authority for policies and procedures related to standards development for PSAPs. The ESCB and EMS work well together on EMD matters. The ESCB helps EMS arrange all the training and EMS does the quality assurance and licensing certification because they already have a process in place to do so.
- GOC: Sen. Nass said he does not have any particular concern about what committee the bill goes to, but the GOC should not expect that it is going to go to the U&E Committee.
- OPEGA: Director Ashcroft said that OPEGA had made recommendations on 2 different issues that need to be addressed, both of which would affect the rates that DPS charges. The first issue is whether there should be a different way of funding or distributing costs associated with cell phone calls. Some of the other emergency communications centers want to receive the cell phone calls coming from their service areas. In Somerset County and some other counties, US Cellular and the PUC have already taken steps to get US Cellular calls directed to local centers instead of the DPS centers. It is technologically-feasible to redistribute cell calls out of DPS centers to other centers thus reducing workload for DPS which could mean reductions in staffing costs and lower rates. However, Director Jacques will tell you that this is a very time consuming process and may not be worthwhile if municipalities can keep changing PSAP providers. Additionally, the Legislature needs to recognize, if it decides to fund cell phone costs differently, that there are cell calls going to more than just the DPS centers.
- The second issue is the fact that DPS' Communications Bureau is set up to be an enterprise fund and has used a rate methodology that is consistent with that, i.e. rates must cover all costs. This methodology is different than all the other emergency communications centers. If it is desirable to bring DPS rates on a more even level with the other centers, then the Legislature should think about changing the enterprise fund approach and using a different methodology to determine rates. OPEGA recommended that the Legislature may want to think about going to an incremental methodology like Somerset has, but remember that all four DPS centers are in the mix.
- Director Ashcroft said there is also a legislative recommendation to revisit what the PUC's role should be in setting rates for the DPS. The next rate setting process will begin this summer. The Legislature should decide if it wants the PUC to go forward with the rate setting case or whether that should be taken out of statute and the root cause issues dealt with in a different way. Alternatively, the PUC could be directed to address the issues during the rate case. This is the recommendation that is the most time sensitive.
- GOC: Sen. Brannigan asked if the GOC should do one or three bills if it is decided the recommendations do not all come under the U&E Committee.

- A: Rep. Fletcher said that he believes the most immediate issue that needs to be addressed is the PUC rate setting issue and that should be sent to the U&E Committee to deal with this session.
- A: Ms. Joyeux said many of the recommendations are for management action, and she wanted to let the GOC know that Commissioner Jordan, Director Wells and herself are taking OPEGA's recommendations very seriously. They can definitely see that there are issues and said they are addressing them, but she reiterated that dealing with employee performance issues is not an easy process.
- OPEGA: Director Ashcroft said she wanted to remind the GOC of timing. If they wanted to introduce legislation of their own, the bill will have to go through the process of being referred to the committee of jurisdiction and for that Committee to have time to work on the legislation this session, the GOC has to move quickly.
- GOC: Chair Hill asked how the GOC wanted to proceed, introduce its own legislation or write a letter to the U&E Committee asking that they introduce legislation.
- GOC: Sen. Trahan said he thought the GOC should introduce the legislation and have it referred to the U&E Committee.
- GOC: Sen. Diamond asked if a fiscal note was anticipated on the bill.
- A: Rep. Fletcher said no because it is not a General Fund allocation. There will be a fiscal note, but it will not impact the General Fund because it is driven off the surcharge fees and special revenues managed primarily by the PUC.
- GOC: Sen. Diamond said it still goes to the Table whether it is Special Revenues or General Fund.
- OPEGA: Director Ashcroft said some of the key items that need to get done, such as changing the legislation related to the PUC rate case would not require any funding. The idea of using the surcharge for training is something that would be nice, but if that got put off, it would not be as critical.
- A: Rep. Fletcher said he would expect, if it was the wish of the U&E Committee that they could deal with quite a few, if not all, of the actions. He was not saying that the GOC should not put the legislation out, but in the next two to three weeks the U&E Committee was going to be making some fundamental decisions around the E-911 rate, as well as what action they are going to take as the result of the Kimball Report. It's possible U&E will have already decided to take some of the actions talked about at today's meeting.
- GOC: Sen. McCormick said he was still unclear on some of the immediate problems involving training and filling vacant supervisory positions. He asked if the costs all needed to be covered through the enterprise account or is DPS going to get additional revenue to solve those problems without waiting for another budget process.
- A: Rep. Fletcher said if U&E Committee took action to relieve the PUC rate setting requirement then DPS would be back in a normal process of coming up with the needed revenue. With some changes to statute it might be possible to use E-911 surcharge for training. And there might also be ways to use it to cover the short term immediate needs, depending on what U&E decided to do.

**Motion:** That the Government Oversight Committee submit legislation for the three legislative action recommendations in OPEGA's Emergency Communications in Kennebec County Report for introduction to this Legislature. (Motion by Sen. Trahan, second by Sen. Diamond)



- GOC: Rep. Pendleton asked for clarification on whether the bill is going to have all three of the recommendations in it. She believes that once the problem of the PUC rate setting is solved, a lot of the others issues will fall into place and that should be emphasized in the Motion.
- GOC: Sen. Trahan suggested the GOC could send a letter saying that this is the one item that appeared to be the priority and he would accept Rep. Pendleton's friendly amendment to his Motion.
- GOC: Sen. Brannigan said if the GOC's legislation gets held up or sidetracked, U&E Committee could go forward with its own legislation.
- GOC: Chair Hill asked Director Jacques if the rate setting process would start this summer.
- PUC: Director Jacques believes that to be correct.
- GOC: Chair Hill asked if anyone had an estimate of what the rate setting process costs.
- OPEGA: Director Ashcroft said the Report gave the cost, incurred by DPS and the Attorney General's Office during the last rate case, but there was not an estimate of the PUC's cost.
- PUC: Director Jacques said she does not believe the PUC kept track of what the staff cost was, but knew considerable time was involved.
- GOC: Sen. Nass said usually the cost for a PUC rate case is paid for by the organization the PUC is setting rates for. In this case, DPS was not at the table with any money so he assumes the rate setting activity had to be paid for by someone else.
- GOC: Chair Hill said if you do not have to go through that rate setting process, money will be saved on a number of fronts and we will be able to resolve the problem before us about the rate CMRCC has to operate under.
- A: Rep. Fletcher said action has to be taken almost immediately to get the training process developed. There is also a management and supervisory issue at CMRCC and they do not have the money to pay for additional supervisor's salaries, so even if the Legislature puts a plan in place, they may have to do some very short term one-time things because of the urgency of the issues and then look at it longer term when the Legislature has more time to deal with it during the legislative process.
- GOC: Chair Hill asked if there was any further discussion regarding Sen. Trahan's motion and Rep. Pendleton's friendly amendment.
- GOC: Sen. Brannigan said that Chair Hill should be the sponsor on the bill as she was here.
- Motion:** That the Government Oversight Committee submit legislation for the three legislative action recommendations in OPEGA's Emergency Communications in Kennebec County Report for introduction to this Legislature and will emphasize the urgent nature of the recommendation regarding the PUC rate setting case. (Motion by Sen. Trahan, second by Sen. Diamond, PASSED 11-0).
- OPEGA: Director Ashcroft said she will work with the Revisor's Office on how to get the legislation in the process as quickly as possible.
- GOC: Chair Hill said the GOC will need a hard copy to see the format it will be submitted in and then the U&E Committee will go to work on it and craft it the way they feel it needs to be. She said she and Sen. Simpson would like to know exactly how it was worded because they need to be able speak to it.

GOC: Rep. Pendleton said on other committees it is usually the Chairs who are the sponsors and then the rest of the Committee can sign on or the sponsor can put the rest of the GOC members' down as relevant contacts. That would allow the GOC members to look at the language that otherwise would be kept confidential.

GOC: Chair Hill thanked Rep. Pendleton for that information.

OPEGA: Director Ashcroft asked if the GOC wanted to deal with the management recommendations in the Report. She wondered if the Committee wanted to send a letter to the DPS asking for them to come back with a report on the actions they were taking.

GOC: Chair Hill said the GOC should give Director Ashcroft direction on the management recommendations.

OPEGA: Director Ashcroft said the GOC was well within their purview to send a letter and ask for a report from the DPS. That is a little less clear when it comes to the other non-state agencies, but she thinks most of the concerns resided at CMRCC. Director Ashcroft said she could draft a letter for the Chairs' signature.

**Motion:** That the Government Oversight Committee send a letter to the Department of Public Safety requesting a report back on an action plan within 60 days, status update at six months and again at the beginning of the next legislative session, January 31, 2011. (Motion by Sen. Trahan, second by Sen. Nass, PASSED, 11-0).

**Motion:** That the Government Oversight Endorse OPEGA's Emergency Communications in Kennebec County Report. (Motion by Rep. Pendleton, second by Sen. Trahan, PASSED, 11-0).

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Review of OPEGA's Current Workplan**

Not discussed.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

## **REPORT FROM OPEGA DIRECTOR**

- **Project Status Report**

Not discussed.

- **Update on Report Presentation to Utilities and Energy Committee**

Already discussed during work session on OPEGA Final Report.

- **Follow-up on Action Items From Last Meeting**

Not discussed

- **Update on OPEGA Budget Matters**

Not discussed.

## **NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING**

The next Government Oversight Committee meeting was scheduled for Friday, March 19, 2010.

Chair Hill asked if there was any other agenda item that a member felt should be addressed at today's meeting or could the remainder of the items go to the next meeting. Hearing no objections, Chair Hill moved for adjournment of the meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The Government Oversight Committee meeting was adjourned at 2:51 p.m. (Motion of Rep. McLeod, second by Sen. Nass, unanimous).

Testimony Submitted To:

**GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**  
**February 26, 2010**  
**8:00 a.m.**  
Room 216, Cross **Building**  
**RE: Emergency Communications in Kennebec County**  
Provided by: Rebecca Renaud  
1016 Riverside Dr.  
Vassalboro, ME 04989  
Cell - 207-333-0236  
Work - 207-287-6977

Good Morning Chair Simpson and other esteemed members of the Government Oversight Committee.

My name is Rebecca Renaud and I am writing this testimony in hopes that your Committee can influence positive changes in the Emergency Communications center for Kennebec County.

This issue is very important to me, as I lost my daughter Amanda (Mandy) Edwards on November 15, 2008 in a car accident on the Stone Road in Vassalboro. This accident occurred not more than 2,000 feet from Route 3.

A witness was to Amanda's side within 30 seconds of the accident. He was a retired EMT and called 911 immediately to let them know she was in very bad shape. He had to call twice more, pleading for them to get someone there. Sadly, by the time the ambulance arrived (over 30 minutes later) she had given up the fight to stay with us.

Because she was not alive when they arrived, the ambulance did not take her to the hospital, so her final wish was stolen from her that day along with her life. If she had been taken to the hospital, her wish of donating her organs could have been fulfilled. She may have given sight to someone; she could have given life or better quality of life to several others. I would have had the peace of knowing that a part of her lived on and that some good came out of this tragedy.

I started requesting information (on what happened and why it took over 30 minutes for the ambulance to get there) in mid-January 2009. I contacted the State Police 4-times before getting any response and the problem with communication and follow up continued until July of 2009.

Even now, I am left with unanswered questions because no one actually ever admitted that a mistake was made or explained why no call was ever made to an Augusta Ambulance. The transcripts clearly show that Delta informed them that they should.

The lack of acknowledgement, compassion, and communication left me feeling completely ignored and invalidated. I felt that I was given only minimal information, and that the information I did receive was unclear as though the truth were being veiled. I simply wanted (and still do) information to help me process the unimaginable tragedy of losing my daughter Mandy, for myself and for meaningful changes to be made to protect others in the future.

It is evident in the transcripts that the communication, teamwork, and training were lacking in the call center the day that my daughter Mandy pass away, for me, the tragedy was made so much worse by the lack of response, empathy, compassion, and customer service after the fact.

I am urging you to please, save another family from this heartache. Please do what you can to make effective and binding changes for the better to improve the quality of service at this center to better protect the communities it serves.

I appreciate your time and I thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

I am available to answer any questions you may have and would be happy to supply you with all documentation I have acquired.

God Bless

Rebecca Renaud