



Town of Middlefield Communications Committee

STM – Emergency Communications Improvements

Several years ago the town spent many thousands of dollars to upgrade our communications equipment to comply with FCC mandates. That upgrade never addressed several technical problems that our current request is designed to remedy.

Our present system has several serious flaws:

- Direct communication from portables to Berkshire dispatch is impossible from many town locations. When Tom was unable to communicate from River Road, he had to put his own life at risk in his attempt to rescue a drowning man. Nor do pagers receive alert signals from many locations.
- Cell phone 911 calls are routed to Hampshire County dispatch, while land line 911 calls are handled by Berkshire County.
- Berkshire County Sherriff's Dispatch will soon cost nearly ten thousand dollars a year to handle our few calls a month.

Our recommended solution:

- Install a repeater (relay station) at our Town Hall to broadcast County communications and route local signals back to the central dispatcher. This would entail a sophisticated transmitter – receiver system and a 30-40 foot tower with new antennas.
- Specialized low power repeaters will be installed in at least two fire trucks and the police cruiser. These local repeaters will enable portable communication with central dispatch or other town units when portable units are in proximity to the repeater equipped vehicles.
- We will apply to change our dispatch to Hampshire County, which is supported by the State at no cost to the towns. We also plan to direct both land line and cell 911 calls to Hampshire County, providing a single point of dispatch.

Once funding is approved at the STM, we will then proceed with vendor qualification and the letting of a request for bids to bring this needed safety upgrade to fruition.