

Dec. 3, 2018

To: Cass County Emergency Services Board Members
From: Jim Feuerborn, Raymore City Manager
RE: Full Physical Consolidation of the current 5 PSAPs

For decades the citizens in communities throughout Cass County have relied on the outstanding service provided by all five of the Public Safety Answering Points and the agencies for which they dispatch. The service provided by these PSAPs is only strengthened by the connection each individual PSAP has with the community and agencies they serve.

That is why we write this letter to strenuously object to the action being proposed by the members of the Cass County Emergency Services Board to physically consolidate and eliminate the five current PSAPs.

We not only object to the prospect of losing our locally operated dispatch center, but we vehemently protest the manner in which it is being handled. The lack of transparency is unconscionable and the failure of ESB members to obtain input from the area Chiefs of Police and Sheriff - who serve as PSAP managers - and City Managers makes it appear that some ESB members are unwilling to hear from professional staff of the five PSAPs you are proposing to eliminate.

By not consulting the affected jurisdictions, the ESB's proposed action fails to recognize the multi-agency disruption it would cause for those agencies that contract dispatching services with Raymore. It also grossly ignores the training, support and investment made in all of the outstanding personnel as well as the physical facility improvements. In Raymore alone, our council allocated more than \$300,000 to build a state-of-the-art communications center with the sole purpose of housing the equipment provided by the taxpayers of Cass County and entrusted to the ESB.

In early 2018, the ESB spent \$63,750 of taxpayer money to hire the IXP Corporation to conduct a "*Centralized Communications Center Feasibility Study*." (CCESB 2018) The handpicked consultants hailed Cass County's current virtual consolidation of its five PSAPs as a model for other jurisdictions and recommended that the ESB not move forward with full physical consolidation.

"IXP believes that considerable regional benefit could be achieved through increasing levels of **virtual consolidation** with the communications centers already in operation." (pg. 33 IXP)

Furthermore, the report recommended that it would be "highly reasonable to consider pursuit of a virtual consolidation strategy that integrates the functionality of the CAD systems of the five separate communications centers."

Rather than spending an incredible amount of money on a new building, the residents of Cass County would be better served by the ESB funding an upgraded CAD system as recommended by your own consultant.

To pursue a full physical consolidation, the IXP report said the ESB would be required to spend more than \$4 million in taxpayer money on a new physical location. This total does not account for potential land acquisition, civil engineering and utility construction costs. Nor does it contemplate the annual operating cost for a new single facility. IXP also stressed the importance of identifying a second facility to use as a backup location, which would add additional taxpayer money to the overall price tag of this ill-conceived project.

"Freestanding and contemporary public safety communications centers are typically the most expensive facilities projects ever undertaken by local governments." (pg. 32 IXP)

Even before IXP issued its own report specific to Cass County, the Missouri State Department of Public Safety also released a definitive report, *"Missouri 911 Modernization and Improvement Report,"* that highlighted how virtual consolidation better and more efficiently serves the public.

"PSAPs that are already providing the best possible technology and service to their population in the most efficient and economical manner possible should continue that function. Virtual consolidation or shared technical services between PSAPs or the regional 911 coordination center should also be pursued to meet the interoperability goals of the State and decrease redundancy." (MSDPS 21-22)

Looking at the state report and your own consultant's recommendations, we believe that full physical consolidation to a single building would be a detrimental step backward. In short, what problem is the ESB attempting to solve through this proposal?

Because of the pride in which we serve, it is particularly abhorrent for anyone to assume that we no longer wish or are unable to provide this service to the communities where we live and work. We are proud that both police and fire agencies outside of Raymore have chosen to use our PSAP to provide professional and collaborative dispatch services.

If the ESB members continue to force this issue onto our residents, the City of Raymore is fully prepared to pursue any and all legal remedies at our disposal to ensure the continued operation of our dispatch center, which is a cost-effective and critical service that keeps our residents safe.

Before taking any action at your Dec. 19 meeting, it would be our hope that the ESB members reconsider this position and consult in good faith with the jurisdictions throughout Cass County that provide these critical services every day.



Jim Feuerborn
City Manager
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Cc:

Cass County Emergency Services Board Executive Director Robin Tieman
Mid-America Regional Council Public Safety Communications Director Eric Winebrenner
City of Belton City Manager Alexa Barton
City of Harrisonville City Manager Happy Welch
City of Pleasant Hill City Manager Shelby Teufel
Cass County Presiding Commissioner Jeff Cox
Cass County Presiding Commissioner-Elect Bob Huston