

Update: Broward County Emergency Communications



Sheriff Bob Gualtieri – MSD Public Safety Commission Chair
June 2019

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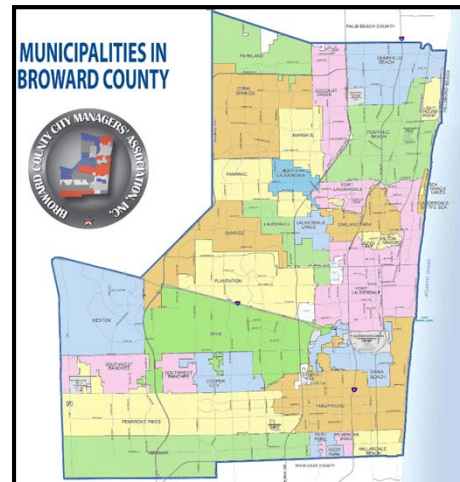
Origin of Regional Communications System



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Emergency Services

- 31 municipalities in Broward County
- 20 fire agencies; 19 local law enforcement agencies
- 11 PSAPs (911 centers) before regionalization
- Differing public safety models:
 - Municipalities have their own law enforcement/fire
 - Municipalities contract with neighboring municipalities
 - Municipalities contract with BSO.



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Origin of Regionalization: 2002 – Voters amended County Charter

November 05, 2002:

“As proposed by the Charter Review Commission, Article V was renumbered and entitled ‘Public Safety,’ with a new Section 5.03 providing for:

(1) the establishment and funding of a communications infrastructure for fire and emergency medical services to facilitate closest unit response for life-threatening emergencies, and support for regional specialty teams; and (2) the establishment of an advisory Fire-Rescue Council to facilitate coordination between the County and Municipalities.”

Source: Broward County Charter, Appendix A



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Origin of Regionalization:

2011 – Broward County Consolidated Communications Committee (BCCCC)

- Formed November 2011 to evaluate feasibility of regional communications system
- 22 members:
 - Board of County Commissioners
 - League of Cities
 - Chiefs of Police Association
 - Fire Chiefs Association
 - Fire-Rescue Services Council

Source: BCCCC Report, March 2012



Origin of Regionalization:

2012 – Broward County Consolidated Communications Implementation ("I-Board")

- Formed March 2012 by County Commission
- 32 members from city and county government; police and fire chiefs associations represented as well
- February 2013 – I-Board issued its final report
- I-Board **recommended County Government oversee regional communications**
- Set goal to be active by October 01, 2013
- Plantation and Coral Springs chose not to join; Coral Springs was concerned the level of service would be inferior to their current system.

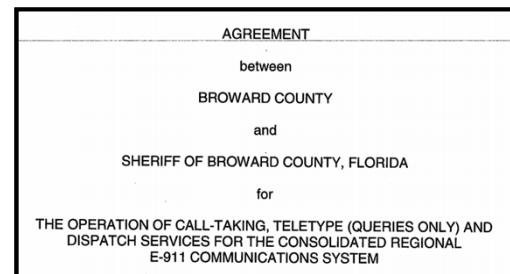
Source: Broward County Consolidated Communications Implementation Board ("I-Board") report, February 2013



Origin of Regionalization: 2013 - Operator Agreement

- Signed September 2013:
 - Bertha Henry, County Administrator
 - Sheriff Scott Israel
 - Kristin Jacobs, County Mayor
- Municipalities join the regional system through Inter-Local Agreements (ILA)
- Allocated nearly all authority and responsibility to the County:

“COUNTY shall provide for the management, administration, and oversight of the Consolidated Regional E-911 Communications System”



Source: Operator Agreement for Regional Communications System



Management and Operation of Regionalized Communications

- Regional communications commenced in 2014.
- The County, under the Office of Regional Communications and Technology (ORCAT), became the “management entity.”
- BSO became the “operator.” As the operator, BSO employed the call-takers, dispatchers and supervisors and ran daily operations.
- The County funded the regional 911 centers and provided all the technology.
- The participating cities closed their 911 centers and because the County assumed all funding, the cities saved millions of dollars.

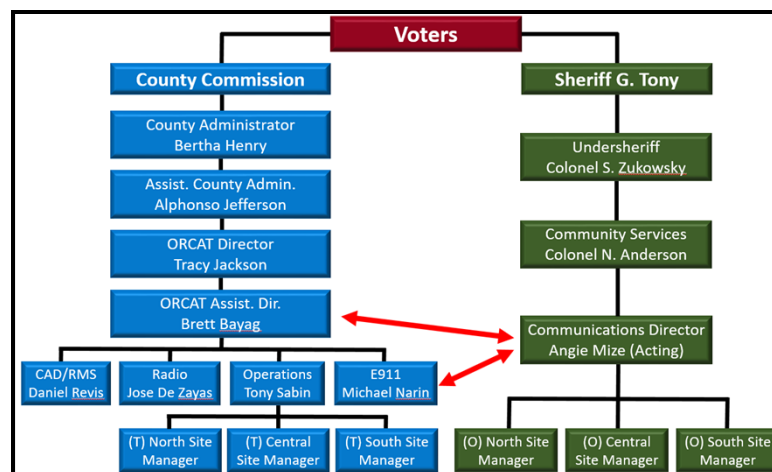


Implementation and Operations of Regional Communications System



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Implementation and Operations: October 2014 – Regional System Implemented



Note: This reflects the current structure; ORCAT Director Tracy Jackson was hired in 2018



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Implementation and Operations:

Structure of Regional System

- Eleven PSAPs consolidated into three regional communications centers: North, Central and South
- Governance boards provide direction for regional system. The Governance boards are: CAD; Law Enforcement; and Fire
- Operational Review Teams (ORTs): “are responsible for vetting all operational issues that could impact the Regional 911 system, and for issue resolution, analysis and reporting.” – ORCAT website
- ORCAT/County personnel all answer to County Administrator Bertha Henry and BSO personnel answer to the Sheriff.



Implementation and Operations:

Structure of Regional System

- Problems started immediately in 2014 between ORCAT, BSO and public safety agency system users (police and fire departments).
- There were operational disagreements beyond the “usual” start-up issues and “growing pains.”
- Issues became personal and tension grew among the stakeholders.
- Distrust became an impediment to resolving issues.
- The users believed ORCAT was exceeding its boundaries and dictating operational issues with which it had no experience.
- To address the concerns, the County retained Fitch and Associates in 2016 to study the system and make recommendations.



Implementation and Operations:

Early 2016: Fitch & Associates

- Fitch found tensions existed.
- "...there have been concerns about the relevant utility of the current performance metrics and the System's ability to quickly achieve all the ambitious goals initially defined by the various stakeholders.
There was significant agreement/consensus in the early stages of the consolidation based on numerous meetings and adoption by all parties of interlocal agreements. However, it is fair to note that such consensus has now dissipated in a number of areas." – Fitch Report Introduction, December 2016



Implementation and Operations:

December 2016: Fitch & Associates Report

- "...concerns that existing processes and governance structures keep the system from achieving significant additional improvements."
- "County staff is essentially attempting to 'run operations' of the law enforcement and fire rescue agencies."
- "concern by many communities was that too much emphasis is placed on performance metrics in lieu of ensuring the quality of services."
- "This issue of relevant and meaningful performance measures is an area of significant friction between the parties. FITCH has identified a number of problems in the current assessment of System performance."
- Employee surveys revealed "organization that has significant morale problems and frustration with lingering staffing, training and management issues."

Source: Fitch & Associates Report



Implementation and Operations: December 2016: Fitch & Associates Report

- “One of the major concerns shared by all stakeholders is the state of relations among the various parties, specifically the County, BSO in their role as a contractor in operating the regional communications system, and end-users, namely law enforcement and fire rescue personnel who provide direct services to residents and visitors...there is a consensus among the parties that **“something is broken”**. Every group indicated that **“there is a lack of trust”** between system participants.” (emphasis added).

Source: Fitch & Associates Report



Implementation and Operations: June 2017: Joint Statement by Chiefs Associations

- June 2017: Police and Fire Chiefs issued a joint statement
- “ORCAT (makes) operational decisions when they have no operational expertise in E911 call taking, police and fire/rescue dispatching, and the operational requirements of the police and fire/rescue services.”
- “day-to-day operation of the system must be predominately the responsibility of the public safety professionals.”
- Proposed to the CRC that it support creation of Director of Public Safety Communications who would answer directly to the County Commission and put the proposal on the ballot.
- Proposed creation of Public Safety Communications Advisory Council comprised of personnel from various, relevant fields.



Implementation and Operations:

Mid-2017: Response to Joint Chiefs Statement

- Mayor Mike Ryan of Sunrise and County Administrator Bertha Henry spoke before a subcommittee of the Charter Review Commission.
- Mayor Ryan spoke in favor of the chiefs' proposals to create a Director of Public Safety Communications reporting directly to the BCC; Administrator Henry spoke against the proposals.
- Administrator Henry proposed hiring an ORCAT director with public safety experience to address the chiefs' concerns and the chiefs' proposals were rejected by the CRC.



Implementation and Operations:

April 2018: Renewed Push for Chiefs' Proposals

- April 18, 2018, Mayor Ryan authored an email to Broward County Commissioners.
- Mayor Ryan referenced his 2017 presentation in front of the Charter Review Commission and that the proposals had been defeated.
- Asked the County Commission to put the matter on the ballot creating Director of Public Safety Communications reporting directly to the BCC.
- "Reported outages of the 911 system (sometime under extraordinarily unbelievable circumstances), the throttling of the radios during major events, and the radio tower failures that results in unreported radio failures."



Implementation and Operations:

May 2018: BSO and Chiefs' Letter to Bertha Henry

- “(We) believe there exists a lack of planning, a lack of oversight, a lack of funding and no clear vision for one of the most important components of public safety.”
- “We are troubled that ORCAT took very little to no responsibility (for past failures), and instead the lion’s share of the blame was put on the fire and police personnel.”
- “There have been committees such as the CCCC and ORT committee with little or no measurable success. Representatives of the both Associations and BSO to these committees have reported frustration on the inability to get things done.”
- “BSO and both Associations seek a system-wide approach, led by a subject matter expert, with the experience, ability, authority, and resources to ensure the citizens, visitors, and first responders have a communications infrastructure they can depend on to receive and relay critical lifesaving information.”



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Implementation and Operations:

September 2018: Chiefs' Letter to Bertha Henry

- Sunrise Police Chief Anthony Rosa is chair of the ORT and last September he, along with Sunrise Fire Chief John McNamara sent a letter to the County Administrator stating:
 - “lack of input by the respective public safety professionals, demonstrating fundamental misunderstandings as to the appropriate role of the County, and raising the specter of setting unilateral operational decisions and performance standards without regard to the impact on our collective agencies.”



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Implementation and Operations

- The Fitch report was issued in December 2016, the chiefs expressed concern over the lack of ORCAT operational experience in 2017 and Administrator Henry hired Tracy Jackson as the ORCAT Director in the spring of 2018.
- Director Jackson has public safety experience with Miami-Dade County Fire-Rescue but more than a year after Director Jackson assumed his position the issues are unresolved and some characterize them as worse than ever.



Implementation and Operations

- In March 2019, Mayor Ryan authored an op-ed that was published in the South Florida Sun Sentinel. MSD Commission members were provided a copy of the op-ed last week as read ahead material.
- Mayor Ryan stated in the op-ed that “today friction and distrust persist as it relates to our 911 system between county technology employees and our public safety professionals.”



MSDPSC Meetings with Stakeholders



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MSDPSC Meetings with Stakeholders

- In March 2019 Commission investigators interviewed numerous stakeholders, primarily mid and upper level managers.
- Investigators found the same tone present that Fitch found and it was evident that there remains significant “distrust” among the stakeholders and this “us versus them” environment is a barrier to issue resolution and the success of Regional Communications.



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MSDPSC Meetings with Stakeholders

- The stakeholders feel that the County exceeds its area of responsibility and is too domineering regarding the stakeholders' operations.
- They feel that the County lacks a collaborative, inclusive decision-making approach.
- They also feel the County is too bureaucratic in its decision-making.



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MSDPSC Meetings with Stakeholders

- The County feels that the stakeholders have co-located but not sufficiently “consolidated” under regional communications.
- Because of this the County believes that the efficiencies and cost savings of true consolidation have not been realized.
- The County’s position is that it has fiscal responsibility as the funder and that obligation is not being realized by the stakeholders.



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MSDPSC Meetings with Stakeholders

- The County also feels that the stakeholders have not been responsive to fully implementing fire/EMS closest unit response protocols, have not developed a common “fleet map” that would better organize police communication and responded to other ORCAT requests.
- The County recognizes that there is discord but does not believe it is universal among all stakeholders.



MSDPSC Discussions with Stakeholders

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| • Bertha Henry, County Administrator | • Plantation Police Department |
| • Alphonso Jefferson, Assistant County Administrator | • Mayor Mike Ryan, Sunrise |
| • ORCAT senior staff members | • Mayor Josh Levy, Hollywood |
| • Sheriff Gregory Tony | • Sunrise Police Department |
| • BSO communications director | • Ft. Lauderdale Police Department |
| • BSO IT senior staff | • Margate Police Department |
| • Coral Springs Police Department | • Coconut Creek Police Department |
| • Coral Springs Fire Department | • Lauderhill Police Department |
| | • Police Chiefs Association |
| | • Fire Chiefs Association |



Implementation and Operations

- I have personally interviewed at least 14 agency heads or other high level individuals representing stakeholders, and all agree with Mayor Ryan's statement that "today friction and distrust persist as it relates to our 911 system between county technology employees and our public safety professionals."
- They all agree the system is not working.
- Where they disagree is on responsibility and reasons for the problems.



MSDPSC Meetings with Stakeholders

- After speaking with numerous stakeholders during the past year, and as recently as within the last two weeks, it is obvious that there is discord and distrust beyond repair among many of the regional communications participants.
- The issues have become personal and cannot be resolved under the current governance structure with the existing personnel.
- Coconut Creek and Margate are leaving and to avoid others leaving and regressing to the disjointed system that existed before 2014 things have to change.



Going Forward

- You will hear directly from stakeholders today.
- The Broward County Police Chiefs Association recently voted for BSO to assume all responsibility for ORCAT and Regional Communications, which would remove the County from its role.
- There is not consensus within the Broward County Fire Chief's Association for BSO to assume ORCAT and Regional Communications responsibility.
- The County Administrator does not currently support BSO or any other entity assuming the County's current role and responsibilities regarding ORCAT and Regional Communications.



Conclusion

- The system is broken and the course has to be reset.
- The people have to change;
- The governance structure has to change (move responsibility to BSO or another agency, appoint a Public Safety Communications Director outside county administration, etc.);
- Or at a minimum a neutral, objective outside facilitator is necessary to resolve the extensive issues.

