

**CVPSA REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
Central Vermont Public Safety
Telecommunications Needs Assessment**

ISSUE DATE: November 25, 2019

Letter of Interest Due: 5pm Thursday Dec 5, 2019 by Email

RFP RESPONSE PROPOSAL DUE DATE: 5pm Thursday Dec 19, 2019

Proposals Must Be Printed and Emailed

**Print Copies mailed or delivered to:
CVPSA, 963 N. Paine Tpk., Berlin, VT 05602**

Email Electronic Copy to: kimcheney35@gmail.com

Proposals Opening and Location:

**7pm Dec 19, 2019 at CVPSA Regular Board Meeting
at Central Vermont Chamber Conference Room
located at 963 N. Paine Tpk., Berlin, VT 05602**

CONTACT PERSON: Kimberly B. Cheney, Board Chair

EMAIL: kimcheney35@gmail.com

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1. PURPOSE

This Request for Proposal (RFP) is issued by the Central Vermont Public Safety Authority (CVPSA) to gather information on the land mobile radio (LMR) issues, cellular coverage needs, and broadband services required to effectively operate and improve the telecommunication services for public safety agencies in Central Vermont.

The CVPSA is attempting to identify problems and potential solutions surrounding the radio communication and cellular coverage available to fire, police and emergency medical services in the greater Central Vermont area. In order to accomplish this task a needs assessment must be performed that identifies the current state of communication services along with the identification of communications problems and solutions to fix these problems.

1.1 Liability

This request for proposal does not commit the CVPSA to contract for any materials or service whatsoever. Respondents are advised that the CVPSA will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in response to this RFP. All costs associated with responding to this RFP will be solely at the interested party's expense.

1.2 Confidentiality

The CVPSA retains the right to promote transparency and to place this RFP into the public domain, and to make a copy of the RFP available as a provision of the Vermont access to public records laws. Please do not include any information in your RFP response that is confidential or proprietary, as the CVPSA assumes no responsibility for excluding information in response to records requests. Any request for information made by a third party will be examined considering the exemptions provided in the Vermont access to public records laws.

The solicitation of this RFP does not commit the CVPSA to awarding a contract.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The CVPSA is an independent union municipal district chartered through the Vermont General Assembly. The purpose of CVPSA is to provide its member Cities (Montpelier and Barre City) and the Capital Fire Mutual Aid System, Inc with an affordable, integrated, efficient system of public safety services (fire, police ambulance, dispatch) that protects public welfare and provides rapid responses with highly qualified personnel when an emergency arises.

The City of Montpelier and Barre City operate full-service police, fire and emergency medical services. Both Cities provide dispatching services to a variety of public safety entities. Montpelier dispatches the Montpelier Police, Fire/EMS, Capital Police and approximately 21 fire departments within the Central Vermont area represented by Capital West Communications Committee. Barre City dispatches for Barre City Police, Fire/EMS, Washington County Sheriff's Office. Washington Fire Department and Williamstown Fire Department.

Capital Fire Mutual Aid System, Inc (CFMAS) is a municipal district formed under authority of the Vermont Statutes. As a municipal district it joined the CVPSA (CVPSA) in July of 2019. CFMAS includes the following towns/cities in Central Vermont; Barre City, Barre Town,

Berlin, Bolton, Cabot, Calais, Chelsea, Corinth, Duxbury, East Montpelier, Fayston, Groton, Marshfield, Middlesex, Montpelier, Moretown, Orange, Peacham, Plainfield, Roxbury, Ryegate, Stowe, Topsham, Waitsfield, Waterbury, Williamstown and Woodbury. See next paragraph for towns being served by CVPSA.

The relationship between CFMAS and CVPSA is intended only for the promotion of dispatching services. Membership in CVPSA only pertains to CFMAS as stand-alone municipal district and does not include the governmental units of the towns that make up CFMAS. CFMAS is responsible for providing dispatching services to a select number of member fire departments. They do this through a contract with the City of Montpelier which authorizes the Montpelier Police Dispatch Center to dispatch for these fire departments for a fee. CFMAS manages this contractual agreement through CFMAS committee called the Capital West Communications Committee (Cap West). The following fire departments are members of CFMAS/Cap West; Barre Town, Berlin, Braintree, Brookfield, Cabot, Calais, Duxbury, East Montpelier, Fayston, Marshfield, Middlesex, Moretown, Northfield, Orange, Plainfield, Roxbury, Waitsfield, Walden, Waterbury, Woodbury and Worcester.

The CVPSA has identified public safety dispatching and improving telecommunication services as its first initiative in integrating public safety services.

3. RFP DESCRIPTION

The CVPSA is seeking proposals from qualified consultants to perform a needs assessment and strategy for public safety telecommunication services in Central Vermont. This needs assessment and strategy should focus on the current state of the land mobile radio (LMR) system currently used by the fire, police, dispatching and emergency medical services in Central Vermont. An assessment of the available cellular services from all carriers available for public safety use with priority and preemption features and broadband/fiber services available for connecting radio services to mountain top transmitting facilities should be included in responsive proposals.

4. CURRENT STATE

Though CVPSA was created to become the regional public safety entity in Central Vermont, only Montpelier and Barre City become chartered members and financial contributors. CVPSA is seeking to facilitate regional improvements to public safety communications including dispatching capabilities, improvements to two-way VHF and UHF radio systems, in-building repeaters, resiliency measures and fail over capabilities. FirstNet compatible 4G/LTE microcells for in-fill of dead zones may also be desirable.

Separately, Central Vermont Fiber (CVFiber), a non-profit organization organized as a Communications Union District, seeks to build and manage fiber optic broadband telecommunications infrastructure in its 17 member municipalities including Barre City and Montpelier. While CVPSA is focused primarily on its members' public safety telecommunications needs, the work of CVFiber should be included in any review of current LMR and LTE radio systems and the future improvements and resiliency of these systems.

Public Safety dispatching is currently being performed out of Montpelier and Barre City Police Departments. Seven (7) personnel perform the dispatching function in Montpelier and six (6) personnel perform the function in Barre City.

The Montpelier Police provides dispatching services for Montpelier Fire/EMS and Police along with approximately 21 fire departments in surrounding Central Vermont communities. The Barre City Police Dispatch Center provides dispatch services to the Barre City Police, Barre City Fire/EMS and 2 other area volunteer fire departments.

The LMR problems can be summarized by crowded frequencies complicate emergency communications and limited in-building radio coverage, i.e. Central Vermont Medical Center Emergency Room. Too many locations are without any cell coverage and towns do not have broadband services enough to operate mobile data terminals in their emergency vehicles.

Vermont's emergency responders rely on radio communications to talk with each other in critical situations. But clear space on the airwaves are frequently not available to fire and police in Central Vermont. Other Vermont dispatchers as well as French-speaking Canadian taxicab companies interfere with dispatching in Central Vermont.

Specifically, the fire department members of Capital Fire Mutual Aid District/Capital West, dispatched out of the Montpelier Police Department suffer the greatest amount of interference. All users want a system that is going to be able to transmit and reach all the towers simultaneously and want all the responders, no matter if they are located in Cabot or Roxbury, to hear each other and be able to talk to each other through a unified, dedicated, resilient, public safety grade communications system.

In summary, interference from outside agencies including Canadian commercial entities and the interference caused by too many people talking on the radio (talk over) leads to dispatcher frustration and difficulties in providing efficient communications. This problem has existed for some time and must be resolved.

At a meeting with representatives of the Capital Fire Mutual Aid System members spoke of a lack of adequate cell phone coverage in many of their towns as also being a big problem. The Fire Chief in East Montpelier highlighted the problem advising that he relies heavily on two-way radio communications when dispatched to a call because cell coverage is so poor. Reliance on two-radio communications contributes to the overcrowded frequencies and "talk over" problems.

A needs assessment evaluating the current telecommunications facilities, technologies, equipment, capabilities, problems and solutions is needed.

RESOURCES to consult:

Terry LaValley, Director of Radio technology Services, Vermont Department of Public Safety (terry.lavalley@vermont.gov); Bonnie Waninger, Executive Director Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (waninger@cvregion.org) regional cellular survey; and CVPSA Executive Director Paco Amund's regional dispatch plan: A New Facility for Central Vermont Communication Center Nov 2018(www.cvpsa.org).

5. SCOPE of WORK

5.1 Perform a Needs Assessment

This needs assessment is intended to do the following;

- Identify and document current and future user LMR, cellular services and broadband connectivity needs.
 - Contractor will meet with as many of the Central Vermont public safety stakeholders as is necessary to properly identify and document the current and future needs.
- Solicit users' perceptions of current system performance including gaps that do not meet their needs.
- Identify and document the current radio equipment and systems in place today.
- Evaluate the current dispatching needs as it relates to telecommunications.
- Identify and document the current problems with public safety communications in Central Vermont and provide potential solutions.
- Recommend what public safety industry standards should be in place for any future procurement of a new system(s) to include recommendations concerning redundancy and reliability.
- Determine what partnerships can be developed through the build out of fiber by CVFiber.
- Recommend a public safety grade technology architectural approach that will provide optimal service to all users at the least cost and highest reliability.
- Identify gaps or dead zones in two-way public safety radio coverage (LMR) and cellular coverage (LTE) and suggest locations where additional repeaters, simulcast transmitters or microcells may be best deployed, considering transmission backhaul facilities needed to reach those locations.
- To the extent possible a network architecture should be proposed that utilizes as much shared network architecture as possible while maintaining isolation between public safety communication traffic and other public traffic.
- To the extent possible provide a map of existing and planned fiber optic networks that might be used for public safety purposes. This map should include the current location of the LMR and cellular towers and other physical components (tower sites, repeaters, transmitters) that are used for emergency communications.
- To the extent possible provide an assessment of how cellular phone service is utilized by the public safety agencies in Central Vermont and the problems associated with lack of cell service.

5.2 Deliverables

A proposal and a presentation of this proposal which identifies all the issues specified in #3. RFP Description and #5. Scope of Work of this RFP are the expected deliverables. Proposal presentations will be by invitation from CVPSA.

6. REQUESTED INFORMATION

6.1 Letter of Interest

A letter of interest is due by 5pm December 7, 2019 and is to be emailed to kimcheney35@gmail.com; and needs to state your intention to submit a proposal.

6.2 Contact Information

All communications concerning this RFP are to be addressed to Kimberly Cheney and copied to the three chiefs listed below. Likewise, all replies to questions by Cheney or a chief will be copied to all interested vendors, chiefs and Cheney. It is essential that all interested parties have full and equal access to all questions and answers shared. Oral communications are not allowed about this RFP. All questions and responses must be written in emails.

Barre City Police Chief, Tim Bombardier at tim.bombardier@vermont.gov;
Montpelier City Police Chief, Anthony Facos at afacos@montpelier-vt.org; and
CFMAS Battalion Chief, Sally Dillon at wfdflorians@comcast.net

6.3 Proposal Submission

CLOSING DATE: The closing date and time for the receipt of Proposals is 5pm on December 19, 2019. **Printed Proposals** must be mailed to: CVPSA, 963 N. Paine Tpk., Berlin, VT 05602 and **Emailed Proposals** sent to Kimberly Cheney at kimcheney35@gmail.com.

Proposals must include one (1) electronic copy on Compact Disc (CD) and three (3) Paper (hard copy) responses must also be submitted. Any hardship in complying with this request may be discussed with the Kimberly Cheney through emails.

The electronic copy must be in Microsoft Word version 2007 compatible format.

6.4 Explanation of Process

6.4.1. Response to Written Questions

Any vendor requiring clarification of any section of this proposal or wishing to comment or take exception to any requirements or other portion of the RFP must submit specific questions in writing no later than 5pm December 13, 2019. Questions must be emailed to Kimberly Cheney with the three chiefs copied, no oral questions or answers are allowed.

Any objection to the RFP or to any provision of the RFP, that is not raised in writing on or before the last day of the question period is waived. At the close of the question period a copy of all questions or comments and the CVPSA responses will be posted on the CVPSA web site www.cvpsa.org. Every effort will be made to have these available as soon after the question period ends, contingent on the number and complexity of the questions.

6.4.2. Review and Evaluation of Proposal Responses

The review and evaluation of Proposals to the RFP will be performed by CVPSA and their designees. CVPSA has the right to clarify anything within submitted Proposals. CVPSA will notify vendors if, and when, they want a presentation of their Proposal.

7. APPENDIX A:

TASK, LABOR, EQUIPMENT, TIMELINE AND COST WORKSHEET

7.1: Create a worksheet that will clearly provide information on the Tasks, Labor, Equipment, Timeline and Cost related to implementing your proposal. It could be as simple as the table below.

Task, Labor or Equipment Description	Timeline	Cost Estimate
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		