

Watauga Consolidated 9-1-1 Dispatch Still Uncertain

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Will there be a consolidated dispatch system for all the entities in Watauga County?

Commissioner Gable believes it's in everyone's best interest for the county and municipalities within it to join together in this effort. In an interview prior to Tuesday's Commissioner's meeting he stated they already had a resolution by the Town of Blowing Rock indicating interest in coming on board, however, he did not yet know Boone's decision. He explained that the planning group had already developed a job description for the director of communications and emergency management because it would become a stand alone county agency. He also shared that they will develop an advisory council made up of the entities involved, are in the process of developing a budget, and will soon be able to tell Boone and Blowing Rock what it will cost to come on board. In the following comments Mr. Gable shared why he felt it was a good idea for Boone and Blowing Rock to join with the county in this effort, "It will be good for the towns because from first blush, I believe we're going to be able to show a substantial savings for each of the entities." Later in the evening, following the Boone Town Council meeting, Mayor Clawson was asked if the Town officials were ready to become part of the consolidated dispatch system the County was promoting. She shared that they had participated in meetings with officials about this but were not ready to commit at this time, "We have not decided yet what would be in the best interest of the town of Boone, but we're certainly looking at it to see what would serve us best." Chief of Police, Dana Crawford, added that they wanted to make sure the personal identity the Town's citizens felt they had with the current dispatch system was not lost, "Our dispatchers, when they receive a call, they're going to generally going to know who it is they're talking to, where they live at, what cars are in their garage, what their house looks like—and those are big things to the taxpayers."