



**BOARD OF ALDERMEN PUBLIC HEALTH &
SAFETY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes**

APRIL 23, 2025

7:00 PM 1 GOVERNMENT CTR. BALLWIN, MO 63011

THE MINUTES ARE PREPARED IN SUMMARY TO REFLECT THE OVERALL DISCUSSIONS, NOT VERBATIM QUOTES.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Michael Finley at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present

Chairman Michael Finley
Alderman Pamela Haug
Alderman Mark Weaver
Alderman David Siegel

Absent

Also Present

Mayor Tim Pogue
Alderman Mike Utt
Alderman Mark Stallmann
Alderman Frank Fleming
Alderman Jim Lehmkuhl
City Administrator Eric Serman
City Attorney Robert Jones

AGENDA

City Administrator Eric Serman gave background to the Board as to how the City got to this point. He noted West Central Dispatch Center contact Chief John Bergfeld to see if the City wanted to join WCDC. Chief Bergfeld then brought the proposal to City Administrator Serman after determining it could make sense financially to join WCDC. City Administrator Serman noted there has been no contract negotiated and the proposal is not up for a vote at all yet.

Chairman Michael Finley noted at the last meeting that all of the committee was able to ask questions and asked if the rest of the Board present had questions.

Alderman Mike Utt asked what the average response time from calling 911 to dispatch answering.

WCDC General Manager Daryl Ostendorf noted the average call time varies by department. BPD's time from receive to dispatch is 4:17, while Creve Coeur PD is 3:52, Frontenac PD is 5:17, Ladue PD is 3:28,



**BOARD OF ALDERMEN PUBLIC HEALTH &
SAFETY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes**

APRIL 23, 2025

7:00 PM 1 GOVERNMENT CTR. BALLWIN, MO 63011

and Town & Country is 5:52. Average call answer time is 3.0 seconds for Ballwin and 3.3 seconds for WCDC.

Alderman Utt noted Ballwin dispatchers verify and confirm warrants as well as enter paperwork currently. Chief John Bergfeld noted they would need to hire a clerk to do that work.

GM Daryl Ostendorf noted their dispatchers do not enter warrants, those are sent to records clerks at each city to complete.

Alderman Utt asked whether there were two dispatchers at minimum staffing with only one answering Ballwin calls. GM Ostendorf noted there would be one person with radio dispatch for Ballwin police but all dispatchers on staff would be available to answer calls.

Alderman Utt asked how many dispatchers would be hired at WCDC. GM Ostendorf noted they were looking at adding at least four fulltime and two part time positions and that Ballwin dispatchers would be given first opportunity for those positions if they apply.

Alderman Utt noted it was hard for him to understand why the City would give up the state of the art dispatch facility that was recently built. He noted he'd like to see Ballwin keep dispatch and add other cities.

Alderman-Elect Tequila Gray asked why the City of Ballwin would be responsible for the one time fee if the City is taking in WCDC into the current police station and would have to make changes to the building to accommodate them.

GM Ostendorf noted the initial fee is a base fee to all members of WCDC and noted the next step would be to determine the cost for renovations and it would be up to the WCDC board to determine who is responsible for the construction costs.

Alderman-Elect Gray also asked about CALEA certification and noted the City of Ballwin already has that certification and that expense has already been paid by the City of Ballwin.

GM Ostendorf noted the Ballwin Police has the national CALEA certification and that certification is not held by an individual person and WCDC is anticipating receiving their CALEA certification in November. He also noted his current dispatchers go through hundreds of hours of training and any incoming dispatchers would receive that training as well.

GM Ostendorf then went through his presentation (which can be found on ballwin.mo.us). He noted WCDC was looking into getting into the wellness check program for elderly adults regardless of whether Ballwin joined WCDC.

He also noted there is a Quality Assurance Program and in 2024 call taking was at 97.9% and dispatching was at 99.6% and so far in 2025 call taking is at 98.6% and dispatching is at 99.8%.

GM Ostendorf noted any Ballwin dispatchers who apply and are hired will be hired at equal or greater than pay rate to what they're currently making. He also noted Ballwin dispatchers are currently at LAGERS L-12 rate and WCDC is currently at LAGERS L-7 rate but the Board is looking to increase that. He also noted their LAGERS time would not be lost.



**BOARD OF ALDERMEN PUBLIC HEALTH &
SAFETY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes**

APRIL 23, 2025

7:00 PM 1 GOVERNMENT CTR. BALLWIN, MO 63011

GM Ostendorf also walked through the makeup of the Boards and Committees at WCDC. He noted the Board of Directors is made up of City Administrators from all the member cities, the Operations Committee is made up of all of the Police Chiefs of all the member cities and the Liaison Committee which handles day-to-day items and information dissemination would be made up of a police member assigned by the Chief of Police.

GM Ostendorf noted Ballwin Police Dispatchers handle 2.015 calls per person per hour and WCDC handles 2.26 calls per person per hour.

Alderman Mark Stallmann wanted to clarify if all Ballwin dispatchers applied to the open positions whether applicants from other agencies would also be considered. GM Ostendorf noted they would not. Alderman Stallmann asked about the length of agreement and there was a timeline for getting out of their current spot in Town & Country. GM Ostendorf noted there was no date that has been set for WCDC to be out of the Town & Country building. Town & Country will be renovating their location but WCDC has not been forced out of the building.

Ladue Police Chief Ken Andreski spoke to the Board, noting his department joined because they felt WCDC has a strong center and it helped their department relieve pressures internally. He also noted they wanted the best service for their residents. He also noted his department has better relationships with each of the other member agencies.

Alderman Stallmann asked if WCDC would be using our equipment.

GM Ostendorf noted they would use some because WCDC also on the same CAD system, Motorola system and 911 equipment system which would transfer over. He noted there could potentially be a credit on the initial fee for transferring over equipment.

Alderman Stallmann asked about lease agreements. GM Ostendorf noted that would be up to the Ballwin Board of Aldermen and also noted they currently pay Town & Country \$300 a month in rent.

Alderman Stallmann asked about the construction costs and how that would be allocated. GM Ostendorf noted there would be minimal changes to the building and it was not in his pay grade to say how they'd be allocated for.

Alderman Stallmann also asked about vacation checks that the department currently does. GM Ostendorf noted all four member agencies do those and they are self-dispatched by the officers. Chief Alderman Stallmann also asked about the satisfaction ratio and whether they keep track of complaints. GM Ostendorf noted they have a complaint log and note the resolution. He also noted there are citizen surveys.

Aldermen Frank Fleming asked whether there was an agreement length. GM Ostendorf noted there is a timeframe for an opt out clause but there's no contract length.

Alderman Fleming asked about the appointed treasurer and GM Ostendorf noted it is the Creve Coeur Director of Finance, Lori Obermoeller.



**BOARD OF ALDERMEN PUBLIC HEALTH &
SAFETY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes**

APRIL 23, 2025

7:00 PM 1 GOVERNMENT CTR. BALLWIN, MO 63011

Alderman Fleming asked if there were plans for future expansion for WCDC. GM Ostendorf noted it was the first time he had heard Chesterfield or Ellisville mentioned and noted they did approach Des Peres to join WCDC but they already had an agreement in place with Kirkwood and their agreement is cheaper than WCDC's.

Alderman Fleming noted the WCDC agreement is driven by numbers and noted Ballwin will be the largest city in WCDC. He also noted there are subdivisions that are looking into annexing into Ballwin which could make us bigger in the future.

GM Ostendorf noted the budget for each agency in WCDC is set by sworn officers and if Ballwin's needs change then the amount Ballwin pays would increase.

Alderman Fleming noted Ballwin has a reputation of being careful with finances.

GM Ostendorf noted in 2024, WCDC went over budget with filling positions with overtime and also noted if the call time supports it, there could be more positions added by the WCDC Board.

Alderman Fleming noted he feels like Ballwin has some growth ahead and he wants the City to be as prepared for our future as possible.

GM Ostendorf noted Ballwin has shared the floor plans for the Police Department and noted there is a sixth position that is in the plans and noted if WCDC got to that point another position could be added because more space could be found.

Alderman Fleming asked about moving the locker room walls and noted officers were pleased to have the new building when they moved in and probably wouldn't like losing some space.

GM Ostendorf noted the locker room that would be changing is a small locker room that's adjacent to dispatch and not the officers locker room.

Alderman Fleming noted he wasn't sure if the Board was moving as fast as WCDC needed the City to because WCDC may need to be out of Town & Country's building soon.

GM Ostendorf noted there is no date set for when they have to be out of Town & Country's building and noted he hoped WCDC could be in place in Ballwin by January first.

Alderman Fleming asked if the City allowed one more meeting for public comment would the WCDC be hampered with the timeline. GM Ostendorf noted no, WCDC would not.

Alderman Mike Utt asked if a City leaves WCDC, would the costs go up for the remaining cities?

GM Ostendorf noted the costs would go up.

Alderman-elect Tequila Gray asked if anyone had talked to the police officers on the street about how they like having WCDC as dispatchers. GM Ostendorf noted he hasn't.

Alderman Utt noted he did have a conversation with a police officer in Creve Coeur and he said he was not a fan of the WCDC.

GM Ostendorf noted those types of statements or feelings are what the liaison committee is for.



**BOARD OF ALDERMEN PUBLIC HEALTH &
SAFETY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes**

APRIL 23, 2025

7:00 PM 1 GOVERNMENT CTR. BALLWIN, MO 63011

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ashley Armstrong-Donnini, the GM of French Quarter asked how many dispatchers WCDC has currently. GM Ostendorf noted there are 20, 14 full time, three supervisors, two part-time employees and him.

Armstrong-Donnini noted when she looked at the numbers presented, the City of Ballwin dispatchers currently take in about half the number of calls the WCDC does.

She also noted she would hate to be put on hold if she was calling for help. She said she did not see this as being a good solution to a budget issue.

Lt. Dan Hawk with the Ballwin Police Department noted he is the bureau commander over dispatch and he fully supports each of the dispatchers on his staff. He said he would put them up against any other department any day. He notes the department prides itself of personalized service and dispatchers provide that daily. He also noted every member of the sergeants and lieutenants was against the proposal. He also noted many dispatchers still working were there the day Officer Flamion was shot. Sgt. Jim Heldmann spoke as a resident of Ward 2 and noted Ballwin is fiscally responsible. He said it would be irresponsible not to investigate this proposal because it would save money, but that's the only positive about this proposal. He noted Ballwin's job is to provide the best service to its citizens and a big part of our safety is dispatchers. He noted the police department wants to continue making the top safety lists in the future.

Detective Ray Rader spoke as President of the police officer's association and noted all of the members were reached out to and many of them were against it. He noted he started out in a small north county police department and quickly moved to the Ballwin PD. He also noted he's aware there will most likely have to be a dispatch merger in the future, but with Ballwin's size and fiscal responsibility, Ballwin should be the leader of the merger.

Diana Gould of 198 Nassau Way spoke to the Board spoke against the merger with WCDC and noted her father was a detective and dispatchers mean everything to officers. She noted she's been a resident of Ballwin for 30 years and would hate to see the merger happen.

Denise Leavy, a current dispatcher with the Ballwin Police Department distributed handouts regarding the responsibilities as dispatchers, what they handle and what they do day to day. She is against the merger and pointed out several things that would have to be handled by someone else if the dispatch merger goes through.

Mike Hitchcock, the Elementary SRO with the Ballwin Police Department, noted he's a resident of Ward 1 for 30 years. He told the Board if dispatch wasn't broken, it shouldn't be fixed. He noted he knows those dispatchers and puts their lives in their hands every day. He said officers lives are worth more than money.

Lt. Kevin Bushery from the Ballwin Police Department spoke to the Board and noted he has led dispatch is his career. He noted he's had to call dispatch when someone was kicking his door down. He noted

APRIL 23, 2025

7:00 PM 1 GOVERNMENT CTR. BALLWIN, MO 63011

he's also had to work with other dispatch centers during Ferguson in 2014 and it is not the same. He asked the Board who they'd want to answer their 911 calls when needed, someone who wanted to work for the Ballwin Police Department and wants to dispatch for Ballwin, or a contract vendor who doesn't. Officer Nick Harbaugh with the Ballwin Police Department spoke to the Board as a resident of 15 years. He noted he started his career as a dispatcher. He noted they are the true first responders, they hear the most horrible things. He said he doesn't think this is the best idea and doesn't think the proposal has the best in mind for citizens.

Lisa Hays of 237 Cedar Trails, spoke to the Board about how she would like to see more of an accounting down to the dollar. She noted the Department would have to hire more clerks to do other work the dispatchers currently do. She noted she agreed with officers that it's not worth it to lose lives for this.

Kaitlyn Strothkamp, a current dispatcher since 2006, noted she wants to stay but there isn't any job security right now.

Karen Karl, of 320 Quinnmoor Drive noted she is a REJIS operator, and WCDC is a great operation. She noted Ballwin is a great dispatch center and the City can't lose 7 dispatchers who are great hearts. She encouraged the Board to vote to keep the dispatch center.

Sgt. Dave Fisher of the Ballwin Police Department noted the City always preaches family, and the dispatchers are his family. He thanked City Administrator Sterman for doing his job, noting it's his job to save the City money. But he noted the City can't throw the dispatchers out. He was concerned about WCDC potentially disbanding, like East Central Dispatch did.

Mia Pogue noted she's been a resident her whole life and didn't want to lose dispatch. She noted there were a lot of dispatchers there the day the City found out about Mike Flamion being shot. She also noted if we annex more parts of St. Louis County, dispatchers could be added to the City's dispatch center making it even better.

Mayor Tim Pogue noted he didn't know his daughter was going to come to the meeting until five minutes before. He noted that's proof on how he preaches it to his family, the City is like family.

Alderman Michael Finley noted when he first was a candidate for office he was contacted to join St. Louis County Police Department's dispatch, and learned that was a bad idea. He noted WCDC seems like a good operation, but it sounds like there's a unanimous response against it. He noted there's no doubt in his mind that dispatch is a tangible benefit to Ballwin citizens. He also noted he called 911 once because he choked on an apple and dispatch helped him out. He also implored citizens and staff to not consider any of management a villain, they did their jobs by bringing a cost saving proposal forward to the Board of Aldermen.

Alderman David Siegel agreed, noting that City Administrator Sterman and Chief Bergfeld did their jobs correctly presenting this to the committee. He also noted if the City was hurting for money they may want to look into this but he doesn't see any reason to entertain getting rid of dispatch.



**BOARD OF ALDERMEN PUBLIC HEALTH &
SAFETY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes**

APRIL 23, 2025

7:00 PM 1 GOVERNMENT CTR. BALLWIN, MO 63011

Alderman Mark Weaver thanked the public for their comments. He noted he's not supportive of the merger because of our facility and our people.

Alderman Pam Haug appreciated City Administrator Sterman and Chief Bergfeld for bringing this forward. She also noted police and dispatchers are invaluable and she herself has had to use dispatch services as well and is against the merger.

Alderman Mark Stallmann noted the police department is a fantastic place, and when his wife had to call 911 the Police Department and Metro West got him to the hospital from a heart attack. He also noted he'll never forget 2016, when Officer Flamion was shot how the dispatchers were there for Flamion. He applauded City Administrator Sterman and Chief Bergfeld for bringing this forward and noted they would not be doing their jobs if they didn't. He noted he will not support the merger.

Alderman Mike Utt noted he wanted to say no one is saying WCDC doesn't do a good job and wanted to commend them. He also noted he himself had a heart attack in 2010 and dialed 911 and it seemed like the police department was there in like 30 seconds and he appreciated the quick response. He noted he is opposed to the merger.

Alderman Jim Lehmkuhl noted he has spent the last 30 years in Ballwin. His wife has had emergencies and he's had to call 911 and it seemed like the police were there in seconds. He noted he would not want to change anything about dispatch.

Alderman Frank Fleming noted this is a committee meeting and there's no final decision. He wanted to bring it up in a Board meeting in May. He noted the reason he's suggesting bringing it up is this is something he wanted all of the public to weigh in on. He wanted to publish the presentation and perhaps have a Google form to let people comment on. He also noted he wanted to hear more public comment.

Alderman David Siegel made a motion to negatively recommend the proposal to the Board. He also noted he would like City Administrator Sterman to post something online. Alderman Pam Haug seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken with unanimous affirmative result and the motion passed.

Alderman Mike Utt made a motion to adjourn with Alderman Jim Lehmkuhl seconding that motion. A voice vote was taken with unanimous affirmative result and the motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.