

**From:** [Cummings, Ian EMBC:EX](#)  
**To:** [Brach, Pader W EMBC:EX](#)  
**Cc:** [Owens, Jeff EMBC:EX](#); [McStravick, Michael EMBC:EX](#); [Maley, Madeline L EMBC:EX](#)  
**Subject:** FW: 911 Funding Request  
**Date:** August 25, 2022 12:26:26  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

---

Pader, below is some further background info for the Metro Van UBCM request.

Ian

---

**From:** Brant Arnold-Smith <Brant.Arnold-Smith@metrovanancouver.org>  
**Sent:** August 25, 2022 11:36  
**To:** Cummings, Ian EMBC:EX <Ian.Cummings@gov.bc.ca>  
**Cc:** Meeks, Ken EMBC:EX <Ken.Meeks@gov.bc.ca>  
**Subject:** RE: 911 Funding Request

**[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.**

Hi Ian

The information I was able to obtain this morning is the 340K is in relation to ECOMM AHT (Average Handle Time) costs for ECOMM 911 call takers. AHT is a metric used to determine caller handle time from the time a 911 call is initiated by a caller, answered by ECOMM, transferred and ultimately dispatched by the response agency. These extra costs were incurred as a result of the BCEHS dispatching delays where ECOMM 911 call takers had to remain on the line with callers until they could be transferred to BCEHS dispatch. As a result, other priority 911 calls waiting in the queue could not be answered due to ECOMM call takers being tied up waiting on BCEHS dispatch. Significant wait times were being experienced by queued 911 callers and this was impacting public safety.

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I hope this information is helpful and I will work to get you more early next week.

Best,

Brant Arnold-Smith  
Program Manager, Security & Emergency Management  
Human Resources and Corporate Services

t. 604.451.6111

c. 604.306.4170



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**From:** [Cunnings, Ian EMBC:EX](#) on behalf of [Brach, Pader W EMBC:EX](#)  
**To:** [Owens, Jeff EMBC:EX](#); [Maley, Madeline L EMBC:EX](#); [Cunnings, Ian EMBC:EX](#); [McStravick, Michael EMBC:EX](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Regional District of Metro Van re E-Comm  
**Attachments:** [UBCM - 578 Metro Vancouver - E-Comm-911.docx](#)

---

-----Original Appointment-----

From: Brach, Pader W EMBC:EX <Pader.Brach@gov.bc.ca>

Sent: August 16, 2022 14:53

To: Brach, Pader W EMBC:EX; Maley, Madeline L EMBC:EX; Cunnings, Ian EMBC:EX; McStravick, Michael EMBC:EX

Subject: Regional District of Metro Van re E-Comm

When: August 29, 2022 10:00-10:30 (UTC-08:00) Pacific Time (US & Canada).

Where: MS Teams

Rescheduling due to a scheduling conflict

---

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer or mobile app

s. 15

**From:** [Brant Arnold-Smith](#)  
**To:** [Cunnings, Ian EMBC:EX](#)  
**Cc:** [Meeks, Ken EMBC:EX](#)  
**Subject:** RE: 911 Funding Request  
**Date:** August 25, 2022 11:35:42  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

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Hi Ian

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**From:** Cunnings, Ian EMBC:EX [<mailto:Ian.Cunnings@gov.bc.ca>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 24, 2022 10:58 PM  
**To:** Brant Arnold-Smith <[Brant.Arnold-Smith@metrovancover.org](mailto:Brant.Arnold-Smith@metrovancover.org)>  
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**Ian Cunnings** | Senior Director, Regional Operations  
[Emergency Management BC](#)  
14292 Green Timbers Way  
Surrey, B.C. CANADA V3T 0J4

Ph: 236-468-1780 Cell: 604-785-7669  
24 Hour Emergency Reporting: 1 800 663-3456

*With gratitude, acknowledging I am working on the traditional territory of the Kwantlen, Semiahmoo and Katzie people*

Follow PreparedBC



Follow EmergencyInfoBC



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**Sent:** Wednesday, August 24, 2022 10:58 PM  
**To:** Brant Arnold-Smith <[Brant.Arnold-Smith@metrovancover.org](mailto:Brant.Arnold-Smith@metrovancover.org)>  
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14292 Green Timbers Way  
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24 Hour Emergency Reporting: 1 800 663-3456

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Follow PreparedBC



Follow EmergencyInfoBC





**From:** [Meeks, Ken EMBC:EX](#)  
**To:** [Cunnings, Ian EMBC:EX](#)  
**Subject:** RE: 911 Funding Request  
**Date:** August 25, 2022 08:26:49  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)

---

Will do

**Ken Meeks** | Regional Manager

[Emergency Management BC](#)

14292 Green Timbers Way

Surrey, B.C. CANADA V3T 0J4

Ph: 236 468-2240 Cell: 604 828-9206

24 Hour Emergency Reporting: 1 800 663-3456

*Follow PreparedBC*



*Follow EmergencyInfoBC*



---

**From:** Cunnings, Ian EMBC:EX <[ian.Cunnings@gov.bc.ca](mailto:ian.Cunnings@gov.bc.ca)>

**Sent:** August 25, 2022 08:23

**To:** Meeks, Ken EMBC:EX <[Ken.Meeks@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Ken.Meeks@gov.bc.ca)>

**Subject:** FW: 911 Funding Request

Ken, I thought my meeting with Pader and Mike McStravick was next week. Unfortunately it's at 11am today! Can you reach out to metro Van and get some more details on what there costs were. Incremental Staff time ? Metro Van employees?

Thanks!

Ian

---

**From:** Cunnings, Ian EMBC:EX

**Sent:** August 24, 2022 22:58

**To:** 'brant.arnold-smith@metrovancover.org' <[brant.arnold-smith@metrovancover.org](mailto:brant.arnold-smith@metrovancover.org)>

**Subject:** 911 Funding Request

Brandt, I'm looking to get a better understanding of the following request Metro Van has made. Would you have sometime Thurs or Fri to discuss?

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**From:** Bland, Craig W EMCR:EX(Craig.Bland@gov.bc.ca)  
**To:** Owens, Jeff EMCR:EX (Jeff.Owens@gov.bc.ca)  
**Subject:** FW: UBCM - 578 Metro Vancouver - E-Comm-911.docx  
**Sent:** 12/18/2023 23:37:22  
**Attachments:** UBCM - 578 Metro Vancouver - E-Comm-911.docx

FYI

**Craig Bland** | Regional Manager  
[Ministry of Emergency Management And Climate Readiness](#)  
14292 Green Timbers Way  
Surrey, B.C. CANADA V3T 0J4

Ph: 236-468-3232 Cell: 604-329-6452  
24 Hour Emergency Reporting: 1 800 663-3456

*Follow PreparedBC*



---

**From:** Cunnings, Ian EMBC:EX <Ian.Cunnings@gov.bc.ca>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 8, 2022 9:50 AM  
**To:** Owens, Jeff EMBC:EX <Jeff.Owens@gov.bc.ca>; Meeks, Ken EMBC:EX <Ken.Meeks@gov.bc.ca>; Bland, Craig W EMBC:EX <Craig.Bland@gov.bc.ca>  
**Subject:** FW: UBCM - 578 Metro Vancouver - E-Comm-911.docx  
**Importance:** High

Could one of you check to see if we received a request from Metro Vancouver RD last summer to cover the attached? I will also need a break down of what fire/police related EAF's we did receive? Unfortunately there is a short turn around on this and I need it by the end of the day.

Ian

---

**From:** Brach, Pader W EMBC:EX <[Pader.Brach@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Pader.Brach@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Sent:** August 5, 2022 17:35  
**To:** Cunnings, Ian EMBC:EX <[Ian.Cunnings@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Ian.Cunnings@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** UBCM - 578 Metro Vancouver - E-Comm-911.docx

Hi Ian,

Can you follow-up on Monday with attached and text me for when more known.

Thanks,

Pader

## UBCM Meeting Briefing Note

Meeting ID #:	578
Local Government:	Regional District of Metro Vancouver
Council Attendees:	

### TOPIC

E-COMM 911

### CURRENT SITUATION

- The Regional District of Metro Vancouver (Metro Vancouver) have requested that the Province provide \$340,000 to cover costs incurred by E-Comm, borne by the region due to BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) dispatching delays. Note: while Metro Vancouver notes “dispatch delays”, the delays related to call-taking delays, not dispatching.
- Metro Vancouver’s emergency management services include E-Comm, which was established in 1997 under the provincial Emergency Communications Corporations Act.<sup>1</sup>
- E-comm provides emergency service response for the 21 municipalities within the region, as well as the community of Whistler and the Sunshine Coast Regional District. This means E-Comm answers initial 9-1-1 calls and then transfers the call to the appropriate local public safety agency (police, fire or ambulance).

### KEY FACTS

- Regional Districts contract the 9-1-1 service to E-Comm. They fund the service through property taxes and other methods such as call-answer levies. E-Comm is responsible for answering 99 per cent of 9-1-1 calls made throughout the province of B.C.<sup>2</sup>
- In addition to providing emergency call services for BCEHS, E-Comm provides emergency dispatch services for 33 police and 40 fire departments in B.C., including Metro Vancouver. BCEHS account for 30% of the calls to E-Comm – 65% are police and 5% are fire.<sup>3</sup>
- In late 2021, Metro Vancouver requested a meeting with Minister Dix to discuss challenges with E-Comm. The Minister’s Office can provide context around the outcomes of any meetings held with Metro Vancouver.
- E-Comm is governed by a 22-person board of directors, with representatives from shareholder groups, including the Metro Vancouver area. The board is responsible for overseeing the Corporation’s strategic direction, finances, and operating results.
- The board also includes representatives from the RCMP, independent police boards, the BC government and independent directors appointed by government.
- The Metro Vancouver delegation is led by board chair and Burnaby City Councillor Sav Dhaliwal and includes George Harvie, Mayor, City of Delta; Mike Hurley, Mayor, City of Burnaby; Jen McCutcheon, Director, Electoral Area A; Brad West, Mayor, City of Port Coquitlam; and Craig Hodge, Councillor, City of Coquitlam.

**Commented [CLRH1]:** Maura, not sure if there is anyway to get the outcomes from these meetings.

### BCEHS and E-Comm

- BCEHS operates three integrated Dispatch Operations Centres in Vancouver, Victoria, and Kamloops. The three centres receive between 1,400 and 1,700 requests for emergency response each day.
- One 911 event can generate multiple calls from the patient and other responder agencies (i.e., calls and events are not synonymous).

<sup>1</sup> [History | 911 Emergency Dispatcher | 911 Emergency Dispatch \(ecomm911.ca\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [How 911 Works | 911 Emergency Dispatcher | 911 Emergency Dispatch \(ecomm911.ca\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [e-comm-annual-report-2020.pdf \(ecomm911.ca\)](#)

## UBCM Meeting Briefing Note

- During extreme events (like the heat dome that occurred in late June and early July 2021) call volumes spiked and BCEHS dispatch centres received more than 2,000 calls. BCEHS dispatch also receives several hundred requests for patient inter facility transfers each day.
- During and since the heat dome, media has frequently reported on wait times as long as 15 minutes for 9-1-1 calls to be transferred to BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) from E-Comm.
- BCEHS attributes the delay in answering calls into dispatch centres is a combination of factors including dramatic peaks in incoming call volumes, COVID-19, overdose related calls, and extreme weather events on top of existing staffing challenges.

### BCEHS/E-COMM Dispatch Actions

- BCEHS has added 42 new dispatch positions to increase their capacity.
- In July 2021, BCEHS implemented a “priority queue” system to ensure those calls that are the most urgent are responded to first. In this system potentially life-threatening calls are separated from less-urgent emergencies, among other process changes to better manage calls.
- Under this system, E-Comm staff follow criteria to determine when callers/patients are experiencing critical symptoms such as troubled breathing or cardiac arrest. When a caller meets the criteria, the call is put through to the priority queue. Before this new process, callers were answered in the order received regardless of acuity.
- In August 2021, BCEHS also implemented another process change where when a calling party hangs up on E-Comm waiting for BCEHS (or tell E-Comm to cancel the request), E-Comm can now submit an email to BCEHS (about the calling party hanging up or cancelling) instead of staying on the line waiting for a BCEHS caller to answer and give this information.
- On December 1, 2021, E-Comm announced a new process change that would allow E-Comm call takers to disconnect from callers waiting on the line for ambulance that resulted in significant media attention.
- Under the new process E-Comm operators continue to triage calls through to fire departments, police, or ambulance; however, once callers were connected into the queue for BCEHS ambulance service, E-Comm operators were no longer required to remain on the line waiting with the caller.
- E-Comm said that this change was made because of previous delays in call transfers, especially to BCEHS, and that the new process will help free up 9-1-1 call takers so they can answer and handle incoming emergency calls (ambulance, fire, and police) more quickly.
- E-Comm and BCEHS leadership are carefully evaluating the new call transfer process to ensure emergency services can be delivered more quickly and effectively.
- The increase of BCEHS dispatch staff and the new triage system is expected to increase service delivery and reduce caller wait times.

### CONTACT

Maura Parte, Hospital and Provincial Health Services Division; 778-698-9278

---

### Approved:

[date]: Kristy Anderson, Hospital and Provincial Health Services Division

**From:** [Brant Arnold-Smith](#)  
**To:** [Cummings, Ian EMBC:EX](#)  
**Cc:** [Meeks, Ken EMBC:EX](#)  
**Subject:** RE: 911 Funding Request  
**Date:** August 25, 2022 09:15:22  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Excellent...gives me more time to track down this info.

Brant

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c. 604.306.4170

*This communication may contain information and advice that is confidential and/or privileged. If you are not the intended recipient, you may not disseminate, distribute or copy this communication. You are asked to delete it and contact the sender as soon as possible.*

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**From:** Cunnings, Ian EMBC:EX [<mailto:Ian.Cunnings@gov.bc.ca>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 25, 2022 8:53 AM  
**To:** Brant Arnold-Smith <[Brant.Arnold-Smith@metrovancover.org](mailto:Brant.Arnold-Smith@metrovancover.org)>  
**Cc:** Meeks, Ken EMBC:EX <[Ken.Meeks@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Ken.Meeks@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** RE: 911 Funding Request

**WARNING:** This email originated from outside of our organization. Do not click any links or open attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Thanks Brant, my meeting has been pushed back to 1330

Ian

---

**From:** Brant Arnold-Smith <[Brant.Arnold-Smith@metrovancover.org](mailto:Brant.Arnold-Smith@metrovancover.org)>  
**Sent:** August 25, 2022 08:49  
**To:** Cunnings, Ian EMBC:EX <[Ian.Cunnings@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Ian.Cunnings@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Cc:** Meeks, Ken EMBC:EX <[Ken.Meeks@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Ken.Meeks@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** RE: 911 Funding Request

**[EXTERNAL]** This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Hi Ian

I am working on getting you this information before your 11 am meeting. Tracking down those involved from the MV side ...most who are presently on vacation.

Hope to have something for you in the next hour.

Brant Arnold-Smith  
**Program Manager, Security & Emergency Management**  
Human Resources and Corporate Services

t. 604.451.6111  
c. 604.306.4170

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**From:** Cunnings, Ian EMBC:EX [<mailto:Ian.Cunnings@gov.bc.ca>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 24, 2022 10:58 PM  
**To:** Brant Arnold-Smith <[Brant.Arnold-Smith@metrovancover.org](mailto:Brant.Arnold-Smith@metrovancover.org)>  
**Subject:** 911 Funding Request

**WARNING:** This email originated from outside of our organization. Do not click any links or open attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Brandt, I'm looking to get a better understanding of the following request Metro Van has made. Would you have sometime Thurs or Fri to discuss?

- The Regional District of Metro Vancouver (Metro Vancouver) have requested that the Province provide \$340,000 to cover costs incurred by E-Comm, borne by the region due to BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) dispatching delays..

**Ian Cunnings** | Senior Director, Regional Operations

[Emergency Management BC](#)

14292 Green Timbers Way  
Surrey, B.C. CANADA V3T 0J4

Ph: 236-468-1780 Cell: 604-785-7669  
24 Hour Emergency Reporting: 1 800 663-3456

*With gratitude, acknowledging I am working on the traditional territory of the Kwantlen, Semiahmoo and Katzie people*

Follow PreparedBC



Follow EmergencyInfoBC



**From:** Bland, Craig W EMCR:EX(Craig.Bland@gov.bc.ca)  
**To:** Owens, Jeff EMCR:EX (Jeff.Owens@gov.bc.ca)  
**Subject:** FW: UBCM - 578 Metro Vancouver - E-Comm-911.docx  
**Sent:** 12/18/2023 23:27:15

Another

**Craig Bland** | Regional Manager  
[Ministry of Emergency Management And Climate Readiness](#)  
14292 Green Timbers Way  
Surrey, B.C. CANADA V3T 0J4

Ph: 236-468-3232 Cell: 604-329-6452  
24 Hour Emergency Reporting: 1 800 663-3456

*Follow PreparedBC*



***With gratitude, acknowledging I am working on the traditional and unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples which include Katzie First Nations, Kwantlen First Nations, and Semiahmoo First Nations***

---

**From:** Cummings, Ian EMBC:EX <[Ian.Cummings@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Ian.Cummings@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Sent:** August 8, 2022 09:50  
**To:** Owens, Jeff EMBC:EX <[Jeff.Owens@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Jeff.Owens@gov.bc.ca)>; Meeks, Ken EMBC:EX <[Ken.Meeks@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Ken.Meeks@gov.bc.ca)>; Bland, Craig W EMBC:EX <[Craig.Bland@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Craig.Bland@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** FW: UBCM - 578 Metro Vancouver - E-Comm-911.docx  
**Importance:** High

Could one of you check to see if we received a request from Metro Vancouver RD last summer to cover the attached? I will also need a break down of what fire/police related EAF's we did receive? Unfortunately there is a short turn around on this and I need it by the end of the day.

Ian

---

**From:** Brach, Pader W EMBC:EX <[Pader.Brach@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Pader.Brach@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Sent:** August 5, 2022 17:35  
**To:** Cummings, Ian EMBC:EX <[Ian.Cummings@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Ian.Cummings@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** UBCM - 578 Metro Vancouver - E-Comm-911.docx

Hi Ian,

Can you follow-up on Monday with attached and text me for when more known.

Thanks,

Pader



**From:** Bland, Craig W EMCR:EX(Craig.Bland@gov.bc.ca)  
**To:** Owens, Jeff EMCR:EX (Jeff.Owens@gov.bc.ca)  
**Subject:** FW: UBCM - 578 Metro Vancouver - E-Comm-911.docx  
**Sent:** 12/18/2023 23:26:19

FYI

**Craig Bland** | Regional Manager  
[Ministry of Emergency Management And Climate Readiness](#)  
14292 Green Timbers Way  
Surrey, B.C. CANADA V3T 0J4

Ph: 236-468-3232 Cell: 604-329-6452  
24 Hour Emergency Reporting: 1 800 663-3456

*Follow PreparedBC*



***With gratitude, acknowledging I am working on the traditional and unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples which include Katzie First Nations, Kwantlen First Nations, and Semiahmoo First Nations***

---

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**Sent:** August 8, 2022 09:50  
**To:** Owens, Jeff EMBC:EX <[Jeff.Owens@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Jeff.Owens@gov.bc.ca)>; Meeks, Ken EMBC:EX <[Ken.Meeks@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Ken.Meeks@gov.bc.ca)>; Bland, Craig W EMBC:EX <[Craig.Bland@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Craig.Bland@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** FW: UBCM - 578 Metro Vancouver - E-Comm-911.docx  
**Importance:** High

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Ian

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**Sent:** August 5, 2022 17:35  
**To:** Cummings, Ian EMBC:EX <[ian.Cummings@gov.bc.ca](mailto:ian.Cummings@gov.bc.ca)>  
**Subject:** UBCM - 578 Metro Vancouver - E-Comm-911.docx

Hi Ian,

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Thanks,

Pader



**From:** Brach, Pader W EMCR:EX(Pader.Brach@gov.bc.ca)  
**To:** Cunnings, Ian EMCR:EX (Ian.Cunnings@gov.bc.ca)  
**Subject:** UBCM - 578 Metro Vancouver - E-Comm-911.docx  
**Sent:** 08/06/2022 00:35:21  
**Attachments:** UBCM - 578 Metro Vancouver - E-Comm-911.docx

Hi Ian,

Can you follow-up on Monday with attached and text me for when more known.

Thanks,

Pader

## UBCM Meeting Briefing Note

Meeting ID #:	578
Local Government:	Regional District of Metro Vancouver
Council Attendees:	

### TOPIC

E-COMM 911

### CURRENT SITUATION

- The Regional District of Metro Vancouver (Metro Vancouver) have requested that the Province provide \$340,000 to cover costs incurred by E-Comm, borne by the region due to BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) dispatching delays. Note: while Metro Vancouver notes “dispatch delays”, the delays related to call-taking delays, not dispatching.
- Metro Vancouver’s emergency management services include E-Comm, which was established in 1997 under the provincial Emergency Communications Corporations Act.<sup>1</sup>
- E-comm provides emergency service response for the 21 municipalities within the region, as well as the community of Whistler and the Sunshine Coast Regional District. This means E-Comm answers initial 9-1-1 calls and then transfers the call to the appropriate local public safety agency (police, fire or ambulance).

### KEY FACTS

- Regional Districts contract the 9-1-1 service to E-Comm. They fund the service through property taxes and other methods such as call-answer levies. E-Comm is responsible for answering 99 per cent of 9-1-1 calls made throughout the province of B.C.<sup>2</sup>
- In addition to providing emergency call services for BCEHS, E-Comm provides emergency dispatch services for 33 police and 40 fire departments in B.C., including Metro Vancouver. BCEHS account for 30% of the calls to E-Comm – 65% are police and 5% are fire.<sup>3</sup>
- In late 2021, Metro Vancouver requested a meeting with Minister Dix to discuss challenges with E-Comm. The Minister’s Office can provide context around the outcomes of any meetings held with Metro Vancouver.
- E-Comm is governed by a 22-person board of directors, with representatives from shareholder groups, including the Metro Vancouver area. The board is responsible for overseeing the Corporation’s strategic direction, finances, and operating results.
- The board also includes representatives from the RCMP, independent police boards, the BC government and independent directors appointed by government.
- The Metro Vancouver delegation is led by board chair and Burnaby City Councillor Sav Dhaliwal and includes George Harvie, Mayor, City of Delta; Mike Hurley, Mayor, City of Burnaby; Jen McCutcheon, Director, Electoral Area A; Brad West, Mayor, City of Port Coquitlam; and Craig Hodge, Councillor, City of Coquitlam.

**Commented [CLRH1]:** Maura, not sure if there is anyway to get the outcomes from these meetings.

### BCEHS and E-Comm

- BCEHS operates three integrated Dispatch Operations Centres in Vancouver, Victoria, and Kamloops. The three centres receive between 1,400 and 1,700 requests for emergency response each day.
- One 911 event can generate multiple calls from the patient and other responder agencies (i.e., calls and events are not synonymous).

<sup>1</sup> [History | 911 Emergency Dispatcher | 911 Emergency Dispatch \(ecomm911.ca\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [How 911 Works | 911 Emergency Dispatcher | 911 Emergency Dispatch \(ecomm911.ca\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [e-comm-annual-report-2020.pdf \(ecomm911.ca\)](#)

## UBCM Meeting Briefing Note

- During extreme events (like the heat dome that occurred in late June and early July 2021) call volumes spiked and BCEHS dispatch centres received more than 2,000 calls. BCEHS dispatch also receives several hundred requests for patient inter facility transfers each day.
- During and since the heat dome, media has frequently reported on wait times as long as 15 minutes for 9-1-1 calls to be transferred to BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) from E-Comm.
- BCEHS attributes the delay in answering calls into dispatch centres is a combination of factors including dramatic peaks in incoming call volumes, COVID-19, overdose related calls, and extreme weather events on top of existing staffing challenges.

### BCEHS/E-COMM Dispatch Actions

- BCEHS has added 42 new dispatch positions to increase their capacity.
- In July 2021, BCEHS implemented a “priority queue” system to ensure those calls that are the most urgent are responded to first. In this system potentially life-threatening calls are separated from less-urgent emergencies, among other process changes to better manage calls.
- Under this system, E-Comm staff follow criteria to determine when callers/patients are experiencing critical symptoms such as troubled breathing or cardiac arrest. When a caller meets the criteria, the call is put through to the priority queue. Before this new process, callers were answered in the order received regardless of acuity.
- In August 2021, BCEHS also implemented another process change where when a calling party hangs up on E-Comm waiting for BCEHS (or tell E-Comm to cancel the request), E-Comm can now submit an email to BCEHS (about the calling party hanging up or cancelling) instead of staying on the line waiting for a BCEHS caller to answer and give this information.
- On December 1, 2021, E-Comm announced a new process change that would allow E-Comm call takers to disconnect from callers waiting on the line for ambulance that resulted in significant media attention.
- Under the new process E-Comm operators continue to triage calls through to fire departments, police, or ambulance; however, once callers were connected into the queue for BCEHS ambulance service, E-Comm operators were no longer required to remain on the line waiting with the caller.
- E-Comm said that this change was made because of previous delays in call transfers, especially to BCEHS, and that the new process will help free up 9-1-1 call takers so they can answer and handle incoming emergency calls (ambulance, fire, and police) more quickly.
- E-Comm and BCEHS leadership are carefully evaluating the new call transfer process to ensure emergency services can be delivered more quickly and effectively.
- The increase of BCEHS dispatch staff and the new triage system is expected to increase service delivery and reduce caller wait times.

### CONTACT

Maura Parte, Hospital and Provincial Health Services Division; 778-698-9278

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### Approved:

[date]: Kristy Anderson, Hospital and Provincial Health Services Division