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COUNTY OF DAUPHIN

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

RESOLUTION NO. 5-2015

Adopted: February 25, 2015

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF DAUPHIN COUNTY, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, STRONGLY SUPPORTING THE ADOPTION OF A NEW, COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC SAFETY EMERGENCY TELEPHONE ACT, ALONG WITH IMPROVEMENTS TO AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF FUNDING STREAMS NECESSARY THERETO.

WHEREAS, under The County Code, Act of August 9, 1955, P.L. 323, §1944, 16 P.S. §101 et seq., and related acts of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, each of the named counties in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has long had the duty to provide the public with certain emergency management services; and

WHEREAS, such emergency management services include 911 service, the specific responsibility for which was assumed by counties, including Dauphin County, in 1990 as a result of the General Assembly's adoption of the Public Safety Emergency Telephone Act (hereafter, Emergency Telephone Act); and

WHEREAS, following the General Assembly's adoption of the Emergency Telephone Act, counties built the Commonwealth's 911 system into one of the best in the nation, providing, among other matters, nearly complete call-taking and dispatch services; and

WHEREAS, despite these accomplishments, the planning and funding components of the Emergency Telephone Act were not structured in such a way as to anticipate or accommodate new technology developments; and

WHEREAS, specifically, the Emergency Telephone Act, as currently written, does not include or otherwise address wireless and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service or Next Generation 911 (NG911) technologies; and

WHEREAS, the Emergency Telephone Act also inadequately addresses PBX technology; and

WHEREAS, wireline fees paid to the counties have not increased since adoption of the Emergency Telephone Act in 1990, and much the same is true for wireless and

VoIP fees which – though adopted later – were directly pegged to the 1990 wireline rates; and

WHEREAS, as a result, the fees generated by the Emergency Telephone Act are wholly insufficient to provide counties, including Dauphin County, with the funds necessary to undertake essential governmental services, such as maintaining 911 system service to the public while undertaking and completing critically important improvements to the 911 system; and

WHEREAS, in order to maintain such service while undertaking and completing such critically important improvements, counties, including Dauphin County, have been forced to use local property tax funds to cover, on average, thirty (30%) percent of the costs of such service; and

WHEREAS, unless the Pennsylvania General Assembly acts promptly to adopt comprehensive reform of the existing 911 service system, as established by the Emergency Telephone Act, counties, including Dauphin County, will be forced to further increase the use of local property taxes to fund the system because the wireless telephone surcharge – an important component of the current funding stream -- is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2015; and

WHEREAS, 911 service is an essential governmental service for all Pennsylvanians, and the funding stream for 911 services must be immediately adjusted given the self-evident need to invest in future response capabilities; and

WHEREAS, the ability of counties to fund 911 service will reach crisis proportions if action by the General Assembly is further delayed.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Board of Commissioners of Dauphin County (hereafter, County) as follows:

1. The County hereby joins with the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (hereafter, CCAP) and strongly supports the adoption of a new, comprehensive Public Safety Emergency Telephone Act. Such a reform bill must combine planning, administration, funding and auditing into a single, consolidated whole, thus affording counties across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania the best opportunity to manage and facilitate shared services and readily adapt to new technologies.

2. The reform of the 911 services system must be “technology-neutral”, meaning such reform must allow each county a reasonable opportunity to develop systems that meet the current and future needs of the respective counties.

3. Furthermore, the County strongly supports increasing 911 subscriber fees to a level that fully supports both current and next generation operations, and which pegs the fees to inflation or otherwise allows for other funding mechanisms that produce regular adjustments in response to telephone system needs.

4. This Resolution shall take effect immediately, and a certified copy shall be sent to the Dauphin County legislative delegation, to Governor Wolf, to the Director of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, and to CCAP.

DULY ADOPTED, this 25th day of February 2015, by the governing Board of Commissioners of Dauphin County, in lawful session duly assembled.

ATTEST

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OF DAUPHIN COUNTY



Chad Saylor, Chief Clerk/
Chief of Staff

By: 

Jeffrey T. Haste, Chairman

By: 

Mike Fries, Vice Chairman

By: 

George P. Hartwick, III, Secretary

