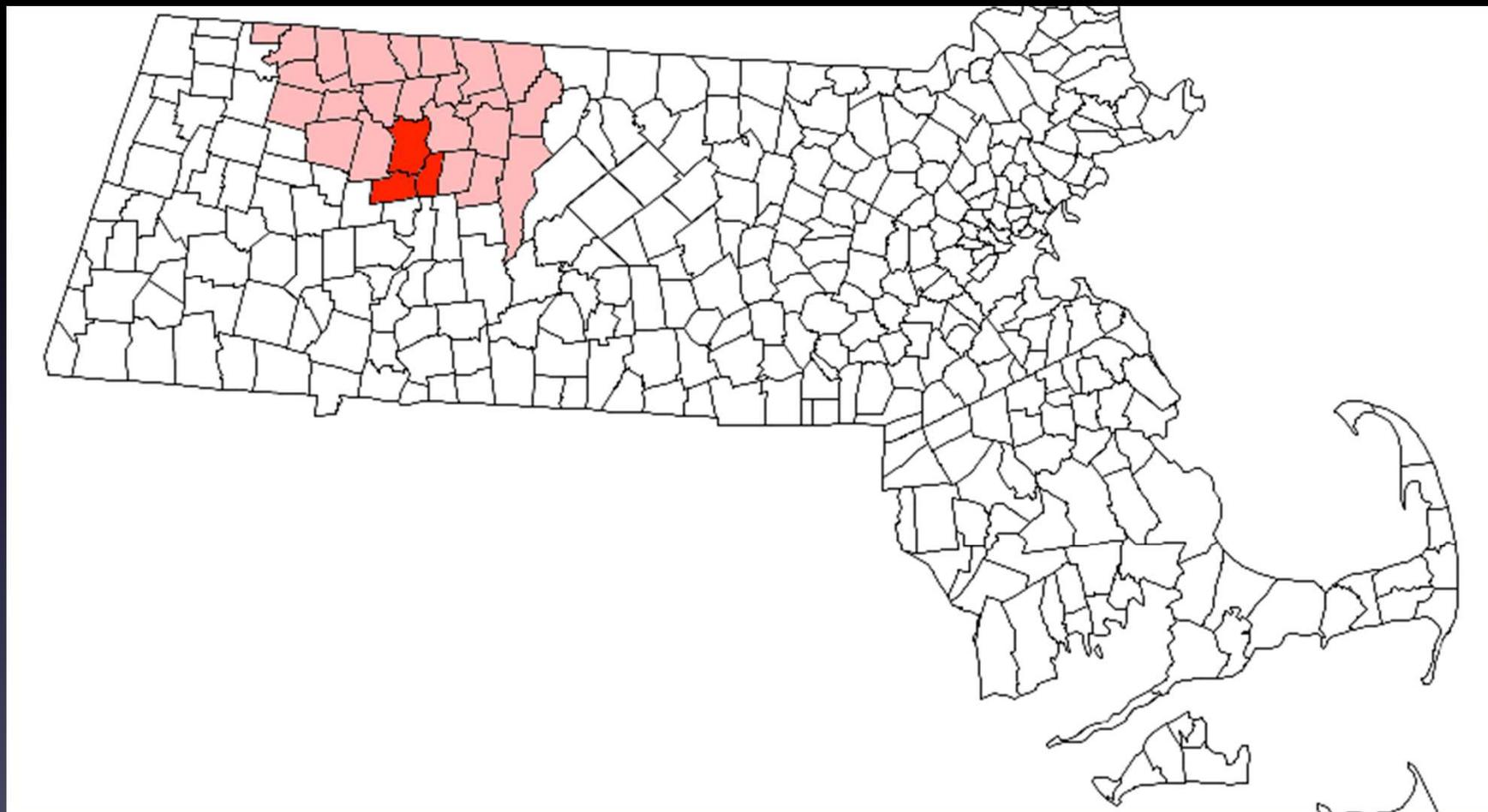


# South County EMS



Serving the towns of  
Deerfield, Sunderland, and Whately MA

# Where We Are



# What We Are

- First regional municipal EMS third-service in Massachusetts.
- Three town partnership to provide 24/7 ALS (Paramedic) transporting ambulance response.
  - Primary response area covers 70 square miles and population of 10,305.
  - Mutual Aid area an additional 91 square miles and population of 28,000.

# Background

- Deerfield
  - Municipal 16/7 (FT + volunteer) EMS Department (EMT-Basic)
  - 600 calls annually.
- Sunderland
  - Municipal volunteer Fire Department (EMT-Basic)
  - 250 calls annually
- Whately
  - Municipal volunteer Fire Department (EMT-I)
  - 150 calls annually

# Background

- All three agencies struggled to staff ambulances when 911 calls came in.
- ALS services provided as an “intercept” from for-profit agencies in Greenfield or Northampton.

# Formation

- Deerfield identified critical need to provide higher level of EMS service to the community.
- Approached Sunderland and Whately regarding their similar situation with proposal to “regionalize” EMS services.
- Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) study done.

# “Baxter Report”

- *Bruce Baxter and Associates* hired to generate report outlining EMS shortfalls in the southern Franklin County region.
- Five solutions proposed (with staffing recommendations).
  1. Add paid staff.
  2. Merge fire and EMS departments.
  3. Outsource EMS responsibilities.
  4. ***Regionalize EMS responsibilities.***
  5. Continue current model with additional ALS component.

# Regionalizing Process / Time Line

- EMS concerns publicly identified in 2011. Regionalization considered as one option and working group formed.
- Baxter Report released Feb 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 under FRCOG grant.
- Working group discussed findings and recommended regionalized EMS approach. Budget and staffing requirements determined. Developed IMA.
- Proposal outlined and approved at three separate special town meetings (October 2013).
- Board of Oversight formed (November 2013).
- EMS Director hired (March 2014).
- Go-Live Date: 7/1/2014 (initially set for 1/1/14)

# Makeup

- Board of Oversight
  - Each town appoints 2 members.
    - Initial makeup is 1 select board member and the existing EMS director from each town.
  - Fiscal Agent representative and EMS Director both non-voting members.
  - Allows for stakeholders to have seat at table and information to flow in both directions.
- Fiscal Agent
  - Town of Deerfield chosen to manage accounts.

# Budget

- Enterprise Fund used.
  - Service accountable for all costs, including personnel/benefits.
- Total budget determined. Revenue from billing estimated. Difference assessed to member towns.
- Assessment based on population / usage information.

# Budget

- Total Budget: 1,129,733
  - Estimated Billing Revenue: 380,138
- Amount Assessed to Towns: 749,595
  - Deerfield: 387,999 (52%)
  - Sunderland: 235,947 (31%)
  - Whately: 125,647 (17%)

# Implementation Headaches

- What do you do with existing staff?
  - Deerfield: 3 FT staff (EMT and Paramedics)
  - Sunderland: 1 FT EMT/Firefighter
- What do you do about new staff?
  - Good EMS providers rarely jump at the chance to change jobs.
- How do you handle regulatory oversight?
- Who is responsible for things?
  - BoO
  - Town of Deerfield

# On Going Headaches

- Who is responsible for things?
  - BoO
  - Town of Deerfield
    - Compensation for fiscal agent duties?
  - Finance Committees
- Permanent Home / Facility
- History and Pride

# Lessons

- Incredible “bang for the buck.” The system works and is a huge improvement in medical care at a fraction of the price to the individual town.
- Requires the correct political climate.
  - Elected officials and town’s people.
  - Appreciation for need to increase service to the community.

# Lessons

- Towns organized a committee to discuss which approach to regionalization made the most sense. Never really discussed whether regionalization actually made sense.
  - Existing staff were more-or-less kept out of the loop.
- Board of Oversight is a cumbersome solution to a problem that may or may not have existed.
- IMA requires some things to be voted on by all three member towns.

# Would We Do It Again?

***Yes!***

- Undeniably beneficial to everyone involved and at a fraction of what it would otherwise cost each town.
- Consider different models for a “regionalized” service.