

## **Project – Public Safety Telecommunicator (PST) Job Reclassification**

The duties of public safety telecommunicators (PSTs) have changed significantly since the first 911 call in 1968, and the role will continue to evolve as Next Generation 911 is fully integrated across the nation.

The 911 community continues efforts to update national classification of the 911 Telecommunicator from that of “Office and Administrative Support” to a “Protective Service Occupation.” This reclassification would recognize the work 911 professionals do every day to protect and save the lives of both first responders and the public.

### **What You Can Do**

#### ***Understand the Classification Process***

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system, a federal statistical survey, relies upon prescribed data points to classify over 800 occupations, including telecommunicators. Check out the YouTube link below for a synopsis.

<https://youtu.be/kz2xyFoc72o>

#### ***Review Job Descriptions***

Some of the most important data/information for classification is included in job descriptions. The 911 community is asked to compare your existing job descriptions with the tasks, knowledge, skills, and abilities in the “Guidelines for Developing a Public Safety Telecommunicator Job Description,” to ensure they do not include outdated task descriptions, which can be perceived as only clerical or administrative in nature. Instead, they should include or expand descriptions of the more skilled, specialized and life-saving elements of the role, such as providing CPR guidance and other pre-arrival instructions. You may download the Guidelines mentioned above at this link:

[https://www.911.gov/pdf/Guidelines\\_for\\_Developing\\_a\\_Public\\_Safety\\_Telecommunicator\\_Job\\_Description.pdf](https://www.911.gov/pdf/Guidelines_for_Developing_a_Public_Safety_Telecommunicator_Job_Description.pdf)

While the expectations of the PST have changed, as seen in the figure below, job descriptions do not reflect those changes accurately. Job descriptions, in some cases, were found to be older than people in the positions. The influx of information is not accounted for or reflected in the description of the position, which creates a two-pronged problem—it does not accurately describe the

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requirements of the position and the wrong candidates are applying for the position because the expectations and needed knowledge, skills, and abilities often do not align.



The role of the PST is an intersection of critical intervention of lifesaving instructions for the caller and a conduit of essential communications for the field responder to improve outcomes. If a patient is not breathing and must wait two to three minutes, or longer, for an ambulance to arrive before initial treatment begins, for example, the outcome can be fatal. The initial intervention by a PST to triage and provide lifesafety instructions over the phone is clearly necessary to preserve lives. Rendering direct care to callers has necessitated additional initial and continued training and certification for PSTs.

A model job description is included in this document.

### ***Support Policy Change***

Whether this be at the local, state, or federal level, there are a number of policy changes that can be supported.

### **Federal**

A bill has been reintroduced in Congress to change the job classification of 911 telecommunicators nationwide. The bill, Supporting Accurate Views of Emergency Services Act (911 SAVES Act), was co-authored by Rep. Norma J. Torres, who is a former LAPD dispatcher, and Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, a former FBI agent. The 911 SAVES Act is bipartisan legislation to reclassify 911 dispatchers from “Office and Administrative Support Occupations” to “Protective

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Service Occupations” in the Office of Management and Budget’s Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) catalog. The reclassification would cost nothing and would more accurately reflect the nature of America’s 100,000 public safety telecommunicators’ work. Write to your representatives in support of such legislation. A copy of what the Alabama 911 Board has supported for a previous version of this legislation is included in this packet.

### State

Contact your Alabama Association of 9-1-1 Districts (AAND) leadership.

OFFICERS		
President	Charlie McNichol	Mobile County
Vice President	Shawn Rogers	Cherokee County
Secretary-Treasurer	Jessica Yeager	Chambers County

Follow in the footsteps of other states like California, Texas, Kansas, Iowa, Indiana, and West Virginia to pass state legislation that impacts 911.

### *Texas*

Governor [signed legislation in June 2019](#) classifying 911 dispatchers and other public safety telecommunications professionals as first responders. The law went into effect Sept. 1, 2019 and qualifies 911 dispatchers for mental health support and provides protections against civil damages liability when helping in an emergency.

### *California*

A bill changing the occupational status of public safety dispatchers is on the road in California to get signed into law. Assembly Bill 1945 was placed in the Governmental Organization and the Public Employment and Retirement Committee in February 2020 and defines first responder in the California Emergency Services Act to include public safety dispatcher and public safety telecommunicator.

[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201920200AB1945](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB1945)

# Project – Public Safety Telecommunicator (PST) Job Reclassification

## *Kansas*

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Kansas decided to push for designating Public Safety Telecommunicators as First Responders.

[Joint State Chapters of APCO and NENA Press Release](#)

[SENATE BILL No. 40](#)

## *West Virginia*

[West Virginia House Bill 4123](#), clarifying that 911 telecommunication workers are included in the definition of those individuals who perform “emergency services” during a disaster, has passed through the House and Senate and is awaiting a signature from Governor Jim Justice (Passed March 7, 2020; in effect ninety days from passage).

## **Local**

In several states like Oregon, Colorado, New Mexico, Montana, Wisconsin, South Carolina, and Maryland, reclassification efforts have been driven from the local level in the form of local resolutions. A few sample resolutions are included in this document.

## **Educate yourself and stay up to date!**

Visit these professional sites regularly, follow them on social media, and stay abreast of the latest news regarding the efforts to reclassify 911 personnel.

- ❖ <https://www.nena.org/page/reclassification>
- ❖ <https://www.apcointl.org/government-relations/topics/soc-revision/reclassification-of-9-1-1-professionals/>
- ❖ [https://www.911.gov/project\\_telecommunicatorjobreclassification.html](https://www.911.gov/project_telecommunicatorjobreclassification.html)

## Appendix C – Model Job Description

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*The following model is intended only as an illustration of the various types of work performed. The omission of specific duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related, or a logical assignment to the position. Emergency communication centers (ECCs) are encouraged to “cut and paste” language from this document while working closely with their hiring authority.*

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### JOB TITLE: Public Safety Telecommunicator (PST)

#### SUMMARY

This critical role serves as the vital communications link between the public needing help and emergency services response. As members of the public safety ecosystem, PSTs are typically the first point of contact when a person reaches out for help. This entails a candidate to be able to work independently in a high-stress environment while receiving and evaluating incoming emergency and administrative requests for emergency services including but not limited to law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS), triaging those requests for service, providing guidance and assistance to the public in life-safety situations and coordinating appropriate responses to high-risk, high-stress operations, with the objective of keeping all participants safe.

#### ESSENTIAL JOB DUTIES AND TASKS<sup>1</sup>

The primary responsibility of the PST is to protect citizens and emergency responders during the emergency incident. These include:

- Using training and policies to screen requests for emergency services; answering them professionally, recognizing if a call is received from telephone, text, video, or an automated data feed.
- Using appropriate technology to communicate with callers.
- Interpreting sensor data to triage, prioritize, properly categorize, and initiate the correct emergency response.
- Using knowledge of law enforcement, fire, and EMS protocols to prioritize and sequence calls promptly in limited time with limited or no supervision.
- Demonstrating clear and effective communications with active listening, call control, judgment, respect, and empathy with callers that range from calm to panicked.
- Providing pre-arrival and post-dispatch instructions to those that are requiring assistance during high-stress situations, such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), childbirth, hemorrhaging, active shooter, and entrapments.

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<sup>1</sup> The job duties and tasks are an all-inclusive list based on current capabilities of ECCs.

- Managing challenging callers using appropriate handling of distressed, autistic, hearing-impaired, elderly, angry, and foreign-language-speaking callers.
- Providing direct counseling to suicidal persons, domestic violence victims, and children.
- Ascertaining incident information by obtaining and verifying caller information and location, determining the nature of the incident, and all available data including but not limited to automated data, social media information, text message, images or video, and providing information to emergency services either verbally and/or digitally.
- Ability to prioritize multiple events based on available resources—critical thinking.
- Using TDD and relay services to comply with standards for handling calls from hearing-impaired callers.
- Utilizing language interpretation services and coordinating with mental health resources for appropriate contacts with callers who have mental health or language barriers to receiving help.
- Using text-to-911 to communicate effectively with callers.
- Interpreting caller location by using geographic knowledge, tools, and location tracking capabilities when available.
- Interpreting automatic number and automatic location data provided by the emergency communications phone system and verifying data using mapping software for accuracy and reliability.
- Maintaining communications during life-threatening emergencies, providing safety/lifesaving instructions, and maintaining control of the conversation until field units arrive on scene.
- Using available vehicular, bystander, and/or law enforcement information for the purpose of protecting the public at the scene as well as on-scene responders by identifying the need for advanced life support resources or specialized fire extraction equipment.
- Utilizing training and reference resources when determining the nature and priority of emergency incidents that have live-streaming videos, graphic images, and text.
- Using training and operational protocols to take appropriate action such as: relaying critical information, dispatching/initiating emergency response services, or referring callers to other agencies.
- Documenting incident details quickly and accurately to establish incident urgency, categorizing the incident type, and obtaining the proper help for the caller.
- Demonstrating clear and effective communications and active listening with public safety responders using appropriate terminology, codes, and signals.
- Relaying initial information for dispatch accurately, reviewing the call for service details, and assuming incident command until first responders arrive.
- Conducting health and safety status checks of responders and using other available technology to ensure on-scene responders' safety.
- Documenting thoroughly and accurately all incident activities while maintaining awareness of scene activities.
- Operating emergency, administrative, and backup telephone communications systems effectively.
- Facilitating the transferring of calls to the appropriate resources and performing conference calls with entities, such as but not limited to poison control centers or helicopter dispatch.
- Interpreting and understanding local and regional geography to quickly and accurately identify the location of the emergency to improve response times of field responders.
- Operating a sophisticated workstation comprised of multiple computer systems, computer-aided dispatch (CAD) software and geographical information systems (GIS), state and federal clearinghouses, call handling including teletypewriter (TTY) and text-to-911 sessions, as well as communications systems such as radio dispatch consoles and recording systems.
- Operating multiple systems and conversations simultaneously without mistake.

- Notifying key personnel of critical incidents, using judgment to determine the need to contact other law enforcement and public safety agencies for additional information and resources as needed, or relaying information regarding incidents and situational awareness.
- Using mass notification software, including social media platforms, to keep the public informed of emergency incidents.
- Activating mass community warning and notification software programs to inform the public of impending critical information related to such things as severe weather impacts, potential injury or life-safety events.
- Managing chain of custody for records and documentation used in court proceedings and legal discovery.
- Maintaining a calm demeanor under chaotic and stressful circumstances, multiple conversations, and frequently noisy environments.
- Completing training, certifications, and competencies as needed by actively seeking training, completing the training and certifications required for assigned PST positions, and completing continuing education and career development as necessary.
- Following established agency policies and procedures, being aware of liability to the agency, and adhering to federal disclosure and privacy laws.
- Using debriefing tools, stress management techniques, and critical incident response models to deal with mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances.

## MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

A high school diploma or GED.

- Dependable, self-motivated and team-oriented, with a desire to provide a service to the community.
- Working knowledge of Windows-based software and various other computerized electronic, telecommunications equipment.
- Flexibility to adapt to changes.
- Has great attention to detail and empathy towards the customers' needs and concerns.
- Must be able to adapt and function, without reservation, in high-stress situations.
- Must pass a background investigation that meets all local, state, and federal requirements as well as be without felony convictions.
- Must be able to perform essential job functions (reasonable accommodation may be made on a case-by-case basis).
- Must have never committed, been involved in, or been convicted of, a felony or serious misdemeanor.
- Must be able to work on a rotating schedule including nights, weekends, and holidays to ensure 24/7 coverage.
- Subject to call back and hold over to maintain minimum staffing 24/7.
- This position is designated as essential and must report to work during times when the government/agency is closed.

Must be able to obtain and maintain the following licenses and certifications within a given time frame:

- Basic Telecommunications Course that includes:
  - Telecommunicator roles and responsibilities
  - 911 call processing

- Radio communications
- Emergency management
- Emergency communications technology
- Legal concepts
- Interpersonal communications
- Stress management
- Quality assurance
- Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) Security Training
- Certification in CPR

## KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

- By the end of the probationary period, thorough knowledge of the policies, procedures, processes, laws, ordinances, and regulations affecting public safety call taking, and the ability to apply them appropriately.
- Able to use logic, critical thinking, and reasoning to reach conclusions and solve problems.
- Adhere to policy and procedure requirements that are stringent, rigorous, and unwavering, including confidentiality of information and trustworthiness while dealing with sensitive information.
- Communicate clearly, concisely, and effectively; relay details accurately; listen actively; think and act quickly.
- Compile and analyze operational data and prepare and maintain accurate records.
- Effectively interact with people of different social, economic, and ethnic backgrounds.
- Establish and maintain cooperative and professional working relationships with co-workers, supervisors, representatives from other departments, and other emergency services agencies.
- Follow instructions, spell correctly, and write clearly.
- Handle multiple tasks simultaneously, under pressure, and in emergency and stressful situations.
- Learn quickly and retain public safety and technology training material.
- Maintain regular, reliable, and punctual attendance.
- Obtain information from hostile, confusing, and emotional callers.
- Provide effective customer service and deal tactfully and courteously with a demanding public.
- Able to handle complaints and difficult situations, remaining calm under pressure.
- Remember names, numbers, and locations accurately.
- Read and interpret geographical spatial data and maps quickly and accurately.
- Resilient and resourceful while coordinating high-risk, high-stress operations, with the objective of keeping all participants safe.
- Operate computer systems with specialized software and enter data via keyboard and software with speed and accuracy.
- Organize and prioritize work to meet deadlines and accomplish tasks.
- Use judgment and decision-making skills to rapidly evaluate situations, establish priorities, resolve matters, and pass on information, as needed.
- Relentless problem solver.
- Friendly and tactful personality.
- Patient and resilient.
- Stress tolerance and adaptability.



## WORK ENVIRONMENT

Work is performed in an emergency communications center. The work level can fluctuate from minimal to fast-paced and high volume. The employee deals with crisis situations that require them to quickly make major decisions involving people, resources, and property with frequently limited direction.

The PST may be asked to work scheduled shifts at any time of the day and on weekends and holidays. Must be able to cope in a safe manner with stressful situations, emotional callers, irate responders and unprofessional contacts. Under unusual circumstances, the PST may be required to perform duties at or near the scene of any emergency.

## PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

This work is sedentary and requires little to no exertion of force. Work regularly requires speaking or hearing and frequently sitting, using hands to finger, handle, or feel, reaching with hands and arms and repetitive motions. Work requires close vision, distance vision, ability to adjust focus, depth perception, and peripheral vision. Vocal communication is required for expressing or exchanging ideas by means of the spoken word and conveying detailed or important instructions to others accurately, loudly or quickly. Hearing is required to perceive information at normal spoken word levels and to receive detailed information through oral communications and/or to make fine distinctions in sound. Work requires preparing and analyzing written or computer data. Work requires exposure to loud noises, extreme emotion, and stressful environments. Work is generally indoors and in a moderately noisy location surrounded by others talking on the phone or radio.

## COMPENSATION

The non-negotiable starting salary for this position is \$20.24 per hour.

Benefits include health insurance, dental insurance, a vision plan, annual leave, sick leave, paid holidays, a contributory retirement plan, group term life insurance, flexible spending accounts (HSA/FSA), and long-term disability insurance.

April 1, 2019

The Honorable XXXXXXXXXXXX  
United States House of Representatives or Senate  
XXXXXXXXXXXX Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Rogers,

Last year, the nation celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first 9-1-1 call placed on February 16, 1968 in our very own Haleyville, Alabama. Alabama has been a leader in 9-1-1 since that first call was made, and we are asking for your support to continue in those same pursuits of excellence within the 9-1-1 profession, not only in Alabama, but nationwide.

Specifically, I write to you today to ask that you support Rep. Norma Torres (D-CA), Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), and others in Congress by cosponsoring the 911 SAVES Act. This bill would direct the Office of Management and Budget to reclassify public safety telecommunicators (9-1-1 call takers and dispatchers) as “Protective Service Occupations,” instead of their current classification, “Office and Administrative Support Occupations.”<sup>1</sup>

Alabama’s 2,500 9-1-1 call takers and dispatchers are critically important public safety personnel. On any given day, they may provide emergency medical instruction, deal with suicidal persons, analyze background noises and a caller’s voice to assess a situation, or coordinate the dispatch and safe arrival of police, fire, and EMS personnel.

However, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics still classifies public safety telecommunicators as "Office and Administrative Support Occupations" in its Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) System — alongside secretaries, office clerks, and taxi dispatchers. This is an outdated, misinformed view of the work performed by 9-1-1 professionals, and must be changed.

To fix this problem, Rep. Norma Torres, along with Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick, Ro Khanna, Mark Meadows, Donna Shalala, Grace Napolitano, Pete Stauber, and Susan Wild,<sup>2</sup> have introduced legislation to reclassify public safety telecommunicators as "Protective Service Occupations," alongside a broad range of other protective occupations, such as lifeguards, fish and game wardens, parking enforcement workers, firefighters, and playground monitors. This small change — which costs nothing — would realign the SOC with the actual nature of 9-1-1 work

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<sup>1</sup> Public Safety Telecommunicators (also referred to as Police, Fire, and Ambulance Dispatchers) are Occupation 43-5031, currently classified under Major Occupation Category 43-0000, “Office and Administrative Support Occupations.” “Protective Service Occupations” is Major Occupation Category 33-0000. U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, 2018 STANDARD OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM, [https://www.bls.gov/soc/2018/major\\_groups.htm#](https://www.bls.gov/soc/2018/major_groups.htm#).

<sup>2</sup> Current as of March 5, 2019.

and give telecommunicators and dispatchers the recognition they deserve. It also could lead to better research and action on workforce issues related to 9-1-1.

On behalf of the Alabama 9-1-1 Board and the 2,500 telecommunicators in our great state, I'm writing to request your support of the 911 SAVES Act. It has broad support throughout the 9-1-1 community, including the endorsement of NENA: The 9-1-1 Association. Put simply, the 911 SAVES Act is good governance and much-deserved recognition for the estimated 100,000 public safety telecommunicators in our country.

The bill's sponsors — and the 9-1-1 community — would gladly welcome collaboration on and cosponsorship of this important piece of legislation. For more information, please contact [Justin.Vogt@mail.house.gov](mailto:Justin.Vogt@mail.house.gov) in Rep. Torres' office or [Joseph.Knowles@mail.house.gov](mailto:Joseph.Knowles@mail.house.gov) in Rep. Fitzpatrick's office.

Please let us know if we may ever be of assistance to you in the future.

Sincerely,

Leah Missildine  
Executive Director

## RESOLUTION NO. 20-10

### A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE WORK OF THE 911 TELECOMMUNICATORS OF THE KENTON COUNTY EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER AND THE SACRIFICES THEY MAKE TO SERVE PUBLIC SAFETY IN THEIR ROLE AS FIRST RESPONDERS

**Whereas**, the 911 telecommunicator plays a critical role in public safety, homeland security, and emergency response alongside police officers, firefighters, and emergency medical services; and

**Whereas**, the 911 telecommunicator requires specialized training and skills to gather vital information and make split-second decisions to form the foundation of an effective emergency response, prevent the worsening of a situation, provide situational awareness to responders, and/ or provide life-saving direction; and

**Whereas**, the 911 telecommunicator works in a uniquely stressful environment, communicating with people in great distress, harm, fear, or injury, and that environment can have an adverse emotional and physical impact; acknowledging that PTSD and vicarious trauma are real issues in the 911 profession; and

**Whereas**, the 911 telecommunicator holds strong “the thin gold line”, providing selfless compassionate care to all who seek their assistance during good times and bad; and,

**Whereas**, the Kenton County Fiscal Court hold all these things to be true; and

**Whereas** the 911 telecommunicator is not recognized by the Federal Government as a protected classification. Despite all the requirements they must meet to work in this position, the Federal Office of Management and Budget classifies this group of individuals as clerical staff, but we dissent; and

**Whereas** Kenton County Fiscal Court recognizes Public Safety Telecommunicators are far from just clerical and supports the national movement to re-classify telecommunicators as first responders and truly recognize the work they do. Additionally, the County of Kenton supports the 911 Saves Act to properly classify the profession of 911 Telecommunicators;

Therefore let it be resolved, this 14<sup>th</sup> day of April 2020, during the national declared emergency of CVOID-19.

APPROVED THIS 14<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2020, BY THE KENTON COUNTY FISCAL COURT.

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Kris A. Knochelmann  
County Judge/Executive

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sue Kaiser  
Fiscal Court Clerk

## **Pitkin County Proclamation, Board of County Commissioners B**

*WHEREAS, Pitkin County is elevating the status of its 911 Emergency Dispatchers to First Responders in a move that outpaces a similar effort on the national level; and*

*WHEREAS, Pitkin County could not wait for the 911 Saves Act that is stalled in Congress to give our dispatchers the classification of first responders that they have earned and deserve; and*

*WHEREAS, all Pitkin County 911 Emergency Dispatchers are trained in emergency medical dispatch qualifying them to offer a variety of potentially lifesaving instructions including CPR, bleeding control, choking, childbirth and airway maintenance over the telephone until paramedics arrive on the scene; and*

*WHEREAS, in the first six months of 2019 alone, Pitkin County 911 Emergency Dispatchers gave medical guidance to over 200 callers. Six Pitkin County 911 Emergency Dispatchers were recognized for their roles in saving the lives of three people who suffered cardiac arrest and a mother in labor, who was coached over the telephone, gave birth to a healthy baby; and*

*WHEREAS, the Pitkin County Public Safety Council, made up of 18 public safety and public safety support agencies in the Roaring Fork Valley unanimously resolved to support the 911 Saves Act and all the agencies who work with the Pitkin County 911 Emergency Dispatch Center already consider them “the first, first responders” as their information and instructions are critical to keeping our citizens and our field units safe.*

*NOW THEREFORE BE IT PROCLAIMED, that from this day forward Pitkin County 911 Emergency Dispatchers are hereby elevated to the status of First Responders.*

*Dated this 10th Day of October, 2019*

*County Manager Pitkin County Board of County Commissioners*

## **Mineral County Resolution**

**RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS,**

*911 Public Safety Telecommunicators serve 24 hours a day, seven days a week, just the same as firefighters, law enforcement officers, and emergency medical services workers; and*

**WHEREAS,**

*911 Public Safety Telecommunicators make the same sacrifices in their personal lives as firefighters, law enforcement officers, and emergency medical services workers by leaving their families, friends, and the safety of their homes to handle the emergency 911 calls that save the lives, protect the property, and ensure the safety of our community during emergency events; and*

*WHEREAS,*

*911 Public Safety Telecommunicators heroically answer 911 emergency calls around-the-clock whereby they give medical guidance, instruct callers on staying safe in difficult situations, and help callers to safety during disasters, all while promptly dispatching field units to said emergency situations for the callers; and*

*WHEREAS,*

*911 Public Safety Telecommunicators must handle the stress of answering over twenty thousand calls each year- one call after another, daily- often being the voice on the other end of the call as citizens experience the worst day of their lives. They hear the cries of devastation, listen to the screams for help, and are the support as citizens cope with the loss of a loved on. Public Safety Telecommunicators handle all of this and at the very same time they keep their fellow emergency responders in the field safe; and*

*WHEREAS,*

*to honor the women and men who serve in this crucial position, we recognize these individuals throughout Mineral County by proclaiming to consider them true "First Responders."*

*NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Mineral County Commission*

*hereby proclaims that this Resolution goes into effect immediately upon adoption.*

*I, Lauren T. P. Ellifritz, Clerk, do hereby certify that the above is a true copy of a resolution adopted the 5th day of November, 2019, at a meeting of the Mineral County Commission. I further certify that a quorum of the Commission was present and a majority of its members voted affirmatively for this resolution.*

**HABERSHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**SUBJECT:** Resolution Recognizing 911 Telecommunication Officers as First Responders

**DATE:** July 24, 2020

- RECOMMENDATION**
- POLICY DISCUSSION**
- STATUS REPORT**
- OTHER**

**BUDGET INFORMATION:**

ANNUAL-0

CAPITAL-0

**COMMISSION ACTION REQUESTED ON:** August 17, 2020

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**PURPOSE:** To seek Commission approval in recognizing 911 Telecommunication Officers as First Responders in Habersham County with the adoption of a resolution of such.

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**BACKGROUND / HISTORY:** There is legislation on the Federal level to reclassify 911 Telecommunication Officers as First Responders. Telecommunication Officers are currently classified in the same class as taxicab dispatchers and clerical workers. Senator Doug Collins along with Representative Terry Rogers are working with the 911 community to pass this at the State level. The first step should be at the county level.

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**FACTS AND ISSUES:**

- a. 911 Telecommunication Officers are more than clerical workers.
  - b. 911 Telecommunication Officers save lives each day by administering life saving medical instruction to callers on emergency medical call.
  - c. 911 Telecommunication Officers handle stress of life or death matters by making split decisions for the betterment of the caller.
  - d. 911 Telecommunication Officers are considered essential workers as are law and fire/ems.
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**OPTIONS:**

- 1) Approve adoption of resolution
  - 2) Deny adoption of resolution
  - 3) Commission defined alternative
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**RECOMMENDED SAMPLE MOTION:** I make a motion to approve the resolution recognizing and reclassifying 911 Telecommunication Officers as First Responders in Habersham County.

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**DEPARTMENT:**

Prepared by: Lynn Smith, E-911/EMA

Director: Lynn Smith

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**ADMINISTRATIVE**

**COMMENTS:** \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

County Manager

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**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF HABERSHAM COUNTY  
GEORGIA RECOGNIZING 911 TELECOMMUNICATIONS OFFICERS AS FIRST  
RESPONDERS IN HABERSHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES,**

**STATE OF GEORGIA  
COUNTY OF HABERSHAM**

**WHEREAS**, 911 Telecommunication Officers are part of the critical infrastructure of the Public safety system and are trained and certified as Communication Officers pursuant to the Georgia Peace Officers' standards and training act; and

**WHEREAS**, Telecommunication Officers play a critical role in emergency response as the first line of communications for persons needing law enforcement, fire or medical response and are, very often, the first public safety employees handling the emergency; and

**WHEREAS**, Telecommunication Officers are a lifeline to law enforcement, fire and medical responders in the field; and

**WHEREAS**, Telecommunication Officers deal with stressful situations, the need to make split second decisions which effect the safety and well-being of both the public and field responders and delivering emergency medical pre-arrival instructions daily; and

**WHEREAS**, Telecommunication Officers handle emergency and non-emergency calls with compassion, empathy and professionalism; and

**WHEREAS**, information gathered and relayed by Telecommunication Officers can mean the difference between life and death for callers and field responders, provides an integral basis for an effective public safety response and often can prevent an incident from worsening prior to the arrival of field responders; and

**WHEREAS**, with the advent of Next Generation 911, Telecommunication Officers are now subjected to graphic photographs, audio and live video streaming from scenes of emergency situations, and

**WHEREAS**, Telecommunication Officers often suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, even though they are not physically on the scene, by answering multiple traumatic calls, banding successful radio incidents and communicating with people in states of distress, fear or injury; and

**WHEREAS**, First Responder means a public safety employee whose duties include responding rapidly to an emergency or accident to provide assistance;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Commissioners of Habersham County, Georgia that 911 Telecommunication Officers are designated as First Responders in Habersham County, Georgia and shall be recognized as such in county policy and procedural considerations regarding First Responders.

**SO RESOLVED THIS 17<sup>th</sup> DAY OF AUGUST, 2020.**

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Stacy Hall, Chairman