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Emergency Dispatch Radio Committee Holds First Meeting

Conshohocken, PA, (February 29, 2012) — An ad hoc committee of elected and appointed municipal officials held its initial meeting Wednesday to advise the Montgomery County Commissioners on how to proceed with a needed multi-million dollar upgrade to the emergency dispatch radio system used by emergency first responders.

Montgomery County Commissioner Bruce L. Castor, Jr. is chair of the 32-member Emergency Dispatch Radio Committee, which is comprised of elected municipal officials and members of the police, fire and EMS units that use the system.

“My colleagues and I recognize that the highest priority of government is public safety,” Castor said. “But in these difficult economic times, it is also our duty to ensure that all options and decisions are properly reviewed and vetted before public funds are expended.”

Josh Shapiro, chair of the county board of commissioners, said he had the utmost confidence in Castor and his committee. “We chose Commissioner Castor to head up this important effort, because of his great experience in the public safety realm. He is uniquely qualified to lead this effort.”

The Montgomery County Department of Public Safety’s emergency dispatch system is at a critical juncture. A large portion of the equipment and infrastructure, and nearly all of the police radios, have reached the end of their useful life, with parts and service no longer available from the manufacturer.

Following a meeting of the whole committee, members broke into four subcommittees to discuss the various tasks they have been assigned.

The Vendor Selection subcommittee interviewed four firms that replied to an RFP that had previously been issued. The subcommittee will recommend one of those firms to the County Commissioners to serve as a consultant to help the various subcommittees accomplish their tasks and implement the strategic outline that is developed.

The Technical Subcommittee will assess the needs of all of the public safety agencies that use the system and determine what equipment will best address those needs. The Operations and Policy Subcommittee will review how the system functions and suggest improvements to the services offered. The Municipal Liaison Committee will keep the governing bodies of our municipal partners informed of the committee's activities and work with them to develop an appropriate funding mechanism.