



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date: June 9, 2017**

**County of Summit and Cities of Cuyahoga Falls, Stow and Tallmadge  
Enter into Memorandum of Understanding Regarding  
Consolidation of Public Safety Dispatch Operations**

On Thursday, June 1, 2017, County Executive Ilene Shapiro, Cuyahoga Falls Mayor Don Walters, Stow Mayor Sara Kline and Tallmadge Mayor Dave Kline signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding a potential consolidation of public safety dispatch operations among their communities. The four communities have been in discussions for several months about the benefits of consolidating their dispatch operations in the face of rising infrastructure, equipment, software, staffing and training costs. Additionally, the State of Ohio has indicated to communities throughout Ohio that it intends to push consolidation of dispatch services.

Pursuant to the terms of the MOU, the communities intend to hire and share in the cost of a consultant to assist them with identifying and implementing a new computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system that will serve the consolidated operation, as well as other communities in Summit County who may contract to use the system. The communities, along with the Village of Mogadore, were previously awarded a \$500,000 grant from the State of Ohio to pursue the joint-use CAD system. Additionally, the consultant will assist the communities with selecting a location for the consolidated dispatch operation and will advise the communities on the processes, procedures and best-practices for implementing the consolidated dispatch operation.

The MOU further provides that the communities will create a Council of Governments to oversee the consolidated dispatch operation; identify, equip and furnish a facility for operations; develop necessary operating and capital budgets and cost-sharing formulas for member and contracting communities; and keep the bargaining units representing their respective dispatchers informed of developments.

“The MOU provides the County and the Cities of Cuyahoga Falls, Stow and Tallmadge with a roadmap of how to implement a professional and collaborative dispatch operation which will serve the needs of all communities involved,” said County Executive Ilene Shapiro. “Since the County joined the discussions several months ago, it was clear to me that our potential partners are approaching this opportunity with the goals of public safety, improved service and fiscal

responsibility in mind. As we move down the path of implementing this shared vision, I look forward to working with the Mayors to make the consolidated dispatch operation a reality.”

The goals of the four communities in establishing the consolidated dispatch operation are enumerated in the MOU, which states that all decisions and agreements between the parties to implement the consolidation will be done with public safety and service as the primary considerations. The communities also identify sustainability, regional disaster recovery and redundancy and cost-effectiveness as key goals of the consolidation.

“The goal for law enforcement should always be to continually improve services for the safety of our citizens, as well as keeping our law enforcement officers and civilian staff members as safe as possible,” said Sheriff Steve Barry. “Collaboration and cooperation between agencies is the most effective solution and most fiscally responsible way to accomplish this goal. The Summit County Sheriff’s Office looks forward to pursuing these combined efforts with Cuyahoga Falls, Stow, and Tallmadge, and potentially other agencies in the future as well.

“We are incredibly fortunate here in Cuyahoga Falls to have the established relationships between communities that allow for a multi-jurisdictional collaboration of this caliber, and we are proud to be a part of it,” stated Cuyahoga Falls Mayor Don Walters. “With costs to operate and improve our dispatch centers rapidly escalating, we are addressing the issue as pro-active regional partners. This consolidation is the most efficient way that our respective communities can come together to help ensure savings while continuing to provide high-quality services to our residents.”

The Cities of Cuyahoga Falls, Stow and Tallmadge began discussions regarding dispatch consolidations more than two years ago, and in 2016 presented to their respective councils the concept of a joint operation, overseen by a COG. At the time, the County was looking to partner with municipalities and townships on dispatch to improve services and reduce long-term costs. Shortly after, the four communities began discussions would become the model for more consolidation in the County.

“The MOU signed by the County of Summit, City of Stow, City of Cuyahoga Falls and City of Tallmadge represents a significant step forward in the process of creating a multi-jurisdictional dispatch center that will serve the public with enhanced capabilities, excellent service and optimal operational efficiencies,” said Stow Mayor Sara Kline. “This effort has my full support and I am confident that the City of Stow will be well served by this process. In the past 2 1/2 years that my Administration has worked on this issue I became even more convinced of the necessity for our communities to collaborate on this issue and control our own destiny to ensure that the public and our safety forces continue to experience first rate dispatch services now and into the future. I look forward to continuing to work with our partners and thank my fellow Mayors and the County Executive for being so forward thinking on this issue.”

“A few years ago, the City of Tallmadge committed to combining its dispatch center with the City of Stow,” said Tallmadge Mayor David Kline. “Because of this, Tallmadge is now enjoying improved operational and administrative efficiencies that were not previously possible. We anticipate that this larger consolidation effort will provide even greater benefits to our community, our neighbors, and our county. It is an honor to work with such innovative and fiscally responsible

partners on this issue. We look forward to merging our collective knowledge and experience to improve dispatch services and reduce long-term costs.”

Under the MOU, all agreements necessary to create the COG and consolidate the communities’ dispatch operations must be approved by their respective Councils. The MOU is not a binding legal document, but instead sets forth the steps that the communities will pursue to make the dispatch consolidation a reality. The communities anticipate submitting appropriate legislation to their Councils at the proper time to approve the numerous steps in the process for the consolidation, with the first step being the hiring of the consultant by the County and the four communities collectively funding the consultant’s work.

Contacts for Additional Information:

County of Summit: Jason D. Dodson, Chief of Staff, 330-643-2075, [jdodson@summitoh.net](mailto:jdodson@summitoh.net)

Cuyahoga Falls: Kelli Crawford-Smith, CDBG/Entitlement Administrator, 330.971.8140, [Crawford-Smith@cityofcf.com](mailto:Crawford-Smith@cityofcf.com)

Stow: Mayor Sara Kline, 330-689-2800, [sdrew@stow.oh.us](mailto:sdrew@stow.oh.us)

Tallmadge: Donald Cooper, Director of Administration, 330-633-5086, [dccooper@tallmadge-ohio.org](mailto:dccooper@tallmadge-ohio.org)