Town of Amenia
Town Board Special Meeting
October 24, 2018
7:00PM

The Town of Amenia Town Board held a special meeting at 7:00pm on Wednesday, October 24, 2018 at the Amenia Town Hall, 4988 Route 22, Amenia NY with the following members present:

Supervisor Victoria Perotti
Deputy Supervisor Vicki Doyle
Councilwoman Michelle Somogyi

Absent: Councilman James Morris
Councilman Damian Gutierrez

Also Present Town Clerk Dawn Marie Klingner

Supervisor Perotti moved to open the meeting at 7:00PM. There was a Salute to the Flag, emergency exits were pointed out.

Public Hearing on the regarding the results of a Feasibility Study for Reginal Ambulance Service

Paul Bishop, Principal of CGR presented the findings of a study that was completed on the existing operations and Options for North East Dutchess EMS sharing possible solutions for future EMS in this area. Approximately forty-two persons were in attendance including those from the Town of Amenia, Town Board; Town of Dover, Town Board; Town of North East and Village of Millerton Boards; Fire and EMS officers from the Amenia, North East and JH Ketcham Hose Company; and Dutchess County Emergency Response.

Mr. Bishops presentation is hereto attached.

No formal actions were taken.

With no additional matters or business of the Amenia Town Board, the meeting was adjourned.

Motion to adjourn at 8:45pm
Motion made by Morris
Seconded by Somogyi
Roll Call 3 Ayes (Doyle, Somogyi, Perotti)
2 Absent (Gutierrez, Morris)

Respectfully submitted:

Dawn Marie Klingner

Dawn Marie Klingner
Town Clerk

{Attached twenty-five page presentation}

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Existing Operations and Options for North East Dutchess EMS

Possible Solutions for Future of EMS

October 24, 2018

Project Website: www.cgr.org/NEDEMS

100 years CGR • 1915-2015

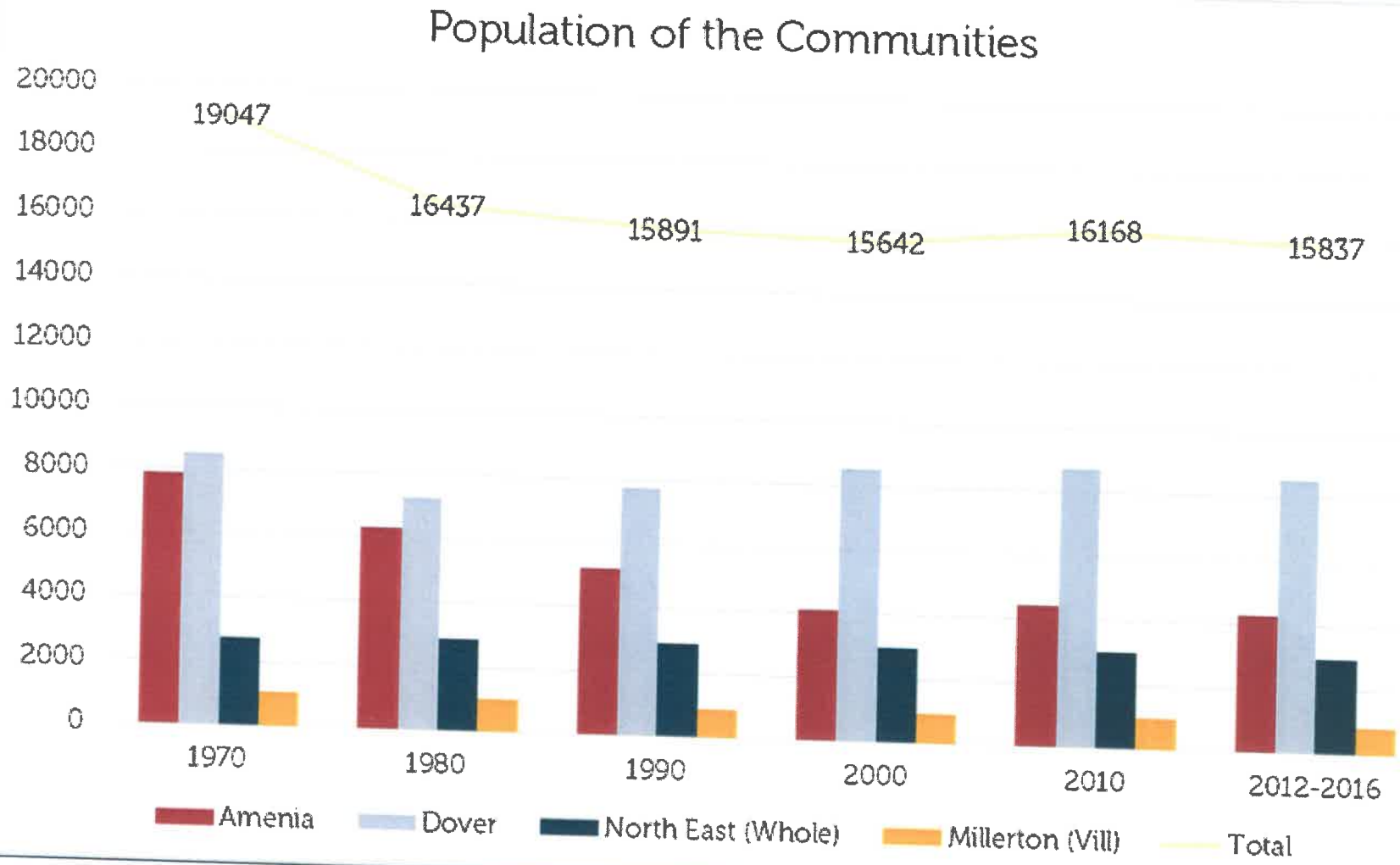
Agenda for Meeting

- Study Background
- Key Findings of Existing Conditions
- Background for Options
- Service Model Changes
- Service Refinements
- Next Steps

Ground Rules for the Evening

- This is a meeting for the public boards
  - Town of Amenia
  - Town of Dover
  - Town of North East
  - Village of Millerton
- There will be minutes and a recording of the proceedings
- Please ask questions
- No votes are being taken tonight
- The focus is sharing information and gaining an understanding of the topics
- Not intended as an opportunity to advocate for a point of view
- Elected Officials will make the decisions on action in upcoming months

The Community



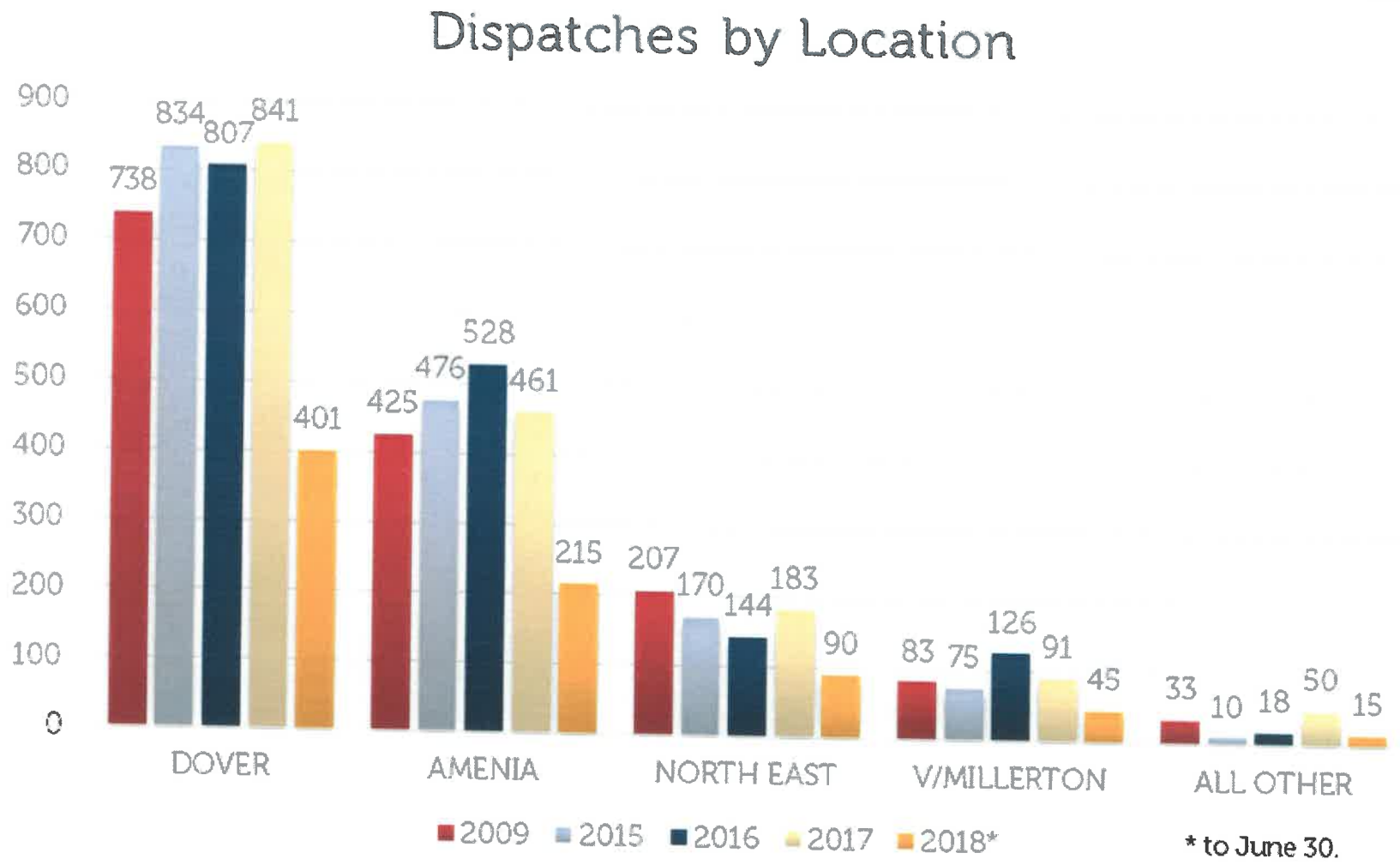
Agency Profiles

- Northern Dutchess Paramedics
  - Private, for-profit, locally-owned company
  - Serves 33 municipalities in NY and CT. Over 1,200 square miles
  - Have contract with each town in the study area
  - Keep one paramedic ambulance stationed in each town
- Amenia Fire Department
  - Volunteer company supported by Amenia Fire District
  - Typically have EMT crew from 6 pm to 6 am to respond to all calls
  - Only transports if NDP is not available or multiple patients
  - 8 certified EMTs
- J.H. Ketcham Hose Company
  - Volunteer company supported by Dover Fire Protection District
  - Typically have EMT crew responding to second calls from 5 pm to 5 am
  - 8 certified EMTs or higher
  - Stopping ambulance services 12/31/2018

Agency Profiles

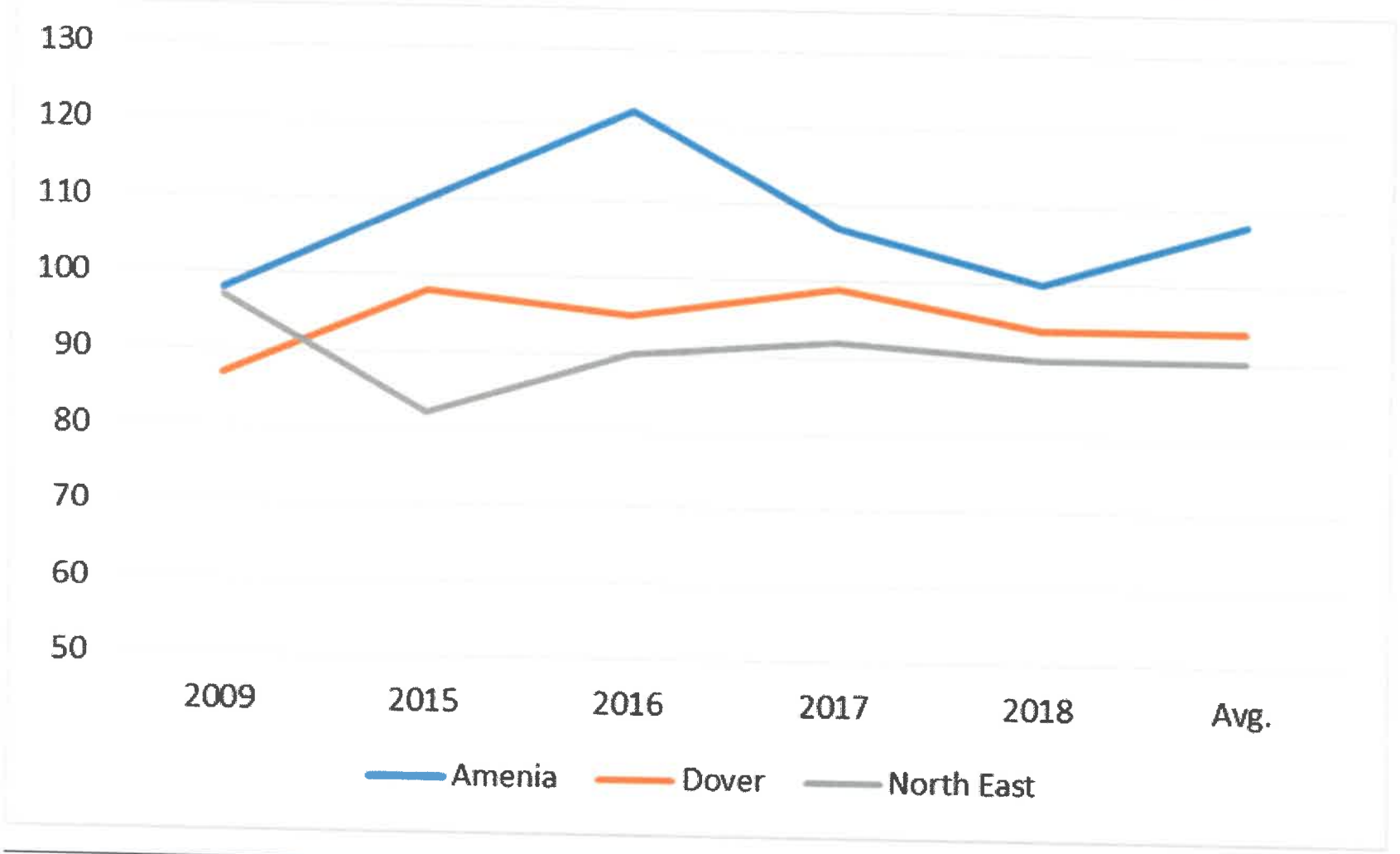
- Millerton Fire Department
  - Volunteer company supported by North East Fire District
  - Have 4 EMTs
  - Respond primarily to fire-related events or motor vehicle crashes
- Wassiac Fire Company
  - Volunteer Fire Company supported by Wassaic Fire District
  - Does not operate an ambulance
  - Has 5 certified EMTs that respond in the district
  - Sends medical first responders to all medical calls

EMS Calls in Community



* to June 30.

Calls per 1,000 Residents



Key Findings

- The **existing EMS system**, with three individual contracts for EMS service, **is functioning well, but is a new financial burden** on the communities.
- The **lack of EMS volunteers is a relatively recent phenomenon** that has a substantial impact on the cost of public safety in the community.
- **Retention of existing volunteers EMTs is more difficult** than in the past because of increased demands on their time and higher training requirements.
- **Northern Dutchess Paramedics provides good clinical care** and meets contract obligations with the towns.
- For each fire department, **it was a very difficult** decision for them **to ask for outside help** to perform a task they had done alone for decades.
- Some of their **neighboring departments seem to be struggling just as much**, but have not yet sought similar assistance.

Key Findings

- **The town governments are primary contractors** and decision makers, but some have limited experience or knowledge in EMS. Dutchess County and the fire departments are providing technical expertise to assist in the transition.
- **All three towns are under agreement or negotiated renewals through 2019.**
- **Actions in neighboring towns impact these three** with demand for resources that occasionally take away from these towns.
- **NDP Ambulance locations in Amenia and Dover are not centrally located** for call volume in those towns, potentially leading to a longer overall response time.
- **The call volume in the community is, on average, just over 4 calls per day.**

Key Findings

- All communities have similar rates of EMS calls by population.
- The busiest times for calls are in the middle of the afternoon and the slowest times are in middle of the day. About 1 in 8 calls occurs within 90 minutes of another call.
- Community is "over resourced" by call volume, but it needs resources because of geography and dispersed population.
- Existing EMS and fire volunteers remained interested in serving the community and could serve as a valuable resource if focused on key events.

Comparison of Town Ambulance Contracts			
	Amenia	Dover	North East
2018 Ambulance Contract	$322,000	$256,000	$310,000
2018 Town Tax Levy	$1,475,596	$1,880,422	$1,926,089
Estimated Share of Tax Levy	22%	14%	16%
Cost per Day	$882	$701	$849
Per Capita Cost	$75	$30	$104
Per Call Cost	$698	$304	$1,131
Calls per 1,000 Residents (2017)	107	99	92
Calls in 2017	461	841	183 Town + 91 Village = 274

Service Model Changes

- Maintain the Status Quo
- Create a Single Service District
- Have Two Towns Share a Service District
- Creation of a Non-Profit EMS Ambulance Service
- Paid EMS staff for fire districts and companies
- Creation of Municipal Ambulance Service
- Development of an EMS Authority
- Service Refinements

Maintain Status Quo

Key Characteristics

- Each town retains control over their contract for EMS services. The contracts focus on the presence of a resource in each community and responsiveness to the individual communities. Each town funds the service on a town-wide basis using a property tax assessment. Existing volunteer EMS units are integrated into the system when they are available.

Benefits

- Local control of the service
- EMS unit "dedicated" to their town

Drawbacks

- Costs will continue to escalate for EMS services to point where they may become unsustainable
- Unlikely to have competitive bidding situation for agreement
- The Village of Millerton does not have a contract for service with NDP. They are covered by the Town of North East's contract.

Create a Single Service District for Three Towns

Key Characteristics

- The three towns and village agree to jointly contract for EMS service inside their borders. This agreement would likely begin with a formal inter-municipal agreement that would include key decisions such as cost-sharing among the municipalities, composition of an advisory board/commission, and requirements for service. The consortium would develop an RFP that provides required response time, minimum service levels, reporting requirements and other specifications as outlined above.

Benefits

- Potential lower costs for communities with more competitive bids
- Dynamic positioning of resources if one (or more) went out on a call
- Able to require additional performance measures
- Could work with vendor to optimize service levels

Drawbacks

- Loss of local control of service
- Balance of cost could be challenge to negotiate

Have Two Towns Share Services/Contract

Key Characteristics

- Similar to the above option of all three towns getting together, but instead focusing on Amenia and either Dover or North East. This provides less density of calls than the three together, but might be more manageable to establish.

Benefits

- Still provides for increased service area with potential for more competitive bidding
- Would allow for dynamic positioning of resources if one went out on call

Drawbacks

- Smaller pool of calls would inhibit competitive bidding and potential economies of scale
- Eliminates exclusive local municipal contract
- Negotiation of cost sharing

Creation of Non-Profit EMS Agency to Serve Area

Key Characteristics

- Numerous communities in New York have independent non-profit ambulance services that provide EMS service to a community. These agencies are separate organizations such as Community Rescue Squad in Copake. They have a board of directors responsible for their direction. They own and operate the EMS services either with volunteers or career staff or often a combination of the two. The service they provide is no different from a commercial service or volunteer fire department.

Benefits

- Non-profit organizations provide service to specific areas
- They can operate at slightly lower costs due to tax exempt status and ability to apply for grants
- Governance is generally drawn from service area
- Able to bill for services

Drawbacks

- Substantial up-front costs to develop the agency and begin operations
- Requires investment of time from a variety of people to develop the service
- Will require subsidy to operate due to call volume and service expectations

Paid EMS staff for fire districts and companies

Key Characteristics

- The fire department ambulances could pay for staffing at either the EMT or paramedic level.
- The staff could be for 24 hours a day or fraction of the day or week
- Existing fire department infrastructure would be utilized for this service

Benefits

- Keeps service under local direction
- Allows for volunteers to remain engaged and work in coordination with paid staff
- Limited need for additional capital expense

Drawbacks

- Fire Districts and independent fire companies are unable to bill for service for EMS transport so the entire cost would be a municipal burden such as property taxes
- The management of this service would likely be a new burden to volunteer leadership of the fire companies
- The fire districts and companies would need to move to the paramedic level to continue the current level of care

Creation of Municipal Ambulances to directly provide services

Key Characteristics

- One or more of the municipalities establish an ambulance service including an operating certificate, such as Dover
- The full operations of the ambulance service including staffing, billing, responding to calls, capital investment, training and purchasing would become the responsibility of the municipality. Could also be inter-municipal agreements for services between towns

Benefits

- Locally directed and focused service
- Staff might be available for other municipal tasks
- Resources remain controlled by community

Drawbacks

- Substantial upfront costs in capital and planning
- Municipalities would be responsible for full operations of agency including burden of billing and collecting revenue, human resource management, and capital planning
- The EMS service is unlikely to generate enough revenue to cover costs and would rely on a tax subsidy still

Development of EMS authority for county or portion

Key Characteristics

- An independent government authority is created to provide EMS service in a designated area.
- The authority would be governed by a board of directors or commission
- This would be a first of its kind entity in New York and would need substantial planning and legal work to implement

Benefits

- Organization focused on the delivery of EMS service
- As an independent service authority across municipal lines it could impose a service fee on all property owners, including tax exempt properties
- Could contract with one or more third parties to provide the service

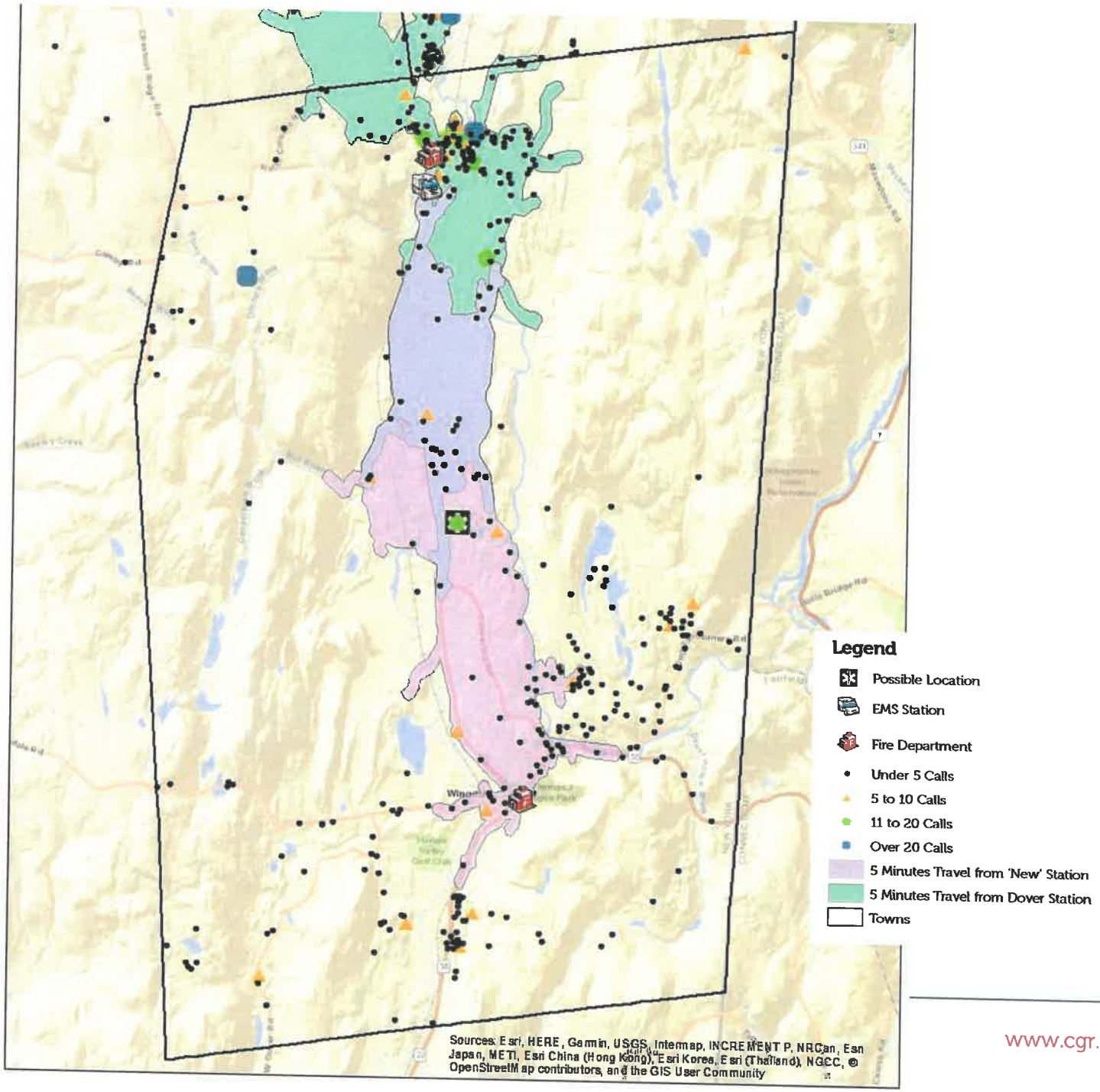
Drawbacks

- As a first of its kind organization, there would be unforeseen challenges in its development
- There is a need for substantial political support to implement this option
- If the authority operated its own service, there would be substantial capital costs and it would compete with other service providers for personnel

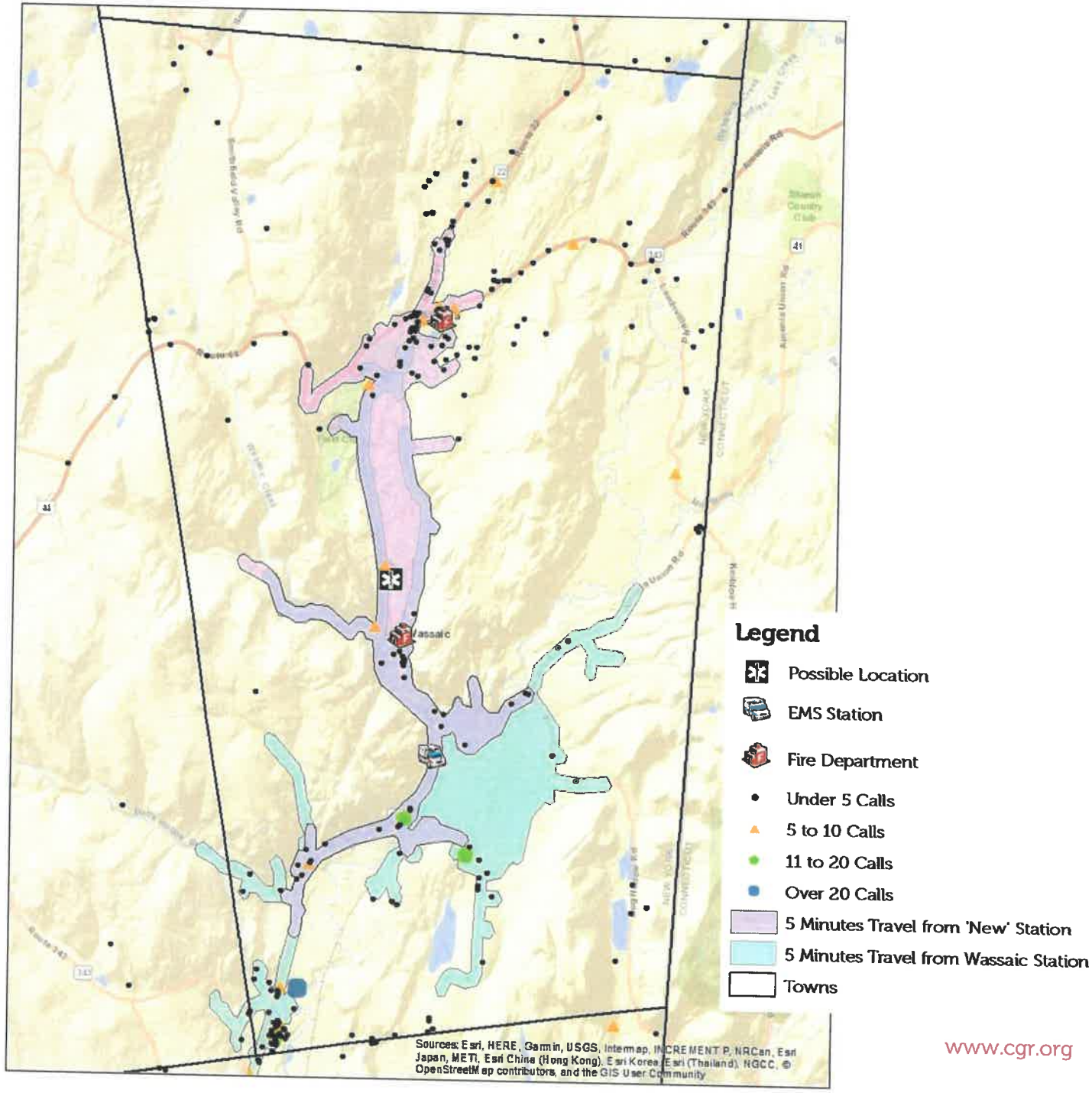
Service Refinements

- Refine Current Contracts
  - Specify standards
  - Clarify operational performance and reporting
  - Use independent data for time reporting
  - Greater detail in financial reporting
- Improve NDP Chute Time
- Reduce Response Time Through Optimization of Ambulance Staging

Dover EMS Coverage – Existing and Potential Shifted Station



Amenia EMS Response Coverage – Current and Centralized Option



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Service Refinements (continued)

- Consider Dynamic Deployment
- Consider Working with Neighboring Towns
- Enhance First Response to Critical Calls
- Evaluate Need for Swing Shift
- Consider Adding BLS Units to Matrix

Next Steps

- Three town and the village boards consider which option might be best for the future of EMS in the community
- A collaborative approach will require additional upfront work, but might lead to a more sustainable solution – improved service, stable costs – going forward
- Share information about this study and give feedback to your elected officials