

REGION OF OTTAWA-CARLETON  
RÉGION D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT  
RAPPORT

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Our File/N/Réf. 03 02-99-0009  
Your File/V/Réf.

DATE 3 May 1999

TO/DEST. 9-1-1 Management Board

FROM/EXP. Co-ordinator, 9-1-1 Management Board

SUBJECT/OBJET **9-1-1 ADVISORY COMMITTEE DRAFT MINUTES**

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### **REPORT RECOMMENDATION**

**That the 9-1-1 Management Board receive the draft Minutes of the 9-1-1 Advisory Committee of 12 March 1999 for information.**

### **BACKGROUND**

The 9-1-1 Advisory Committee met on 12 March 1999. The draft Minutes of that meeting are hereby submitted for the information and/or discussion of the Board.

*Approved by*  
*Rosemary Nelson*

att.

MINUTES

9-1-1 ADVISORY COMMITTEE

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON

COLONEL BY ROOM

12 MARCH 1999

9:30 A.M.

PRESENT

Chair: C. Powers, Nepean Fire Chief

Member/: K. Ablett, public representative, R. Lavictoire, Ottawa Central Ambulance  
Alternate Comm. Centre, G. Hawkins, Rideau Fire Chief, D. McCallan, Gloucester Fire Department, R. White, Division Chief, Ottawa Fire Dept., T. Gervais, Goulbourn Fire Chief, K. Scheel, Deputy Fire Chief, Kanata, G. Nelson, 9-1-1 Bureau Manager, P. Couillard, OCRPS, D. Armstrong, Ottawa-Carleton Regional Ambulance

Associate: Councillor R. Cantin  
Member

REGRETS

P. Asmis, West Carleton Fire Chief, C. Lungstrass, OPP, H. Bourgeois, RCMP, F. Payette, Ministry of Health, J. Yelle-Weatherall, Land Ambulance Health Service, H. Doucette, DND, G. Bennett, Osgoode Fire Chief, G. Mills, Cumberland Fire Chief, A. Gignac, Rockland/Orléans Ambulance, J. McIsaac, Carleton/Richmond Ambulance, M. Cassidy, Osgoode & District Ambulance/St. Lawrence & District Ambulance, J. Kibsey, St. Lawrence & District Ambulance, D. Powell, Arnprior/Kanata Ambulance

Others: H. Murphy, Manager, EMU, L. Jenkins, Manager, 9-1-1 Emergency Service, Bell

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

**That the 9-1-1 Advisory Committee approve the Minutes of the meeting of 25 September 1998.**

CARRIED

1. 9-1-1 MANAGEMENT BOARD MINUTES

- Co-ordinator, 9-1-1 Management Board report dated 16 Feb 99

With respect to Item 1 and the issue of civic addressing, Councillor Cantin indicated he has agreed to sit on the sub-committee to be formed, along with representatives from emergency agencies to examine this issue. Chief Hawkins advised that Fire Chief Mills had indicated an interest in sitting on that sub-committee.

The Committee Chair stated that all agencies recognize civic addressing is a problem and it is evident standard signage is needed.

Division Chief White questioned whether the sub-committee will also examine the naming and numbering conventions, stating that the Ontario-wide naming convention is supposed to be used. He recalled situations where a street is extended and instead of continuing the numbering, they are being reversed. He also made reference to new developments where housing is erected, but the streets have not been named - people are actually living on streets that have a temporary name chosen by the builder in order to receive materials for the development. He thought that as part of a planned development, street names had to be established before the development was approved. He believed emergency services should be made aware of the process for street naming.

Chair Powers agreed with this suggestion, but raised the question of who is actually responsible for ensuring proper addressing. He suggested the sub-committee could discuss this with municipal planning departments and builders in an attempt to address this particular aspect. The mandate of the committee should be to make developers aware of how sensitive an issue this is.

L. Jenkins advised that Bell now has a street list that should match the digital file with the area municipalities and through review, any anomalies and duplicate addresses will be eliminated.

With respect to traffic calming studies (Item 4), K. Ablett noted that in areas where there are traffic problems, the community looks to forms of calming as an answer, but it is not until after these facilities have been installed that the feedback from emergency services is

heard. She questioned how community associations are advised of those initiatives and Councillor Cantin advised that with specific reference to the examples referred to in the Minutes, there were traffic studies conducted prior to the vertical measures being implemented and during that time period, the communities affected are circulated with proposals to address the various concerns. Public meetings are held to give residents and community associations an opportunity for input.

K. Ablett stated that she would advise her community that when such issues arise, the people can rely on their ward councillor and perhaps Regional staff to explain the situation. She emphasized that safety and education are important, especially for children.

**That the 9-1-1 Advisory Committee receive the 9-1-1 Management Board draft Minutes of 12 February 1999 for information.**

RECEIVED

2. DUPLICATE CIVIC ADDRESSING - RIVER ROAD  
IN THE TOWNSHIP OF OSGOODE/SOUTH GOWER  
- Co-ordinator, 9-1-1 Management Board report dated 16 Feb 99

As per the 9-1-1 Management Board minutes of 12 February 1999, the Committee noted that a letter had been sent to Chief Bennett in Osgoode, supporting the action he was taking in this regard.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS RESULTING FROM A FATAL ACCIDENT  
- Co-ordinator, 9-1-1 Management Board report dated 16 Feb 99

R. Lavictoire assumed the position of Chair while C. Powers spoke to this issue. Chief Powers referred to the comments made he made the Board in February, adding that while he has not yet received a reply from the Coroner, he intends to follow-up. He believed the recommendation adopted by the Board will improve the training of dispatch operators and field personnel so that all relevant agencies will be dispatched to respond in similar situations. He made note of the significant turnover of 9-1-1 call-takers and suggested this may be one of the reasons for the wrong agency being dispatched.

Councillor Cantin expressed concern that the agencies that did respond in this particular situation were not really prepared to respond to such an emergency, whereas fire fighters would have been more able. He hoped this was an isolated incident.

The Acting Chair acknowledged that the policy will have to be revisited. He indicated the 9-1-1 Bureau and ambulance dispatch are already involved in some successful cross-

agency training. Inspector Nelson indicated there has also been cross-training with fire fighters and police and during this time information is shared. Further, through a training bulletin established by the 9-1-1 Training Co-ordinator, the 9-1-1 Manual was identified as being out-of-date, but it was not known who was responsible for updating it. While he could not answer that question, Chief Powers acknowledged that the Manual has not been used effectively as a training guide in a lot of cases over the past few years and emphasized the need to ensure it is kept current.

From an operations perspective, L. Jenkins advised that there are portions of the Manual that could be easily updated and in fact there were some house-keeping issues that could easily be addressed by Bell. She explained that one of the problems stems from the fact that not all of the equipment is the same. She stated that re-training depends on each agency, the application of equipment and determining whether it is a 9-1-1 issue or how each agency utilizes its equipment. While she did not believe the whole manual required updating, she agreed to examine it to determine what can be done to streamline it.

Councillor Cantin suggested that if the Manual was available in electronic format, it could be easily updated. He suggested someone at the Bureau might be able to review it and circulate a copy of the updated version to committee members for input.

Division Chief White believed the problem was related to the fact that 9-1-1 has been in service for many years and everyone knows how it works and what they are supposed to do; however, he believed staff turnover is an issue and therefore, continuity is the problem. He suggested the committee may be taking for granted the call-handling aspect of this service and how it is applied.

Chief Powers indicated that in the meeting with the Coroner, it was acknowledged that there has been substantial changes in tiered response since 9-1-1 was first implemented. He stated that the prime agency concept is the same as tiered response, but suggested there is still some confusion about this for some people. He believed there was a need to meld the two together and ensure the Manual maintains the concept of prime agency and how it rolls out to the downstream agency.

Chief Gervais stated that if the Manual is redeveloped and circulated, then it can be assured that all agencies have the same document. He added that 9-1-1 is the first link in an emergency response and when the Manual is revised, the emergency agencies should be educated together under a common training platform, including 9-1-1 operators and dispatch personnel. This format would perhaps give them a better understanding of each other and their related roles.

G. Nelson advised that the OCRPS have a partnership with Algonquin College in that call-takers are all trained on the same platform. He advised that Staff Sergeant Peter Couillard

and the 9-1-1 Training Co-ordinator, Lyne Veinotte, will have within one year a platform for training and in conjunction with the College, will be able to determine what kinds of people make the best call-takers. While it was recognized that these are worthy long-term goals, some members emphasized the need to move ahead faster. Inspector Nelson advised that L. Veinotte will be meeting with ambulance staff next week and he invited other members to attend. He agreed with the earlier comment about consistency and explained that that is why the Bureau developed the training co-ordinator position.

Committee members agreed re-training was required for up-to-date policy and procedures, but it was questioned how long the cross-training would work with small dispatch services. Chief Gervais believed there was too much difference between large and small dispatch and suggested the need for joint training in policy and procedures. The question arose on whether it should be the Advisory Committee or a sub-committee that examines this issue and Councillor Cantin suggested a sub-committee be formed consisting of representatives from emergency agencies, including one each from a big and small fire department.

R. White opined that cross-training is a way of establishing a rapport between the various agencies and noted the fire departments are constantly doing a high volume of training with ambulance. They are also involved with 9-1-1 and the police and did not believe they were experiencing problems. He stated that cross-training without the procedures is not a sensible approach and the key is to keep the procedures clear and simple.

Chief Powers believed the Advisory Committee should recommend to the Management Board that they do what is necessary to update the training manual with current policies and procedures and the Tiered Response Utilization Review Committee (TRURC) be advised accordingly. R. White preferred that the Advisory Committee review the manual and then put forward recommendations to the Board. Acting Chair Lavictoire agreed, adding that if it is determined there is a problem within individual agencies, it would be up to that member to make recommendations on how to change it. C. Powers proposed that recommendation, with the addition that the Advisory Committee recommend to the Management Board that they wait to do any updates and that the TRURC Sub-Committee on Training develop a program and that each agency using 9-1-1 review their policies and provide that information to the Management Board.

In summary, the following action was proposed:

1. That each agency review their Manual and either the Chief or his delegate ensure they have the most current copy and then determine what improvements are required.

2. Following such review, everyone can get together to ascertain if there are inter-agency differences or aspects of that Manual that can be revised and then have it brought back to the Advisory Committee with a view to determining revisions together. Any recommendations could then go forward to the Board.

Councillor Cantin suggested all agencies should identify aspects which may be common to all and discuss those amongst themselves. Then, examine those that are specific to the individual services/needs i.e. what do the agencies do and what they need to provide to the downstream agency - their needs and the call-sending needs. The Acting Chair indicated that each agency will have to revise their Manuals but the councillor reiterated the importance of identifying needs e.g. what are the needs of 9-1-1 and the downstream agencies.

Chief Hawkins believed there was a need to establish a sub-committee to look at this because he was concerned that going out to the individual service agencies will be too time-consuming. It was suggested that the sub-committee consist of representatives from 9-1-1, ambulance and fire. Through his experience at the 9-1-1 ComCentre, P. Couillard believed that a sub-committee could identify how 9-1-1 identifies a call and how that call is passed onto the primary agency. He believed there is a lot of expertise to be gained from those that use it on a daily basis.

Several individuals indicated their interest in serving on the sub-committee and Councillor Cantin suggested the sub-committee get together in a couple of weeks to examine what the task involves, with a view to identifying and resolving the problems and then reporting back to the Advisory Committee. Chief Powers did not feel it was necessary to wait that long and suggested that if the Management Board can accept the recommendations of the sub-committee then they can be implemented.

When questioned whether she wanted to be on the sub-committee, L. Jenkins advised that she did not feel it was necessary for her to do so, but requested that she be advised of any operational changes that may be made. She further confirmed that an electronic version of the Manual does not exist and went on to state that there are eight versions of the Manual and some of the sections do not have to be updated. She agreed to get back to the sub-committee in this regard. She added that when the Region moves to PERS it will be a whole different manual which will be available electronically.

R. White indicated that the Joint Powers Agreement includes some statements with respect to call-handling and if this particular issue is going to be revisited, he suggested the Agreement should also be reviewed.

Chief Hawkins believed it was necessary that one of the larger urban fire departments be represented on the sub-committee and R. White indicated his interest in representing the Ottawa Fire Department in this regard. Deputy Chief Kim Scheel of the Kanata Fire Department also offered to assist Chief Gervais on behalf of the fire departments. The following individuals volunteered for the sub-committee: K. Scheel, T. Gervais, Councillor Cantin, R. White, P. Couillard and R. Lavictoire. They agreed to meet briefly following the meeting to determine their first meeting date, with the first meeting to be held at the 9-1-1 Bureau.

**That the 9-1-1 Advisory Committee receive this report for information.**

RECEIVED

4. 9-1-1 BUREAU QUARTERLY REPORT

- Co-ordinator, 9-1-1 Advisory Committee report dated 1 Mar 99

Chair Powers made note of the fact that the change in the efficiency ratio is partially due to the increased use of cell phones. Inspector Nelson confirmed that cell phones have posed a big problem, especially with multiple calls being made to 9-1-1 advising of the same incident. As detailed by R. Erfle at the Board's last meeting, he reiterated it is how quickly the Bureau can respond - not if the calls can be picked up within one or two rings.

He added that the efficiency ratio is based on how long a caller may be put in the queue for i.e. if there are four call-takers and a fifth call comes in, the call goes into the RAN which is a recorded announcement. The time the caller remains in this queue is measured.

The Inspector further explained how unrealistic it would be to hire ten people per shift just to wait for a time when there is a large accident and more than a dozen people call on cell phones to report it. The efficiency ratio is never at 100% most of the time, but when there is a major accident the ratio drops because of the number of cell calls that come through. R. White stated these are isolated incidents and any affect on the efficiency ratio can easily be explained. The Inspector confirmed they receive 1/2-hour print-outs on all incoming calls, which will indicate whether the caller was put in the RAN and how long they had to wait. The main issues with cell phones is that they increase the volume of incoming calls and increase the time required for verification because the ANI/ALI from a cell phone does not appear on screen.

A member of the public, Mrs. Wagshall, recalled when she had an occasion to call 9-1-1 from a payphone and explained the length of time she had to wait for assistance because it was not clear where she was calling from. She suggested 9-1-1 call-takers be instructed to ask for the exact location and the nature of the incident so the appropriate help can be



dispatched quickly. Inspector Nelson confirmed that the first thing the operator asks is what emergency response is required by the caller and then verifies the location of the call.

He further explained that when a call is made to 9-1-1 and the line is busy, it is not the 9-1-1 Bureau but the cell tower that is busy. Chair Powers explained that it is a matter of the public understanding the limitations with cell phones and the affect duplicate calls for the same accident have on the system.

R. White added that if a call comes in from a business for example and the line is disconnected, there is an ability to ring that number back; however, the ring-back number that comes up for a cell is the number of the cell phone company, which does not help the person making the call. Councillor Cantin suggested that perhaps cell phone companies could include an insert in their monthly bills explaining to users the affect this technology has on emergency calls and what the caller needs to do before they make a 9-1-1 call.

Chair Powers suggested a letter be sent to the Canadian chapter of NENA with respect to this issue and recommend that as an interim measure, cell phone companies insert a message in their bills about the limits associated with cell phones and 9-1-1. *The Bureau Manager agreed to receive any responses received in this regard.*

**That the 9-1-1 Management Board write to the Canadian Chapter of the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) with respect to the issue of problems associated with calling 9-1-1 from cell phones and recommend that as an interim measure, cell phone companies be requested to provide an insert in their monthly bills explaining the limits associated with cell phones and 9-1-1.**

CARRIED

**That the 9-1-1 Advisory Committee receive this report for information.**

RECEIVED

5. 9-1-1 BUREAU ANNUAL REPORT  
- Co-ordinator, 9-1-1 Advisory Committee report dated 16 Feb 99

**That the 9-1-1 Advisory Committee receive this report for information.**

RECEIVED

6. EFFICIENCY RATIO  
- Co-ordinator, 9-1-1 Advisory Committee report dated 16 Feb 99

**That the 9-1-1 Advisory Committee receive this verbal report for information.**

RECEIVED

7. CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR 9-1-1  
- Co-ordinator, 9-1-1 Advisory Committee report dated 16 Feb 99

G. Nelson indicated that at its last meeting, the Management Board approved the Switch Re-Direct for the 9-1-1 back-up site as a contingency plan. He noted that in working towards Y2K compliance, some issues were identified which needed to be resolved and these are currently being investigated.

**That the 9-1-1 Advisory Committee receive this verbal report for information.**

RECEIVED

8. 9-1-1 SERVICE INTERRUPTION  
- Co-ordinator, 9-1-1 Advisory Committee report dated 16 Feb 99

The committee discussed the outage and the back-up radio system which was used to reroute calls. It was noted that some agencies have multiple radio frequencies and if there is another outage, there may be a requirement to make phone calls to various departments to advise them of the situation. It was noted that in this particular situation, they did not have the ability to call.

R. White advised that their radio was turned on, but there have been ongoing problems with that equipment; he thought that upgraded equipment would be installed for the emergency radio system (EMO). H. Murphy advised that the emergency radio system was installed in all fire stations and is tested every Monday. He added that there is an intent to change to the tracking system with the new EMO. R. White stated that part of the

problem is if someone decides to move the power supply, the radio will not function because the magnetic field negates the power of that EMO to receive.

The question was raised whose responsibility it was to fit and service the radio system and H. Murphy advised that staff in the Environment and Transportation Department install and maintain the system.

Chief Powers stated there are continuing problems with that radio system with respect to calls being answered by other agencies who may be on the background channel. He remarked that should an outage occur again and the EMO radio is the one to be used, there is still a need to contact the emergency agencies on a cell phone to ensure they are monitoring the EMO radio. Inspector Nelson indicated that the Bureau has 10 cell phones which they would use to contact the other services. Chair Powers suggested that perhaps the newly-formed sub-committee can review the issue of what happens if 9-1-1 shuts down again.

**That the 9-1-1 Advisory Committee receive this verbal report for information.**

RECEIVED

9. PUBLIC EMERGENCY REPORTING SERVICE (PERS) MIGRATION  
- Co-ordinator, 9-1-1 Advisory Committee report dated 16 Feb 99

L. Jenkins agreed there was a need for a back-up solution and while the Switch Re-Direct (SRD) is an application that can redirect calls from 7-digit numbers, it cannot do so from 9-1-1. In that situation, alternate routing is the answer. She explained that it has to be a different application, but in the same eventuality of breaking down, this application would be similar and rerouted to the back-up centre at Regional headquarters. She referred to her letter dated 12 February 1999 which speaks to the alternative routing proposed for 9-1-1. With specific reference to the SRD, she explained there is no feature supported with 9-1-1, but there would still be the voice call. She added that if the PBX (telephone equipment) is operational, the ComCentre would still have the choice to move out to the Randall site, for example. There are various solutions to handle all contingencies and Bell could activate the SRD which would take approximately 15 minutes.

Chair Powers questioned whether the SRD is an interim solution until PERS is operational and Inspector Nelson confirmed it will only be in place for approximately 18 months.

L. Jenkins stated that what is important is that 9-1-1 PERS will provide alternate routing; there will be four stations of single telephone lines at 111 Lisgar Street and 9-1-1 calls will be transferred to the 7-digit number. As the Region progresses to PERS, something to be

considered is enhancing the 9-1-1 back-up system that can support a true back-up, so those trunks can be terminated. She agreed the SRD provides for a contingency, but noted there will be no extra cost for PERS once it is implemented. She went on to explain that when a call is made in a PERS environment, all the information is provided on-screen to the call-taker, who will automatically press the code key for that emergency and the call will be directed to the geographically-correct fire, ambulance or police department. She confirmed PERS will not do that for cell phones. She stated that until pay phone providers solve that problem, Bell will seek direction from emergency services and the Region on where they want their cell phone calls to be directed to i.e. which fire department should receive all cell calls.

Some concern was expressed about the anticipated 15-minute timeframe involved with the SRD, and Inspector Nelson indicated that the OCRPS hired a consultant to come up with solutions for police and 9-1-1 and the solution was the SRD which he brought for the approval of the Management Board last month. He suggested the Consultant could be invited to attend the next meeting of the Advisory Committee and answer any questions, because contrary to what was stated previously, he did not think the process would take more than 5 minutes.

The Committee Chair indicated that the Bureau identified a solution that is cost-effective. While it is recognized that it is not as fully functional as the Bureau and will be time-consuming, it is identified as an alternative and will allow emergency services to get into place pending a PERS solution. He did not think there was a need for the consultant to address the committee.

**That the 9-1-1 Advisory Committee receive this verbal report for information.**

RECEIVED

10. UPDATE ON TRAFFIC CALMING INITIATIVES

- Co-ordinator, 9-1-1 Advisory Committee report dated 16 Feb 99

Councillor Cantin made reference to the number collisions that have occurred on Lyon Street as a direct result of speed humps and was interested in knowing how many and how serious they were. The Committee Chair noted that members were requested to bring any verbal or written documentation to the meeting today and emphasized that if the emergency agencies do not begin documenting and bringing their concerns forward with respect to the impact vertical traffic calming measures have on service, these will only continue to gain in popularity.

Councillor Wendy Stewart indicated that one of the primary reasons the Region approved the pilot projects for these traffic calming measures was because the representatives from the three emergency services had originally advised the Region that they were willing to see them installed on a pilot project basis. In fact, the only negative response received was from ambulance services. She emphasized the need for a strong response from emergency agencies.

R. White advised that the Ottawa Fire Department had supplied a lot of information regarding the affect of the speed humps on Lyon Street and their concern is that as more and more streets become inaccessible due to these measures, emergency response teams may be forced to use alternative routes, thereby impacting response times. He stated that ambulances cannot use Lyon Street because they will be unable to do CPR while driving over those humps and he confirmed that all of those concerns were brought forward to the Region. Chief Hawkins added that he did not recall the Fire Chiefs agreeing to these measures.

Chair Powers referred to the letter dated 19 October 1998 sent by the Chair of the Management Board to the Regional Clerk, which reiterated the Board's concerns about vertical traffic calming measures and the impact to emergency response time.

There was some discussion about how much consultation took place between the Region and the emergency services and Chair Powers indicated that not all services were involved in discussions about what the impacts may be on response time, et cetera. He recognized that the matter was seen as an Ottawa issue, but maintained that consultation with other dispatches should be a priority.

It was suggested that Doug Brousseau and/or Harold Murphy attend the next meeting of the Regional Fire Chiefs to discuss this in detail. The suggestion was also made that Regional councillors be invited to ride in an emergency vehicle to experience "first hand" what it feels like to travel over the speed humps.

R. Lavictoire confirmed he would provide the feedback he has received from ambulance to the Board Co-ordinator or to Doug Brousseau.

R. White agreed he would also follow-up with the Fire Chief Gary Richardson.

11. RESPONSE TO FIRE AT JOURNEY'S END MOTEL  
- Co-ordinator, 9-1-1 Advisory Committee report dated 4 Mar 99

Chief Gervais indicated this is a training initiative and emphasized the need to ensure the address where the emergency is located appears on the screen. P. Couillard noted that the ANI/ALI is generated from where Bell sends their bills to. L. Jenkins indicated that if emergency response teams find an address that is a rural route number, Bell needs to know about it. P. Couillard confirmed he would discuss this with her.

R. White indicated that when 9-1-1 first came in, it was going to be a data base that would be used. However, that would not be satisfactory because if someone has input inaccurate data from a customer, then there may be anomalies; the established data base is the service data base and there may be exceptions to that.

#### ADDITIONAL ITEM

12. MARKET RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE  
- Bell letter dated 5 Mar 99

Reference was made to a survey distributed to emergency agencies dealing with Bell's suggestion of offering its customers two new 9-1-1 related services on a subscription basis. Committee members were reminded to submit their completed responses to Bell

#### OTHER BUSINESS

##### Seconds Can Count Video

Chair Powers provided H. Murphy with a "Yield to Emergency Vehicles" campaign video produced in Toronto. He inquired whether staff could review this example and determine whether the Region can prepare something similar for Ottawa-Carleton, when their campaign is finally initiated.

Y2K Compliance

Chair Powers asked H. Murphy to ask the Director of the Year 2000 Program (Greg Geddes), to advise emergency service agencies how the end-to-end test of the 9-1-1 system will be confirmed with them.

NEXT MEETING

10 September 1999

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

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CO-ORDINATOR

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CHAIR