

## **RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING 911 TELECOMMUNICATORS AS FIRST RESPONDERS IN WASHINGTON COUNTY, OHIO**

WHEREAS, Washington County is proud to be Ohio's first established county and part of the first permanent American settlement in the Northwest Territory, and as such, it is fitting that we lead the state once again—this time in formally recognizing our true First, First Responders: 911 Telecommunicators; and

WHEREAS, 911 Telecommunicators—commonly known as dispatchers—are the calm, knowledgeable voices that guide callers through life-threatening emergencies, providing critical, life-saving instructions while coordinating police, fire, and EMS response; and

WHEREAS, 911 Dispatchers are the first point of contact in virtually every emergency, bearing the responsibility of interpreting chaos, offering reassurance, and facilitating rapid deployment of appropriate response resources; and

WHEREAS, these professionals sacrifice nights, weekends, holidays, and time with their families to serve the public—often without public recognition, despite enduring the emotional and psychological burdens that come from constant exposure to trauma and crisis; and

WHEREAS, dispatchers regularly instruct callers in CPR, childbirth, and active shooter response, and help prevent harm by detecting critical cues such as background noises or distressed voices—actions that save lives before police, fire, or EMS arrive; and

WHEREAS, 911 Dispatchers are currently classified in Ohio under clerical designations, which fails to reflect the rigorous training, psychological toll, and essential emergency functions they perform; and

WHEREAS, states such as Texas, California, New York, and New Jersey have reclassified dispatchers as First Responders, acknowledging their essential role within the emergency response system; and

WHEREAS, research from public safety and mental health professionals—including the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) and the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO)—supports reclassification, noting that dispatchers face significant risks of post-traumatic stress and secondary trauma; and

WHEREAS, recognizing dispatchers as First Responders is not merely symbolic, but vital to ensuring access to resources such as mental health support, specialized training, and the respect that comes with the critical nature of their work;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Washington County, Ohio:

1. That Washington County formally recognizes 911 Telecommunicators as First Responders in honor of their essential, heroic, and life-saving role in public safety.
2. That Washington County urges the Ohio General Assembly to pass legislation reclassifying 911 Telecommunicators as First Responders across the state.
3. That copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Governor of Ohio, the Ohio Senate and House of Representatives, and the Ohio 9-1-1 Program Office as a call to action for this long-overdue recognition.
4. That this recognition will serve as a testament to the courage, commitment, and professionalism of the 911 personnel who serve the residents of Washington County and the State of Ohio each and every day.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 15 day of May, 2025.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
WASHINGTON COUNTY, OHIO

  
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Charlie Schilling, President  
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Eddie Place, Commissioner  
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James Booth, Commissioner

ATTEST:

  
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Clerk of the Board