Butler County Fiscal Court

Some facts about the ineffectiveness of the Butler County 911 Service that some are paying yet never receive, and the adverse effects of these deficiencies.

I live on the intersection of Lock #5 Road and Holly Trail, as far east and south in Butler County that you can get, right next to The Green River and Bear Creek, where Butler, Edmonson, and Warren Counties join. Probably 99% of the time we have no cell phone signal, many of us have landline service to use when there is no signal. We still are required to pay for the 911 service, even though we cannot use our cell phones, which brings us to the problem I want to address today.

My landline phone has a 286 prefix, most of Butler County has a 526 prefix, I have nothing to do with prefixes on phones, it is the service offered to me. When Gayland Neighbors worked on setting the 911 system up in Butler County many of us received new addresses, requiring us to notify everyone we knew or did business with of the address change. We were told how this would enable 911 to pinpoint exactly where we were located, and in the event of an emergency responders would know exactly where we were located.

Years went by and I never used the 911 service, or called for help, that all changed on March 3rd, 2013. My neighbor, James Pearson, suffered a heart attack, his wife, Edna, called 911 on her landline because she had no signal on her cell phone. She was connected with a lady in Lexington Kentucky who asked why she was calling 911 on her landline, and got the lady in Lexington, who was very confused, but did connect her with Edmonson County, since her phone prefix was 286, Bee Springs. That 911 did make contact with the Bear Creek Fire Department, as well as 2 first responders, and they were on scene within 10 minutes followed by a fire engine from Bear Creek a few minutes later.

After Edna got her call in to 911 Edmonson County she called me, I responded, evaluated the situation, and with the help of her son began CPR on Mr. Pearson. We worked at the CPR without relief (once you begin you have to stay with it until qualified responders arrive and take over), for about 40 minutes, neither the Bear Creek Fire Department or First Responders would take over, since they were not EMS qualified. After about 1 hour from the official call, the Butler County Ambulance Service arrived, they took over and placed Mr. Pearson on a stretcher and took him to the Hospital in Bowling Green, where he was pronounced dead.

There is no way to be sure, but CPR is not intended to be used long term, it is to maintain activity within the heart to supply blood to the body, trained personnel are supposed to take over quickly and to transport to a medical facility. I feel that a proper working 911, and dispatching the closest emergency provider, would have given Mr. Pearson at least a fighting chance, time and the delays quite possibly cost Mr. Pearson his life. Edmonson County EMS Ambulance Service is about 15-20 minutes away from my house, the same for the Medical Center Ambulance Service, Butler County Ambulance Service is approximately 30 minutes away, depending on traffic it could take longer. Shortly after Mr. Pearson died a State Police Officer visited Mrs. Pearson and told her that since the 911 system was not working in our area, she was to call the State Police and they would take care of dispatching emergency help to her. If any doubt what the State Police told Mrs. Pearson I will furnish, (with her permission), her number in Louisiana and you can ask her first hand. I personally reported this incident, and failure of the 911 system, in a meeting of the Fiscal Court, members of the Ambulance Service were present and I was told they would take care of it and ensure the 911 system was working properly… obviously, they did not. I did visit the Ambulance Service last year, was given a very cordial and informative tour of the facility, and Brian McKinney was kind enough to give me a demonstration of how the 911 system worked. I was not fast enough to recognize there was a problem, when he attempted to call up my residence on the 911 map, and while I don’t know, I think the system did not recognize me because I have a 286 Prefix on my landline, and the system is programed for 526 Prefix… I don’t know but to me that is a logical explanation.

Fast forward to Christmas Eve, 2016, my neighbor’s house on Holly Trail, unoccupied, volumes of black dense smoke come billowing from its direction, thinking the house was on fire I called 911. The lady who assumed was located in Lexington Kentucky, she wanted to know why I WAS CALLING her 911, and I explained I had just picked up my landline phone and dialed 911. I could not explain why it rang at her facility. She asked me to hold on and she would try to connect me with someone in my area, I thanked her and said no thank you, I will call the State Police, which I did, and gave the reason I had called them, and the emergency… they took care of it. First Responders arrived, followed by elements of various Fire Departments, and lastly by a member of the Butler County Sheriff’s Department. I drove towards the smoking area after I called the State Police, had a run-in with two four-wheelers who ignored my request to stop, even though I recognized them, and they sped off at a high rate of speed. No one from the Fire Department stopped to question me, the Sheriff’s Deputy just drove off, and no one has contacted me since…. Whatever occurred, I had information that could have helped in solving the mystery… but no one cared… someone got away with something. Later in the week, when people were back to work, I called the Sheriff’s Office, no answer even though it was about 10 AM, a clicking on the phone and I was connected to 911 dispatch. So, I can’t call 911 on my landline, but if I can make a toll call to the Sheriff and be transferred to the 911 dispatcher.

At present I have no 911 service, no cell service, I can’t call for an Ambulance, the Sheriff, to report a fire, NO ONE in Butler County. I can call the State Police, Bear Creek Fire Department, Edmonson County Ambulance, The Medical Center Ambulance, but I can’t call for help in Butler County. I am expected to help pay for the Sheriff’s Budget, 911 Tax, Fire Dues, what I get in return is Bear Creek Fire Department, instead of 4th District… they respond quickly. For 4 plus years I have been paying for services I could never receive because of inadequacies in the 911 system. They took my money, never followed up with reports of deficiencies from March, 2013, just let it slide, even when they could not call up my address last year. Our Police Protection, Fire Protection, Ambulance Service, comes from the State Police, they are the ones who should be getting the money from people with a 286 Prefix, not Butler County, and by the way, how about giving me my money back for services you not render. I’ll donate it those who do.

Butler County, thru the Fiscal Court, OWNS the 911 system… they OWN THE BUTLER COUNTY AMBULANCE SERVICE. I AM TOLD THE Ambulance Service oversees and operates the 911 service, receive monies for the 911 service from taxes, just as I reported last year. So, who is to blame for a defective, inadequate, poorly administrated 911 system. Is it the Ambulance Board/Service who oversees and has control of the 911, or is it the Fiscal Court who OWNS both, check with the County Attorney if you doubt me. Whomever is responsible have put the lives of numerous Butler County Citizens at risk, and possibly contributed to, directly or indirectly the death of my neighbor James Pearson in 2013. We MUST feel that when we have an emergency, dialing 911 will get us prompt and effective help from Butler County, not Lexington Kentucky. Butler County MUST address this problem IMMEDIATELY, who knows when their house will catch on fire, or someone will have a heart attack, OR some lowlife will break-in and terrorize homeowners, we have had no less the 2 instances last year just a couple of blocks from where I live… the State Police handled it.

Fiscal Court, you own the 911, fix it… either change how, and who, administers YOUR system, before someone else dies because of your failure to preform your duties, do whatever it takes to ensure the safety of your constituents, don’t be influenced by verbal attacks, resistance to doing what is best for Butler County by some know it alls… DO YOUR JOB. Until then, as far as I am concerned, I will continue to call the State Police for Police Protection, the State Police for Fire Emergencies, and the State Police for Ambulance Emergency Services…. Send my 911 taxes and fire dues to Edmonson County and Bear Creek Fire Department, they will come and they care.

Robert D. Cron

January 9th, 2017