



MINUTES – August 18, 2022 - 7:30 AM
BENTON COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES EXECUTIVE BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING
City of Richland Council Chambers ~ 625 Swift Blvd
Richland, WA 99352

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m. by Chair Jon Amundson.

Attendance

Members

Jerome Delvin	Benton County (2 votes)
Keith Johnson	Franklin County (2 Votes)
Marie Mosley	City of Kennewick (2 Votes)
Bob Gear	City of Pasco (2 Votes)
Jon Amundson	City of Richland (2 Votes)
Dave Giles <i>(remote)</i>	City of Prosser (1 Vote)
Brent Gerry	City of West Richland (1 Vote)
Ron Duncan <i>(remote)</i>	Benton County Fire Districts (1 Vote)
Duane Szendre	Benton PUD (1 Vote, Microwave Only)

Absent

Bill Reed	City of Benton City (1 Vote)
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Also Present Richland Police Chief, Brigit Clary; Richland Assistant City Manager/BCES Director, Drew Florence; SECOMM Manager, Kim Lettrick; SECOMM Manager, Gwen Stanley; BCEM Manager, Deanna Davis; IS Manager, Doug deGraaf; Accounting Specialist, Jordan George, Administrative Assistant/Board Secretary, Carole Cimrhakl

Other Attendees Kennewick Director of Management Services, Christina Palmer; Benton County Deputy County Administrator, Matt Rasmussen; Richland Fire Chief, Tom Huntington; Richland Finance Director, Brandon Allen *(remote)*

Approval of Agenda

KEITH JOHNSON MOVED AND JEROME DELVIN SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 13-0.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Approval of Consent Calendar

- I. Minutes – Jon Amundson
Approve the Minutes of the Benton County Emergency Services Executive Board Regular Meeting held July 28, 2022.

KEITH JOHNSON MOVED AND BRENT GERRY SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION

CARRIED 13-0.

Director's Report

2. Manager's Report – Drew Florence, Richland Assistant City Manager/BCES Director
SECOMM currently has 15 open positions with 2 pending departures in the coming weeks. A third may also be leaving for a job in Othello but may stay on as part-time.

Statistical information shows the majority of calls coming into dispatch are non-emergency. Future discussions with law enforcement are planned in efforts to reduce the number of administrative, non-emergency calls. Drew Florence has already had conversations with Fire Chiefs and Sheriffs about changes to levels of service.

Items of Business

Benton County Emergency Services (BCES)

3. Vote to Affirm Hire of Benton County Emergency Services Executive Director
Background, polygraph, psyche and medical investigations have been completed for the Executive Director candidate, Jeremy (Jay) Atwood. Jay comes to us from the Spokane Fire Department where he is currently the Deputy Chief of Support Services. His anticipated start date is September 19th or 26th.

Drew Florence recommended the BCES Executive Board vote to affirm the hire (a necessity of the interlocal agreement) of Jeremy Atwood as the Benton County Emergency Services Executive Director.

RON DUNCAN MADE THE MOTION TO AFFIRM THE HIRE OF JEREMY ATWOOD AS BENTON COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. KEITH JOHNSON SECONDED THE MOTION. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 13-0.

Jon Amundson thanked the Board for their participation in the interview process. He also thanked Drew Florence for leading the recruitment process.

Benton County Emergency Management (BCEM)

4. DR-4650 Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Application – Designation of Applicant Agent and Letter of Intent to Participate and Commit Matching Funds
Deanna Davis explained that when a disaster happens in the state and it goes presidential, a certain percentage of the actual payout of the grant of that declaration goes into the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. This provides an opportunity to apply for hazard mitigation funds. We are looking for money to update our Hazard Mitigation Plan that is due in 2024.

For the process of providing an application back to the state, a designated applicant must be identified for the state to coordinate with. The letter of intent to participate guarantees the applicant is aware of the match that is required to the grant. The match for this grant is typically 75/25 but this grant was discovered to be a 90/10 split - 90% is federally funded and 10% is funded through the state. The state then splits that with the local jurisdiction, each paying 5%. The Hazard Mitigation Plan is a critical component that allows jurisdictions to apply for project funding. Without an approved Hazard Mitigation Plan, some jurisdictions would not qualify to request project funding.

JEROME DELVIN MOVED AND MARIE MOSLEY SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE DR-4650 HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION –

DESIGNATION OF APPLICANT AGENT AND LETTER OF INTENT TO PARTICIPATE AND COMMIT MATCHING FUNDS. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 8-0.

Southeast Communications Center (SECOMM)

800MHz System

Benton County Microwave System

Discussion Items

- **Red Mountain Road Update**
Jerome Delvin said an update has been received from Paul Knutzen who has been hired to design the road on Red Mountain. Mr. Knutzen hopes to have everything wrapped up (including permitting) by December after which it can be put out for bid. Mr. Knutzen spoke with landowner Gary Heaton and his siblings who have all agreed to allow the road to pass through all three of their parcels. This will reduce the number of switchbacks thus reducing the overall costs.
- **VHF Radio Governance Options**
Tom Huntington spoke on the condition of the VHF system and the need to establish a governance structure in order to be eligible to apply for grant funding to pay for a VHF system upgrade. The preferred path would be to bring the VHF system back under BCES. If the Board was willing to consider this, a draft mechanism to make that happen would be brought back for further consideration. The other option would be to create an interlocal agreement agency but with approximately 19 stakeholders and their respective boards, the time to do so is very short as the FEMA grant period opens in January.

He also noted that Deanna Davis has helped secure grant funding for an engineering study including system evaluation, system design and other core pieces that allow positioning for future grant applications. An RFQ process just closed after receiving 4 vendor submittals for the study which will be reviewed next week.

A general consensus of the Board agreed to move forward with the VHF system being brought back under BCES governance.

- **Capital Funding Sources/Priorities**
Capital funding needs for BCES are estimated at \$15 - \$20 million dollars. A phased approach will allow some progress to be made. VHF and Microwave are estimated at \$7 - \$9 million dollars alone and are considered the most pressing.

The City of Kennewick is working on a proposal to re-engage Sciens to develop a capital plan. The City of Richland is working on an RFQ to identify a grant writer that can operate on behalf of both the city and BCES. Jon Amundson clarified that there are no specific grants currently targeted and that the grant writer would identify and seek available grants as part of their position. BCES staff is working on a prioritized list based on currently known capital needs.

Potential financing of some capital items (VHF, Microwave and other items to be identified) through the state's local government loan program are being looked at. There is also ample

fund balance to cover several immediate needs, or they could be included in the 2023 budget and allocated out. Jerome Delvin added there could be an additional \$2 million dollars (for Microwave) in federal funding come October. A more detailed list and action items will be presented at next month's meeting.

Marie Mosley added that long term needs from a consolidated perspective for Bi-PIN and BCES should be included as the intent is to eventually combine the two entities. Jon Amundson agreed, adding that a timeline and project planning would occur and would include both Bi-PIN and BCES capital needs as they relate to further integration of the systems. The timing of when to merge the two Boards is a discussion needing to be had with both BCES and Bi-PIN Boards.

- Strategic Advisory Team

The reason dispatch personnel are leaving is due to the number of hours being worked with mandatory overtime. Some changes will need to be made to the level of service which will result in things being significantly different than they have been for Law in the field. It will push more onto the officers and police departments. These changes should have little impact to Fire if any. Online reporting software that would allow non-emergency, no suspect type calls to be routed is also being looked at.

Drew Florence will send an email to Chiefs and Sheriffs regarding changes. Fire is welcome to participate although it is doubtful they would be impacted. Drew Florence noted the Inter-Local Agreement (ILA) is very specific in that it is made up of Chiefs and Sheriffs and an executive from Prosser. He suggested users in the field who are able to make decisions on behalf of their respective agencies attend this discussion.

- Recruitment

Brent Gerry questioned recruitment and retention strategies. Drew Florence noted that we are not struggling with attracting applicants as we have 8 in different phases of background and he expects a couple of final offers to be made soon.

Oral board interviews are being eliminated which may result in exercising probationary terminations more often, but it may also result in getting a few more hires made. Statistics for our target age group (18 – 25) show that 90% use YouTube as their primary information source. Recruitment efforts at schools are being stepped up and a new recruitment video using both Law and Fire may be produced. We also have a lateral candidate in the process. Some ideas about recruitment will be worked on and presented in the coming months.

Announcements

Adjournment The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 a.m.

APPROVED:


Jon Amundson, BCES Executive Board Chair

Date Approved: October 27, 2022

ATTEST:
Carole Cimrhakl

Carole Cimrhakl, BCES Board Secretary

Date Published: October 27, 2022