MINUTES – September 22, 2022 - 7:30 AM
BENTON COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES EXECUTIVE BOARD
REGULAR 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 Vice-Chair Keith Johnson.

Attendance

Members

Jerome Delvin *(remote)*	Benton County (2 votes)
Keith Johnson	Franklin County (2 Votes)
Marie Mosley	City of Kennewick (2 Votes)
Bob Gear	City of Pasco (2 Votes)
Drew Florence *(in for Jon Amundson)*	City of Richland (2 Votes)
Dave Giles *(remote)*	City of Prosser (1 Vote)
Thomas Greggo *(in for Brent Gerry)*	City of West Richland (1 Vote)
Bill Reed	City of Benton City (1 Vote)
Duane Szendre	Benton PUD (1 Vote, Microwave Only)

Absent

Jon Amundson	City of Richland (2 Votes)
Brent Gerry	City of West Richland (1 Vote)
Ron Duncan	Benton County Fire Districts (1 Vote)

Also Present Richland Police Chief, Brigit Clary; BCES Director, Jay Atwood; 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 AT&T Principal Architect, Brad Steiner; Benton County Deputy County Administrator, Matt Rasmussen; City of Pasco Deputy Fire Chief, Patrick Reid *(remote)*; Richland Fire Chief, Tom Huntington; Richland Finance Director, Brandon Allen *(remote)*; City of Richland Accountant, Jeanne Portch

Approval of Agenda

Drew Florence requested the addition of an update by Bob Gear regarding Building Code, LTE and FirstNet Authority as item #9 under Discussion Items.

MARIE MOSLEY MOVED AND BOB GEAR SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PROPOSED. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 13-0.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Approval of Consent Calendar

1. Minutes – Jon Amundson
   Approve the Minutes of the Benton County Emergency Services Executive Board Regular Meeting held August 18, 2022.

   This item was not addressed at the last meeting.

Director's Report

2. Introduction of Benton County Emergency Services Executive Director Jay Atwood
   Drew Florence introduced Jay Atwood who started Monday as BCES' Executive Director. Jay is excited to be here, noting there is a lot of information to take in, but he's ready to strategize and start moving forward to address existing concerns. He has over 25 years of fire service experience. In his most recent position, he ran a combined communications center for the Spokane Fire Department which dispatched for 15 fire agencies.

3. Manager's Report – Drew Florence, Richland Assistant City Manager/BCES Director
   SECOMM currently has 17 open positions. Two new hires started this week. Nine candidates are in early background phase, one has a conditional offer and the other 8 are close to offers. Twelve are taking the CritiCall test this week and 22 more are taking the typing test. The healthy group of candidates are due largely in part to the recruitment efforts by Beth Whitton who is a newly hired Human Resources Specialist for Richland. Other efforts include electronic media pushes with partner agencies and multi-media outlets (KEPR-TV and Tri-City Herald). Our public education events always include recruiting materials. The state 911 office is working on an initiative they are calling "Fully Resourced 911". The focus is on recruitment and technology. A recruiting event will be held on the west side of the state that will hopefully bring in large numbers of candidates to apply to the many communication centers within Washington State. Dependent on outcome, we may work to bring a similar event to the east side.

   Drew noted that Communications Supervisor Esther Click works diligently on our public education events. She and the other supervisors have been instrumental in preparations for Text-to-911 which went live September 11. Developments continue to evolve with the implementation. It was recently discovered that when a phone is roaming, Text-to-911 does not work. The FCC has no requirements for roaming, therefore cellular providers are not interested in assisting as the capability is working as it's supposed to.

   Since August 23, SECOMM's management group (supervisors and managers) have covered 126 hours of overtime that would have been mandated to dispatch staff by filling in to ensure minimum staffing. Hours are offered first to Guild members and if there are no takers and if a supervisor is working, the supervisor will fill that gap. A new schedule was also implemented September 12 which has resulted in an additional 128 hours of overtime saved. This has impacted how often dispatch staff is required to work on their scheduled days off. A grievance has been filed by the Guild which was expected. A meeting is scheduled for this Friday (9/23). Updates will be provided.

   The dress rehearsal for the Columbia Generating Station (CGS) exercise went very well and Emergency Management Manger Deanna Davis extended her appreciation.

Items of Business

Benton County Emergency Services (BCES)

4. 2023 Benton County Emergency Services Proposed Operating Budget and Current Year

Projects - Presentation

Assessments increased this year due to several factors, many of which were attributed to prior board actions. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is 9.1 this year which increases the cost per call for service and the per capita rate. Labor increased with the hiring of the executive director and codifying of the CBA as it relates to wages for the dispatchers. Regular increases were incurred for Maintenance agreements. In addition, new assessments have been added this year as a result of prior board actions.

Assessments were based on a 3-year average of calls for service. It is noted that Tyler identifies calls for service or case ID's slightly different than how I/LEADS does, making it possible that calls for service are not accurately reflected. It is suggested that once we have a good data set (likely a full year from Tyler) this should be reviewed.

Items that are new or notable and are included in the assessments consist of the new lease for the for Red Mountain site (approximately $42k), Locution maintenance and increased costs for Payroll, Insurance, Radio Site Leases, Software License Fees, Server Licenses, Hexagon Maintenance, CAD Server Maintenance, HVAC Maintenance and the Microwave (Day Wireless) agreement. Day Wireless has lost a great deal of their experienced radio technicians and are having difficulty finding qualified replacements. If BCES takes on the governance of the VHF, it may be beneficial to look at hiring someone to fill this position internally. It is not included in the budget and would be dependent on what happens with the VHF.

Increased payroll expenses are tied to the hiring of a full-time Executive Director, the administrative assistant position reclass (from part to full-time), and a records specialist increase from .5 (part-time) to .7.

Major increases in assessments are broken out between supplies, labor, contract services and administrative costs.

The budget will be brought back before the Board in October for a formal vote.

Marie Mosley questioned if an analysis has been done for the administrative fee BCES pays to Richland. Might the administrative assessment be reduced from 7% to 5% as an offset for the increased fees? Drew Florence thought an analysis could be done and brought back to the Board.

5. Cisco Firewall and Identity Services (ISE) Upgrade – Approval
    This upgrade was not included in assessments as there is sufficient fund balance to cover the expense. Doing so would have increased assessments.

    The upgrade replaces the Cisco firewalls and Cisco Identity Service Engine (ISE). Current firewalls are significantly aged, needing replacement, but more significantly we can no longer migrate to newer versions of Cisco's software as it requires the ISE which we do not currently own. These new firewalls and the solution will be part of the building block of implementing Zero Trust, which authenticates, authorizes and continuously validates users before enabling access to applications and data.

6. Server Storage and Backup Project – Approval
    BCES currently uses Storage Area Network (SAN) that is installed at the City of Richland's data center. It is currently at end-of-life and end-of-support with Dell. This is a lifecycle replacement request to replace the infrastructure with healthy, supported equipment. This will also provide additional storage capacity to back-up the CAD environment and allows for increased retention

schedules. This was originally included in the scope of the Tyler CAD upgrade. The Hexagon upgrade was accounted for in 2022.

Marie Mosley requested a comprehensive scope of all BCES capital needs.

BOB GEAR MOVED AND MARIE MOSLEY SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CISCO FIREWALL AND IDENTITY SERVICES UPGRADE. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 13-0.

MARIE MOSLEY MOVED AND MATT RASMUSSEN SECONDED THE MOTION TO INCORPORATE THE SERVER STORAGE AND BACKUP PROJECT INTO THE 2022 BUDGET USING FUND BALANCE. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 13-0.

<u>Benton County Emergency Management (BCEM)</u>
7. EMPG-ARPA Contract E22-132 Amendment 2 - Approval
This contract amendment adds $14,661 to the existing EMPG-ARPA contract. This is a result of unexpended funds at the state level and is a reallocation request that requires a match in funding. Jurisdictional assessments and the Radiological Emergency Preparedness (REP) budget will fulfill the required match.

MATT RASMUSSEN MOVED AND MARIE MOSLEY SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE EMPG-ARPA AMENDMENT 2 AS PRESENTED. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 13-0.

<u>Southeast Communications Center (SECOMM)</u>

<u>800MHz System</u>

<u>Benton County Microwave System</u>

Discussion Items
8. VHF Governance – Update by Tom Huntington
Richland City Attorney Heather Kintzley recommended adding to or modify the existing Interlocal Agreement to incorporate the VHF governance and subsequent system management. Tom Huntington believes these changes will be minor and proposes making necessary changes to the Interlocal Agreement and moving workflow elements to the policy manual. He wants to keep the transition as simple and status quo as possible. He anticipates the VHF system upgrade is a transition project and hopes the next iteration of the life cycle is a fully integrated, single platform for public safety.

The creation of a separate and dedicated fourth fund for the VHF system was proposed. The existing SAT would be used to make recommendations on any significant system upgrades or changes. The existing CAG would be used for operational recommendations. The owned infrastructure would remain with the current owners. Any scenarios of lease payment or arrangement to use the infrastructure in the new system would be managed like we currently do with other infrastructure that is shared within the system.

The intent is to bring back a red-lined update of the Interlocal Agreement and policy manual at the October meeting for the Board's consideration. There are no additional costs anticipated at this time as existing funds within the Fire Agencies and Sheriff's Office are already allocated. Fire

intends to apply for every available source of grant funding to pay for the project.

9. Building Code, LTE and FirstNet Authority – Bob Gear
    Current Building Code requires in-building radio systems (commonly referred to as Bi-directional Antenna [BDA] or Distributed Antenna System [DAS]) in large buildings. Each entity decides which frequencies will be used in the building (for both 800MHz and VHF). Historically these systems have caused many problems, especially the VHF side of the system as they tend to lock-up frequencies due to interference from other electronics inside the buildings. These systems have been found to not be maintained (due to lack of use) as building owners have little interest in spending the money necessary to maintain their systems. Inside the vast Amazon buildings, it is nearly impossible to communicate from outside the building which is a real concern for keeping track of responding personnel inside the building.

    Looking for alternatives to the BDA and DAS systems, contact was made with FirstNet Authority. FirstNet Authority was established after 9/11 in efforts to improve interoperable communications across the country. FirstNet connected us with AT&T who is the general contractor for FirstNet. We've been working with AT&T to figure out how to leverage the existing cellular systems that are installed in these buildings as our portable radios have the capability to switch over to a cellular network (Long Term Evolution [LTE] or cellular) which works the same as talking on the current VHF system (Land Mobile Radio [LMR]). FirstNet Project Engineer, Brad Steiner has been contemplating how to make this work.

    Preliminary testing has been conducted with FirstNet and it has proven to be effective with Pasco's existing radios. Through a series of connections, both Benton and Franklin counties radio systems can talk with FirstNet and SECOMM dispatch. Motorola has been engaged and supports the augmentation of their system for this connection. Catalyst is the vendor that can provide the connection between the two networks. When these radios are on FirstNet in their final software form, they will achieve the highest level of priority within FirstNet besides 911 calls that are mandated by the federal government. This will also expand coverage as they will work better inside buildings and in many more places where there is LTE coverage. In-building-locating will also be available because the buildings will have distributed antennas which are capable of triangulating the person's location and that can be transmitted out to a laptop or command post. This solution is estimated at about $450k to set up and Pasco is committed to doing so with funding having already been set aside. An additional $20k is expected for annual maintenance.

    This also could serve as a back-up to the Microwave system as long as the internet is up. As 800MHz upgrades their radios (LMR to LTE) it will provide communication between the two without the need for patches. Additional tests by BCFPD #1 using LTE to LMR in areas within the district known to not work resulted in good test results. Law enforcement also tried using cell phones instead of portable radios and that worked very well.

Announcements
Drew Florence noted the SAT will meet this afternoon (3-5p.m.) to discuss levels of service to create a plan in the event staffing does not improve at SECOMM.

Adjournment

MARIE MOSLEY MOVED AND BOB GEAR SECONDED THE MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. ALL WERE IN FAVOR.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 a.m.

APPROVED:

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Jon Amundson, BCES Executive Board Chair

Date Approved: October 27, 2022

ATTEST:

Carole Cimrhakl
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Carole Cimrhakl, BCES Board Secretary

Date Published: October 27, 2022