



MINUTES – August 24, 2023 - 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 Chair Jon Amundson.

Attendance

Members

Jon Amundson	City of Richland (2 Votes)
Michael Alvarez	Benton County (2 Votes)
Mike Gonzalez <i>(remote)</i>	Franklin County (2 Votes)
Marie Mosley	City of Kennewick (2 Votes)
Kevin Crowley	City of Pasco (2 Votes)
Jay King <i>(remote)</i>	City of Prosser (1 Vote)
Brent Gerry <i>(remote)</i>	City of West Richland (1 Vote)
Bill Reed <i>(remote)</i>	City of Benton City (1 Vote)
Duane Szendre	Benton PUD (1 Vote, Microwave Only)

Absent

Lonnie Click	Benton County Fire Districts (1 Vote)
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Also Present: BCES Director Jay Atwood; SECOMM Managers Kim Lettrick and Gwen Stanley; BCEM Manager Deanna Davis; BCES Technical Systems Coordinator Craig Hamilton; Accounting Specialist Jordan George; Administrative Assistant/Board Secretary Carole Cimrhakl

Other Attendees: Benton County Deputy Administrator Matt Rasmussen; Franklin County Sheriff Jim Raymond; Benton County Sheriff Commander Mat Clarke; Kennewick Director of Management Services Christina Palmer; Richland Fire Chief Tom Huntington; Richland Police Chief Brigit Clary; Richland Finance Director Brandon Allen; Richland Accountant Jeanne Portch; Motorola Senior Account Manager Kevin Haight, Motorola Area Sales Manager Roy Kyser; Motorola Engineer Jeremy Gordon

Approval of Agenda

MARIE MOSLEY MOVED AND MICHAEL ALVAREZ 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 DRAFT Minutes of the Benton County Emergency Services Executive Board Regular Meeting held July 27, 2023.

MARIE MOSLEY MOVED AND JAY KING SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 13-0.

Director's Report

2. Manager's Report – Jay Atwood, BCES Executive Director

Multiple full-time vacancies remain however all part-time positions are now filled. Katie Ziegler who used to dispatch for SECOMM started yesterday. We anticipate she will get back up to speed quickly. Three candidates are to start mid-September (post conditional phase), one is in employee background and reference check, three are at the suitability assessment and integrity interview step and one is in pre-hire screening. Sixteen candidates have been invited to take CritiCall with seven more getting pre-screened for qualifications.

City of Richland Attorney Heather Kintzley reviewed the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Corrections were made and we received the updated document yesterday. It's being routed for signatures.

We are on the verge of getting the lease established with Red Mountain landowner Gary Heaton. A meeting is scheduled September 7 to discuss terms. Michael Alvarez noted there are 5 parcels the road must go through and the county must have signed agreements on each parcel. He is concerned that the lease hasn't been finalized yet and that costs continue to rise. He suggested hiring a consultant as a commercial agent before moving forward with negotiations to protect BCES' interests. Jay estimates the lease will be locked down once a price has been agreed upon, noting that Mr. Heaton is very supportive of this project. Once negotiations are completed, results will be reported to the Board for their approval.

Jay spoke with Benton County Director of Operations and Capital Programs Robert Blain who said Benton County is comfortable with going out to bid for the road once they have agreements on the easements which he expects to be completed at the end of this month.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has a 2:1 mitigation requirement for disturbing the bird and wildlife habitat on Red Mountain. Benton County believes this can be accomplished by using a park property that was purchased by the county some years back. Additionally, Fish and Wildlife has migratory bird restrictions in place February 1 through the end of July. If our project isn't underway prior to February 1, no construction can be started until August 1 which will further delay construction.

The tower is staged at the Richland City Shops and equipment from Motorola continues to arrive - most of which should be secured this fall. The shelter is still waiting for the Gold Seal from Labor and Industries with no estimate as to when this will happen.

At the last Strategic Advisory Team (SAT) meeting, the attending Law Chiefs decided they would like to remain status quo with Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD), get the Records Management System (RMS) stabilized in its current condition and consider trying to upgrade the interface between Hexagon CAD and Tyler RMS. They were not interested in moving forward with a whole new CAD system at this time. The attending Fire Chiefs were also in agreement. Both groups are drafting a letter of their recommendations that will be presented to the Board in the coming weeks.

Jay introduced Kevin Haight, Roy Kyser and Jeremy Gordon from Motorola, adding they were here to answer any questions about the Microwave and financing proposal that was included in the packet.

Items of Business

Benton County Emergency Services (BCES)

3. Capital Projects – Discussion

Jay Atwood provided the Board with an updated capital needs document that identified the top needs for the next few years noting that the CAD upgrade was not included given the status of where we're at currently. He advised it has the potential to impact decisions made on how various items are funded.

The top need is the Microwave System Replacement. Benton County allocated two million dollars for equipment-only purchases for both Benton and Franklin Counties. The entire project is estimated at \$6 million leaving about \$4 million to finance. Motorola offers a couple of different financing options and a couple different deployment plans.

The Motorola NICE Inform Elite Upgrade would replace the existing recording system for the phone lines and radio traffic. The upgrade would allow us to capture more components of our system than we can today. In addition to recording radio and phone traffic, the upgrade will allow screen captures and will bridge an existing gap between the phone system and CAD which is key for statistical analysis in call-processing time. Today we use when the call is created in CAD to determine call-processing time. The upgrade will help us improve our service levels, allow us the ability to provide our user agencies with needed data and allow us to compile records requests more efficiently and thoroughly by having all records located in one place. The overall cost of the upgrade (\$830,826) also includes additional costs for support plans and warranties for the next four years.

BCES Infrastructure Replacement and Upgrades are included as expanded programs. The current Nutanix Virtual servers are at end of life and are no longer supported. We had hoped we could extend the warranty for another year however, Nutanix was only able to offer a 6-month extension which still leaves us needing to replace the servers next year. The servers are \$714,181.17. Recurring costs of \$251,309.98 (every five years) will cover replacement and keep us current.

The Router Upgrade (\$58,076.67) will get us up to current standards and will replace existing routers that handle voice traffic on the administrative side of the house. The current routers are also at end of life and need to be replaced. These replacements also give us the ability to upgrade to Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) which is an over Internet Protocol (IP) solution for phone traffic, while also positioning us well for the future.

Internet Resiliency (\$57,264.09) will allow us to sustain Public Safety Services that require an always-on internet connection by installing additional networking hardware to build independent and resilient connections to 2 Internet Service Providers (ISP's.) The annual recurring cost is \$11,000. Recent events have impacted service, resulting in taking down essential services we provide to our user agencies.

The VHF Project is pending, but we don't have a solid idea yet of what Federal Engineering is going to recommend. This project is estimated at \$2 million.

Additional considerations are a Back-Up Center, estimated at \$2 million and a Clean Agent Fire Suppression System (\$100-\$200k).

The Microwave and the Motorola Nice Inform Elite recording system can be packaged together and financed through Motorola. The infrastructure replacements do not currently have a funding source other than using fund balance or trying to build up a capital reserve fund through user fees.

Marie Mosley would like to see today's capital needs handout incorporated into the previously presented capital needs spreadsheet with more detail on associated costs, allocations and funding options. It was decided a workshop is needed to discuss the 2024 budget and capital items with the packet being distributed a week prior.

Benton County Emergency Management (BCEM)

Southeast Communications Center (SECOMM)

4. VHF Project Update - Discussion

Richland Fire Chief Tom Huntington provided an update on the status of the VHF Upgrade. Site visits and the coverage study are finished. The next meeting with Federal Engineering will include Richland's in-house technical team and will hopefully provide a draft of Federal Engineering's recommendations for system replacement. Three proposals are anticipated, with one option being a straight VHF replacement. There may be other alternatives that are more cost effective and may be able to leverage the existing Motorola system as costs are a major factor. Additional meetings will follow to ensure all stakeholders are informed.

Funding for the project continues to focus on acquiring grant funding. There are several leads to follow-up on, but the project currently is unfunded. Additional meetings are scheduled with Richland's lobbyist to discuss the possibility of appropriations. Other members of the project team are following-up with federal representatives to investigate if any federal appropriations are possible.

If the project schedule stays on track, the project should conclude early 2026 assuming the project is funded and kicks off late 2024, early 2025. If no funding is acquired, the project will get pushed back. The existing VHF system is 30 years old but was designed for a 15-year lifecycle. The bulk of the infrastructure no longer repairable. It's to the point that if radio infrastructure is lost, channels will have to be dropped to keep other channels up. The system is beyond obsolete.

800MHz System

Benton County Microwave System

5. Benton & Franklin Microwave and Municipal Lease-Purchase Agreement (MLPA) Proposal – Discussion

Two different proposals, each with different options were presented. The first option (\$3.9 million) is solely for the Microwave system. The other proposal (\$4.7 million) includes the NICE Inform upgrade in addition to the Microwave. Financing options were presented as 7 and 10-year terms with no pre-payment penalties through Motorola Solutions Finance.

Motorola's Kevin Haight defined Motorola Solutions Finance as a division within Motorola that is a specific product designed for municipal or government agencies. City of Richland Finance Director Brandon Allen has reviewed the proposals and thought they were reasonable options to consider. He said some other loan options that would be available to government at a possibly lower rate have strict guidelines as to what qualifies, the applications are lengthy and application times are limited.

We currently have multiple radio systems at the sites that are using the microwave with network equipment to connect everything together. The proposal replaces all the existing, antiquated technology currently in use and adds additional capabilities. As the current system is at end of life and is no longer supported and with the Support Upgrade Agreement (SUA) we currently have with Motorola, the included upgrades are no longer feasible as the equipment is not upgradeable and cannot accept an update.

The lifespan of Microwave is estimated at ten years. The Microwave radio equipment (in the shelters), the dishes, the line up the tower and network equipment are estimated at five years. With the support level agreement, much of that will be covered allowing us to stay current through the SUA without having to do a major overhaul later.

Discussion Items

Announcements

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 a.m.

APPROVED:



Jon Amundson, BCES Executive Board Chair

Date Approved: 09/28/23

ATTEST:



Carole Cimrhakl, BCES Board Secretary

Date Published: October 17, 2023