



MINUTES – October 12, 2023 - 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 special meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chair Jon Amundson.

Attendance

Members

Michael Alvarez <i>(Arrived after Attendance)</i>	Benton County (2 Votes)
Mike Gonzalez <i>(Remote)</i>	Franklin County (2 Votes)
Marie Mosley	City of Kennewick (2 Votes)
Jon Amundson	City of Richland (2 Votes)
Jay King <i>(Remote)</i>	City of Prosser (1 Vote)
Erin Gwinn <i>(in for Brent Gerry)</i>	City of West Richland (1 Vote)
Duane Szendre	Benton PUD (1 Vote, Microwave Only)

Absent

Kevin Crowley	City of Pasco (2 Votes)
Brent Gerry	City of West Richland (1 Vote)
Bill Reed	City of Benton City (1 Vote)
Lonnie Click	Benton County Fire Districts (1 Vote)

Also Present: BCES Director Jay Atwood; SECOMM Manager Kim Lettrick; SECOMM Manager Gwen Stanley; BCEM Manager Deanna Davis; BCES IS Manager Doug deGraaf; Accounting Specialist Jordan George

Other Attendees: Benton County Commander Mathew Clarke; Franklin County IS Assistant Director Liz Cupples; Kennewick Director of Management Services Christina Palmer; Richland Finance Director Brandon Allen; Richland Fire Chief Tom Huntington

Approval of Agenda

MARIE MOSLEY MOVED AND MICHAEL ALVAREZ SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 10-0.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Approval of Consent Calendar

Director’s Report

Items of Business

Benton County Emergency Services (BCES)

- I. ILA Revision - Discussion

This topic is included within the budget discussion.

2. Benton County Emergency Services 2024 Budget Presentation – Approval
Feedback from the last workshop was incorporated into today's presentation to hopefully bring additional clarity to the budget.

There are no significant changes from the previous budget presentation. The overall budget increased by \$120,201. Assessments decreased overall by \$11,055 due to higher tax estimates, investment interest and the Red Mountain lease carry-over. The assessments are calculated based on many factors including Consumer Price Index (CPI), per capita population, direct costs (law and fire specific), radio rates, property assessments, call volumes, number of radios on the system, labor and maintenance costs, site leases, insurance and software license costs. Conversation would be needed before making significant changes as to how BCES calculates assessments on an annual basis as the interlocal agreement depicts how expenses are divided regarding ownership.

Projects for 2024 include Internet Resiliency, Server Replacement and Router Upgrade. Of the three, Internet Resiliency is truly an expanded program that would add redundancy to our current internet connectivity so that service is uninterrupted and continuous. The cost is \$57,264.09 with an ongoing monthly fee of \$1,000 after implementation. There is no ongoing additional maintenance.

Server Replacement is a lifecycle replacement project (not an expanded program) in the amount of \$714,181.18 with a recurring cost of \$251,309.98 every five years. The initial expense replaces and updates to new technology that will be updated through the recurring cost every five years. The recurring cost will be anticipated in future budgets, which should set us up well for the future.

The current Nutanix servers are beyond manufacturer support. We initially looked at extending our support contract, but the vendor was only willing to extend the contract by six months. Replacing the servers with Dell VXRail will match the Hexagon CAD server environment and simplify management. These servers support SECOMM operations and are expected to have a life cycle of five years.

Router Upgrade is another lifecycle replacement in the amount of \$58,076.67 with an annual recurring cost of \$8,822. The existing Cisco voice routers connect our administrative call functionality, including non-emergency dispatch. Current calls are delivered as Primary Rate Interface (PRI). The new routers support this in addition to Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) which we'd like to convert to in the future.

The City of Kennewick just had their legislative priorities discussion with five of the six legislators from the 8th and 16th Districts. Marie Mosley said they had a really good discussion about BCES' capital needs, stating they were very supportive.

The City of Richland just had an internal workshop with their City Council. They also discussed the capital needs at BCES. They will be having a meeting with their delegation in a couple weeks and feel that collectively some synergy is occurring in the region. Jon Amundson added that they've talked to their City Council on becoming more involved at the federal level in grant opportunities. Richland is looking at hiring a full-time federal lobbyist with BCES as one of their areas of focus.

Options for creating a capital reserve were presented with and without the 2024 projects.

3. Capital Needs – Discussion

The top three projects (Microwave Replacement, NICE Inform Upgrade and VHF Radio Replacement/Upgrade) are listed solely due to criticality and or availability for a funding option which is the case with the NICE Inform Upgrade as it can be included in the financing package with the Microwave Replacement. There are many benefits in doing the upgrade such as the analytics it would provide but this is not a must have when compared to other needs. We believe Motorola could still offer financing for this option.

The Microwave Replacement total cost of the project is \$6.4 million dollars (including taxes) with \$2 million secured in federal funding, leaving about \$4.4 million to pay. Financing costs were provided based on 7 or 10 years. Useful life of the Microwave itself far exceeds the finance terms.

The total cost for the NICE Inform Upgrade is \$864,800 with a maintenance contract (SUA) attached to it and it would track with the Microwave. Assessments could be split between the big five (Benton County, Franklin County, Kennewick, Pasco and Richland).

The VHF Radio Replacement/Upgrade is roughly estimated at \$5 million based on rough order of magnitude provided by Motorola for some system upgrades if we go a certain direction and a best guess on equipment if we go any other direction.

With the finance option for the Microwave, there are no early payment penalties and spreading the debt isn't really an option. The City of Richland could assume the debt capacity as the lead agency and there would be some sort of interlocal with the other agencies for their portion of the payment. Richland Finance Director Brandon Allen thought there would be some disclosure requirements for each agency. Ownership would be divided based on the interlocal. Subscriber agencies would benefit from a new and improved system and so there should be some way to capture this cost in their assessments.

Benton PUD is not using the Microwave system as they had in the past. It is more of a back-up should their primary communications fail. They are potentially interested in maintaining a partnership to have the Microwave as a back-up, but they aren't likely to pay as they have in the past which was based on the number of circuits being used. That technology with this upgrade is no longer so a different methodology would need to be determined for how to bill their use based on capacity of the system. They will continue to use radios however, the data acquisition is third in line according to Duane Szendre, Benton PUD's Superintendent of Operations. According to his IT Department, they have not used it in a couple of years. They are also in the middle of doing their own study to improve their supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) System. They will continue to pay their assessment and understand it will go up due to improvements, but they would like to see where their study leads them before they make a 100% commitment. With PUD's share going down, all other users' rates will increase. Currently a third of the overall cost of the existing system is divided evenly between BCES, all fire agencies and Benton PUD. The other 2/3 of that fund is billed by the number of circuits.

4. Priorities and Strategies – Discussion

It was noted that if we decide to pursue the financing option through Motorola, the first payment isn't due until a year after the contract is signed. We can codify the proposal for the Microwave to lock in the pricing and then set up the actual contract for the financing piece so that it starts in the first quarter of 2025. The project proposal from Motorola for the Microwave is only valid through November 30th, 2023. Additionally, the federal funding that was awarded (\$2 million for equipment) comes with the expectation that those funds are spent so we don't lose it.

An update of where we're at with the Red Mountain Project was included. A little over \$1 million is left to use for site construction. Benton County has the bid package out and bids will be in hopefully by the end of October. Shaw Vineyards has given verbal agreement to use an access road through their side to get to the mountain top. Terms have been agreed to on the lease agreement with Gary Heaton and it will be brought forward to the Board. Assessments for the lease have begun. Forty-two thousand dollars was allocated in the 2023 budget. No lease payments have been made due to the lease being unsecured. Now that the lease amount has now been negotiated, the overage will be passed on as a credit to our user agencies.

5. Decisions and Determinations – Discussion

Kennewick City Manager Marie Mosley believes we need to move forward with the Microwave Project and the Radio System for fire, hoping we can get some grant or legislative funding. She said she was prepared to approve the baseline budget and recommended looking at approving the expanded programs but would hold off on the NICE Inform at this time. She added that we should try to fund the expanded programs with assessments and perhaps forego the \$100k capital reserve, keeping it in mind for the next budget. She would recommend financing the Microwave using the ten-year option. City of Richland and Benton County agreed. She also thought it made sense that assessments be split equally amongst the big five as ownership is going to be equal in the end.

Franklin County IT Assistant Director Liz Cupples spoke on behalf of Franklin County stating that the 2024 budget has already been submitted. She agrees with approving the baseline budget. Projects should be funded through fund balance. She would approve creating at least a \$100k capital reserve along with their portion of funding for the Microwave and the Radio Project.

Finance Director Erin Gwinn spoke on behalf of West Richland, agreeing to approve the baseline budget, expanded programs and continue to look at capital expenses.

Kennewick City Manager Marie Mosley suggested getting the baseline budget approved and out of the way and then start looking at the expanded programs choosing to either pay for them through fund balance or assessments. The Microwave System being split equally between the big five or based on assessments, same with the radio system and the capital reserves. Jon Amundson thought each member would take this information back to their respective agencies for discussion. He thought it comes down to two options, spending down reserves and maybe include the idea of building up the reserve as well OR doing it through assessments.

Kennewick City Manager Marie Mosley thought it best to wait to approve the baseline budget, adding that it would be helpful to narrow down options and look at using assessments or

reserves while also building up the reserves and splitting amongst the big five evenly, thinking it will help the Board have a discussion with their respective finance departments.

The next version of the presentation will include a baseline assessment, even split on the potential reserve fund projects as an assessment and then an even split on the financing for the Motorola Microwave Project. Another column can be added to include a capital reserve option as another consideration.

Benton County Emergency Management (BCEM)

Southeast Communications Center (SECOMM)

800MHz System

6. Red Mountain Ground Lease Agreement – Approval

JON AMUNDSON MOVED AND MICHAEL ALVAREZ SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE RED MOUNTAIN GROUND LEASE AGREEMENT. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Benton County Microwave System

Discussion Items

Marie Mosley thought a more thorough discussion on the capital needs was necessary. She would like a complete list of everything needed and that items are in the order of priority. Include things that are contingent upon something else happening and that the time frame is established to ensure we are planning effectively.

The current list is pretty comprehensive with the feedback from the Strategic Advisory Team (SAT) that items are prioritized based on time frame and criticality.

A recommendation from the SAT regarding Tyler CAD was expected but not received. Chief Huntington is tracking down the last signature and the letter will be ready at the October 26th regular board meeting.

Announcements

Adjournment

The Workshop adjourned at 10:58 a.m.

APPROVED:



Jon Amundson, BCES Executive Board Chair

Date Approved: October 26, 2023

ATTEST:

Carole Cimrhakl

Carole Cimrhakl, BCES Board Secretary

Date Published: November 1, 2023