



MINUTES – October 26, 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 7:35 a.m. by Vice-Chair Marie Mosley.

Attendance

Members

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

Absent

Jon Amundson	City of Richland (2 Votes)
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; Administrative Assistant/Board Secretary Carole Cimrhakl

Other Attendees: Benton County Deputy Administrator Matt Rasmussen; Benton County Sheriff's Commander Mat Clarke; West Richland Police Commander Jared Kelly *(Remote)*; West Richland Finance Director Erin Gwinn; Motorola Senior Account Manager Kevin Haight *(Remote)*; Richland Finance Director Brandon Allen; Richland Accountant Jeanne Portch

Approval of Agenda

BCES Executive Director Jay Atwood requested the addition of two items to the agenda: Washington State Emergency Military Department and US DOE Contract E24-118 (under Benton County Emergency Management) and Microwave Proposal (under Benton County Microwave System).

BRENT GERRY MOVED AND MICHAEL ALVAREZ SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS MODIFIED. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 12-0.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Approval of Consent Calendar

1. Approval of the DRAFT September 20, 2023 Benton County Emergency Services Executive Board Special Meeting Minutes – Marie Mosley
2. Approval of the DRAFT September 28, 2023 Benton County Emergency Services Executive Board Regular Meeting Minutes – Marie Mosley
3. Approval of the DRAFT October 12, 2023 Benton County Emergency Services Executive Board Special Meeting Minutes – Marie Mosley

DREW FLORENCE MOVED AND BRENT GERRY SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 12-0.

Director's Report

Manager's Report – Jay Atwood BCES Executive Director

SECOMM has 12 full-time dispatch and 3 supervisor positions open. A new dispatcher is scheduled to start Monday, October 30th. There are 9 candidates in background and 3 in the post conditional phase - on the verge of receiving job offers. Three more are in the early phases of background and suitability assessments and another three are in pre-hire screening. Eleven applicants have been invited to take CritiCall and the typing test and another eleven are at the baseline/qualification step. We continue to advertise and are looking at doing another radio/media campaign within the next month or so.

SECOMM Manager Kim Lettrick advised there is consideration being made of increasing the 911 excise tax sometime in 2025. The state is also looking at taxing other devices.

The Red Mountain Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) has been signed by all parties except the FCC. We continue to work on the easements for Mr. Heaton's property on Red Mountain and the lease agreement is pending as we wait for the legal description to be added as an addendum to the agreement. Bidding for the road is open and will close October 31st. We continue to work with Labor & Industries (L&I) on getting the approval for the shelter.

A Doodle Poll will be sent out to the BCES and BiPIN boards to find a date that will work for a joint meeting to discuss next steps with the potential functional consolidation. This meeting will replace the regularly scheduled November and December BCES Executive Board Meetings.

Items of Business

Benton County Emergency Services (BCES)

4. Benton County Emergency Services 2024 Budget Presentation – Approval
Based on feedback received, an updated version of the BCES 2024 Budget was presented.

In many cases, assessments decreased due to funds collected for lease payments on Red Mountain that have not yet been expended. An overview of what impacts assessments was reviewed. Radio assessments by agency were presented, using the number of radios each agency has in service and their usage of the system.

Projects originally presented as expanded programs were reviewed. Those projects include Internet Resiliency (redundant internet service for continuity of operations), Server Replacement (end of life and moved to highest priority of the three projects) and Router

Upgrade (end of life). Two options were proposed for each program. The first option was to use fund balance, the second was a one-time assessment to the 8 user agencies.

Options for establishing a capital fund were presented in \$50k increments (\$50k, \$100k, \$150k and \$200k), showing the increase to each agency for each increment. It was suggested that these contributions could be re-evaluated annually.

Two options were originally presented for the Microwave, one that included financing the Microwave by itself and the other to include Nice Inform. With the Board's direction, the Microwave alone was focused on. It was noted the expense would likely increase due to fluctuations in interest rates. An updated quote will be needed as the original proposal (4.95%) is now more than a month old and expires November 14th. Current rates received from Motorola (during the meeting) were quoted at 5.38% for 7 years and 5.45% for 10 years. Of the two financing options previously discussed, the 10-year option seemed to make the most sense due to no early payment penalty and the difference in interest rates was negligible. There is approximately \$4.4 million left to finance with no solid determination on funding at this time. Motorola Senior Account Manager Kevin Haight believed a vote of support by the Board would be sufficient to lock rates in.

Options for distributing the remaining expense between agencies were presented as an equal payment amongst the "Big 5" or by using a calculation based on population. It was noted that user agencies would benefit from the new and improved infrastructure and should be charged in some manner. Additional decisions would be needed to amend the interlocal agreement (ILA) to allow for changes in calculations and votes.

Under the current ILA, Benton PUD is a voting member on the Microwave system, but they no longer use the Microwave, using fiber, their own radios and cellular instead for their communications. They would like to keep the Microwave as an additional back-up and will continue to pay as a user on the system. Benton PUD is not being considered as a contributor for this reason.

MARIE MOSLEY MOVED AND MICHAEL ALVAREZ SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE BASELINE BUDGET, THE EXPANDED PROGRAMS USING FUND BALANCE AND \$100K RESERVE TO ESTABLISH A CAPITAL RESERVE FUND STARTING 2024. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 12-0.

The Board agreed it needs to move forward on the Microwave. The decision to finance (or not) will need to be determined. If financed, the decision on how to allocate the loan will need to be made before it can be brought before Richland's City Council in order for Richland to assume the debt of the loan. The first payment will be set-up to come due the first quarter of 2025. Kevin Haight believed that as long as the Board's intention is codified, Motorola would honor the proposed contract.

MICHAEL ALVAREZ MOVED AND DREW FLORENCE SECONDED THE MOTION TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE MICROWAVE CONTRACT TO THE

RICHLAND CITY COUNCIL AND TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE MICROWAVE PROJECT. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 13-0.

With the approval of the baseline budget, Jay Atwood pointed out there were two different proposals for assessments. Approving the baseline budget assumes the original assessment passed. The other option was to include the added agencies in the assessments.

DREW FLORENCE MOVED AND KEVIN CROWLEY SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE ASSESSMENTS WITH THE ADDED AGENCIES BASED ON THE ACTUAL USAGE OF THE RADIO SYSTEM. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 12-0.

The cities of Kennewick and Richland have spoken with their legislative districts and Benton County has their meeting scheduled in December. Advocating the need for funding as a unified regional priority through the legislative districts was strongly encouraged and will be seen as an area-wide, fully supported need. Jay Atwood put together a descriptive list of the Microwave project and Fire Chief Tom Huntington did the same for the radio system project. The lists will be shared with the Board. It was noted that asking for a specific dollar amount is better received and more likely to be granted. Later discussion decided the ask should be \$4 million (\$1 million for each for the four legislative districts that serve our area).

Benton County Emergency Management (BCEM)

5. Washington State Emergency Military Department and the US Department of Energy Contract E24-118 – Approval

This is the annual contract from Washington State Emergency Military Department and the US Department of Energy in the amount of \$179,970. The funds are for off-site emergency planning and preparedness in support of the Hanford Site. The grant also funds 1.03 FTE and the BCES facility.

MICHAEL ALVAREZ MOVED AND DREW FLORENCE SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE US DOE CONTRACT E24-118 WITH WASHINGTON STATE EMERGENCY MILITARY DEPARTMENT AND THE US DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$179,970 AND AUTHORIZE STAFF TO MAKE THE NECESSARY BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 8-0.

Southeast Communications Center (SECOMM)

6. Public Safety Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) Recommendation

A letter of recommendation was finalized, signed and presented to the BCES Executive Board from Police and Fire Chiefs and Sheriffs of Benton and Franklin Counties. The letter contained their collective recommendations on the current and future of CAD. The recommendation was to stay with the current CAD system, to continue leveraging Tyler RMS for needed improvements to the maximum extent possible and to look at potential enhanced interfaces down the road. It is important to remember that many capital projects are inter-dependent of other projects and will require work ahead of time to reach the desired goals, making a timeline very important.

800MHz System

Benton County Microwave System

Discussion Items

Mike Gonzalez thought there might be an opportunity to use the media to educate the public regarding the capital needs. Caution was urged as we don't want the public to think we are looking at taxes to raise the needed funds. The current public safety tax is set to expire at the end of 2024 and Marie Mosley thought that might be the time to educate the public.

Announcements

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 a.m.

APPROVED:

Marie Mosley

Marie Mosley, BCES Executive Board Vice-Chair

Date Approved: December 6, 2023

ATTEST:

Carole Cimrhakl

Carole Cimrhakl, BCES Board Secretary

Date Published: December 14, 2023