



MINUTES – April 25, 2024 - 7:30 AM
BENTON COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES EXECUTIVE BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
Richland City 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

Matt Rasmussen (in for Michael Alvarez)	Benton County (2 Votes)
Mike Gonzalez	Franklin County (2 Votes)
Lisa Beaton	City of Kennewick (2 Votes)
Adam Lincoln	City of Pasco (2 Votes)
Jon Amundson	City of Richland (2 Votes)
Rachel Shaw	City of Prosser (1 Vote)
Brent Gerry	City of West Richland (1 Vote)

Absent

Michael Alvarez	Benton County (2 Votes)
Bill Reed	City of Benton City (1 Vote)
Lonnie Click	Benton County Fire Districts (1 Vote)

Also Present: BCES Executive Director Jay Atwood; SECOMM Manager Kim Lettrick; SECOMM Manager Aimee Fournier-Plante; BCES IS Manager Doug deGraaf; Accounting Specialist Jordan George; Administrative Assistant/Board Secretary Carole Cimrhakl

Other Attendees: Franklin County Commissioner Steve Bauman; Franklin County IS Director Liz Cupples (*Remote*); Franklin County Telecommunications Engineer Michael Namchek; Franklin County Sheriff Commander Monte Huber; Benton County Sheriff Commander Mat Clarke (*Remote*); Kennewick Director of Management Services Christina Palmer (*Remote*); Richland Interim Police Chief Craig Meidl; Richland Fire Chief Tom Huntington; Richland Assistant City Manager Drew Florence; Richland Finance Director Brandon Allen

Approval of Agenda

BRENT GERRY MOVED AND ADAM LINCOLN SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 12-0.

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 March 28, 2024.

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

Director's Report

2. Manager's Report – Jay Atwood

SECOMM has 14.5 vacancies. Fourteen candidates are certified on the eligibility list and 27 more are in pre-certification. A training academy of 5 is expected to begin May 28 with another academy anticipated to start July 8. The hiring process has been streamlined to reduce the process from 8 weeks to 5 in hopes we won't lose as many candidates. The search for supervisor candidates has now closed, yielding 3 internal and 3 external candidates. An assessment center for promotion will be conducted May 14.

The foundation for the shelter and tower has been poured at Red Mountain and progress has been made this week with backfill and leveling. The shelter will be delivered towards the end of May. The project remains on track for early fall completion.

As previously reported by SECOMM Manager Kim Lettrick, the Washington State 911 Advisory Committee had discussed increasing the 911 excise tax. The tax has not been increased since 2011. It was being considered for implementation in 2025 but is now being considered for 2026.

Emergency Planner Tony Bench will start Monday, April 29.

Items of Business

Benton County Emergency Services (BCES)

Benton County Emergency Management (BCEM)

3. Amendment to the 21SHSP Grant Agreement – Approval

Benton County Emergency Management was initially awarded \$211,865 for the 21SHSP Grant Agreement E22-101. Of this amount, \$137,324 was designated for a National Priority Project relative to cybersecurity security. The total project came in under budget by \$10,466.83. Since these funds can only be used toward the projects approved in the scope of work, the excess funds are required to be returned to the State.

LISA BEATON MOVED AND ADAM LINCOLN SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AMENDMENT TO THE 21SHSP GRANT AGREEMENT. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED 12-0.

Southeast Communications Center (SECOMM)

800MHz System

4. Public Safety Radio System Project – Update

Richland Fire Chief Tom Huntington provided an update on the project. Highlights include having submit \$6 million dollars in funding requests, Congressional Directed Spending requests have been submitted, about a million dollars in grant funding requests have been filed through other sources and they continue to look for additional resources.

The requirements document has been reviewed with Federal Engineering and a final draft is expected by the end of April or first part of May. This document will provide the basis for Motorola's proposal on how the system build-out will look. The proposal will also provide firm numbers that will allow for project planning. Additionally, work has started on the programming template and plans for installing apparatus and field units. Motorola will host a "lunch and learn" program for the user agencies on May 2 at the Richland Public Library Gallery Room to examine mobile and portable radio options to determine which model best fits.

Chief Huntington committed to continue sending monthly project updates. He added that they are experiencing almost weekly component failures. Failures thus far have been mitigated but the system is still in a highly critical stage. They are actively working to develop a tiered response plan up to and including a system failure for continuity of operations. Workarounds will have significant impacts to response times and notifications.

Benton County Microwave System

Strategic Advisory Team (SAT)

BCES/BiPIN Consolidation

Discussion Items

Franklin County Administrator Mike Gonzalez asked for thoughts and ideas on pursuing the E911 sales tax as Franklin County has expressed interest in doing so. Benton County's Deputy Administrator Matt Rasmussen advised that Benton County is not considering an increase at this time due to numerous uncertainties regarding future needs and capital expenditures. Voters will also want to know what exactly the tax will fund and why it's needed, adding there is much work needing to be done prior to bringing it before voters. Additional concerns were discussed.

Pasco City Manager Adam Lincoln asked about the state of the equipment, the future capital investments and the funding needed to stabilize it. BCES Executive Director Jay Atwood explained that expanding the 800MHz System to make it a true bi-county system puts all public safety on one single platform, breaking down the barrier for interoperability between Law and Fire. Additionally, the way the 800MHz System is managed today will allow BCES to keep the system maintained at the same level as it will be managed through our SUA (System Upgrade Agreement). He estimates it will take 1.5 – 2 years to complete the project after contract execution adding that the ILA will need to be re-opened. Currently, without a true count of the number and type of radios needed makes it impossible to provide a price per entity cost at this time.

Richland City Manager Jon Amundson noted there are plans to present this item as kind of a "history of BCES" and the current project need to their City Council on May 7. Both the City of Richland and Benton County are committed to funding their portion of the Public Safety Radio Project regardless of the funding mechanism used. Richland Assistant City Manager Drew Florence and BCES Executive Director Jay Atwood are willing to meet with any legislative body for a similar presentation regarding the project.

Announcements

West Richland Mayor Brent Gerry thanked everyone who participated in the incident that took place in West Richland earlier this week. He noted the collaborative effort from the multiple agencies was amazing.

The Bi-PIN meetings will be held quarterly, right after the BCES Executive Board meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for June 27th at 8:00 a.m.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:58 a.m.

APPROVED:



Jon Amundson, BCES Executive Board Chair

Date Approved: May 23, 2024

ATTEST:

Carole Cimrhakl

Carole Cimrhakl, BCES Board Secretary

Date Published: May 29, 2024