

Regular Meeting Minutes
Spokane Regional Emergency Communications Governing Board
January 21, 2021

1. Call to Order and Roll Call 7:30 a.m.

Chief Bryan Collins called the meeting to order at 7:33 a.m. The following Board members were in attendance:

Board Members – via Zoom

Chief Bryan Collins – Spokane Valley Fire Department (Chair)
Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich – Spokane County Sheriff's Office (Vice Chair)
Assistant Chief Howard Johnson – Spokane County Fire District 4
Chief Brad Richmond – Airway Heights Police Department
Chief Dave Ellis – Spokane Valley Police Department
Gerry Gemmill – Spokane County

Staff – via Zoom

Lori Markham, Executive Director
Kim Arredondo, Deputy Director
Tim Henry, Finance Manager
Bob Schwent, Technical Services Manager
Brad Kane, Dispatch Operations Manager
Heather Wood, 911 Operations Manager
Patrick Erickson, Communication and Media Manager
Jon Adams, Training Manager
Cherell Yates, Office Manager
Megan Schneider, HR Analyst
Jenni Folden, Finance Analyst

Auxiliary Partners / Guests – via Zoom

Lt. Alan Arnzen, SPD
Laura McAloon, McAloon Law Offices
Ariane Schmidt, Spokane Regional Project Manager
Todd Mielke, Spokane County Sheriff's Office
Tom Williams, City of Spokane
Brian Scott, BDS Planning and Urban Design
Ishmael Nunez, BDS Planning and Urban Design

2. Consent Agenda

Gerry Gemmill motioned to approve the minutes from the December 17, 2020 regular meeting and the December 22, 2020 Special Meeting. Brad Richmond seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

3. New Business

a. HB 1155

Lori Markham stated Representative Marcus Riccelli brought forth a bill to the House of Representatives regarding the 1/10th of 1% sales tax. The bill proposes that any City with a population over 50,000 would be eligible for their portion of the sales tax through an ILA with their County. SREC has sent a letter of opposition to Spokane lobbyist Mike Burgess to present to the House Representatives at the hearing scheduled for January 26, 2021. The letter was signed by the SREC Board, Spokane County Board of Commissioners, City of Spokane Mayor Nadine Woodward, City of Spokane Police Chief Craig Meidl and City of Spokane Fire Chief Brian Schaeffer. Lori explained the bill will not only impact Spokane County, but Counties throughout the State. TheAPCO-

NENA Washington Chapter is also in opposition. Gerry Gemmill stated he has a meeting with Marcus Riccelli later today and will explain the actual, negative consequences this bill will have on Spokane County and its emergency communications system if it passes. He will be speaking to Marcus as a SREC Board member, not the County CEO. Bryan Collins explained there are many downstream consequences the bill has which will push many cities into emergency communication systems that are not sufficient or well run. Gerry Gemmill continued that there will be unattended consequences for the constituents of the City of Spokane if HB 1155 passes.

4. Old Business

a. 911 Live

Dave Ellis explained the law advisory committee reviewed the program a few days ago. He reminded the Board the program allows officers to hear live 911 calls immediately and shows the geographical location; allowing for time savings and giving the ability to hear the actual communication, background noise, tone, etc., not just the notes entered by the dispatcher. The law group was in favor of exploring the program further. Dave explained the cost to equip staff is minimal, roughly \$12,000 annually. Dave explained his department would include it in their real-time crime center, which will be very useful during big time events. If the Board is in favor of it he will reach out to the host agencies regarding funding. Bryan Collins asked what the timeline would be. Dave replied as soon as they could get the program tied into the current system. Lori explained the program has already interfaced with Vesta systems, which is the phone system SREC uses, so it should not be a difficult or long process. Dave reminded the Board the program is currently used by a couple departments in California and they are very pleased with the program. Bryan asked how the call is generated in CAD. Dave explained the dispatcher/911 would still create the call in CAD; the program allows the officer to get a head start when a call is in their vicinity. The officer would be able to alert the dispatcher they are in the vicinity, heard the call and are in route. Bryan explained the Fire agency implemented something similar a few years ago and the data was skewed, so a time stamp had to be created to reflect an accurate response time. Dave stated a workgroup could be established to work on the data gathering issues. Lori added, the program could also be useful for the Fire agencies as well, especially during fire season. The Board agreed to have Dave move forward to work with the vendor and workgroup for final figures.

5. Staff Reports

a. Operations

Kim Arredondo stated staffing is better as employees are returning from FMLA and COVID quarantines; there is one employee who just tested positive who is out on quarantine. The new academy of six employees returned to the CCB from the BUC and are on the floor. There are three employees slated for cross training in March, one will go to Fire and two to Law dispatch. Two supervisors started their cross training in Fire this week and more potential for cross training will be put to staff as staffing numbers allow.

b. Technical

Bob Schwent stated projects are starting up again, weather permitting, including the GeoPrime site and microwave upgrade. The SRMA-1 project is complete and the group continues work on programming the new fire station alerting radios, hopefully to be completed by the end of the month. Bob explained he is working on the Jay Hughes memorial and there is a walk through today. The GIS group is working with the New World group for the upcoming upgrade. The vacant radio and GIS Technician positions are now open and posted. Lori Markham added the IT group is working on configuring

and outfitting the Report Technicians to be able to work from home to help address COVID concerns as well as the lack of space at the CCB as staffing levels continue to improve. A major hurdle is a recording system that can work on their phone systems from home. She will have an update at the next Board meeting.

c. Finance

Tim Henry stated the team is busy closing out 2020, completing reporting requirements and setting up 2021. The conveyance and work on fixed assets continues to close 2020. Tim thanked Bob Schwent for his help on the fixed asset and conveyance process. Additionally, there was a payroll change over that has been a little challenging with the new year.

d. Human Resources

Lori Markham explained there is negotiating being done with the base unit to finalize their contract. Lori added there have been four applications received for the Citizen Representative position which will close on January 31, 2021. Once closed, the Executive Committee will review the applications and bring the finalists to the next Board meeting for review.

6. Open/Public Comment

No public comments.

7. BDS Strategic Plan Update Presentation

Brian Scott and Ishmael Nunez provided a presentation to the Board on the strategic plan update. The agenda is to; provide the results of the staff focus groups that have been conducted since December, go through the strategic plan priorities, assign next work groups for February, review goals and objectives for those work groups, and finally summary and next steps. Brian reminded the Board there are three phases to the strategic process; assessment, planning, and implementation. Currently, SREC is moving from the assessment phase to the planning phase. Brian continued through the presentation highlighting key components. One of the goals today was going to be to affirm the vision, mission and guiding principles (values), but based on the focus groups we will revisit those at a later date. The key action today will be to articulate the strategic priorities which will organize the work groups. Brian summarized for the group the steps and work that has already been done in this whole process; workshop outlining values and fears, formation of strategic questions, conducted a situational assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, one on one interviews with Board members, staff leaders, user agencies and public safety partners, and conducted a staff survey.

The results of the staff focus groups resulted in an additional focus group to discuss, dig deeper into the mission, vision, and values statements, which is why that will be revisited at a later date. In summary, the staff focus groups revealed that staff feels things are changing too fast which is creating a lot of confusion. The staffs' hopes are tempered by on-going frustration that concerns are neither heard nor valued by leadership. Brian furthered this is reflective of growing pains and knows from his work with SREC leadership and the Board this is not the intent, but the consistency of the comments suggests these tensions should be prioritized. The staff's perception of key issues include the following; lack of understanding of the reasons behind organizational policies, lack of regular communication from management, lack of clear future planning and implementation, lack of transparency and decision making, and consequences stemming from the disconnection of disciplines. In addition to the pace of change, COVID is not helping the communication process. Brian recommended the mission, vision, and values statements be held off until later in the process to allow visible progress on issues, allowing staff trust building in strategic planning and management leadership.

Brian explained the next step is to identify the strategic plan priorities which will organize the rest of the process. Strategic priorities are areas of focus for the detailed work on the strategic plan and include; current priorities due to strategic challenges and opportunities facing SREC now, organize the work groups, their goals and objectives; not necessarily a list of everything SREC does and how it will get there. During the last planning meeting the Board outlined its strategic priorities, and those were combined with the comments from the staff focus groups resulting in the next work groups; internal culture, financial issues, operational independence, and regional relations. Each larger group has smaller components for each work group to consider during their meetings. Brian asked the Board if they agreed on the four areas presented. The Board agreed. Brian stated the next step is to assign people to the work groups. He explained that he, Lori Markham and Kim Arredondo have had some discussion on what those assignments look like and agreed that the internal culture work group should be made up of SREC staff across the disciplines. The financial subcommittee seems to be a good group to make up the financial issues work group. Brian furthered there would need to be Board volunteers for the regional relations group along with management, staff representatives and possibly some regional partners. The operational independence group should be made up some Board volunteers, management staff, technical staff, staff representatives and possibly regional partners. These work groups should consist of at least one meeting in February to draft goals and objectives and then a meeting in April to craft action steps and performance measures. Brad Richmond volunteered for the regional relations group and asked if Cheney should also be included. Howard Johnson volunteered to be on the operational independence group. Ozzie Knezovich volunteered to be on the regional relations group and stated that Cheney has consistently made it clear they want to remain an independent dispatch center. Gerry Gemmill volunteered for the regional relations group.

Brian explained next steps will be to organize the groups and assign additional people if needed. Once the work groups have met in February, BDS will update the Board at the meeting scheduled for March 18th where the Board will review the work of the work groups and their goals and objectives. In light of the goals and objectives presented, if ready, will revisit the vision, mission and values statements. After the March meeting the workgroups will reconvene for their April meetings to craft actions and performance measures.

Ozzie Knezovich stated he reviewed the answers to the Spokesman Review and believes SREC is being too politically correct in their answers. He believes the true reasons should be outlined as to why the City of Spokane has not joined SREC and paint a true picture of what has transpired. The City of Spokane has been offered multiple times to join SREC and they refuse to at the cost to their own citizens. Regional dispatch was not thought up four years ago, but a thirty-year process that finally culminated four years ago. Gerry Gemmill suggested if there was a follow up, to direct them to the Sheriff for comment. Ozzie furthered it is not SREC's job to persuade the City to join, the fact is SREC has offered multiple times for them to join and they refuse because they are bought and paid for by Local 29. Ozzie continued that Breean Beggs hypocritically used the 1/10th tax issue as a reason not to join SREC and is now pushing a bill to receive a portion of those funds. Lori Markham asked if the Board had direction for SREC in responding to these types of inquiries. Lori furthered SREC is responding with just facts and not trying to give the media any ammunition. She asked if it would be better for a Board member to respond to these types of questions as she would like to move past the City of Spokane and focus on SREC operations. Ozzie agreed it is time to move past the City of Spokane.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:31 a.m.

The next Regular Governing Board meeting is scheduled for February 18, 2021 at 7:30 a.m.

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Chief Bryan Collins

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Board Member
Governing Board

DocuSigned by:

Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich

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Board Member
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