

Special Meeting Minutes
Spokane Regional Emergency Communications
January 25, 2020

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m. The following Board members were in attendance:

Board Members – via Zoom

Chief Bryan Collins (Chair) – Spokane Valley Fire Department
Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich (Vice Chair) – Spokane County Sheriff's Office
Chief Dave Ellis, Spokane Valley Police Department
Chief Brad Richmond – Airway Heights Police Department
Assistant Chief Howard Johnson – Spokane County Fire District 4
Chief Cody Rohrbach – Spokane County Fire District 3
Gerry Gemmill – Spokane County

Staff – via Zoom

Lori Markham, Executive Director
Jeff Tower, Human Resources Manager
Tim Henry, Finance Manager
Brad Kane, Dispatch Operations Manager
Heather Wood, 911 Operations Manager
Jon Adams, Training Manager
Patrick Erickson, Communication and Media Manager
Cherell Yates, Office Manager
Megan Schneider, HR Analyst

Auxiliary Partners / Guests – via Zoom

Lt. Alan Arnzen, SPD
Laura McAloon, McAloon Law Offices
Ariane Schmidt, Spokane Regional Project Manager
Brian Schaeffer, City of Spokane
Damon Simmons, Liberty Lake Police Department
Tom Williams, City of Spokane
Todd Mielke, Spokane County Sheriff's Office

2. Discussion

HB 1155

Lori Markham stated Bryan Collins had requested the meeting be scheduled to discuss HB 1155. Gerry Gemmill explained he and Lori have been in contact with lobbyist Mike Burgess who provided the date and time for testimony, and they provided the letter of opposition to him. Gerry continued he had a meeting with Marcus Riccelli and provided him the 1/10th prioritization policy. He stated the conversation went well and he advised Marcus of the full impact of the bill. Gerry explained they are in the process of getting the information to commerce for the fiscal note, so everything that can be done now, is being done.

Ozzie Knezovich stated he spoke with the editor of the Spokesman Review and alerted him of some errors in the original story. The electronic version was supposed to have been corrected and the writer is supposed to reach out to Ozzie for clarification. One of the

errors was a statement that dispatch was a City led endeavor prior to SREC, which was not true. Gerry Gemmill asked Patrick Erickson if he was aware of the updated electronic version. Patrick Erickson stated he was unaware of the updated version and no one had reached out to him further from the Spokesman Review.

Ozzie Knezovich asked Gerry Gemmill if the lobbyist seemed to have an opinion on if the bill was likely to pass or not. Gerry stated he did not say one way or the other, but a similar bill was introduced last year and received no traction. Gerry stated that Marcus explained he only introduced the bill to help dialogue between SREC and the City. Gerry explained to him there has been considerable dialogue between SREC and the City. Ozzie continued that was the same comment he made last year when he introduced the bill. Ozzie explained to him at that time it was not an issue of not wanting dialogue with the City, but the fact the City does not want to listen. Ozzie explained that Marcus may not be aware that at the beginning of the year the City told SREC they will not be joining SREC in 2021, which shut down all dialogue; except for the City wanting SREC to continue assisting them with dispatch services. Gerry stated he will talk with Mike Burgess further and emphasized the letter of opposition signed by the SREC Board, County Commissioners and especially the City of Spokane's Mayor, Fire Chief and Police Chief, carries a lot of weight. Gerry stated he believes we have done everything proactively that can be done. Ozzie stated he is waiting to hear from the Spokesman Review to discuss the bill further.

Bryan Collins explained after the article was published, Ozzie was not pleased with the accuracy of the article and felt a more aggressive public approach was needed. Ozzie confirmed those sentiments and added it is important the facts begin to come out in our message. He reiterated he has been a part of the regional effort for over 15 years. Bryan furthered it is important to have that aggressive approach, but there are limits especially for appointed individuals, whereas Ozzie is in a unique position as an elected official who answers to the public rather than a Board. Bryan furthered if the SREC Board would like to take a more aggressive approach then it would have to be led by Ozzie. Ozzie agreed and asked that Gerry and Todd Mielke help in developing the talking points and with Patrick's help, get the message out. Gerry clarified that in his discussion with Marcus he was talking with him as a SREC Board member, not the County CEO and it is very important to make that distinction. Gerry agreed Ozzie was in the best position to do so and would assist in developing those talking points.

Bryan Collins explained the other issue is to keep SREC administration from being too involved in that campaign and focus on running their operations and stick to answering questions factually, like they have. Bryan furthered it would be his preference to address those questions, campaigns to the Board and focus on SREC operations. The Board agreed. Ozzie reiterated he would be the spokesperson with the help of others to develop the talking points. Todd Mielke agreed with the idea of SREC administration staying out of the campaign. Todd furthered that he would hope as these conversations continue and talking points developed the SREC Board members would share these points with their

jurisdictions and advise them of the potential impacts. The message to the voters originally and which should be conveyed to the jurisdictions is the regional effort would result in a better deal for the citizens from financial and service perspectives. The current legislation does not contain a discussion on growing the financial pie to support emergency communications, but rather about re-dividing the current amount of money, which goes against what was presented to the voters and which the voters overwhelmingly approved; and if passed, jeopardizes existing systems throughout the state. It would put a financial burden on these systems requiring each jurisdiction to come up with additional funds, or go out to their constituents for a tax increase on something the voters already thought they voted to pay for. Ozzie added the message to the voters was a focus on interoperability and a regional effort, and this isn't the first time he has had to fight to keep their promise to the voters. Ozzie reiterated the importance of the voters' trust and if the promise isn't kept the 1/10th tax will not pass again and the infrastructure will crumble. Bryan agreed with Todd and stated his Board has been apprised and is currently drafting a letter of opposition to HB 1155. Todd stated the bill will also affect other agencies in the State and he is hopeful they will be vocal as well. Lori Markham added the APCO-NENA WA Chapter is also opposing the bill.

Ozzie Knezovich asked if the Board agreed with the strategy. Cody Rohrbach summarized, the strategy is to utilize the Sheriff's platform and the Board members lend their support from their agencies. Cody stated he is currently in Vancouver at CRESA and to let him know if there is anything he can do from there. The Board supports the strategy. Bryan asked what other Counties met the 500,000 population threshold and had a 1/10th sales tax. Lori stated she wasn't sure if CRESA did (Clark County), but TCOMM which incorporates Olympia and those groups, would be voicing opposition. Laura McAloon asked if the Board intended to have the Sheriff voice the opinion of the Board, and if so there needs to be a motion. Cody Rohrbach motioned that the position of the SREC Board is in opposition to current HB 1155 as presented. Brad Richmond seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried. Bryan explained he and Ozzie would be testifying at the hearing tomorrow afternoon. Todd Mielke briefly described the legislative process and reminded Bryan and Ozzie they would have two minutes for testimony.

3. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:33 a.m.

Signatures:

DocuSigned by:
Chief Bryan Collins
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Board Member
Governing Board

DocuSigned by:
Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich
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Board Member
Governing Board