

Regular Meeting Minutes
Spokane Regional Emergency Communications Governing Board
January 20, 2022

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

Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich called the meeting to order at 7:33 a.m. The following Board members were in attendance:

Board Members – via Zoom

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

Staff – via Zoom

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

Auxiliary Partners / Guests – via Zoom

Laura McAloon, McAloon Law Offices
Chief Lonnie Rash, SCFD 8
Chief Frank Soto, Spokane Valley Fire Department

2. Consent Agenda

Dave Ellis motioned to approve the minutes from the December 16, 2021 regular meeting. Brad Richmond seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

3. Action Items

a. Radio Surplus Disposal

Bob Schwent stated SREC received a request from Spokane County Detention Services for radios to provide their nurses. Bob stated he would like to use some of the surplus radios SREC would normally send to auction. Additionally, SREC will be donating the radios only and not providing any technical support for them aside from the initial programming. Ozzie Knezovich motioned to approve donating the surplus radios to detention services. Howard Johnson seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried. Lori Markham added this is a similar process to when we donated surplus radios to neighboring fire services to help maintain interoperability.

b. CCB Remodel Electrical Work

Lori Markham explained the bids were included in the Board packet along with a recommendation letter from SREC IT. The remodel process is underway and the old consoles have been taken out and electrical work will need to begin next week. Two bids

were received providing the same level of service and the recommendation is to accept the lower bid from Mountain States Electrical Contractors, they are also a local company. Brad Richmond motioned to accept the bid from Mountain States Electrical Contractors for \$62,000. Bryan Collins seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

4. New Business

a. CAD System

Lori Markham explained the Strategic Plan included purchasing a new CAD system that would fit the needs for both Law and Fire agencies. The current Tyler CAD system has had many issues throughout the last five years, especially during updates. Lori stated it was the desire of the CAD Core Team to reevaluate the initial process used when Tyler was purchased and focus now on a system that works for Law and Fire agencies that SREC will manage, and utilize an outside records system, possibly AXON records, that the law enforcement agencies will manage. The strategic plan outlines a timeline to have a new CAD system in place by 4th quarter of 2023, which means the process needs to begin sooner rather than later. During the Core meeting this week there was consensus to move forward and Lori will begin looking at a company that helps agencies select CAD systems based on their business needs. Bryan Collins clarified, the ultimate goal is to have a system both Law and Fire can be on and the law enforcement records system would be separate, utilizing an interface piece to the CAD system. Bryan emphasized the interface would be a key piece and it is a good idea to get started now as with new technology emerging it will be a long process to look at the various systems available. Howard Johnson supports moving forward and reiterated the ultimate goal of having Law and Fire on the same system that works well for both. Dave Ellis reinforced the frustration the Core Team has had with Tyler and stated law enforcement is looking close at AXON records, for the records management system.

Ozzie Knezovich stated he would like to look at the feasibility of pursuing legal action against Tyler for their inability to perform. Lori stated the contract with Tyler is held by Spokane County and believes that conversation was taking place within Spokane County IT. Scott Simmons stated he was not aware of any conversations, but was aware of the level of frustration all the agencies have had with Tyler New World. Bryan stressed the importance of being realistic when it comes to the levels of customization across what different Fire and Law agencies will want versus what is doable. Brad Richmond suggested Lori speak with other agencies about their CAD systems and conduct site visits. Scott seconded Brad's recommendation.

b. Staffing Impacts

Kim Arredondo reiterated staffing in 911 is critical and gave an overview of the last year. SREC received 224 Communications Officer applications in 2021, 89 of those were either no shows or withdrew at some point in the testing process, 68 applicants failed the testing phase, 47 made it past the testing phase and into the interview phase with a handful failing the background process. Out of the initial 224 applications only 16 made it through the entire process and were hired. SREC has increased the number of recruitment platforms to roughly 12 different platforms since mid-November and has seen an increase in applications over these last couple months and will continue the recruitment push through Spring.

Kim explained staffing impacts and the union contract affected the turnaround time for report call backs during the months of November and December. The LCAB user group was updated at their last meeting that priority reports were being accomplished without delay but routine callbacks were taking between 5-7 days to complete during the Holidays. The new union contract has been restructured to allow Report Technicians to work on Holidays. Additionally, the two new report technician positions that were

approved is being advertised and should be filled by the end of February. Two current 911 employees will be transitioning to report technicians and working a hybrid schedule and a current trainee has been assigned to report writing fulltime. Kim explained that with these changes the turnaround time has decreased and this situation should not occur again. Dave Ellis reiterated it is not okay to have such a delay in report writing and asked if implementing a hiring bonus might help in recruiting. Lori Markham explained there are similar programs in place, including a retention bonus and a referred bonus for employees, that includes a bonus for the new hire. Lori added she has found the best referrals come from current employees who already understand the skills needed for the job and the complicated testing and background process. Since implementing the bonuses there has been an increase in employee referrals. Additionally, those that have applied not being referred by an employee, seem to lose interest in the job when they discover exactly what the job and hiring process entails.

Lori added that over the last year SREC has lost employees that were not expected to leave, which was a main reason for including a retention bonus in the union contract negotiations. Lori explained SREC is looking at all the various ways to help mitigated the staffing shortage, get new hires through the door, and get them to stay. Bryan Collins stated he believes SREC is on the right track and supports a sign-on bonus in addition to what is already being offered based on the current budget situation. At the end of the day service levels must be maintained. Brad Richmond concurred with bonuses and suggested if the internal referrals are successful to weigh the incentives more heavily there than outside incentives.

5. Old Business

Ozzie Knezovich asked Lori to update the Board on the new facility for SREC. Lori Markham explained she has a phone call with ADCOMM later today. In December ADCOMM sent a representative to meet with SREC leadership and discuss the needs and wants for the new facility. Lori is hoping to get the report back from ADCOMM today and be able to present to the Board at next month's meeting.

6. Staff Reports

a. Operations

Kim Arredondo stated the remodel project is underway. Law dispatch personnel are now working out of the BUC and Fire dispatch will join them next week, and they will be there until the end of February. A new academy of three new hires started on January 4th and the process has started for another academy to begin February 22nd. Law Dispatch is still understaffed and cross-training and movement will be on hold until at least summer until 911 staffing has improved. SREC is hopeful that with Law and Fire dispatchers collocated, there will be some cross-training happening organically as they hear each other's radio traffic and observing their positions and processes.

Kim stated that Lori had sent out an email regarding T-Comm's outage. They were down for two hours in which time SREC was taking their calls, there were 96 of their calls in addition to SREC's 252 calls within that time period. The outage was unexpected and not a planned outage. The State ESInet is set up so that SREC is the last answering point for the State. Kim is in conversations with the State as to why it seems to be occurring more frequently.

b. Technical

Bob Schwent stated the radio shop and IT have been focused on making sure the BUC was ready for dispatch to move there during the CCB remodel. There have been no changes to the code plugs for Fire this year, but there were some changes left from last year. Testing has been completed on Bluetooth capability and masks.

c. Finance

Tim Henry stated finance is busy closing out 2021, still in the opening period, and transacting those expenses back to 2021. The team is busy preparing the year-end budget to actuals and will have those reports for the Finance Committee and Board next month. Filing with the State Auditor's Office is due in May.

d. Human Resources

Jeff Tower explained contracts have been negotiated with both union group officials and will take them to their members for a vote and will hopefully be passed by next week. The contracts included a retention bonus, one bonus once the contracts are signed and then another for those employees who stay through October.

e. Administration

No further updates.

Ozzie Knezovich asked if there were any updates regarding HB1155. Scott Simmons stated a meeting is scheduled with the City of Spokane for January 26th, which will be the initial conversation to discuss the City's ability to apportion the 1/10th tax.

Ozzie asked Dave Ellis if there were any updates with the City of Spokane's request to encrypt radio channels. Dave stated he believed the City still desired to move forward and that Bob Schwent had done a good job explaining the impact to SREC's staff workload. Encryption would require the SREC staff to touch every City radio, roughly 300 man hours just for the City and then again for all the other radios on the system, requiring additional man hours. Dave's concern is that until all the radios have been touched there will most likely be issues with switching to channels that have already been encrypted. Dave asked if this were to move forward would the requesting agency be billed, or would SREC absorb that cost and disperse across the agencies. Lori explained that would be determined by what is decided with HB1155. SREC has created a rough idea of what the bill would like for the City if moving forward with the encryption project. Dave stated the importance of this conversation being included in the HB1155 conversations. Additionally, it is important to relay that a decision the City of Spokane wants to make about encryption has an impact on the other 4000 radios throughout the County and should also be included in the billing hours. Ozzie reiterated the system was designed to move to encrypted channels when the need arises, and this is merely a training issue. Ozzie does not support the City's request and the Sheriff's office has no intention of moving forward. The system was designed for interoperability and this decision would hurt interoperability to some extent. Ozzie added he will have an additional discussion with Chief Craig Meidl, but if the City decides to move forward then any man hours attributed to the encryption project should be billed to the City, entirely.

7. Open/Public Comment

No open/public comment.

8. Closed Meeting to Discuss Matters with Legal Counsel Related to Potential Litigation

As allowed by RCW 42.30.110 (1)(i)

No closed meeting.

Closed Meeting to Discuss Matters Related to Collective Bargaining

As allowed by RCW 42.30.140 (4)(a)

No closed meeting.

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:22 a.m.

The next Regular Governing Board meeting is scheduled for February 17, 2022 at 7:30 a.m.

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