

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

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

Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. The following Board members were in attendance:

Board Members

Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich – Spokane County Sheriff's Office (Chair)  
Chief Cody Rohrbach – Spokane County Fire District 3 (Vice Chair)  
Chief Brad Richmond – Airway Heights Police Department  
Chief Frank Soto, Jr. – Spokane Valley Fire Department  
Chief Dave Ellis – Spokane Valley Police Department  
Assistant Chief Howard Johnson – Spokane County Fire District 4  
Scott Simmons – Spokane County  
Gayne Sears – Citizen Representative

Staff

Lori Markham, Executive Director  
Kim Arredondo, Deputy Director  
Jeff Tower, Human Resources Manager  
Tim Henry, Finance Manager  
Brad Kane, Dispatch Operations Manager  
Heather Thompson, 911 Operations Manager  
Cherell Yates, Office Manager  
Kelly Conley, Communication and Media Manager  
Jenni Folden, Finance Analyst  
Megan Schneider, HR Analyst  
Trish Weitz, CO

Auxiliary Partners / Guests

Jeff Galloway, WBM  
Chief Brian Schaeffer, SFD  
Chief Lonnie Rash, SCFD 8  
Assistant Chief Tom Williams, SFD  
Dusty Patrick, SFD

**2. Consent Agenda**

Howard Johnson motioned to approve the minutes from the September 15, 2022 regular meeting. Scott Simmons seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

**3. New Business**

a. Transition Update

Lori Markham reminded the Board an email was sent out last week outlining preparations for the transition which will now take place at 1800 on October 31, 2022. SREC is working with the Spokane Fire Department (SFD) to get updated policies and procedures and training SREC dispatchers. SREC is working with the Spokane Police Department (SPD) to create a soft landing as they begin triaging their calls at 1800 on October 31, 2022 through the end of the year. On January 1, 2023 SPD will be fully triaging their own calls as a secondary PSAP. Some of those soft-landing procedures include warm transfers on priority one calls. SREC will continue to work with SPD on other procedures to help not burden staff and ease the transition for SPD staff. The struggle remains as both agencies are short staffed and though the workload is a trade-

off between SPD and SFD; there are more SPD calls received, but SFD calls generally take longer to process. There are additional procedures that need to be established, but SFD and SPD need to come to an agreement on how SREC will handle some calls; there is a meeting being scheduled for next week with SREC, SPD and SFD.

Ozzie Knezovich asked at what point the City of Spokane will have representation on the SREC Governing Board. Lori explained it will not be until January when there is a Service Level Agreement (SLA) in place. Currently SREC's legal counsel has been working with the City of Spokane on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for SREC's services for November and December which includes fees at the user member rate. Lori added the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) was to have two City representatives on the SREC Board; the City Administrator, as a decision maker, and the Fire Chief. Spokane City Council would like the positions to include someone appointed by the Mayor, most likely the Fire Chief, and a position appointed by City Council, most likely the CFO as there are no elected officials on the SREC Board, except the Sheriff. Lori explained this is a decision for the Board to discuss. Lori added she met with the BoCC on Monday and one thing she stressed to them was how much she appreciates the SREC Governing Board and is grateful for the public safety focus of the Board. Scott Simmons reminded the group it is ultimately up to the BoCC to update the charter and bylaws of SREC to add more positions and determine who makes up those positions. Scott recommended that the SREC Board make a resolution or motion making a recommendation to the BoCC. Scott reminded the group that in the past the positions were the Public Safety Chiefs and City Administrator. Ozzie explained there needs to be a decision maker on the Board, which the City CFO is not. Additionally, the Council has representation on the Board via the City Administrator and the City Administrator has the authority to make decisions. Scott clarified the SREC Board is set by the BoCC and does not state that there is to be Mayoral or Council appointed members in the Charter or bylaws. Scott added the SREC Board is a Public Safety Dominated Board intentionally, with a few key financial and operational members to provide specific insights, but it is a Public Safety Board, made up of Public Safety experts.

b. Q3 Budget Report

Cody Rohrbach presented the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter budget report. Overall revenues are consistent with the growth we have seen and up about 10% over last year. Overall expenses are slightly under budget this is due to higher vacancy rate than anticipated and timing due to capital expenditures. The year to date actual will result in a net of roughly \$2M at the end of the year. Lori Markham added the Board will need to take action on what to do with the \$2M. There are a few options; there are a couple large capital projects coming up over the next five to seven years the money can be reserved, or put toward user fees. Cody stated with SFD joining, the fire agencies will see significant savings on user fees, but with the capital projects coming up funds will run short, and he would rather not take the savings now instead of having to pay more later. Ozzie Knezovich agreed with Cody that the funds should be applied to the capital projects.

c. 2023 Draft Budget

Scott Simmons thanked the finance team for their work in preparing the budget, breaking it down for the Finance Committee and prepping him for the presentation. Lori reminded the Board this version is the same as presented last month, with changes to include SFD. Scott explained the first item addresses five additional full-time positions (FTEs), which include an additional Public Records Specialist and four Communication Officers for the Fire services, bringing the FTEs from 139 to 144. Next, the revenues are presented to show the 2022 budgeted amounts, the projections for the end of 2022, and the proposed 2023 budgeted amounts. Inter-governmental sales tax is the 1/10<sup>th</sup> that

comes through the County, this tax continues to see growth. There is a large decrease in 2023 due to the anticipation of the 1/10<sup>th</sup> apportionment to the City of Spokane in accordance with HB1155. Scott clarified the 1/10<sup>th</sup> funds and user fees are two separate buckets and therefore SFD joining SREC does not change that. Lori added the 1/10<sup>th</sup> pays for radios and Crime Check services, the City will take their apportionment, but SPD and SFD still need crime check and their radios and SREC will charge them for those services. Legal Counsel has clarified the apportionment is a negotiation between the City of Spokane and Spokane County, not SREC. SREC will provide a bill for the services to the City of Spokane. Ozzie Knezovich reiterated the 1/10<sup>th</sup> is for the totality of the infrastructure and that is how the bill was written and presented to the citizens. Scott clarified the County is still in negotiations with the City on HB1155 and drafting an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) to include and call out the responsibilities of the City to spend the dollars in accordance with the RCW that allows for the 1/10<sup>th</sup> sales tax as well as spend the dollars in accordance with Proposition 1, which was passed by the voters. Scott clarified the estimated apportionment to the City is roughly 45%. SREC has prepared a detailed billing methodology to provide an invoice to the City of Spokane which dates back to July 2021, as allowed by HB1155. Scott added the County is drafting the ILA based on a prospective basis.

The intergovernmental excise tax is the 911 tax and is showing an increase from the budgeted amount. The projected user fees are to remain the same and there will be more discussion on that later. The investment projected amount is lower than originally budgeted due to lowering interest rates at the end of 2021, after the 2022 budget was already set. Overall operating revenue reflects the change in apportionment and sales tax growth. There was a fund balance use for this year and projected fund balances to use in 2023 towards the CAD project which was already designated by the Board.

Scott explained the 2023 expenses reflect a 7% increase in salary and benefits, which include; contractual increases in the bargaining unit contracts and cost of living increase for non-represented employees, proposed salary adjustments, additional FTEs, increase in benefits cost, proposed realignment of Communication Officers, and a 5% vacancy rate that has not been built in before. Supplies and services includes a proposed decrease of 6% due to a decrease cost for shared CAD services and increase in training and travel expenditures. Capital outlays are proposed with a 37% increase, primarily due to increased expenses for a new CAD system and increased expenses being put towards a new facility. Scott continued, the reserve and fund balance expenses reflects a projected \$2M surplus. The six-year capital improvement plan includes 2023 spending from the capital project reserve balances. The six-year plan is a good way to see the projects and funds as fluctuation occurs due to timing and other factors. The facility project has \$14M set aside with the largest costs being in 2025 as construction is projected to begin and wrapping up in 2027.

Scott stated the member agency statistics are based on the number of member agency incidents recorded from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. Dave Ellis asked why SREC is projecting a decrease in incidents for the Sheriff's Office in 2023. Lori Markham explained the numbers for 2023 are not a projection, but based on the actual number of incidents from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 and the same methodology was applied for 2022 numbers which were based on the actual number of incidents from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2022. The statistics also include the addition of SFD incidents. Scott reminded the Board there is a recommendation to keep the user fees flat. The addition of SFD results in a significant decrease in user fees for the member fire agencies. Scott also confirmed with Brian Schaeffer that SFD will see a decrease in dispatching expenses joining SREC vs. on their own. Lori reiterated SREC is proposing four additional Communication Officers with SFD joining and reevaluate staffing needs at a later date.

Brian stated there is definitely a financial benefit for the City of Spokane in joining SREC, but the more profound piece is getting the region into a consolidated system. Lori explained the Finance Committee realizes it is a significant savings for the fire agencies now, and discussed what the better options are; take the savings now and be asked to pay more later as the capital projects come to fruition, keep user fees the same and dedicate the funds to the capital projects, or something in between. Ozzie recommended the topic be brought back to the fire agencies and make a determination as a group. Howard Johnson agreed with Ozzie and will have the fire agencies take back to their communities and Commissions. Scott added it is difficult to see a true picture without SPD joining now and seeing what impact that may have on law agency user fees and the totality of user fees. Scott reiterated the importance of being able to look ahead multiple years at capital and ongoing costs for the next three to five years for budgeting purposes. Ozzie stated even if SPD were to join and there was a decrease in user fees for the Sheriff's Office, he would recommend leaving the fees the same and putting the surplus toward capital reserves. Lori stated hopefully the fire agencies will have a recommendation by next month when the Finance Committee meets and then a final budget can be presented to the SREC Board for action at the November 17<sup>th</sup> meeting. Cody reiterated the importance of managing expectations regardless of what decision is made. Cody summarized the action needed at the November meeting is the budget, direction of user fees, and the \$2M in reserve balance.

d. Technical Services Director

Lori Markham introduced Dusty Patrick as the new Technical Services Director for SERC. Dusty comes from the City of Spokane, Fire and Police Department where he has worked for many years. Dusty stated he has had the honor to work with most of the people present over the course of his career and is excited about the new opportunity with the new CAD system and upcoming technology projects.

**4. Old Business**

a. New Facility Update

Lori Markham stated she had a chance to meet with Dave Ellis and discuss the progress of the Sheriff's facility. Lori stated she brought the initial conversation to the BoCC on Monday and there will be more discussions to come. Lori is hoping to meet with Dave, the contractor and architecture the next time they are on site, to discuss SREC's needs based on the ADCOMM study and what that might look like. Scott Simmons explained each year the BoCC sets a State Legislative agenda, and in advance of that other groups around the community put together their priority lists and one group was GSI (Greater Spokane, Inc.) that asked what are some of the jurisdictions wanting to see on GSI's priority list. The BoCC provided a list of items and included a \$3M ask for SREC's new facility. Scott will update the Board as he knows more. These are community focused investments.

b. HB1155 Update

Scott Simmons stated there is a meeting scheduled with the City in a couple weeks and will keep the Board updated. Howard Johnson asked about the October 25<sup>th</sup> deadline. Scott clarified the October 25<sup>th</sup> deadline is so that if no progress has been made, either party may take legal action. Since both parties are making progress and continue to move forward he does not anticipate either party taking that action. The County is drafting an ILA to present to the City this week.

c. CAD Update

Lori Markham stated SREC met with the National Public Safety Group (NPSG) yesterday and are wrapping up the final needs assessment documents. Lori would like to conduct a few demos with some of the vendors they saw at the WA APCO-NENA

conference, before the RFP goes out. Lori would like to have the RFP go out by December 1<sup>st</sup> and make a selection by mid-January, beginning of February 2023. Ozzie Knezovich asked how SREC is ensuring we do not end up in another Tyler New World situation. Lori explained in the assessment meetings with NPSG they have explained the frustrations and problems there have been and Lori believed everyone at those meetings was very upfront about what the frustrations are and nothing was left off the table. Those concerns are being written into the RFP as service level and upgrade level expectations and the vendor will be held to those levels. Ozzie added the other difference this time is it is being driven by public safety not politicians. Ozzie reminded the Board the public safety group cautioned against choosing Tyler New World, but they were chosen anyway. Ozzie stated he appreciates that no politicians are involved in this decision. Lori explained the NPSG has a wealth of experience and experienced backgrounds not just on the vendor side, but as dispatchers, and they are asking great questions and looking for things we didn't think to consider in the first place. Howard Johnson agreed with Lori and stated he has been impressed with the NPSG's thoroughness and information gathering. Dusty Patrick echoed Howard's comment and stated that he was a part of the selection process ten years ago and is encouraged by the process and engagement levels from the user groups this time around.

## **5. Staff Reports**

### **a. Operations**

Heather Thompson presented a power point presentation on SREC staffing levels. There are 105 budgeted FTE positions for operations, 70 of those positions are filled and working on the floor, 10 are in training and 25 positions are vacant which is roughly 24%. There is an academy slated for late November, 5 applicants have been forwarded to the background phase as of yesterday. Heather continued with explaining staffing within the individual disciplines. Fire, has 9 out of 10 dispatch positions filled and 3 out of 4 supervisor positions filled. There is one extra-help supervisor working. The fire supervisors have begun gathering and creating training materials for the upcoming transition and have done a great job. Once that training and transition has been completed staffing will be re-evaluated. Law, has 15 budgeted dispatchers, 6 of which are open. One trainee has recently signed off and is filling a shift. Another trainee is working a hybrid shift between law and 911 and a third trainee is going back to 911 and will hopefully be back in law in a couple months. There are 4 budgeted law supervisors, 3 filled and one in training. Dave Ellis reiterated these staffing levels are not sustainable for SREC and asked that SREC come back with what a lateral dispatch program would look like. Ozzie Knezovich stated the Sheriff's Department, by January 2023 will have filled every vacancy they had, including the 27 new positions they received in 2022; it has been the best lateral year for the Sheriff's Department. Heather continued, in 911 there are 54 budgeted communication officers, with 8 in training, and 13 open which is about 61% on the floor. Two trainees are expected to transition to the floor in the next couple weeks and 3 hopefully transitioning by the end of November. There are 8 budgeted 911 supervisors, 62% filled and one extra help supervisor. There are 9 out of 10 report technician positions filled, the open one is designated as an internal applicant, so as soon as staffing is better with the communication officers we will fill that position. The operations team had multiple meetings with staff over the last week to discuss the upcoming transition on October 31<sup>st</sup>. Heather stated the communication was very valuable and great questions were being asked. Lori added that due to the current staffing levels the supervisor positions are not being filled at this time. After the transition, we will better understand the impact on workload.

b. Technical

Lori Markham stated IT staff is working with SPD to get the phone system ready for the transition. Two RFP's were done for the installation of the helicopter radios and only one response was received, so a sole source was completed and installation should begin soon.

c. Finance

Tim Henry stated there is one more item to be uploaded for the State Audit. Once they receive that they will work towards a report date and then schedule an exit interview. Tim explained there may be a few management items which are expected, but otherwise everything looks good. Lori thanked the finance team for their hard work.

d. Human Resources

Jeff Tower reiterated the focus is on hiring and getting applicants through the background process in a timely manner. HR is meeting with Alliant, SREC's insurance broker, this afternoon to get benefits costs for 2023. Open Enrollment will begin the second week of November.

e. Administration

Lori explained that work on the MOU between SREC and the City of Spokane for fire dispatch services for November and December is complete and will get that out for signatures. The City will be charged as if they were members and an SLA is being drafted for services going forward.

Lori stated the Sheriff is retiring and the SREC Board will need to nominate a new Chair. Action will be need to be taken at next months meeting.

Lori reiterated that she and Kim Arredondo gave an update to the BoCC on Monday which went well, it was also an opportunity to address any questions they had. Scott Simmons stated Lori updated the BoCC on the upcoming transition with the City and the positives of what SREC's impact on the community has been, and the positive feedback from the State Audit. It was a good reminder for the BoCC and the public that SREC is subject to the State Auditor's audits and applicable RCW's. Scott reiterated the importance of sharing the positive operational matrixes of SREC. Lori added that Kelly Conley created a one-sheet of some of those positives which she will send to the Board.

**6. Open/Public Comment**

Ozzie Knezovich stated he has a conference in November and a trial in December, so this may be his last meeting. Ozzie stated we have come light years since 2006 when the 1/10<sup>th</sup> was first passed and everyone should be proud of what has been accomplished.

In regard to recruiting, Ozzie added that with each of the Sheriff Department's recruits he asks why they chose this department, and the number one answer is, 'you treat everyone like family.' Ozzie stated maybe it's time SREC ask what its reputation is and make any necessary adjustments to attract and retain employees. Ozzie added he is very proud of everyone in the room, he has seen a lot of Chiefs come and go, and is excited to see where the Board takes the next generation. Cody Rohrbach thanked Ozzie for his hard work, service and leadership, including work on the 1/10<sup>th</sup> and the JPSL. Howard Johnson echoed Cody's comments and thanked Ozzie for being willing to say publicly what needed to be said and take the hard hits.

**7. 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.

**8. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 a.m.

The next Regular Governing Board meeting is scheduled for December 15, 2022 at 7:30 a.m.



Board Member  
Governing Board



Board Member  
Governing Board