

Regular Meeting Minutes
Spokane Regional Emergency Communications Governing Board
June 15, 2023

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chief Cody Rohrbach called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. The following Board members were in attendance:

Board Members

Chief Cody Rohrbach (Chair) – Spokane County Fire District 3
Chief Brad Richmond (Vice Chair) – Airway Heights Police Department
Undersheriff Michael Kittilstved – Spokane County Sheriff's Office
Assistant Chief Sean Walter – Spokane Valley Police Department
Chief Frank Soto, Jr. – Spokane Valley Fire 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
Dusty Patrick, Technical Services Director
Brad Kane, Dispatch Operations Manager
Heather Thompson, 911 Operations Manager
Kelly Conley, Media and Communication Manager
Brandon Childs, Technical Project Manager
Jenni Folden, Finance Analyst
Megan Schneider, HR Analyst

Auxiliary Partners/Guests

Ariane Schmidt, Broadlinc Spokane County
Ben Ealey, New J
John Bauman, New J
Major Eric Olsen, SPD
Morgan Koudelka, Spokane Valley
Erik Lamb, Spokane Valley
Brian Werst, WBM
SCFD 9

2. Consent Agenda

Lori Markham stated the minutes were amended to correct the spelling of Johnnie Perkins' first name. Brad Richmond motioned to approve the amended minutes from the May 18, 2023, regular meeting. Scott Simmons seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

3. New Business

a. Coe Tower Access

Cody Rohrbach introduced Ariane Schmidt to discuss a pilot project for broadband in Spokane County. Ariane Schmidt explained Broadlinc was formed in December 2022 and modeled after SREC, as a Public Development Authority (PDA) servicing all of Spokane County for Broadband, focused on open access infrastructure. There are enormous funding sources coming to communities to connect unserved and underserved populations in rural areas. The County Commissioners want to ensure public funds are retained in public assets and that this public funding does not go to one

private company, but shared throughout the County, i.e., infrastructure, roads. Ariane explained the concept of digital equity as the public works side, the fiber and towers, and the connectivity, people side; do they have the disposal income for the services, the devices that are needed, or the digital literacy to do it wisely and these two missions are why Broadline was formed. The Washington State Broadband office asked Spokane County to vet a pilot program for a new type of hybrid technology in the wireless space. Broadband is not always infrastructure; it just means high capacity wireless. There are a number of funding streams coming in and there is a small piece of land in Spokane County Fire District 3 that does not have high capacity wireless, meaning schools on snow days don't have the option for remote learning, telehealth to the home, etc. This pilot program uses semi-fixed wireless assets to bring in high capacity wireless now, while the long-term infrastructure is being put into place. The capital and that equipment will be owned by the PDA and moved to the next area where there is a gap in services while infrastructure is put in place there. Ariane stated Ben Ealey from New J will talk about the technology. Ariane explained the pilot is being funded now and there will be a baseline period this summer and the data interactions between households, Fire District 3 locations, school districts and businesses is queued up to start early this Fall and run through June, then a summary report, after which coverage will continue in a more traditional matter. Cody Rohrbach reiterated this would be publicly owned infrastructure. Cody added SCFD 3 would benefit from this program, so if there is a vote by the Board he will not be participating.

Ben Ealey explained he as well as the core group from New J have over 30 years in the wireless industry working in the major network operators. Their goal is to take the experiences and best practices from these major operators and find a way to solve the problem differently; how to deliver services that are meaningful to both the people that need them, but also to those that provide the service. New J has proposed utilizing the same methodology that was used to build out the network so quickly in the cellular world. Utilizing these semi-fixed assets of towers and get service up and people connected, and in parallel build the permanent infrastructure. Once complete, the semi-fixed assets will be moved to the next location needing coverage. Ben asked, through the transition from analogue to 5G, what can best help with the vision and the goals of the County, i.e., mental health, public safety, etc. and why is there a digital desert. From the business side there is tremendous cost, time, lease, etc., for these providers and not financially stable if they can't even make their money back, results in barriers to entry. These semi-fixed structures are a lot less money than a traditional tower, they set up in a day or less, can be a permanent infrastructure or moved if needed and built to withstand harsh environments. New J has conducted real world testing for these assets.

Ben explained he also has background and experience in public safety, modernizing a public safety system and realizes the importance of getting the right information every time and getting that connectivity now to provide that level of service and safety. Next step, what to do with that network; connect data to vehicles, medical software to the home, etc. This is not new technology just new application to this arena. Ben presented a map showing the project area. Ariane explained Pullman School District and Whitman County have already been funded and are using New J, which is part of the criteria from the State to show two independently funded counties can leverage coverage, and that geopolitical boundaries will need to be addressed as these funding sources come in. The identified sites within the project area are utilizing their proprietary tower locations, but there is a site, Coe Road Tower, that they would like access to in order to extend the network, which is the ask of the SREC Board. Scott Simmons stated that the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) is supportive of the project and are the ones who received the grant from the State Broadband Office. Scott explained this is a two-touch process; SREC needs to be comfortable with the compatibility and confident that it would

not disrupt or interfere with emergency communications, if SREC signs off then it will need to go back to the BoCC for approval as the County owns the towers. Lori Markham explained SREC already has a policy and process in place for granting access to tower locations and asked that those steps be completed and submitted to SREC first. Lori added in general, SREC is always looking to help and better the community but want to ensure public safety is not hindered. Cody explained that, as he understands it, based on project design, studies and engineering, the Coe Tower site would serve as the ideal site for the Broadband initiative. Ben explained it serves two purposes; bring the high-speed connection to the Fire Stations, but also to feed the radio sites. The coverage footprint for South County is quite good, but there are other areas with very little coverage which affects the ability of public safety to communicate out in the field. Cody referred back to the Williams Lake Fire in 2022 where first responders were utilizing residential data to get real time updates for mapping, third party software updates, getting information back to dispatch, etc. Being in a disconnected environment limits first responders' effectiveness. Ariane stated she gave a briefing before the State Emergency Management Council and they were very interested as this can also be prioritized for mobilization teams, getting real time data, fuel mitigations, mapping, etc. Ariane summarized the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) created a national fabric (point layer) on what a serviceable broadband location is. The FCC asked the States to challenge that, to find out if something was missed. Washington discovered in most counties; they lacked the capacity to determine this. There is no baseline, the Counties that did have the capacity to complete the study realized they could use the 911 system that everyone has in place to create a map, submitting over 100,000 points that were missed. This resulted in over 70,000 of those points being approved by the FCC, increasing viability but also moving Washington State up 3% points on the funding scale, going from around \$900M to \$1.4B.

Cody summarized next steps are to follow SREC policy and complete the application process, to understand any potential impact to the SREC network. Dusty Patrick added the application process and needed study will be at the cost of the requester, but additionally the issue of having a private entity having access to and on the network will have to be addressed, as SREC's main priority is public safety. Brad Richmond supported moving forward with the application process and bring back to the Board for final decision. Brad reiterated the importance of public safety but also having the opportunity to serve the underserved areas of the community. Scott agreed with Brad and stated SREC has a policy in place to evaluate this and this could help meet the needs of the community through public safety and support broadband in the rural areas. Howard Johnson concurred and stated he is very supportive of the project.

b. Building Committee

Lori Markham explained SREC is looking to begin the new building process and would like to form a building committee that consists of Board members or Board recommendations. The time and dates of the committee will be determined once the committee is established. Lori added that her and her team conducted a CAD site visit to South Sound 911 last week. South Sound completed their new facility a couple years ago and there were many smart and creative ideas that were used to truly create a state-of-the-art facility and a place employees are excited to come to. Lori stated she is excited to start this process and create a facility to better serve our community and employees. Scott Simmons explained this has been discussed at the Finance Committee meetings that a different skill set will be needed for this project and the building committee will need to be comprised of individuals with experience and expertise in this matter and this will be a unique challenge and opportunity as SREC is not in the business of building facilities, but of operating high quality public service for the community. Frank Soto explained through the process of building their new facilities,

he recommends hiring a project management committee, and the Board will need to decide if they want to go through the progressive design build process, which would include a proposal presented to the Public Resource Center (PRC) in Seattle and approved by the State. Frank added that Lori and her team need to provide operational input and what is important to the staff as they are the ones working and operating in the facility each day. Scott added the County has two projects that have been approved by the PRC and there may be a possibility of having those teams come alongside and assist SREC. Brian Werst stated he has clients who have also been through the PRC process and is happy to help on the legal side. Lori added that Dave Ellis emailed her that he would like to be on the building committee. Frank explained he is happy to help where he can but cannot commit to the building committee; Lori stated she will notify him of the dates and time of the meetings and any that he is able to participate in is greatly appreciated. Lori added that it does not have to be a Board member on the committee, but if you know of anyone in your agency with the knowledge or expertise, please let Lori know.

4. Old Business

a. Kalispel Update

Lori Markham explained that instead of going into a separate Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Kalispel, the Kalispel EMS Department will go under Spokane County Fire District 10 and become part of the SCFD10 SLA. Cody Rohrbach explained this is modeled after how it was previously done under Airway Heights.

b. Cheney Update

Lori Markham explained the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) and SLA were sent to Cheney for review and they were informed that if they wanted to be a member for 2024 the signed SLA would need to be signed by June 30, 2023, per SREC policy.

c. New Facility Update

Lori Markham had no further update.

b. HB1155 Update

Scott Simmons explained he has had discussions with City Administrator Johnnie Perkins and at this time there is no action for the SREC Board, the City and County need to enter into an ILA, even if operations remain status quo, that follows the State statute.

c. CAD Update

Brandon Childs explained Infor, Hexagon and CentralSquare conducted onsite visits last month. The CAD team has conducted two site visits, one to Seattle (South Sound and Kitsap 911) and one to Denver (Jeff Com and El Paso Centers); the team will be traveling to Florida in July for their final site visits. Lori added the selection committee will most likely begin mid-August. Cody Rohrbach reminded the Board that SREC is looking for input from all the user agencies, so please forward suggestions, questions, etc., to Lori and her team.

5. Staff Reports

a. Operations

Kim Arredondo stated the hands to chest times have gone up, this happened about the same time last year and is expected when there is an influx of large classes. Kim added those times are expected to decrease once these trainees have a little more training and time on the floor, probably the end of September. The group of trainees that were in the classroom are now on the floor, the group currently in the classroom should be on the floor late July on their own and a new academy began on the 6th, so a lot of trainees and kudos to the training officers for all their hard work and time. There are two trainees in

Fire who have training oversight boards next week and should be filling shifts within the next couple of weeks. One trainee in Law will be entering probationary status and should be filling a shift next week and there is still a trainee in Law. Kim explained the training method in Law will be changing from having two trainees at a time to having one trainee come in every six to eight weeks.

The dispatch call statistics will be modified going forward to compare the last years calls to current. There has been a significant increase in dispatchable incidents this month compared to last months. There is an academy slated for August and will hopefully be another class of eight. There are a hundred applicants that will be going through Critical testing this week and over four hundred applications have been received through Indeed. Mike Kittilstved asked how many dispatchers are in place for Law and Fire and how many vacancies there are. Kim stated there are six vacancies in Law and two in Fire, and there are fifteen positions for Law and fourteen for Fire. Currently trainees are funneled from 911 into Law due to staffing, otherwise it will be a round robin scenario. Lori added one of the problems is there aren't enough Law dispatchers to train the number of employees that want to move over. Mike asked if it is tracked when Law combines channels one and two due to staffing and what those plans are. Brad Kane explained that is done when there is limited staffing and one person needs to take a break, they will combine the channels so one person can cover all the traffic. This is not the ideal plan and this will improve as staffing does, and will improve as the newest trainee is signed off. This has not been tracked in the past but we can if that is the direction.

b. Technical

Dusty Patrick stated that IT personnel have been participating in the CAD site visits and bringing back great information to help prepare for the infrastructure need for the new CAD system, keeping the new facility in mind. The IT group is working on finalizing the incident response plan as well as establishing and cleaning up IT policies, including an internal tabletop exercise. The radio shop is continuing preventative maintenance at the tower sites and working with agencies on meeting in-building coverage requirements and not causing interference on the SREC system. The teams are also preparing for the addition of Kalispel and Cheney.

c. Finance

Jenni Folden stated 2023 is moving as expected and the budget process has begun for 2024. The 2nd quarter report will be presented at next month's Board meeting. Lori Markham added it is exciting to see that SREC is moving closer to the budgeted amount for salary and benefits.

d. Human Resources

Jeff Tower reiterated the HR team is busy with the new hires and testing for the next academy. Jeff has started early preparations for next year's union negotiations. Jeff explained he should have Consumer Price Index (CPI) data available to the Finance Committee and Board next month.

e. Administration

Lori Markham stated she is reviewing the Strategic Plan and possible asks in preparation for the 2024 budget. Lori explained operations was at the Backup Center (BUC) for a couple weeks as roof repairs were being done at the CCB. Lori added work has begun to update the Executive Conference room. Lori stated that as preparations begin for negotiations, she will be asking for committee members as outlined in the Charter and Bylaws. Additionally, Lori will be giving an update to the Board of County

Commissioners (BoCC) and asking for permission to purchase the property for the new facility.

6. Open/Public Comment

No open/public comment.

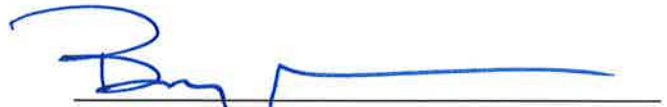
7. Adjourn

Adjourned at 9:06 a.m.

The next Regular Governing Board meeting is scheduled for July 20, 2023, at 8:00 a.m.



Board Member
Governing Board



Board Member
Governing Board