

Regular Meeting Minutes
Spokane Regional Emergency Communications Governing Board
September 17, 2020

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

Chief Bryan Collins called the meeting to order at 7:34 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)
Chief Brad Richmond – Airway Heights Police Department
Chief Dave Ellis – Spokane Valley Police Department

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
Patrick Erickson, Communication and Media Manager
Cherell Yates, Office Manager
Heather Wood, 911 Operations Manager
Megan Schneider, HR Analyst

Auxiliary Partners / Guests – via Zoom

Lt. Al Arnzen, Spokane Police Department
Laura McAloon, McAloon Law Offices
Ariane Schmidt, Spokane Regional Project Manager
Nadine Woodward, City of Spokane
Wes Crago, City of Spokane
Mike Ormsby, City of Spokane
Darin Morgan, Liberty Lake Police Department

2. Consent Agenda

Dave Ellis motioned to approve the minutes from the August 20, 2020 regular meeting. Brad Richmond seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

3. Action Items

a. Subscriber Radio Policies

Bob Schwent stated the subscriber policy was included in the Board packet. Bob explained there is an ongoing problem with radios being returned with missing parts, no batteries, etc., and not in the shape they were issued in. Additionally, there have been problems with users retiring or leaving and not returning the equipment, or users swapping radios. The subscriber policy helps to establish better practices and controls. Lori Markham explained the radios are an expensive part of the agency and a large risk and liability. Bryan Collins clarified, when the radio is being reassigned within the same unit, as long as SREC is notified of the transfer, then the physical equipment does not need to be brought back to SREC. Bob explained the equipment does not need to be brought back to SREC as long as they are notified of the transfer and it does not have to be switched from an encrypted radio to a non-encrypted radio. Lori stated this is the first draft provided to the Board for review, so it will be brought forward at the next Board meeting for action.

b. 1/10th Prioritization Policy

Lori Markham stated the policy was presented at the August Board meeting. She has received no feedback or concerns and is asking the Board to approve the prioritization policy. Bryan Collins explained the policy is consistent with the work done with BDS Consulting and setting the 1/10th priorities. Ozzie Knezovich motioned to approve the 1/10th Prioritization Policy. Dave Ellis seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

c. Fund Balance Reserves Policy

Tim Henry explained the policy was brought to the Board at the July Board meeting for review. The policy was developed by the Finance Committee; no feedback was received and Tim is asking the Board to approve the fund balance reserves policy. Bryan Collins stated the Finance Committee has been working on this for quite a while, the policy establishes three funds, is a very conservative approach and he is happy with the outcome. Dave Ellis motioned to approve the Fund Balance Reserves policy. Ozzie Knezovich seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

4. New Business

a. BDS – Adding Agencies to SREC

Bryan Collins stated with the formation of SREC, key policies were identified that needed to be established and put into place; including the cost allocation methodology allowing to build a budget, pay employees, bill subscribers, etc. The second piece, is a policy on how agencies would join SREC in the future and if agencies chose to left. The next step is to have BDS facilitate the Board through the best practices approach to onboarding and offboarding agencies with SREC. The end product would be a best practice policy and which clearly informs subscribers a head of time what to expect. The Board agreed to move forward with the process and engage BDS.

b. Strategic Positioning Plan

Lori Markham stated the initiatives from August of 2018, prior to SREC's go-live in July 2019, were included in the Board packet. The initiatives included a three to five-year consolidation plan. Lori explained many of those initiatives have been met and since consolidation has occurred, it is now time to create a strategic plan going forward. Lori talked with BDS about working with SREC to create a strategic plan for the next few years, moving forward as a new, existing agency. Lori asked the Board if there were any objections to move forward with BDS. Chief Collins stated he would support moving forward with BDS and advised Lori to provide BDS with the original plan from 2018 to be incorporated into the discussions. There were no objections from the Board.

c. City of Spokane – Mayor Woodward

Mayor Nadine Woodward thanked the Board for allowing her and City Administrator, Wes Crago to address them during this morning's meeting. She expressed her thanks for the extension of the ILA between SREC and the City of Spokane for continued assistance with Fire dispatching services through October 2020. The City Council unanimously ratified the ILA which she believes is a good sign moving forward and to finding a way to begin new discussions with the City and SREC; ultimately having the City join SREC. Nadine explained she is new to the conversation and recognizes the importance of a regional communications system, and that the City of Spokane being part of SREC will only strengthen that regional communications system. She appreciated the conversations she has had with the SREC Governing Board members and members of SREC. The conversations helped provide opportunities for her to have honest conversations with members of the City Council and provide everyone's perspective regarding SREC.

From the various conversations, there was a unanimous agreement that there is a path going forward to have the City of Spokane become a member of SREC. She asked the SREC Board if they would be willing to engage in new discussions with a facilitator, stated ground rules and a framework established; including not rehashing the past and not coming to the discussions with preconceived notions. She added the question has been raised on how progress would be measured, so that no ones' time is wasted. Nadine stressed she really thinks the City Council is interested in engaging in new conversations with SREC. Wes Crago explained that trying to look at it from the SREC Board's perspective and understanding these conversations will take time, he believes the Board would want to see SREC remain whole during the process, ensuring the City of Spokane is paying its fair share and alleviating any risk to the Board by extending or renewing the ILA during that time. He continued, there would need to be priority placed on ensuring SREC personnel are protected and in an environment where they are treated fairly and professionally. Wes added the City Administration has taken some interim steps to ensure their personnel are behaving professionally in the dispatch center and will continue to monitor that area. He stated the long-term goal and best thing for the region is one communications system. Nadine added she would not be asking the SREC Board to engage in new discussions if it were not for her relationship with the City Council and continued effort to foster those relationships to achieve successes as a City. Those successes so far include, the ratifying of the ILA, collaborating on Police reform, and Council deferred unanimously to fluorinate the City's water. She will rely on the relationship moving forward to get the City of Spokane to the table and move forward with discussions on the City of Spokane becoming a member of SREC.

Bryan Collins asked if there was a specific time line or ask of the Board to make a decision on, or is the ask to engage in discussions outside the discussions regarding the extension of the ILA. Wes stated the specific ask is for time. The Council does not want to be pressured and therefore does not know how long the discussions will take. He understands the SREC Board would want some measure to keep the conversations moving forward and making progress. Ozzie Knezovich stated the City Council has had almost two years to make a decision. He explained he gave up a large portion of his organization to SREC, Sheriff's Dispatch, in order to make a regional communications system; this is not about a single agency but a partnership. He stated he is willing to give City Council until February to make a decision. Nadine stated she understood that and there is a difference now with a new administration and new relationships. She understands the timeline and does not want to be at the table for an unlimited amount of time without getting anywhere. She asked the Board to allow her office to be the conduit between SREC and the City Council. Wes stated he has a list of questions from the Council, many of those questions can be answered internally, but will be reaching out to SREC directly for any answers they still need. Wes explained the administration would like the Council to get used to going through the administration for contacting outside agencies like SREC. Dave Ellis stated he appreciated the Mayor and Wes' position and reiterated we are stronger together. He supports the Sheriff's timeline with the caveat that SREC's employees are protected during that time. Laura McAloon stated the Board could discuss the topic during Executive session. Bryan Collins stated they would discuss during Executive session and possibly take action once open session resumed. Nadine and Wes thanked the Board for their time.

5. Old Business

a. Financial Sub-Committee Update

Tim Henry stated the Finance Committee met last week and the draft 2021 budget along with a narrative was included in the Board packet. This is the second look at the draft budget and includes the assumption of a 2% COLA. Lori Markham stated the assumption was made to extend the COLA across the entire agency, including those

employees who are not a part of the bargaining unit, and asked the Board if that was the direction they wanted SREC to take. Tim explained there was a decrease in resources. The sales tax revenue assumption was reduced to a decrease of 3% based on the latest information provided by the County. There was a slight increase in agency fees due to some personnel costs, originally it was a 4% decrease from 2021, now it is a 3% decrease. Part of the personnel costs includes a deferred compensation match that is part of the union negotiations. There are no changes to capital expenditures since the last draft. Two of the three reserve budgets are included in the 2021 budget. Those reserves are expected to come from the County in early 2021. There is a new line item which accounts for the last debt service payment to the County. The six-year CIP plan and radio plan timeline is also included in the proposed budget. No additional changes are anticipated and will ask the Board for approval at the next Board meeting. Lori stated the Fire Communications Advisory Board was provided with the user fees and it will also be brought to the Law Enforcement Operations Group at their next meeting.

b. Citizen Representative Update

Lori Markham explained a posting was created and advertised in the Spokesman Review for the next month. Lori encouraged everyone to pass the information on to those that might be interested. A subgroup will need to be created once the applications have been received to narrow down the top three or four, and then bring to the Board for a final decision. Lori stated the application process is on the SREC website and to direct any possible applicants there.

c. Priority Dispatch

Kim Arredondo stated as discussed at last month's meeting there were some technical issues at the beginning of EMD but those have mostly been resolved. There are still some interface issues that are being identified and worked through. The manual stats show 16 seconds in savings for response times versus the 15 seconds during the first week. Even one second gained is a win. Those seconds will increase as we get further along in the process and training. Kim explained a report is being designed so that the stats can be produced automatically instead of the long, tedious manual gathering of the statistics that has been done. Lori Markham added that they are in the stages of fine tuning, and discussions with employees to improve process and procedures. Lori anticipates as those things are clarified, that number will continue to improve. Bryan Collins encouraged Lori and Kim to reach out to 'like' centers and see their processes and look for best practices to bring back to SREC.

6. Staff Reports

a. Operations

Kim Arredondo stated operations continues to refine the EMD process. There are four new employees in 911, for a total of seven trainees. The applicant list continues to grow and there are actually not enough classes to keep up. Cross training is still on hold until staffing numbers are back up, there are employees interested when the opportunity becomes available. The Live911 that was presented to the Board last month is being brought to the Law Operations group at their meeting on September 29, 2020, along with the user fees.

b. Technical

Bob Schwent stated work continues on transitioning the radio shop completely off the County network and onto the SREC network. They are in the process of standing up SREC's own GIS process and server, which will allow SREC to provide the public safety GIS. The replacement microwave equipment has been received and is being installed. The replacement radios for the Geiger facility have been received and once those are added into the inventory they will be distributed. Bob explained they worked through

some changes requested by the City for the fire code plugs, but are holding off on making those changes until fire season is over.

c. Human Resources

Jeff Tower explained there will be no increase in any of the insurance benefit rates for 2021. Originally it was anticipated to be a 7% increase, but since SREC's loss ratio is good there will be no increase.

7. Open/Public Comment

No public comments.

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

As allowed by RCW 42.30.110 (1)(i)

Closed Meeting to Discuss Matters Related to Collective Bargaining

As allowed by RCW 42.30.140 (4)(a)

Lori Markham asked the two closed sessions be combined into one.

Moved to closed session at 8:18, estimated 30 minutes, will reconvene at 8:50 am.

At 8:47am the Board estimated 15 more minutes.

At 9:04 am the Board estimated 10 more minutes.

At 9:14 am the Board estimated 10 more minutes.

The regular meeting reconvened at 9:24 am.

Ozzie Knezovich motioned to approve extending services to the City of Spokane for Fire dispatch services until February 2021. There will need to be monthly reviews of the progress being made toward a resolution, including the relationship between SREC employees and the City of Spokane employees, as well as a two week out clause if SREC does not see any possible resolution or if employee relationships spiral out of control. Dave Ellis seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:26a.m.

The next Regular Governing Board meeting is scheduled for October 15, 2020 at 7:30 a.m.

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Chief Bryan Collins

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Board Member
Governing Board

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