

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

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

Chief Bryan Collins called the meeting to order at 7:32 a.m. The following Board members were in attendance:

Board Members – via Zoom

Chief Bryan Collins – Spokane Valley Fire Department (Chair)  
Ozzie Knezovich – Spokane County Sheriff's Office (Vice Chair)  
Randy Johnson – Spokane County Fire District 4  
Cody Rohrbach – Spokane County Fire District 3  
Chief Brad Richmond – Airway Heights Police Department  
Chief Dave Ellis – Spokane Valley Police Department  
Gerry Gemmill – 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  
Brad Kane, Dispatch Operations Manager  
Heather Wood, 911 Operations Manager  
Patrick Erickson, Communication and Media Manager  
Jon Adams, Training Manager  
Cherell Yates, Office Manager  
Megan Schneider, HR Analyst  
Jenni Folden, Finance Analyst

Auxiliary Partners / Guests – via Zoom

Howard Johnson, SCFD 4  
Laura McAloon, McAloon Law Offices  
Ariane Schmidt, Spokane Regional Project Manager  
Nadine Woodward, City of Spokane  
Brian Schaeffer, City of Spokane

**2. Consent Agenda**

Randy Johnson motioned to approve the minutes from the November 19, 2020 regular meeting. Brad Richmond seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

**3. Action Items**

a. CCC ILA

Lori Markham stated the ILA is for the occupation of the Combined Communications Building (CCB) and was signed by the City of Spokane and Spokane County earlier this week. The occupancy is calculated on a percentage basis with SREC using about 72% of the building space. Additionally, the City of Spokane and Spokane County occupy about 1% of space in the equipment room for IT purposes. The ILA is retroactive to July 1, 2019 equaling roughly \$323,000. The annual expense for 2021, for the building, will be around \$350,000 for which SREC will be responsible for 72% of that amount. Agencies in the building are responsible for their own improvements and anything over \$50,000 requires approval from the CCB site council; SREC has one vote, Spokane Fire and Spokane Police combined have one vote, and the City of Spokane and Spokane

County have one vote each. Gerry Gemmill motioned to approve the ILA. Dave Ellis seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

b. Asset Policy

Tim Henry explained there have been no changes since the last review of the policy. He reminded the Board it is a high-level policy that is accompanied with an asset management plan, including department level definitions. Randy Johnson motioned to approve the asset policy. Cody Rohrbach seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

c. Update Radio Request Policy

Bob Schwent explained clarifying language was added to the policy regarding the process for large or substantial equipment increase requests. A substantial increase is defined as anything greater than \$50,000. The agency making the request will need to make a presentation to the SREC Governing Board and follow budgetary timelines. Brad Richmond motioned to approve the updated policy. Cody Rohrbach seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

#### 4. **New Business**

a. Non-Represented Items

Lori Markham explained the Supervisor contract was approved and the base unit contract should be approved soon. The contracts include some items that SREC would like to pass on to its non-represented employees for consistency and management purposes. The items do not have a large budgetary impact and will benefit the non-represented employees as some of the items hinge on longevity. An outline of the items was included in the Board packet; they include, a change to paid holidays, bereavement leave, CAT leave, PTO accruals and a PTO sell back option which is a benefit for budgetary purposes. Lori stated SREC was looking for direction from the Board to implement these changes to the policies for the non-represented positions. Gerry Gemmill agreed the benefits should be passed on and consistency throughout the agency is a good thing. Ozzie Knezovich agreed. Bryan Collins stated the Board agreed to have Lori move forward with the changes.

#### 5. **Old Business**

a. City of Spokane Update

Mayor Nadine Woodward updated the Board with a slide presentation and explained she continues to have conversations with the City Council but building relationships takes time. She reminded the Board those Council Members are Candace Mumm, Lori Kinnear and Council President Breean Beggs. Nadine briefly went through the various projects that have been successful over the last few years through regional partnerships. She reiterated this takes time but her commitment is to continue the conversations with Council as they continue to have questions. She explained she has integrated the updated data provided by Chief Collins into the integration model she presented last month. Nadine added she is meeting with Local 29 for the first time tomorrow, which is a significant step in the process. Additionally, City Council has asked what the model would like if Spokane Law Enforcement was brought into the model, not just Fire, which is very encouraging.

Nadine stated the City Council approved the 2021 budget on Monday which did include funding for additional Fire Dispatchers. She explained she is being very honest that they need help and will not be ready by February 1, 2021 to operate Fire dispatch on their own. She asked the Board if they would be willing to extend the ILA through June. She added it would need to happen rather quickly in order to get it on the Council agenda for January. She added that she understands the Board wanted an answer much quicker, but honestly does not believe the City of Spokane will have an answer to joining SREC

in 2021. She explained she will continue to have the conversations and get more information to the City Council and continue to meet, including the meeting with Local 29 tomorrow. She stated the case will be easier to make to the public than City Council, but it is her goal to get the City of Spokane to join SREC. Ozzie Knezovich stated it is not a disappointment or surprise, the writing was on the wall when Council began increasing the budget for additional dispatchers. He explained there are things working against her including, Breeann Beggs trying to have a bill passed to pull the 1/10<sup>th</sup> of 1% for Emergency Communications. He clarified, the 1/10<sup>th</sup> of 1% was passed by the voters of Spokane for Emergency Communications infrastructure, not dispatching. He stressed that he will do everything in his power to protect the integrity of that vote. He added he is not in favor of extending the ILA, the City can save itself money by joining SREC and the City Council is stringing the Mayor along. Nadine reiterated her plea to extend the ILA and that she will continue to have conversations with City Council until they tell her no, they will not join SREC. Gerry Gemmill stated he does not believe the current City Council has any intention of joining SREC but that it will be a political issue during the reelection campaign. Gerry emphasized he agreed with Ozzie Knezovich and added that it is unacceptable when Local 29 dispatchers are anything but professional to SREC employees, and it will not be tolerated. He continued that if there were an extension it would absolutely have to include a clause where SREC could immediately terminate the ILA if the City/Local 29 dispatchers are anything less than professional. The last time this happened the reaction or consequences were not what he would have like to have seen from Fire management.

Bryan Collins asked Nadine to send a formal request for the extension of the ILA. He stated if SREC were to extend the ILA through June 2021, then the assumption is that Spokane Fire Dispatch would be able to support itself the latter part of 2021. Nadine answered that is the City Council's plan, that Fire Dispatch needs to be viable while discussions with SREC continue. She reiterated that even when dispatch is staffed up the conversations will continue. Bryan Collins asked if Nadine thought that without the extension of the ILA, the City could not meet its minimum staffing requirements to run the dispatch center past February; even with hiring back overtime for those employees to fill vacancies. Nadine replied that she would have to discuss that with the Chief, but that is her understanding. Ozzie Knezovich stated a way to solve the problem would be to cross train police dispatchers to fill those vacancies. Nadine stated they would do whatever is necessary and thanked the Board for their time.

b. Citizen Representative Update

Lori Markham explained another application has been received along with additional inquiries. The posting will remain open until the end of the year and she will bring the applications forward in the new year. Ozzie Knezovich stated he had an individual who is interested and asked Lori to forward the application process to him to pass on.

## 6. Staff Reports

a. Operations

Kim Arredondo stated a Fire Supervisor position has been filled in a cross-training manner by a 911 Supervisor and an additional supervisor, our current QA supervisor, will join the 911 supervisor for training, so there will be two cross trained supervisors by the second quarter of 2021. Kim added this will allow the QA supervisor to be trained on Fire calls before the transition happens and thus keep fire calls in line with the QA program.

Kim explained the Fire Supervisors have been working very hard, conducting EMD Q's, building the training curriculum for transitioning fire calls, and pulling 19 shifts this month for Spokane Fire Dispatch. Kim stated they are doing an amazing job, but are very tired.

911 has continued to get hit with staffing issues and has reached a staffing crisis. This is mainly due to employees out on FMLA and now with COVID related absences; 16 employees out total. There are currently 7 employees in training, leaving 6 vacancies. Call answering times have dropped and SREC has reached out to its Law Enforcement partners for help, but they are in the same situation. Kim explained they are getting creative, currently analyzing staffing configuration, scheduling overtime, asking employees for their suggestions, and looking at the possibility of implementing an exigent report writing policy that existed with the County for Crime Check reports. SREC still needs to define what exigent means and when to implement the policy. Kim asked what the Boards thoughts were on categorizing some reports that could be called back and taken the next day. Ozzie Knezovich stated it would be ok to do, but that a PSA would need to go to brief the community. Kim stated that Patrick Erickson has been pushing PSAs regarding Crime Check and one of the suggestions was a phone tree that would defer people to other resource, i.e. 311, but we found that 27,000 of the calls that came in on Crime Check last year were priority 2 calls, which are emergency calls. SREC is trying hard to push the Crime Check campaign out, including touching base with other PIO partners, pamphlets, etc. Patrick can absolutely push a PSA out if the exigent report writing policy is implemented. Bryan Collins agreed and felt along with the PSA the public would be understanding of the situation we are in.

Dave Ellis stated some officers have been recently hired and awaiting the academy to begin so could possibly help with report writing and asked what the training time frame was. Heather Wood explained for report writing the training is two to three weeks depending on their background knowledge. Dave Ellis explained they were looking at the light duty officers as well and were working on some viable options to get SREC some help. Kim explained we were able to fill the new academy with six employees and they began this week at the BUC. Bryan Collins asked the Board if they were in agreement to allow SREC to implement the exigent report writing policy. Ozzie Knezovich motioned to approve implementing the policy. Brad Richmond seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

b. Technical

Bob Schwent stated the team continues to do a great job and they have accomplished a great deal this year. IT is currently cleaning the network, working through their punch list and beginning the planned PC refresh project. The radio shop has slowed down due to Motorola issues and the weather. It is the perfect opportunity for the employees to use some vacation time. The recent radio order has been received and are currently being logged into the inventory system before they begin issuing them out. Clean up in the radio shop continues.

c. Human Resources

Jeff Tower explained talks continue with the base unit, there is still one item remaining regarding mandatory overtime that has not been resolved. A mediation meeting is scheduled for Monday if it is not resolved before then. Starting January 1, 2021 there will be a payroll change away from normalized hours, to actual hours and pay dates will move from bimonthly to every other Friday.

**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)

Moved to closed session at 8:19, estimated 10 minutes, will reconvene at 8:30 am.

At 8:30 am the Board estimated 10 more minutes.

At 8:40 am the Board estimated 5 more minutes.

At 8:45 am the Board estimated 2 more minutes.

The regular meeting reconvened at 8:47 am.

No action was taken.

**9. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 a.m.

The next Regular Governing Board meeting is scheduled for January 21, 2021 at 7:30 a.m.

DocuSigned by:

*Chief Bryan Collins*

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Board Member  
Governing Board

DocuSigned by:

*Sheriff Ozgie Knezovich*

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Board Member  
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