

Regular Meeting Minutes
Spokane Regional Emergency Communications Governing Board
September 15, 2022

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

Chief Cody Rohrbach called the meeting to order at 7:31 a.m. The following Board members were in attendance:

Board Members

Chief Cody Rohrbach – Spokane County Fire District 3 (Vice Chair)
Undersheriff Michael Kittilstved, Spokane County Sheriff's Office
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
Bob Schwent, Technical Services Manager
Brad Kane, Dispatch Operations Manager
Heather Thompson, 911 Operations Manager
Jon Adams, Training Manager
Cherell Yates, Office Manager
Kelly Conley, Communication and Media Manager
Jenni Folden, Finance Analyst
Megan Schneider, HR Analyst
Trish Weitz, CO
Bre Kostelecky, CO
Josette Renken, CO
Sarah Loomer, CO
Hanna Kresse, CO

Auxiliary Partners / Guests

Jeff Galloway, WBM
Chief Brian Schaeffer, SFD
Chief Lonnie Rash, SCFD 8
Major Michael McNab, SPD

2. Consent Agenda

Brad Richmond motioned to approve the minutes from the August 18, 2022 regular meeting. Frank Soto, Jr. seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

3. Action Items

a. Motorola Quote – 25 Mobile Radios

Bob Schwent explained the reserve of mobile radios is getting low and this was part of the budgeted replacement plan. Dave Ellis motioned to approve the purchase of the mobile radios. Brad Richmond seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

b. LoPTT Aware and Interference Locator

Bob Schwent stated this was not specifically called out in the approved budget, but is part of the budgeted amount for infrastructure and capital projects. The radio system has been hit with a lot of interference lately and will probably only get worse with the additional in building transmitters coming on-line, etc. The program will allow SREC to triangulate and locate interfering signals; it is an enhancement to the existing infrastructure. Additionally, it will help with location on Push-to-Talk with the existing mobile and portable radios. When someone keys their radio, it will give their location on a map, with their XY coordinates. Bob explained with the increasing interference issues and supply chain issues it was a better use of the capital funds now. Howard Johnson asked if it was an updated XY location with every push-to-talk. Bob explained that once the radio is keyed it will show the GPS location from the radio on a mapping screen. Howard stated that is a huge benefit to improve responder safety and where he thought it would be initially with the system. Lori Markham stated the start-up cost is roughly \$229,000 and then roughly \$17,000 annually after that. Cody Rohrbach added if the interference issue is not addressed it could have significant impacts to the system as seen in other jurisdictions. Bob stated it is already seen with illegal carriers causing interference and that in the past the FCC would help, but that is not the case anymore. Howard Johnson motioned to approve the LoPTT Aware and Interference Locator purchase. Scott Simmons seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

4. New Business

a. First Look 2023 Budget

Lori Markham reminded the Board there are a few unknown factors as SREC awaits some decisions by the City of Spokane and explained two budgets have been prepared, and the one that will be presented today is without including the City of Spokane as well as a one-sheet that will include what it will look like if the City of Spokane joined SREC as a member agency. Lori added this is just an initial look and to ask any clarifications or questions as the document is presented. Tim Henry explained the first item addresses positions and salaries and includes an additional Public Records Specialist, two additional Sr. Systems Specialists, and the pay ranges are increased to reflect a cost of living adjustment, comparable salary and wage adjustment, and realignment of Communications Officer positions. All of these have been discussed at the Finance Committee meetings and are now being brought forward. Lori added the two additional Sr. Systems Specialists are in conjunction with the CAD RFP that is currently being worked on, and will hopefully have the RFP out and selection made late first quarter early second quarter, and those positions will be needed on the back end and potentially more depending on the CAD system selected and the support needed. The additional Public Records Specialist is to support the increasing volume of records requests coming in. Lori reminded the Board there was a previous discussion surrounding the realignment of Communications Officers which could also change those pay ranges, those are still in negotiation conversations with Labor Management, but moving forward as if it will be approved. Lori furthered that with regards to the comparable wage and salary adjustments, SREC has not reviewed administrative staff wages since prior to 2019. Lori furthered that with shortages nationwide she tasked the HR team to research administrative positions at other local government agencies and local PSAPs throughout the State. There were many comparable positions where SREC staff were being underpaid. These adjustments have been discussed at the Finance Committee meetings.

Tim explained the next item is the 2023 revenues. The total operating revenue is estimated to increase by 11% over the 2022 budgeted amount, using a 2022 projected amount. The estimated Emergency Communications Sales Tax revenue is adjusted to reflect the anticipated change in tax distribution, this amount is an assumption of what

will be received from the County. The proposal uses the 2022 projected revenue and reduces that amount by the expected re-distribution percentage. The 911 excise tax is estimated at the 2022 projected amount. The charges for service for non-member agencies is the estimated billing for radio, Crime Check and CAD services. The charges for service for member agencies is estimated at the same amount as 2022. This also includes some fund balances for authorized expenditures; \$1.25M for CAD replacement and \$500,000 for the new facility project, expenses expected to be seen in 2023.

Tim stated the third item is the 2023 expenses. The expense budget is proposed with an overall increase of 7% from the 2022 total. Salary and benefits are proposed with an increase of 5% and included; cost of living increase 3.5%, salary and comparable adjustment, cost of benefits increase, additional FTE's, realignment of Communications Officers, and a 5% vacancy rate. Supplies and services are proposed with a decrease of 6% over 2022. This percentage includes a decrease in shared costs for CAD services and an increase in training and travel in 2023. Capital outlays is proposed with an increase of 37% over 2022. This increase includes increased expenses for a new CAD system and increased expenses for a new facility.

Tim reminded the Board that SREC policy is to have the Board approve the budget at the department level, the next item is the 2023 proposed expense budget detail by department. Tim explained the increase in the administrative percentage over 2022 is due to the \$500,000 expected for the new facility costs in 2023 being housed under administration.

Tim explained the next item is the current reserve and fund balance, which includes the operating reserve, designated \$2.5M for the new CAD project, and the \$14M for the new facility with an ending reserve of \$2M. The 2022 budget includes a line item directing \$1M to the facility reserve project, leaving the \$2M fund balance at the end of 2022. Lori furthered there was an in-depth discussion at the Finance Committee meeting regarding what to with the fund balance (that number won't be finalized until the end of 2022), two options were proposed. The first option is to use that fund balance to offset user fees for 2023, or the second option, is to direct that money into the capital projects coming up. Looking at the CIP and those projections funding wise, about 2026 SREC will begin running short on funds to complete the facility project. The choice is to begin saving now to have cash on hand when that money is due, or run short and take a loan out at that time. The other issue to consider is the 1/10th sales tax renewal will also be in the election year 2026.

Tim stated next is the six-year capital improvement plan and includes 2023 spending from the capital project reserve balances totaling \$1.25M for CAD replacement and \$500,000 for a new facility. The total cost of the facility is an estimate and will be updated as the planning continues. Following that is the 2022 to 2023 total budget comparison sheet.

Tim explained the final part is the 2023 Member Agency Statistics and includes the number of member agency incidents recorded from July 2021 to June 2022 which are used to determine the 2023 charges. The total incidents declined 4% from the previous period. The rate model used to determine the annual Member Agency charges was developed and approved by the Governing Board in 2020. The initial calculation splits the total charges, 60% to Law Enforcement Agencies and 40% to Fire Agencies, based on positions and estimated hours. The Fire Agency charges are then split again based on the number of incidents. Mike Kittilstved asked if Spokane Fire comes on board, does that mean SREC incurs those personnel costs without any additional revenue stream. Lori explained that would be part of their user fees and SREC will allocate how many

positions will be needed to join and cover their call volume; if it is just Spokane Fire, that will be reflected in Fire user fees, if Spokane Police joins, that will be based on Law user fees. Lori furthered it is a separate issue from the revenue stream from the 1/10th funds.

Tim concluded by presenting a one page 2023 budget comparison summary to compare the second budget that was prepared if the City of Spokane were to join SREC. The second 2023 budget considers the potential that a new member is added and participates in the member agency user fee model, sales tax revenue is reduced, FTE's are added, and billing for non-member services continues. Tim reiterated that both budgets have been prepared and can be brought forward depending on the decisions still being made by the City of Spokane. Howard Johnson thanked the team for their hard work. Tim appreciated the support of the Finance Committee. Cody Rohrbach summarized based on yesterday's Finance Committee meeting and today's presentation, and the impact of the City of Spokane. There is the potential for a reduction in user fees if the City joins, but it is important to consider the future capital needs of a new facility and projects and the projected shortfalls. The choices are to realize the savings today, or maintain the user fees and use that to offset future capital costs. Cody cautioned that once user fees are lowered that will be hard to undo in the future when that money is needed. Scott Simmons explained there are many complexities with this year's budget as there are still unknowns with the City of Spokane and HB1155. Scott thanked the team for their work. Tim thanked Jenni Folden for her work and support. Lori asked that any questions, clarifications, etc., be brought to her and Tim and this will be brought back to the Board next month for another review.

b. Communication and Media Manager

Lori Markham introduced Kelly Conley as the new Communication and Media Manager. Kelly explained she has a 30-year background in corporate marketing and communications. Most recently was 17 years with Avista, leading their customer technology programs, and the last 8 months at SREC as a Communications Officer I. She stated she is glad to be here in this role and to support the agency.

5. Old Business

a. New Facility Update

Lori Markham stated there is no update.

b. HB1155 Update

Scott Simmons explained meetings continue with the City and he continues to encourage the City to meet with the SREC team to understand what the costs of receiving services into the future will look like. Lori Markham stated she met with the City of Spokane's CFO, Tonya Wallace yesterday. HB1155 allows SREC to bill for services back to July 25, 2021 and a bill has been prepared for services provided (money already spent) from July 25, 2021 – July 24, 2022 that lists out areas where support is provided to the City of Spokane, including Crime Check, the radio system and services, CAD overhead, etc. Lori went over this bill with Tonya who had no questions but realizes the deadline is approaching and asked that an ILA (Inter-local Agreement) be drafted to outline such services and attach that ILA to the bill for those past services and then annually going forward. Lori introduced Jeff Galloway an attorney with WBM, SREC's new legal counsel. Lori added that Tonya requested her and Tim come to the next City Council meeting in case there are any questions. Lori asked the Board for their thoughts and direction. Scott Simmons explained the deadline of October 25th is for, if the City and County cannot come to an ILA, then either the City or the County can seek equitable apportionment via the Superior Court. Scott believes if a good framework for the ILA is being established outlining the apportionment and methodologies behind it, by the October 25th deadline, then neither party would probably trigger that next step, certainly

not the County. Scott furthered that he has encouraged Lori, whenever the City asks for meetings, they should be coming out to SREC and see the actual operations. There should be a point when there is a meeting scheduled to include a couple more City Council members, and Scott recommended there is also representation from the SREC Board, potentially the Executive or Finance Committee members. Lori explained the request was to bring it to the City's Public Safety Briefing before City Council to go over the ILA and bill for services. Scott stated it should be City Administration who familiarizes themselves and becomes knowledgeable with services being provided, and representing that to City Council, not Lori. The Board unanimously agreed with Scott. Lori stated she will work with legal counsel on drafting the ILA and bring forward for the Board's review. Cody Rohrbach thanked the teams work on this, especially Scott's work and his representation of the SREC Board.

c. CAD Update

Lori Markham stated the National Public Safety Group will be on-site next week to go over what they took back from the kick off meetings and make sure they didn't miss anything. Kim Arredondo sent invitations out on Tuesday to the agencies to make sure there is representation present from all groups. Lori stated the goal is to get the new CAD system in place as soon as possible for a couple reasons; one is, Tyler is due for an upgrade on the Law Enforcement CAD and would like it to be the last upgrade with them. There always seems to be many problems and issues that come when the upgrades are done. The second reason is the City of Spokane has exhausted their warranty extensions for the hardware of the Fire CAD system, and knowing they are anticipating joining SREC on one CAD system, the hope is to not have to purchase additional hardware. Currently there are five services that house the Fire CAD system, so there are five layers of redundancy, it is a bit of a risk by not renewing or purchasing hardware, but there are four layers of failure until that last server is reached and at that point there are patch works to utilize, until the retirement of that system. Of course, still sooner rather than later.

d. SPD Notification Update

Lori Markham reminded the Board there was no response from the City of Spokane Police Department. SREC sent a letter which stated that with no response, SREC will no longer triage SPD calls as of January 1, 2023. Lori explained no changes to staffing will be made until more data can be collected and see what the impact will be. Lori anticipates it will have a significant impact in reducing the amount of time the Communications Officers are on the phone, but until there is more data business will continue as usual with just a change in operational process. Scott Simmons explained about a month ago, the Mayor, City Administrator and Police Chief had a site visit to SREC on the operational floor and observed the differences in call handling services between member and non-member agencies. Scott has had some additional conversations with the City Administrator and believes he intends to have SPD handle their own triage services.

e. SFD Update

Lori Markham stated there is a meeting scheduled for tomorrow with SFD leadership and City Administration to discuss the possibility of Fire Comm joining SREC. There is not much to update at this point, but there is a concern with the Governor's recent changes to COVID restrictions. Fire Comm currently has some accommodated Fire Fighters working in dispatch that as of October 31st, when those restrictions are lifted those Fire Fighters may go back into the field, leaving Fire Comm staffing critically low. Lori explained she has had some conversations with Chief Brian Schaeffer and Assistant Chief Tom Williams about the impact to SREC and if SREC is capable of taking on the additional workload at that time. Lori will be working with legal counsel to draft an ILA,

should an emergency situation arise, with Fire Comm to outline what SREC is willing to do and what that cost will be. There are still a lot of unknowns and Lori would like SREC to be prepared if the need arises. Lori furthered SREC's staffing is also low and not in a position to take the additional workload of Fire Comm on November 1st. The original January 1, 2023 date allowed a few months of training and staffing for SREC before taking the additional workload; it also was a tradeoff to begin triaging City Fire calls and stop triaging City Police calls on the January 1, 2023 date.

6. Staff Reports

a. Operations

Kim Arredondo stated staffing is still an issue, there are fourteen current vacancies in 911. There is a new academy starting on September 27th which includes 3 new hires and one that has been given an offer letter to, but has not accepted yet. The biggest change has been to Law, there were a couple planned and unplanned absences that has left staffing at a very critical level. A letter was sent to Law Enforcement partners explaining the staffing situation and the need to patch channels as there is only one dispatcher working at times. Kim furthered the situation will be a little better over the next two weeks as people return from vacation. Additionally, there are two trainees in Law who are about to finish their training. There are two others in the training process, including one supervisor. Kim added that an email went out to Supervisors to those who are interested in cross-training; three are interested and they will begin navigating that process as staffing allows. Fire staffing remains the same.

Jon Adams explained Priority Dispatch was on-site for its annual review of SREC's EMD calls and QA/QI process. Jon went through the one sheet that was included in the Board packet. SREC went live with the EMD process in August 2020, so this is a two-year progress report. Compliance levels are observed, compliance measures accuracy and efficiency in a call receiver's performance in processing EMD calls. In the first three months 27% of calls were non-compliant compared to the last three months where only 10% of calls were non-compliant. Priority Dispatch sets a goal of 7% for a center to become accredited. The next item observed is hands on chest. Hands on chest measures times from the start of the call, through the call receiver's recognition of the need for CPR, through positioning of the patient and stops at the start of bystander compressions. In year one that time was 71 seconds and in year two dropped down to 55 seconds, a 22%- time savings and 46%-time savings from the internationally recognized target of 120 seconds. Jon explained the next observation is the average time to que. Average time to que measures the time it takes from the call receiver's recognition of a medical call to a complete dispatchable incident (call for service). For echo level responses (where patient is not awake and not breathing effectively or at all), the international standard of excellence is 45 seconds. SREC's average time to que in year one was 33 seconds and year two was 24 seconds, a 28%-time savings and 53% of the benchmark of 45 seconds. Jon explained that Ryan from Priority Dispatch stated these are the best numbers he's seen from any agency he has worked with. Jon accredited this to the hard work of the call receivers to learn the software, learn the program and process, and continuing getting better.

Jon explained once SREC is accredited it will open additional resources to the agency. This includes exploring the use of a nurse line to triage calls that are not pre-hospital emergencies. Over the past 12 months the EMD protocols have identified 225 omega level calls and an additional 2,416 alpha level calls that are candidates for use of an accredited nurse line. That means there were 2,641 calls that may have not required a response from Fire units. The reduction in responses would reduce cost to fire agencies, wear and tear on equipment, and help maximize responders' ability to respond to higher priority incidents. Jon added times continually improve through the hard work of the call

receivers and there a few actions being taken to help continue driving these numbers in the right direction; Training Supervisor Rocky Botner conducts monthly focused training sessions, QA Supervisor Veronica Hamm continues work on the robust quality assurance program, and all CPR calls are reviewed through CPR quick reviews. Jon reiterated the numbers are truly amazing and the great work done by staff. Cody Rohrbach thanked Jon for the statistics and stated he had a chance to share some of those numbers and accomplishments with the EMS Council earlier in the week, and also echoed the amazing work being done. Frank Soto, Jr., also thanked the staff for their work and accomplishments, and stated validation for that was winning the heart save community award for large communities of 100 thousand people or more from Cardiac Arrest, of which SREC was a large part.

b. Technical

Bob Schwent stated IT continues work on deploying the replacement computers. The radio shop is working with Motorola to get the background pieces in place for the APX project (FirstNet capable portables), and have identified a couple sites that need battery replacements. Cody Rohrbach asked if there have been any changes identified as needed for next year. Bob explained he has not received any changes from the Fire side but is working on some changes with Kootenai County on the law side. Bob added he is still working on the bid for the installation of the new helicopter radios.

c. Finance

Tim Henry explained the State audit for 2020-2021 has begun and the engagement letter signed. It is a financial statement and accountability audit with the State Auditor's Office. Tim anticipates it to be concluded in November and brought to the Board after that.

d. Human Resources

Jeff Tower reminded the Board that Bob Schwent is retiring effective at the end of the month and there will be an interview panel next Tuesday to review candidates. Lori thanked those that will be part of the panel.

e. Administration

No further update.

7. **Open/Public Comment**

Josette Renken read the following speech:

Hi, my name is Josette and I've been here for almost 5.5 years. I'm here to speak on behalf of my coworkers across all three disciplines, as I have no fear of retaliation due to today being my last day. Unfortunately, many here have this fear as we have experienced and witnessed the retaliation firsthand.

As a group, we have many concerns about our agency and work environment. Many of which I won't be able to touch on due to my limited time but have documented in those papers for your review. The two issues mentioned most were staffing and compensation.

911 and law dispatch are both below 50% in staffing. 911 has 24 non-probationary employees, seven probationary, four on the floor, and three in classroom. Pending no one else leaves, that makes for 35 out of 54 call receivers by October. Law has two full time trainees and a third who is only training in law on their days off from 911. None of the law trainees are close to being signed off and still have several months of training left to be competent dispatchers. For the last week, law has had only one supervisor and that supervisor worked 40 hours straight trying to

provide coverage. Not only is that dangerous to their health, but it also jeopardizes the safety of our responders.

Fire dispatch was forced to rebid their schedules to fill a supervisor vacancy that the agency isn't currently planning on filling. This is causing fire dispatch to be without a supervisor for a minimum of six hours every day.

Our workload is continuing to increase along with call volume. While it's currently in the air if we will be taking over city's medics calls and continue to process the rest of city's calls, we don't have the staffing for the additional workload. Currently, 911 calls can hold from 30 seconds to a minute and a half, with Crime Check holding for three to five minutes. One person is doing the work of two people and that's going to increase with the additional calls, yet we aren't being compensated for the increase in work. I understand that it needs to be brought up through our union, but it should still be mentioned.

The environment that has been created in the center is hostile and toxic, and it has caused multiple people to have breakdowns simply because they must come to work. It's not the job itself, it's the additional stress that our administration has created. Many of us perceive that our management doesn't care about those of us on the floor.

I've included some possible suggestions of how we might begin to fix our agency, but I don't know how feasible they are as I don't know how to do your job. I only hope that they might help point us in the right direction.

I'll leave you with this quote, "When your boat is sinking, it is not wise to ignore it while you make plans to build a new ship" – Anonymous. We are drowning and we need to focus on our boat. Thank you.

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 8:47 a.m.

The next Regular Governing Board meeting is scheduled for October 20, 2022 at 7:30 a.m.

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