

Regular Meeting Minutes
Spokane Regional Emergency Communications Governing Board
November 16, 2023

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

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

Board Members

Chief Brad Richmond (Vice Chair) – Airway Heights Police Department
John Nowels – Spokane County Sheriff's Office
Chief Dave Ellis – Spokane Valley Police Department
Chief Brian Schaeffer – Spokane Fire Department
Chief Frank Soto, Jr. – Spokane Valley Fire Department
Chief Ken Johnson - Spokane County Fire District 10
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
Tim Henry, Finance Manager
Brad Kane, Dispatch Operations Manager
Brandon Childs, Technical Projects Manager
Megan Schneider, HR Analyst
Bradley Dilg, CAD Administrator
Bre Kostelecky, Public Records Specialist

Auxiliary Partners/Guests

Lonnie Rash, SCFD8
Nathan Jeffries, SCFD9
Tom Williams, SFD
Erik Lamb, Spokane Valley
Jeff Galloway, WBM
Josh P.

2. Consent Agenda

Brian Schaeffer motioned to approve the minutes from the October 19, 2023, regular meeting. Ken Johnson seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

3. Action Items

a. Motorola System Upgrade Agreement Plus Contract

Dusty Patrick explained the proposal was included in the Board packet and is to enter into an extended contract with Motorola. This will expand the current contract and cover almost everything purchased for the system over the last thirteen years, many of which are nearing end of life in the next couple of years. This will cover software and hardware upgrades every other year. The proposal has been budgeted for and briefed at the Finance and Radio Sub-committees and vetted by the radio shop. The proposal would be in effect January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2031, and cover the system for the next seven years. Lori Markham explained this was the area of the budget where money was moved from the portable and mobile radios line item to support this contract. Brian

Schaeffer motioned to approve the contract. Scott Simmons seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

4. New Business

a. Board Chair/Vice Chair

Lori Markham thanked the Chair and Vice Chair for all their work over the last year and explained it is time for the annual status check if they would like to continue on in their roles, or if there was anyone else interested in being the Chair and Vice Chair for next year. The consensus was to have Cody Rohrbach remain as the Chair and Brad Richmond remain as Vice Chair. Lori explained she is very appreciative of the Board and thankful for all their work and support.

b. Training Positions

Kim Arredondo stated the recruitment process for the Training Coordinator was complete and a conditional job offer made. Kim added that the process revealed a need for a training team; a Training Coordinator and a Training Administrator. The Training Coordinator's main focus will be accreditation, documenting hours, meeting State requirements, which SREC is obligated to for some of its funding. The Training Administrator will focus on the CTO's (Certified Training Officers) and getting that in line with the training that the consultant that was brought in began and then matching that curriculum with policies and procedures, QA processes, and moving toward accreditation. The goal is to have a team of trainers, who are cross trained, and there would be training supervisors for each discipline. The Training Coordinator position is already budgeted for. Lori Markham added that currently a line Supervisor is being pulled out of the numbers as a Training Assistant and this will put that Supervisor position back in the numbers, creating a floating Supervisor per se, which will be beneficial and utilized to cross train Supervisors; one of SREC's overall goals. This shift would bring the total SREC FTEs from 147 to 148, which could possibly have an impact to the budget, but depending on vacancies that could be absorbed. If there is a budgetary impact that will be brought forward to the Board. The goal is to set SREC up for success by one, having a robust training program, but two, to achieve accreditation. Accreditation is really that stamp of approval nationally, and reflective of SREC doing what they are supposed to be doing and doing what the community expects. Accreditation is an in-depth process and there is an administrative piece as well as a people component to be successful. Kim added that more than sixty percent of staff in 911 are probationary employees, which is a significant lift for the Supervisors and adding that position back into the numbers will be very helpful and give the Supervisors more ability to support the trainees and probationary employees. Additionally, having that floating supervisor will help fill the gap when a Supervisor is pulled out for cross training.

Brian Schaeffer explained the goal is always to move toward accreditation. Accreditation is the gold standard and best practice. If achieved, SREC will be the only one in the region and reflects a commitment to excellence and should absolutely be a goal attained in the next two years. On the medical side SREC is very close to achieving this and it is worth noting that prior to integration this was not feasible. Brian fully supports SREC moving forward. Creating the position also allows movement and upward mobility for staff. Lori added that another focus SREC has for 2024 as staffing has improved, is in developing employees and setting them up for leadership, ensuring SREC's continued success as tenured staff retire and well into the future. Gayne Sears asked if the position would help alleviate some of the workload of the Training Supervisors or SMEs (subject matter experts). Lori explained that it will, and that the goal of the Training Supervisors is to have the interaction with the CTO and trainee on the floor and then the conversations with the Training Administrator through the process. Currently the one Training Supervisor is completely removed from the floor, spending most of their time reading

training materials and scheduling; this shift will take the administrative portion off of the Supervisors. Kim added this will allow the trainees to have a focal person in their discipline to connect with. Brad Richmond explained he like seeing the self-reflection, evolving from that process and creating opportunities for growth. Lori stated they will continue moving forward with the position and bring any budget adjustments that may be needed forward to the Board.

5. Old Business

a. CAD Update

Brandon Childs explained SREC is in active negotiations with Hexagon. There were meetings held last week that included the SREC Executive team, legal, NPSG (National Public Safety Group), Shawna Ernst from SPD (Spokane Police Department) and Hexagon. There will be a follow up meeting next Tuesday. The goal is to have a finalized contract and bring forward for purchase to the Board next month. Lori Markham explained there will be further discussion during closed session.

b. Cheney Update

Lori Markham stated she had a discussion with Chief Rick Beghtol who assured her that Cheney will be joining SREC in 2024, just not sure when in 2024. Lori added that SREC is proceeding accordingly. Gayne Sears stated she recalled there being a policy placing a deadline on agencies who want to become members of SREC. Lori explained that there is, but because of past practice with SFD (Spokane Fire Department), SREC has set a precedent. More importantly Cheney is joining because they are at a critical level in staffing and cannot sustain dispatch services. SREC's main goal is citizen safety and will do what is needed to ensure citizens are receiving the services they need.

c. New Facility Update

Scott Simmons explained he is working with Lori Markham on bringing forth a Resolution to the BoCC (Board of County Commissioners) on behalf of the SREC Board to get a commitment to lease the space next to the small arms range. Lori worked with the County to identify a footprint on the property, square footage, etc. The Resolution instructs the County to move forward with developing a lease agreement. Scott briefed the BoCC on it last week and will hopefully be on their consent agenda to approve.

Lori explained several City Council members have been on site over the last couple days to talk with her and her team about SREC. They were positive meetings; some hard questions were answered and clarity provided that was missing from a lot of the rhetoric that is out there. One of the questions was about the 1/10th sales tax and Lori provided them with the numbers and the reality that the funding would fall short for the services that the City is receiving. The Council members present were Jonathan Bingle, Zack Zappone, Ryan Oelrich and a few legislative aids. Lori added that they had planned on two hours, the first being for a presentation and to answer questions, then second to observe and plug-in on the operations floor, but they ended up talking the full two hours, so many of them will be coming back to plug-in and see the operations floor. Lori explained that as much as the Spokane News post was hurtful and damaging and hard for the employees, it opened a door that SREC is grateful for. The Council Members were able to come in and bring their questions and concerns from citizens in which SREC was able to answer those questions, address the concerns and provide clarity as to the pictures that were posted; what do the numbers represent, what are the hold times and what that day truly looked like and what was going on. Lori thanked Kelly Conley for all her work in gathering the information and putting materials together and getting the information out there. There will be additional visit from the Council Members and hopefully another round in January when the new council takes effect.

- d. HB1155 Update
No new updates.

6. Staff Reports

- a. Operations

Kim Arredondo stated a conditional offer has been made for the Training Coordinator position and she is currently undergoing the background process. Once that process is complete, they will make that announcement as well as offer their number two choice the Training Assistant position. Kim explained that there were four resignations of brand-new probationary employees from the same academy. There were no performance issues but feedback from their exit interviews was that there was anxiety moving to a different shift and losing that support they had built on their current shift; additionally, the calls themselves were difficult and they were anxious moving on and being on their own. Kim added they will continue to work on this with the Supervisors and Training Coordinator moving forward and how to provide some sort of safety net.

Kim explained there wasn't a lot of changes to the operational packet. 911 and Crime Check hold times are reflected as an average and in seconds, there was an increase in crime check reports, and the online report gap is closing, just still not where it was a year ago. The dispatch page reflects the changes discussed at the last meeting and having the numbers reflect what SREC can control, from the time a call comes in, to the time it is dispatched, with some variables. The 911 median reflects from the time the call comes in until it is marked ready for dispatch. The dispatch median reflects from the time the call is marked ready for dispatch until the first unit is dispatched. The dataset was opened up to include priority ones and priority twos and includes domestic violence with a weapon (DVW), injury accidents (ACCINJ), commercial burglaries (BURGC), and person with a weapon (PERW) call types. Lori asked that on the next version, the call types be listed out completely instead of using the abbreviations. Kim asked for any other feedback or suggestions. Scott Simmons asked to see the numbers at a 90th percentile evaluation as a side-by-side comparison, knowing there are always outliers. John Nowels asked what the overall percentage of those four call types are within the priority one and two calls. Kim explained these represent the higher call volume types to have a better data source to pull from that have a dispatch response. Kim added they can definitely dive deeper into those and/or provide a brief explanation. Kim reminded the group that these are only representative of calls coming in and closing out as priority one and twos. The EMD statistics do not reflect the 90th percentile yet, which was asked for at the last meeting, but that should be updated for the next meeting. The staffing model was also updated and reflects the budgeted and filled positions as well as those in training. There will be another academy in January 2024 and will begin pushing media information regarding live crime check reporting as soon as that academy is ready, probably in February 2024. Gayne Sears asked if there was any value in showing vacancy/hiring trends. Kim explained that due to 2020-2022, the graph would be very skewed, possibly starting that in the next year or two would have some value. Brian Schaeffer echoed Kim's suggestion.

- b. Technical

Dusty Patrick stated page four of the operations report highlights the great work the radio shop has been doing. The shop has completed almost all the punch list items identified from the site inspections that happen every five years. Repairs to the Booth Tower are proceeding, just waiting on a piece that is being fabricated to get that completed. The work for the Broadline project on the Coe Road Tower is on the BoCC agenda to approve. The contract will then come to the SREC Board for approval and signatures.

Preliminary research has begun on a new phone system as the current contract expires in 2026. The decision will then be made to either extend that contract and upgrading the hardware or going to RFP (requests for proposals) for other systems. Lori Markham added that the current phone system does not give SREC the option of a phone tree, which could really help in getting calls where they should be going. Several of the calls that come into Crime Check are for other agencies and SREC becomes a directory for the County, a phone tree would help alleviate some of these calls as well as educate the public along the way.

The job posting for the IT Applications Manager is posted and closes on November 19, 2023. The hope is to have the recruitment and background completed by end of year so the incumbent can be onboarded in late January.

c. Finance

Tim Henry stated work for year-end has begun and the last payment from the County has been received and everything is on track for the tax transfers. The numbers came in about 5% over budget and investment income is slightly over budget. Tim reminded the Board that they will need to decide how to allocate the reserve contributions once those numbers are finalized. There are only a couple outstanding agencies who still need to pay their user fees and they will be contacted.

d. Human Resources

Jeff Tower stated the last academy for the year started Monday, which means fifty-two people have been hired in 2023. SREC is currently in the second week of open enrollment and a few of the vendors have been onsite to answer questions. Jeff thanked Megan Schneider for all her hard work with the open enrolment process.

e. Administration

Lori Markham stated the only topic she has, is the Spokane News posting, which most everyone is aware of. In the posting there were pictures of the queue boards in the facility. Those boards show calls on hold and waiting for 911 and Crime Check. Those pictures were taken without consent and from an area that is not designated to SREC. Lori explained the employees are feeling hurt and that their privacy was violated. There was initial discussion when some moving and rearranging was happening in the facility to put a wall between SREC and its City partner but decided against it at the time due to interoperability concerns. Over time the work dynamic has become difficult and uncomfortable, employees are not feeling safe at work, feeling as if anything they now do will be publicized to the world. Lori has investigated putting up a temporary wall between SREC and SPD dispatch to provide some distance between the agencies. The wall is temporary and can be taken down when SREC moves out of the facility. There may be some concerns operationally but SREC has a responsibility to the employees and their wellbeing and in turn their ability to feel safe coming to work and doing their job. Brian Schaeffer stated, the privacy violation aside, there has been an overall violation of trust between the workgroups and SREC has always taken the highroad and it is very frustrating, as the landlord of the building, to watch the dynamic. Brian added he is supportive of the wall but the concern remains during large scale events when multiple resources are needed and a collaborative response is needed. Each time a critical incident happens it reminds him of the collaboration that is needed and signals time and again the need for a regional system, but with that said and as disappointing as it is, he understands the need for the wall and that it is needed for the mental health of the employees in the building. Scott Simmons stated that he agrees with Brian and it is unfortunate that it needs to be done in order to address inappropriate behavior by another agency. It is good to demonstrate that SREC is tracking its queues, it helps the employees and leadership have the visibility and accountability. It is unfortunate this was

taken out of context and not knowing what was happening at the time, what major event, etc., was taking place. Scott furthered if the shoe were on the other foot, SPD does not track their queue times, but would probably not appreciate this happening to them; hopefully there could be some self-reflection. Gayne Sears asked if there was another option to the wall as that is a very bold statement. Can the queue boards be moved. Lori explained the boards are there for situational awareness, as SREC employees who are cross trained can help another discipline out if needed. Lori explained that interoperability is important but there are other means of communication and at the end of the day employees are voicing concern of turning those boards/TVs on in for fear of what could be done. The TVs also show the FLOCK cameras with sensitive information. Frank Soto, Jr. asked who the employees are afraid of, do we know who took the pictures, is it being investigated. Lori explained that based on the angle of the pictures, they were taken from the SPD dispatch side of the room, but cannot say exactly who took it, but based on comments heard in the building and comments posted on Spokane News they have a pretty good idea. Frank asked the question, so the agency that is milking the cow for free is the agency that is taking pictures, and what is being done about that. Frank added walls should not have to be set up, but based on what has occurred he is ok with it. Frank asked again what is being done about it and stated that someone's feet needs to be held to the fire for it. Lori explained that she had spoken with their Lieutenant and he assured her that it will not happen again, but unfortunately this is a repeat of similar situations. Lori has brought it to their leadership but doesn't have anywhere else to go with it. John Nowles reminded the group that legally, the information that was posted is public information and the "news" source that chose to post it is about the only news agency that would even run with it. John added that SPD could deal with it as a policy violation if they chose. Lori stated she was told that there was no policy violation on SPD's part. John stated there was some policy violated even if it is a 'conduct unbecoming'. Lori stated there has been conversation with legal and can discuss this further during closed session.

Lori reiterated that she was grateful for the meetings with the City Council members, that they were extremely positive, and information and clarity were provided. Scott added that he wanted to thank Lori and the team for presenting the 2024 budget to the BoCC. The BoCC does not approve the SREC budget but does allocate the funds to SREC from the 1/10th of 1% sales tax. Gayne reiterated the importance of protecting the emotional and mental stability of all the employees. Brad Richmond added that it is important that the employees who come to work, to serve, are not distracted by these things; their focus should be on mission, serving the citizens, and the safety of our community. These distractions have gone on for years and we can't allow it to continue.

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

As allowed by RCW 42.30.110 (1)(i), it is not anticipated the Board will take any action.

Vice Chair Richmond closed the meeting at 8:59 a.m. and estimated the Board would open the meeting in 20 minutes.

At 9:19 a.m. the Board announced the session would be extended 5 minutes.

At 9:24 a.m. the Board announced the session would be extended 5 minutes.

The meeting moved to open session at 9:29 a.m. No action was taken.

8. Open/Public Comment
No open/public comment.

9. Adjourn
Adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

The next Regular Governing Board meeting is scheduled for December 21, 2023, at 8:00 a.m.



Board Member
Governing Board



Board Member
Governing Board