

Regular Meeting Minutes  
Spokane Regional Emergency Communications Governing Board  
September 19, 2024

**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 – Spokane County Fire District 3 (Chair)  
Chief Brad Richmond – Airway Heights Police Department (Vice Chair)  
John Nowels – Spokane County Sheriff's Department  
Chief Dave Ellis – Spokane Valley Police Department  
Assistant Chief Tom Williams – Spokane Fire Department  
Chief Frank Soto, Jr. – Spokane Valley Fire Department  
Assistant Chief Howard Johnson – Spokane County Fire District 4  
Scott Simmons – Spokane County  
Maggie Yates – City of Spokane  
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  
Jeff Tower, HR Manager  
Kelly Conley, Communication and Media Manager  
Jenni Folden, Finance Analyst  
Breann Kostelecky, Public Records Specialist  
Chad Borjesson, Fire Dispatcher

Auxiliary Partners

Brian Werst, WBM  
Jeff Galloway, WBM  
Michal McNab, SPD  
Terry Preuninger, SPD  
Kim Blashill, SPD  
Todd Pouncey, SPD  
Don Malone, SCFD10  
Nathan Jeffries, SCFD9  
Lonnie Rash, SCFD8  
Jim Lahde, SCFD 4

**2. Consent Agenda**

Dave Ellis motioned to approve the minutes from the August 29, 2024, regular meeting. Howard Johnson seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

### 3. Action Items

#### a. Budget Amendment

Dusty explained this is reflective of the approved action at the last Board meeting to transfer \$224,000 from personnel benefits to capital to cover six additional radios requested by SFD (Spokane Fire Department). The amendment was presented to the finance subcommittee last week. Dusty furthered that in order to avoid another budget transfer this year this amendment also includes two pairs of Cisco switches for the new CAD system, providing redundancy and eliminating a single point of failure by having two switches at the CCB (Combined Communications Building) and at the BUC (backup center). It also includes an upgrade to the Microsoft licensing. Hexagon partners with PowerBI (an analytics software) and would allow dashboards for all user agencies to be published through the web and provide data instantly. The upgrade will also provide cyber security tools that meet CJIS security requirements and will help with mobile device management. It is all a package of enhancements for Microsoft. Tom Williams motioned to approve the amendment and purchases. Dave Ellis seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

### 4. New Business

#### a. 2025 Draft Budget

Scott Simmons presented the 2025 draft budget and stated that the finance subcommittee had its first look at it last week. Scott reminded the group this is the proposed budget and will likely have changes. The total authorized FTEs are the same as 2024. The pay ranges are increased to reflect a wage adjustment for represented public safety officers and the Cost-of-Living Adjustment of 5% for other employees. The 2025 resources consist of the 911 excise tax, 1/10<sup>th</sup> of 1% sales tax and user fees. The taxes are projected to remain flat for 2025. Scott explained the 1/10<sup>th</sup> tax follows the County's sales tax. The County budgeted a 2% increase 2023 over 2024 and is now seeing a less than 1% growth in 2024 in overall sales tax; meaning the County and the 1/10<sup>th</sup> are trending 1% under what was budgeted. The County is only budgeting for a 1% growth from 2024, basically flat from what the 2024 budget was. Consumer debit is the highest it has been and not seeing a lot of potential increases in sales tax coming. Scott cautioned to remain conservative in terms of projecting sales tax. The 911 excise tax continues to be a challenge as there are less and less landlines and current legislation does not include all mobile devices such as watches, iPads, etc. and as more of these mobile devices come up, we are losing those opportunities. The 2025 proposed budget keeps the 911 excise tax flat from 2024. Member user fees in this draft are consistent with 2024, but there will need to be further discussion to balance the budget. Lori Markham explained the 2024 budgeted user fees came in slightly under and that was due to the Cheney Police Department joining in July of this year rather than January. Scott continued the investment interest income is projected to be higher in 2024 due to favorable interest rates but since there will be some spin down from capital and reserves for 2025, the finance committee recommended projecting that over the year.

Scott moved on to expenses and explained there was a robust discussion at the finance meeting as salary and benefits are the biggest expense SREC has. The increase for 2025 is due to increased benefit costs. Benefits make up roughly 39% and includes medical, dental, retirement, and taxes. Supplies and services have a slight increase. Lori added SREC is trending at a 5% vacancy rate. Scott added the vacancy rate is applied across salary and benefits, not just salary. The next slide showed expenses broken out by department and Scott stated the largest spin down will come from software licenses and subscriptions and contract maintenance for CAD, not capital outlay. Expenses also include the planned \$20.5M utilization of reserves for the new facility. Lori reminded the

group that as the new CAD system costs become a part of user fees, agencies should see that balance out as they will no longer be paying the County for that service. Scott continued that the reserve and fund balances reflect the \$6.1M for three months of operating reserves, which is best practice and shows the health of the agency. There is \$1.25M for the CAD project, \$22.5M for the new facility, leaving a little left in the ending fund balance for 2024. The six-year capital plan shows upcoming needs, radio replacements, information technology, vehicles, new facility, etc. The next slide is an overall budget comparison from 2024 to 2025 showing the 911 excise and 1/10<sup>th</sup> taxes staying flat, more discussion on member agency charges, and significant use of reserve balances for the new facility in 2025.

Scott moved on to agency statistics showing number of incidents per agency from 2024 to 2025. The call volume used to determine 2025 is from July 2023 to June 2024. The final slide reflects the user fees based on that call volume and applied to the rate model. Lori added the finance committee will meet again next month to review and apply any changes and bring to the Board for approval at the next Board meeting. The team will also meet with the LCAB and FCAB groups to review user fees and any concerns. Per policy the SREC budget needs to be adopted by November 1<sup>st</sup>.

## 5. Old Business

### a. New Facility Update

As allowed by RCW 42.30.110(1)(b)(c), the Board may be asked to take action. Chair Rohrbach closed the meeting at 8:18 a.m. and estimated the Board would open the meeting in 10 minutes.

The meeting moved to open session at 8:30 a.m. Lori Markham stated that over the last few months her team has taken the opportunity to look around the area for any potential, existing, buildings for the new facility. Lori explained issues and concerns have come up with the area next to the Sheriff's training center; significant barriers for the size of the facility needed and the number of employees SREC has. The team was able to work with JLL Real Estate, look at comparables and found a location at 12809 E Mirabeau Parkway, in the Mirabeau Parkway Business center. After extensive due diligence, work and looking at potential barriers, the team determined the building to be an excellent home for SREC. Lori has been in negotiations the last couple weeks and the seller has come with its last and final offer of \$9.11M for the purchase and remodel. It is a 44,000 sq ft tech building, built in 2015, has two floors, lots of open space, great amenities, is centrally located and has easy access off I-90 and Trent. Lori has been working with JLL on a purchase sale agreement (PSA) and would like approval from the Board to sign the PSA and move forward with the purchase of the facility. Howard Johnson motioned to approve Lori signing the PSA for the new facility. Dave Ellis seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

### b. City of Spokane Update

Cody Rohrbach stated at the last Board meeting it was decided to send a formal response to the Mayor creating some clarity and context around the Board's position. The Mayor replied promptly and then SREC replied to that on Monday. The intent of the last reply was to get a timeline going for the transitional team to meet with key decision makers from the City of Spokane. Cody added that though there is a lot of media coverage right now, things look positive as we move toward regionalization and in the Mayor's response, she included herself as well as other key decision makers on the team for these meetings. Cody stated that if we can't come together as a regional effort, then we still support the City of Spokane's choice to become their own PSAP. Cody reiterated the Board's response was to bring clarity around transition and the transition

team, the Board's established position related to governance, knowing that the decision ultimately lies with the BoCC (Board of County Commissioners), and trying to establish some timelines and management action points around an ILA (interlocal agreement) related to cost apportionment or lack thereof as it is not needed for a fully regionalized model. The transition meeting will be at the beginning of October. Maggie asked if the County knew which Commissioners would be a part of the transition team. Scott explained he didn't know yet, but provided the BoCC with a quick overview, they have seen the communication back and forth, but Scott highlighted a couple key points; the Board composition which requires a Charter amendment which can only be done by BoCC action, and the ILA conversation which ultimately is between the City and the County. Scott added that the SREC Board has recommended two Commissioners from the BoCC to be a part of the transition team and he will update the Board once he knows more. Maggie stated the Mayor is aware the Board made a recommendation on governance to the BoCC, and that the decision ultimately lies with the BoCC and there is continued conversation and efforts to facilitate these conversations. Maggie added they know the correspondence highlighted the need for an ILA and that too rests with the BoCC. The Mayor's perspective is that we still need to work through those issues brought up at the last meeting, but they do want to get there.

c. CAD Update

Dusty explained Brandon Childs and the CAD team are at the Public Safety User Group Hexagon Summit this week in Florida, which is a great opportunity to share experiences, make contacts, connect with those a year or so ahead of us in the implementation process and learn from them. Last week the second of eight workshops was held with our partner agencies. This was system build number two and included, determining unit nomenclature, location alerts, caution notes, and moving those items from the two current systems into this one. There was good participation including from Spokane Police Department. The next workshop is the first week of October. Go live is still anticipated for October 2025.

**6. Staff Reports**

a. Operations

Kim Arredondo explained focus has been on public education and highlighting when to call 911 and when to call Crime Check. 911 calls have decreased and the percentage of Crime Check calls that turn into reports has increased to 18%. Crime Check and online reports are trending consistently up per year. The next page reflects the top fifteen officer-initiated call types and overall call types. These haven't changed much and Kim will check with the LCAB group about removing this piece from the operations report. The Crime Check survey result percentages continue to increase and the law enforcement dashboards have been rolled out. Kim added we might be looking at revamping the survey questions in January to get a new data set. We already have a good data set on customer service, their expectations and an improvement on what the process is after a report is completed; we will continue working on that piece with the public and law enforcement partners. One of the main questions citizens continue to have is what to do with digital evidence, so Kim brought that to the last LCAB meeting to get feedback on how SREC can help facilitate that. Scott Simmons stressed the importance of these surveys and the role SREC plays. There has been a misconception and misunderstanding around the dissatisfaction with Crime Check, but that dissatisfaction actually isn't with Crime Check and the report taking process, but the response and follow-up; and that is evident in these survey results. Kim added that SREC is working on setting expectations with citizens on what is a solvable crime and what constitute a law enforcement response and what happens with their information if it isn't solvable now; their information is still valuable. Scott added it is also not a reflection on law enforcement as there are so many high priority calls that takes their time and

incidents that don't elicit a response. Kim added that they are trying to educate the public not only through social media but when the report technician is on the phone with the caller.

Kim stated Janet Hawkins and Joe Sacco were recognized by NICE on a national level. Joe was recognized for his technical work and Janet for her longevity and career. NICE will be out in November to present them with their awards. Kim explained EMD statistics remain consistent which is a testament to not only our staff but the CTO's (certified training offices). The training team held a CTO recognition week for the CTO's and highlighted the great work they do. We are at a 7% vacancy rate and looking to fill the two report technician position in the next couple weeks. A new trainee for Fire will move over in winter and one for Law in November. A new academy is starting on Monday and the next academy is scheduled for November.

b. Technical

Dusty Patrick explained there is lots of planning around the new facility, the radio infrastructure and timing of the phone and CAD systems. The contract for the phone system includes a hardware refresh and we are trying time that accordingly with moving to the new facility. There was a power failure at the Fancher site on September 12<sup>th</sup> which is the main site that controls the simulcast system, causing a disruption in coverage. It is supposed to failover to the Krell site, which it did not, so needed to be done manually, resulting in 15-20 minutes of disruption and intermittently after that as it was being repaired. The Fire area coordinator was activated and Chief Jeffries and Chief Bement came to the CCB to manage the aftermath. They activated the whiskey zones which were put in place during the last reprogramming in case there was an outage, so there were frequencies that were able to be used and switch over to. There is some room for improvement as this was the first activation, so some training on the dispatch and end user sides is needed. When power came back to the Fancher site there were some cards and power supplies that failed because the equipment hasn't been power cycled for a number of years. Those have been replaced and reprogrammed. The cause is still being investigated and there will be an after-action next week. Howard Johnson reminded the group that when the system was converted to 800mhz all the VHF infrastructure was removed from the CCB, leaving no way to talk on the VHF system. Howard suggested having VHF infrastructure included as planning for the new facility. VHF is used by DNR, mutual aid partners, etc., and is currently located at the Fancher site. Tom Williams also suggested regional drills.

Dusty explained the entire technical service team (IT, GIS, CAD and the radio shop) has completed a three-month training around team building and communication. Currently the radio shop is at a different location than the rest of the team and the new CAD and facility projects will require a lot of communication and teamwork. Dusty stated the team is very excited to be collocating in the new facility. Tom asked that since there is approval to move forward with the new facility what are the plans for the BUC. Lori Markham explained she would like to have a discussion with the City of Spokane about utilizing one of the rooms at the CCB as the BUC. Lori added SREC is outgrowing the current BUC at Fire District 9 and is sure District 9 would like that space back.

c. Finance

Jenni Folden stated finance is status quo. The SOA (State Auditor's Office) audit has begun and is in the gathering and documentation phase. Jenni added that with the approvals today the team will make updates to the budget.

d. Human Resources

Jeff Tower stated four new hires start on Monday. Jeff explained they met with insurance broker about benefits and there will definitely be an increase in medical benefits of 7-10%, but they are still negotiating. Jeff added negotiations with the two unions are ongoing and will hopefully have something to report next month.

e. Administration

Lori Markham stated her work continues on the new facility. Brad Richmond stated he believes the new facility will help with employees and retention for the future and opportunity to evolve with technology and facilities to better serve our citizens. Brad commended Lori and her team for all their efforts and looking to the future.

**7. Open/Public Comment**

No open/public comment.

**8. Adjourn**

Adjourned at 8:56 a.m.

The next Regular Governing Board meeting is scheduled for, October 17, 2024, at 8:00 a.m.



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Board Member  
Governing Board



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