

**Story County E911 Service Board
Board Proceedings
August 8, 2012**

The E911 Service Board met on 08/08/2012 at 6:30 p.m. in the Sheriff's Squad Room at the Story County Justice Center.

John Berg, Gilbert/Franklin Township Fire; Rob Bowers, Iowa State University Alternate; Chuck Cychosz, City of Ames; Kevin Deaton, City of Huxley Alternate; Scott DeYoung, City of Cambridge; Jerry Gull, City of Nevada; Connie Hambly, Story County E911 Service Board; Doug Houghton, City of Ames Alternate; Jerry Johnson, City of Zearing; Wally Looney, City of McCallsburg; Dina McKenna, Story County Alternate; Jerry Stewart, Iowa State University and John Wilson, City of Colo present with Paul Fitzgerald presiding.

Guests: Marie Carlson, Iowa State University Department of Public Safety; Melissa Spencer, Story County Emergency Management; Jeff Theulen, City of Nevada and Barb Vos, State of Iowa E911 Program Manager.

Approval of Minutes

Gull moved; Looney seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the meetings 5/9/12. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Agenda

DeYoung moved; Gull seconded the motion to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

State E911 Next Generation 911 PSAP Update

McKenna advised members the Story County Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) was recently upgraded to NG9-1-1. It is a statewide project involving 117 PSAPs. Barb Vos is the State E911 Program Manager and was present to explain the upgrade.

Vos explained the upgrade was possible through a Federal grant the state had applied for two years ago. The new network is IP based and offers more flexibility, such as text messaging. The PSAPs won't see or experience any differences in the network until the agencies are able to upgrade their legacy equipment to an IP base. Story County was upgraded July 13th and Ames is scheduled sometime in October. The upgrades are scheduled to start between 4 and 5 a.m. with one PSAP scheduled daily.

The major change to the network has been the way the over flow calls are handled. Previously the 9-1-1 would roll-over to the agency's administrative lines. By doing so, the call actually left the 9-1-1 network. If there was a major incident and the 9-1-1 lines busied out, the calls would fill the administrative lines. When those lines filled the caller would get a busy signal and go unanswered. The new system will not allow the call to

leave the network. The call will forward to a PSAP designated by the original agency. That change created a problem for Ames and their transfer calls to ISU.

Hambly supplied Vos with a few questions submitted by board members.

1) Is there a state strategy to facilitate the sharing of 9-1-1 equipment, such as Vipers?

Vos advised the state does not have a strategy for that. The PSAPs purchase and maintain the CPE equipment. There are vendors that have set up shared networks. RACOM did a shared network for the South Central Iowa Regional E911 Service Board using the Zetron Max. This is not an endorsement for any vendor. This is for the information only. South Central Iowa Regional E911 Service Board represents seven counties in south central Iowa. The equipment's located in three counties and the Service Board used T1 lines to connect to the other four. Scott County has a Viper for the county and another Viper for a back-up. They operate as three separate entities (Scott County Sheriff, Davenport PD and Bettendorf PD) but operate out of one building.

Fitzgerald advised other states have coordinated a statewide network. Why hasn't Iowa's 9-1-1 Board looked at entertaining such a concept? It would take the burden off the local service boards.

Vos advised the state's legislative body does not allow for purchasing equipment for the local level call taking. The state could do that to the wireless side because the state maintains the wireless network. Whenever discussion has suggested such an idea, locals push back. They want to maintain the control. Each state has set up their networks differently.

Vos offered her expertise to review any RFP Story County would draft to make sure the board was including all necessary information. Vos also suggested reviewing the NENA website for samples of RFPs.

DeYoung expressed his frustration that the state doesn't have a plan. The idea of regional call centers would be financially more responsible. Vos reminded everyone the wireline network is the responsibility of the local service boards. That was in place a long time ago. All the equipment was in place at the PSAPs long before wireless came along. If the answer is regional call centers, it would take boards, such as your selves, to step up and educate others. It would require a complete overhaul of the code. Consolidation is a dirty word at most 9-1-1 meetings. It means taking away jobs at the local level.

Fitzgerald said the technology today is not the same as it was when the code was written. The purpose of the legislature is to modify and change the laws when needed. This involves the whole state and is not just a county issue. Vos said it

could become a state issue to get all the PSAPs to an IP base. Some counties are really struggling to pay the bills each month. Vos added the discussion could be raised at the next 9-1-1 Task Force meeting later in the month.

Cychosz stated the ICN would be a natural asset to add to the mix. Vos said 85 of the 117 PSAPs will be on the ICN Network. Some centers are too far out to be connected.

2) Do you anticipate any change in wireless revenue for the next 3 years?

Vos said it would be hard to predict at this time. The legislature made huge changes to the wireless surcharge. The surcharge for prepaid phones and cards dropped in half plus an additional 5% was taken by retailers and the Dept of Revenue. Prior to this change in legislation, the wireless surcharge had stayed steady for the last two years.

Gull asked if the state audited the wireless carriers. Vos replied there wasn't any provision in the code to audit wireless carriers.

Fitzgerald asked if the 9-1-1 program was audited. Vos replied yearly as a single audit. It is not included with Homeland Security. That is required by the legislature.

Vos stated the local Service Boards will be receiving the 21% that previously went back to the carriers for cost recovery. The quarterly check in October should reflect the increase.

Cychosz asked Vos what she anticipated for this legislative session. One issue will be the moratorium placed on the \$2.50 for the wireline side and some of the wireless carriers are pushing for an increase in the wireless surcharge. The wireless and wireline surcharge would be equal. That was the purpose behind the 9-1-1 Task Force Survey. The data needs to support the justification in order to request an increase in surcharge.

Houghton asked for some clarification on operations of the seven county consortia. Vos advised it consisted of seven county PSAPs in central Iowa – Union, Adair, Clark, Madison, Taylor and Adams. The Zetron Max equipment resides at Union, Madison, and Taylor. Union County will have four counties working off their equipment. Madison will have 2 counties, and Taylor will be a single county. They have connectivity to the other counties. The calls route through Union County and depending on the Emergency Services Routing Key (ESRK) will go to the appropriate county to be answered. The advantage is having a PSAP in every county. Marion Co and Pella PD have also been doing something similar for the last ten years through Ramsey Communications. The

call routes through Marion County Sheriff's Office located in Knoxville and answered in Pella.

Fitzgerald asked Vos when the wireless funding would be opened for supported funding. Vos advised July of 2013.

Updated Report for Weather Alerts/Warnings

Spencer reported Chief Cychosz had contacted the Office of Emergency Management a few months ago concerning means of notifying citizens who are outdoors about impending weather.

Story County experienced storms that produced straight line winds last July and again in May and July of this year. Those large scale wind events were examples of the damage straight line wind can create and how these events can be hazardous to people who could have been outside. On close examination of the recent storms in Story County, the damages have been equivalent to an EF0 or EF1 tornado. The winds start at 65 mph for an EF0.

Presently the activation of the Outdoor Warning Siren (OWS) requires either a reported sighting of a tornado by a trained spotter, or an issuance of a Tornado Warning by the National Weather Service (NWS).

A preliminary review of the Outdoor Warning Siren Activation Policy was handed out to the members as a draft only. The purpose of the document was to provide guidance and facilitate discussion. The proposed criteria for OWS activation includes two additional points:

- 1) Any severe thunderstorm warning issued by the NWS with predicted/observed wind gusts of 70 mph or greater or predicted/observed 1.75 inch/golf ball sized or larger hail.
- 2). Or reports by trained storm spotters of damage or conditions consistent with wind gusts of 70 mph or greater and/or 1.75/golf ball sized or larger hail.

The weather service has also added 'tags' to their weather warnings reflecting the additional points.

The July storm this year would have met the criteria.

However, Cychosz added, the National Weather Service could not have predicted the storm warning in time. The PSAPs can push the button for the OWS but can the NWS predict those conditions in time.

Members expressed their concern for the western side of the county and the need to monitor the weather in Boone County.

Spencer advised Emergency Management will gather information and feedback from the communities and agencies within Story County before the next season.

Discussion & Budget Considerations for E911 Equipment

Fitzgerald stated the PSAPs have previously experienced problems with the backroom 9-1-1 equipment but the problems have become more frequent with the recent upgrade. The problems are reaching a critical stage and the PSAP managers have expressed concern of a possible failure. The Chair called an Emergency Meeting of the Executive Board to discuss possible options.

Houghton started off by echoing Vos' remark about the E911 network being a very complicated system. The Communications Planning Committee met following the Executive Board Meeting in an attempt to formulate a plan for connecting into the state's E9-1-1 network. The committee decided to solicit assistance from a professional consultant, GeoComm. They were the consulting agency hired by the Statewide Interoperable Communications System Board (ISICSB) to complete a 911 Feasibility Study. However, the estimated cost to assist the committee with writing a Request for Proposal (RFP) was \$35,000 to \$45,000. The committee's attempted to make contact with other consulting agencies and other counties, was unsuccessful. The committee is concerned with the new technology and the state making upgrades to the 9-1-1 system, that the committee isn't qualified to write the RFP. The task isn't as simple as the committee thought it would be.

Financing the \$400,000 project was another area of discussion. \$88,300 was designated in this year's budget for 9-1-1 and another \$88,000 was allocated for pagers that could be utilized if necessary. But the consensus for a short term solution was: The Service Board will need to borrow the money. The increase in wireless surcharge will generate approximately \$40,000. To put the financing in perspective, Houghton advised. If the board would borrow \$300,000 at 5% interest for 5 years the annual payment would be approximately \$69,000. That amount could be conceivable. The increase in surcharge along with the reduction in tower fees could generate enough to fund the new equipment. It wouldn't fund the maintenance for the 9-1-1 equipment. The Board was fortunate enough to purchase 5 years of maintenance contract for the radio equipment, so there won't be a need to fund radio maintenance for 5 years. Some vendors offer financing with 0% interest. The Service Board borrowed money 17 years ago to pay for the equipment being used today.

Another consideration is the option of sharing the 9-1-1 equipment. Dallas County, Perry Police, WestComm and Racom have all approached the committee to share 9-1-1 equipment. A contract would be required between any agencies, but the possibility is achievable. The reason for sharing is because the maintenance contracts are expensive.

Originally the committee had hoped to have a reasonable cost for hiring a consultant, but more time is needed before making that decision. Fitzgerald advised more time would be appropriate with the dynamics involved with this issue. Gull advised a reasonable approach is enough time to explore the options and make a determination. Houghton

expressed his concern of waiting until the next scheduled meeting in November. A decision needs to be made sooner. All members agreed the Chair could call a meeting if necessary.

McKenna advised the APCO National Conference would give committee members a chance to talk with vendors and explore the options.

Discussion followed on how to proceed through the information gathering process. Fitzgerald proposed to continue working on the 9-1-1 equipment issue within the Executive Committee. Notices will be sent out to all Service Board members when an Executive Board meeting is scheduled so those that want to attend may do so. Information can be shared quicker and a reasonably sound proposal can be given to the Service Board. Gull seconded the proposal, motion carried.

Appoint Proxy Designation for ICAP Resolution

Gull moved; DeYoung seconded to leave Fitzgerald as primary and Cychosz as the alternate designated proxies with the Iowa Communities Assurance Pool. Resolution 12-1 would continue the authorization. Motion carried.

Old Business

Hambly informed the members a bill from Electronic Engineering had been paid for work, research and consulting fees regarding the change-over of the radio consoles. The bill was \$4,275 and was an allowable expense for the radio grant. Due to the grant deadline the Chair authorized payment. The board will receive 80% reimbursement.

New Business

Hambly reported a bill was submitted by ISU for reimbursement of the mapping application, Looking Glass for \$3,579.78. This claim was originally submitted for payment in the final pay period of FY12. However, mapping maintenance was not included in the FY12 budget. At the time the FY12 budget was prepared, the intent was to be operating on the new CAD, so this maintenance was not budgeted. Attempts were made to get a refund from SunGard for the unused portion, June to October. Because it was a third party vendor, SunGard was unable to refund the unused portion. DeYoung moved: Gull seconded to approve payment to ISU for reimbursement for \$3,579.78. Motion carried.

Comments from the Public

None

Comments from E911 Service Board Members

Stewart expressed his concern about the lack of accomplishment on the 911 issue. Individuals or committees could have been assigned areas of research, but instead the issue was referred back to the Executive Board.

DeYoung again expressed his frustration with the State's lack of planning and inability to have answers for the PSAPs.

Gull moved; seconded by Loney to adjourn, motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted

Connie Hambly, Secretary
Database Coordinator