



JOINT POWERS AGENCY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

September 16, 2014

1:00 p.m.

City-County Administration Building
1010 Tenth Street, Board Chambers
Modesto, CA 95354

Commission Members Present: President, Bill Zoslocki; (alternate for City Manager, Jim Holgersson), Deputy City Manager, Dee Williams-Ridley; C.E.O., Stan Risen; (alternate for Mayor Katen), Newman Chief of Police, Randy Richardson; Chief of Police, City of Modesto, Galen Carroll; Stanislaus County Fire Warden, Dale Skiles, City Attorney, Rolly Stevens; County Counsel, John Doering

Absent: City Manager, Jim Holgersson; Vice-President Bill O'Brien

President Bill Zoslocki called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Michael Holland, Newman City Manager spoke during Public Comment Period, notifying the Commission of their intent to sever the agreement for law dispatch services effective 1/1/2015. They will continue to utilize SR9-1-1 for Fire dispatch.

IV. Williams-Ridley/Skiles Unan. Approved minutes from June 18, 2014

V. Consent Items

A-1. Risen/Slamon Unan. Approved dates for JPA meetings for remainder of 2014.

Co-Director Cecil Ridge explained the reason and need for additional meetings to be added to the Commission calendar for the remainder of 2014. Matrix Consulting has been hired to conduct an evaluation on dispatch center, making suggestions on how to improve service to our customers, both internal and external. It was felt that during this process it would be important to come back to the Commission on a monthly basis to report any information, or recommendations that they may have, also seeking any insight from the Commission during the process. Matrix Consultant was unable to attend the September meeting, but has confirmed they will be here for the October 15, 2014 to make introductions. This also provides the Commission with some time to determine if they may want to continue the Commission meetings on a monthly basis as opposed to the quarterly meeting format that has been used for the past several years.

President Zoslocki commented in agreement that the additional meetings are a good idea at this time to provide a better understanding of where we are going and what we are trying to accomplish.

Chief Ridge extended an invitation to the members of the Commission to come to Stanislaus Regional 9-1-1 for a visit and tour, as well as hopefully have some time to sit along with a dispatcher and plug in for calls and radio traffic to better understand the job that they do.

VI. Informational

B-1. Stanislaus Regional 9-1-1 Director's update

1. Matrix Consulting update - Cecil Ridge

At the last JPA Commission meeting, direction was given to issue an RFI for different consultants to conduct an efficiency study of the Dispatch Communication Center. Limited responses were received on the initial request, so it was extended in hopes there would be more. Due to there being so few consulting firms responding to the request, it was decided that the CEO and City Manager would filter them, conducting telephone interviews and make the selection. Matrix was selected, retained and a contract signed. Greg Matthews has spent 4 days in the agency, met with more than 30 of our staff members, and stake holders with more meetings planned in the near future. They are also receiving a lot of data they have requested, regarding call volume, and operations information for them to begin to analyze and build the background for their final report.

CEO Risen added that he and City Manager Jim Holgersson are serving as project managers for this study. They have received a 'check-in' report with the firm indicating they have conducted 41 interviews so far with plans to be back this week for additional interviews. Hoping to have a draft report by the end of November.

2. 800 MHz project update – Barbara Jackson was named Project Manager for the 800 MHz project in April 2014. She presented to the board that this is a joint City-County project for radio interoperability. It's a mostly grant funded project. The focus is on the 5 sites. Barbara provided coverage maps with her presentation for the Commission. Those are Turlock PD, Modesto PD, 10th St. Place, Modesto Fire Station #6, and Modesto Fire Station #9 along with SR 9-1-1 Base Station.

Project was originally approved in April 2012. Phase 1 Started, Contract was awarded to Tait Radio for this project. All radio equipment was purchased, tower for 10th St Place, Communication Shelters for Fire Station #9 also purchased. Turlock PD is pretty much complete, Ceres PD is almost done, & SR 9-1-1 Site installed. Looking toward Phase 2, there is some grant money that will be used once the Board of Supervisors approves in order to continue with the project. The Grant period will have to be extended. Also have had to apply for some Dept. of Homeland Services Funding. COPS grants needed modification. Scope of Work has been completed. Working on allocating money for DHS to do an EHP study for Fire Station #6. The Tait contract will be amended to continue the project for Phase 2. Also looking for an award of DHS funding in November/December time frame. A Scope of Work will be completed for the EHP, which is an environmental assessment.

Goals are to complete the Ceres PD site, start and complete 10th St. Place, Fire Station 9 and Fire Station 6. Conduct multi-site and overall systems testing. Complete training, procure radios, and implement. Set to be completed in July 2015.

Fire Warden Dale Skiles wanted to confirm if the FY 2014 Homeland Security money is not approved until January 2015, will it pose a problem in completing the project by

June or July 2015. Barbara indicated the project is on schedule, anticipating about 6 months to complete Fire Station 6. The Homeland Security money is basically funding Fire Station 6. The rest of the sites will be completed by January; Fire Station 6 will be completed by July, hopefully sooner, but definitely by July.

President Zoslocki inquired when the whole system would be up and running county wide. Barbara replied that this project is focused on the 5 sites. There were originally 14 sites that were identified. She is unable to predict when the rest will be done. It's a funding issue. These 5 particular sites were identified because they were the most populous areas and had the coverage in the most populous area.

Co-Director Ridge added that he understood the original plan was to cover the Highway 99 corridor with its heavy population and then down the road as funding became available add additional sites to get coverage out to the outlying areas. This is very expensive.

President Zoslocki was inquiring more about the technical aspect of the radio signal coverage and Co-Director Ridge explained about signal strength, and topography which will require additional towers to be installed for improved transmission in the remote areas of the county.

Barbara explained the color keys on the coverage maps she provided indicating signal strength.

3. 9-1-1 Telephone System Update – Chief Ridge gave some background to the commission explaining the phone system is the department's life blood for calls in and out. The system we have been using has caused a lot of consternation amongst the employees. It's not a popular system, which has also created a lot of problems for our customers. We are excited; we have a new system that will be implemented in the first part of the year. It is paid for by 9-1-1 fees that are attached to the phone tax. There is no money coming from the JPA or any user agencies' budgets for it. The phone system is coming through the phone users' fees. A contractor has been selected. Introduced Nate Olson, Radio tech to update the Commission on the current status.

A purchase order and paperwork were submitted to the State of California in May 2014. June 2, received a commitment to fund the 9-1-1 equipment from the State of California. AT & T was the selected Vendor for this product by the SR 9-1-1 Managers and dispatchers after looking at different products that were offered.

Kickoff Meeting was held on 8/7/2014 with AT&T & SR9-1-1 staff. Equipment was scheduled to ship to the AT&T Bar Area Staging location on 8/25/14. Airbus (Cassidian) which is the actual manufacturer is scheduled to have Remote Field Engineers working for Site Configurations the week of 10/27-11/3. Training for SR9-1-1 staff was originally scheduled for the week of 11/14/14 with cutover scheduled for the week of 12/1/2014. There have been some concerns with this (Cassidian) which is the actual manufacturer is scheduled to have Remote Field Engineers working for Site Configurations the week of 10/27-11/3. Training for SR9-1-1 staff was originally scheduled for the week of 11/14/14 with cutover

scheduled for the week of 12/1/2014. There have been some concerns with this schedule as it gave us only the week of Thanksgiving to train all the dispatch staff. We have requested that AT&T revise this schedule giving us at least two weeks for training. They are looking at pushing the cutover out to 12/8/2014, which was originally scheduled for the week of 12/1/2014, or push the training back one week, which would still give us two weeks between training and cut-over and keep our original cut-over date.

Questions were fielded regarding the equipment life expectancy. Nate replied that the State allows replacement every five years with the funding. The system currently in use is no longer supported by the manufacturer, so there's another reason to get it changed out. Five to seven years is considered normal for these system changes.

Chief Ridge reminded the Commission again, that the Department and its supporting agencies do not have to pay for the equipment. The funds come completely from the State.

4. Staffing Updates – Cecil Ridge updated the Commission with recent changes including a new Organizational Chart and recent promotions. Introduced Wendy Silva to the Commission as the new Manager IV, in charge of SR9-1-1 operations. In addition to Wendy, there have been two new Shift Manger Promotions, Lisa Frazer, and Kim Rightmire. This created the need for a new Communications Training Officer as both Lisa and Kim were CTO's prior to their promotions. These people can also step into Management in the absence of the Shift Manager. Chris Beach was selected as a CTO to fill some of that vacancy. There have been some recent promotions and things are going well. We have some vacancies, and the Commission has allowed us to run a continuous recruitment for Emergency Dispatcher and Emergency Call Taker. We are well underway, with five Dispatcher vacancy positions right now, anticipating possibly one more in the future. That's quite a few when we have less than 40 dispatchers. We have suffered from staffing issues for several years. It's tough to get people trained. It's a very difficult job with the multi-tasking, and stress. There has been a good response from applicants. There have been 377 Emergency Dispatcher applicants, and 396 Emergency Call Taker applicants. We lose a lot of candidates through the process. There is about 50% loss through the testing process. We're down to 188 people for Emergency Dispatcher who are now completing the criminal convictions questionnaire, and 178 for Call Taker. Once we get the results from that, there will be additional applicants that are filtered out. We're planning on at least a week of testing (8 hours a day). It takes us approximately 6 months to get somebody from when they are trained to where they are able to be a dispatcher in the seat by themselves. Along with that, they not only have to take the test, but there's an extensive Criminal Justice background that weeds a lot of people out. Because of the nature of the job, there's a lot of sensitive material they have access to in the Dispatch Center, so we can't have anyone who has a questionable history allowed in that room. We hope by the end of next we will have established a list of the people to be hired and go forward with that.

A question was fielded regarding the positions being funded. Chief Ridge responded that they are funded but not filled.

A question was fielded seeking total number of applicants. Chief Ridge responded that there were 377 for Dispatcher, and 396 for Call Taker, which has already been reduced to 188 for Dispatcher and 178 for Emergency Call Taker.

This is a larger pool than we have seen. The Department is attempting to “cast our net into a different pond.” We had a problem with the last few recruitments of not getting much of a candidate pool, so things have been done differently with this recruitment, advertising in different areas where we had not previously done, and it seems to have helped.

Chief Skiles asked additional questions regarding the 800 MHz project, seeking clarification regarding radio coverage of the Highway 99 corridor versus county wide coverage. Attached to that project is the Simulcast project, which is county wide, having an effect on both Fire and the Sheriff’s Dept.? Chief Ridge deferred to Nate Olson to confirm that Chief Skiles was correct. The maps provided were for the 800 MHz system, but tied into that is also the Simulcast system which is County Wide which does support and improve both Fire Dispatch Channel as well as the SO Channel 1. There will be a benefit county wide when this project is complete. Even though there may not be 800 MHz County Wide, the Simulcast will enhance the transmissions throughout the county.

Chief Skiles was seeking clarification as to who’s the owner for this system since the funding has come from three different sources, two COPS Grants as well as Homeland Security. Who will be responsible for it, and will the ongoing maintenance costs in support of the system be budgeted for next year?

Chief Ridge extended an invitation for the Commission to come visit the SR 9-1-1 facility, spend time to understand what a unique work environment it is, as well as how stressful it can be. Also, providing opportunity to get the answers to some technical questions from the staff on hand who are more specialized and capable of helping with that understanding.

VII. Closed Session

C-1. Discussion regarding upcoming Labor Negotiations; Agency Negotiator: Nancy Bronstein (or designee); Employee Organization: Stanislaus Regional Emergency Dispatch Association. Government Code section 54954.5 (f).

VIII. Adjournment at 1:55 p.m.

ATTESTED: Kaye-Marie Newell, Joint Powers Agency Commission Clerk. The above is an expanded summary of the minutes of the Governing Board of the Consolidated Emergency Dispatch Agency. Complete audio-taped minutes are available from the Stanislaus Regional 9-1-1 Administration office.