

Note: These minutes are a draft and are not to be considered official until approved at the next meeting.

Poweshiek County 911 Board Meeting Minutes for October 17, 2023

The meeting was held in person and via ZOOM

Members Present:

Rusty Massengale-Malcom, Gary Sears-Gilman, Tom Kriegel-Sheriff, Ruth Moore-New Sharon, Joel Kercheval-Montezuma, Jason Roudabush-Poweshiek County, Kurt Hall-Brooklyn

Dawn Disney-Addressing/Database Mgr.

Via ZOOM: Brian Paul-EMA

Members Absent:

Grinnell, Hartwick, Barnes City, Chelsea, Sully, Belle Plaine, Victor, Deep River, Midwest Ambulance, Searsboro

Guests:

Joe Meyer-Dispatch Supervisor

Call to order and Roll Call

Massengale called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. - Members present as listed above.

Approval of Agenda

Motioned by Sears to approve the agenda as presented, second by Moore. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes from Meeting held September 12, 2023

Motioned by Kercheval to approve the minutes as presented, second by Kriegel. Motion carried.

Business:

Power Phone Service Plan – Annual Product & Service Plan (EMD) – Meyer

There was nothing further to be added or changed on the Power Phone Service Plan from last meeting. It was approved to allow the Sheriff to spend the remaining balance of the \$4,000 line item for training as needed this fiscal year.

Meyer got the service plan sent back in and is waiting on an invoice from them at this point. He has received the product and is going to get it pushed out to the dispatchers in the next week or so, so they can get started on that and start using their continuing education on the new product. He is also trying to get the state to approve the basic 40-hour telecommunication training that is built into the training. If ILEA will approve it, then instead of sending them to the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy for the 40-

hour training they would be able to do it inhouse. He feels that it would be better because ILEA puts out a generic product and then they come back to the county for the actual hands-on training and to learn the way we do things in Poweshiek County. Doing it inhouse would allow them to do the training with their trainer available to answer questions, save overtime as they could train during their normal scheduled hours, and it would be done on the system that they will actually be using. Massengale asked if there were any specific requirements to get a certificate, etc., and Meyer advised that they have to get at least 75% per course and then the printable certificates are made available. That is true for the EMD, Fire Service Dispatch, Law Enforcement Dispatch and then there are different one-hour courses, like the Active Shooter and all require 75% to pass. Meyer added that the software also has a checklist of questions available for Dispatch to use should there ever be an active shooter situation, that is accessible on the screen.

PSAP Agreement with HSEMD for NG911 Shared Services – Meyer

Meyer said that he got the agreement approved to use just one router, as we are currently doing which brings the cost down to basically half. The first year there is a non-recurring charge for the hardware and software of \$1875.00 as well as the service fees of \$2,749.04. The annual recurring charge then goes down to \$3593.17 for each of the five years, for a total of \$17,965.85. They will be installing the new equipment in Dispatch when they get to us on the list they are currently working from, with upgrades starting July 1, 2024. So once the contract gets approved, they will add us to that list and we will have to wait until they get to us. This will include all new monitors, keyboards, and wireless mouse for all three stations, along with the cabinet in the equipment room that holds the computer equipment.

Massengale asked if everyone was following him and if he could walk them through the handout, as it was hard to read. Meyer stated that basically the first year will be more because of the hardware, which will be \$8217.21 and then the four remaining years it will drop to \$3,593.17 per year. Massengale asked if that will keep all three stations current. Meyer said yes, and that they basically use two stations with the third station in the middle should a need arise, and that it has a hand-held radio that they can use if they have to but that it doesn't have the cool computer screen with all of the radio frequencies on it like the other two stations. It does have the phone system on it so that they can answer 911 calls on it like the other two full-time stations. The contract includes the upkeep on the recorder, which records the administrative lines, 911 calls and radio traffic. The thing that we cut back on was the additional router in the equipment room that is used as a back-up. We've never had an issue with the current router, and if it does go down then Dispatch just has to use the actual handset to answer the phone, instead of the headset until the problem with the router gets resolved. Massengale asked how long it takes to get the router fixed should it go down. Meyer said just shipping time, and then someone from Racom in Pella brings the new equipment here and replaces it, and that 3 days would probably be the maximum time it would take. Meyer said that he is comfortable with operating with only one router.

Moore thanked Meyer for getting that information for the board.

Massengale asked for a motion to enter into the five-year agreement as presented. Moved by Moore, Meyer asked if they could give him the authority to sign the contract as part of the motion, Massengale said that the authority would be for the Sheriff to sign the contract, Kercheval seconded Moore's motion. Massengale then asked Paul if he could hear everything that was being discussed and if he had any questions. Paul said he was hearing everything just fine and doesn't have any questions. Massengale then asked for a vote – motion passed.

Invoices from Response Technologies and ILEA

Disney received an invoice from Response Technologies for a hand-held radio and battery back-up that was purchased for the courthouse. The one that they had needed replaced as it didn't work after the new outdoor warning siren system. EMA was under the impression that the system would work on the backside of the current fire channel. The system would work on the current fire channel; however, the system would take priority over any dispatching that the 911 center was doing, radio traffic, etc. This would be the case evening when the system would perform the routine testing, Paul stated that not only does the alarm system send the signal out to the sirens to activate or not activate, but it also gets information back from each siren reporting whether or not they activated, etc., and can take up to 10 minutes which posed an obvious problem with using that frequency. The thought that it would work in the background was not really in the background but would override emergency traffic. EMA paid for a new FCC license to have the sirens to be put on their own frequency and then the radio that was in the courthouse needed to be replaced in order for it to be programmable and working as it was originally. This was done as soon as possible without knowing who was going to pay for it. EMA and the Sheriff discussed it, and Paul is asking if the 911 Board would be willing to pay for the radio or if it needs to be paid for out of the county budget since it is for the courthouses use, but know if that is fair either as no one was prepared or budgeted for this radio. It was just needed without advance notice.

Massengale asked if the new radio will be compatible with the new countywide radio system. Paul confirmed that they could have fixed the old radio for less money, but it wouldn't have worked with the new system and would've only been a bandage until the county is operating on the new system. The new radio was not figured into the original project because no one knew that the storm warning system was going to pose this problem. Meyer said that the security system, which is what the old radio was initially placed at the courthouse for is old and quickly becoming outdated as well. Paul said, that there is no support for it anymore and Meyer said, that it is still working and effective but will need replaced at some point as well. Massengale said "that it would probably be for us to take that on as well". Hall said, "at least half of it". Moore said, "or we pay for the radio now, and then the next phase would be the courthouses responsibility to take care of, as another way to divide that expense and won't have to hope that they approve of paying half of it now". Massengale asked if there is any future plans or costs for upgrading it. Paul didn't think so and advised that there is no software or anything, that it is literally a panic button that they can push and it sends out a recording over the airwaves. Currently it is using an analog signal but can be switched over as part of the project by Racom when the time comes. We could've paid to have the old radio reprogrammed and then have to turn around and purchase a new radio once the new system is up and running, or just buy a new radio now that will operate on the old and new system.

Massengale said it is his opinion that this board is taking on the radios in the rest of the county that he thinks that the board should take on the alarm system at the courthouse as well. He then asked if anyone else has any other comments or questions on this and if not that he'd entertain a motion to pay for the radio at this time. Hall moved a motion for the 911 Board to pay the invoice for the radio, seconded by Gilman. Motion passed.

The next invoice is from Iowa Law Enforcement Academy for the Telecommunicator Basic 40-Hour Class for the two newest employees for a total of \$750.00. Massengale asked if we need a motion to pay this invoice. Paul said that we had already approved it at the last meeting. Disney said that wasn't this invoice, and that there was approval for the Sheriff to use whatever remained in that line item, but Meyer was to keep the 911 Board apprised of the spending. This invoice is for that purpose and doesn't require any action. Disney will get a claim prepared for payment.

Countywide Radio System Update:

Roudabush advised that the damage to the tower on 480th Avenue has been fixed and it is ready for everything to move forward. Roughly the first week in November they will send a crew to start hanging all of the antennas and dishes. It takes basically a week per tower for installation and then they will start testing. Paul, Kriegel and Meyer went to Racom in Marshalltown for some training. Racom has all of our towers set up in their system in their back room, so they went through and tested the portable radios, dispatch consoles, and instructed how the system is to work with priorities on the radio, etc. Meyer asked Paul if he could give a better detail as to what was covered and Paul said "it's a good thing that they had us there with the visuals of the actual system or I would've been lost, it was a lot". Racom gave a tour of the place. They had Poweshiek County's system set up in a back room, and then had those that went in a front room with a console as if they were working off of the actual system in Dispatch. They were given a 100-page document to go through with tests to run through, from simple to complicated situations such as towers failing and how they switch over and work, to a complete system failure and what would happen and what to do. It was very in depth and being done in real time, informative, detailed, long day but well worth it. Paul said that he felt more comfortable and learned a lot more about the systems capability. He thinks that probably 99% of the people using it will have no idea how it all works, but to see all of the intrinsic things that go on in the background was really quite impressive and he was happy with what Racom is doing and where we are with the sights. Those concerns that the 911 Board had with the sites and delays due to damage, etc., Racom picked up on and have been making good progress. There is another meeting tomorrow and it is getting a lot closer than we were just a few weeks ago.

Roudabush stated that he believes there is still one tower without power. The biggest problem there is dealing with three different electric companies instead of just one. Paul state that is true and the companies what punch listed signed off on before installing electricity, and one of the punch lists states that there has to be power before it can be signed off on, so they are in a stalemate at one of the sites. Roudabush said the ice dams are on, they are getting ready to install the racks. All of the equipment has been tested and ready to plug and play as soon as the sites are ready for it. Paul said that Racom will be doing testing in square mile grids and then come back to us when they present the system for final acceptance. We should be using the system by the end of the year and tentatively scheduling the mobile installs with the Fire Departments starting in January through February, but don't want to do the final approval of the system until next fall after we have full crops for testing. We will be able to use the system, but we just won't sign off on it until it is completely tested per the contract. Racom is also planning on rolling out some of the portable radios by the end of the year, starting with the Sheriff's Office as they cover the majority of the county and will be good for testing countywide coverage. Grinnell PD and Grinnell College will be testing also. The college has joined our system at their own expense and are prepared to switch over as well. Paul anticipates that we will start using the system the beginning of December, by March or April be completely up and running and then signing off on it by next August or September.

Massengale said that we probably need to keep the old system up and running as a backup. Paul said that we shouldn't deactivate the old system until we have signed on the dotted line for the new system. Paul said the he and Meyer have discussed going down to Keokuk County and doing some testing with them for mutual aid as they assist with Deep River sometimes and they are on an analog system, so they feel it would be good to see how that is going to work if needed, and to keep some of the old analog radios for that purpose as well.

Disney asked if the 911 Board is to be paying for the electric and LP at all of the old sights as well as the new for the next year. Massengale asked about an invoice that was received for LP and filling all

four sites. Roudabush said that it has been taken care of. Paul said that it was to go to Racom and was included in the cost of the project including connecting the lines. There was further discussion about the progress and testing. Moore said something for them to consider when doing the testing is in-floor heat. That the foil layer between the basement and upstairs floor causes interference with reception, so they need to be sure that they check those kinds of places when testing as well. That was good information and the board agreed that a lot of people wouldn't think about that and should be considered as well. Paul said that Jasper County shared a recommendation. They have an underground rock mine, and that they do have a direct channel on the system that talks radio to radio, not through the tower sites and they recommended that if there are areas that don't get good coverage to have a dedicated channel for that purpose that can be switched to if needed.

Sheriff said that we only had 2 fails out of 90 tests when they were at Racom. Those fails were fixed while they were still there, and it was pretty cool to see. Meyer said it was nice to see the system working with several people using it at once.

Hall asked if there will be countywide training, or just by department, etc.? Paul said that they will first go to each department when issuing the equipment and go through the nitty gritty on all of it, and by no means will they just hand out equipment and without any training. Hall was asking if there would be countywide training instead of just individual department training. Paul said that the issue with that is that not all of the department's radios are set up the same. Some have certain talk groups and channels installed in different places on their lists than others, so that might lead to confusion if being done all together. More than likely, it will be done by department. It will probably take an hour and a half to two hours for training.

Massengale stated that Iowa, Jasper, Mahaska, and Tama are all up and running. Paul stated Marshall County is as well, Benton is right behind us and Racom is trying to get Keokuk County on board as well. Racom believes that with all of the bleed over coverage from the counties surrounding Keokuk County that they will only need to build one tower in Sigourney.

Discussion:

Disney asked for clarification on paying the invoices that there has been back and forth discussion on. Meyer stated that once the contract is signed for the Shared Services that we will go on a list and won't get invoiced and need paid until July 1, 2024. Meyer doesn't have the figures of the most current invoice for the PowerPhone but said it is around \$3000 for the training portion and there should be enough in the training line item to pay it and the ILEA invoice for \$750.00. He will send Disney the correct invoice for the PowerPhone. Meyer stated the following year it will be more because this year only covers eight or nine months, but that he is looking for some grants and other places to help pay that next year, and that he doesn't just come to the 911 Board to ask for money that he looks elsewhere too.

Next Meeting: December 19, 2023 @ 6:30 p.m. – Zoom Meeting Only – for Radio System Update and to plan the Budget Workshop date.

Motioned to Adjourn @ 7:38 p.m. By: Hall and 2nd by Kercheval. Motion carried.