

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 May 1, 2023

This meeting was held via Zoom

Members Present: Michael McLelland-Grinnell, Ruth More-New Sharon, Rusty Massengale-Malcom, Tom Kriegel-PSAP, Fred Foreman-Searsboro, Gary Sears-Gilman, Brian Paul-EMA, Jason Roudabush-Poweshiek County

Dawn Disney-Addressing/Database Mgr. @ Public Safety Building

Kurt Hall-Brooklyn @ Public Safety Building

Members Absent: Hartwick, Barnes City, Chelsea, Sully, Montezuma, Belle Plaine, Victor, Deep River, Midwest Ambulance

Guests: Attending via ZOOM:
Joe Meyer-Dispatch Supervisor, TJ-Searsboro Fire

Call to order and Roll Call

Massengale called the meeting to order at 6:23 p.m. - Members present as listed above.

Approval of Agenda

Motioned by Moore to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Roudabush. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes from February 7, 2023

Motioned by Roudabush to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Hall. Motion carried.

Business Items

Countywide Radio System

Encrypting Fire/Law/Ambulance frequencies in all radios –

Both Poweshiek County Sheriff and Grinnell Chief want all law enforcement channels encrypted in addition to the designated Special Operations and Tactical channels that were included in the RFP. The cost provided by Racom for the additional encryption per radio is \$250 each if requested prior to ordering. This meeting was called quickly because Racom will be placing the order within the next week. Paul stated that to make this change to all radios purchased for the countywide inoperability radio system will cost \$51,250 if it is done now, and if added later \$101,475.

Paul said that all radios will need to be encrypted in order to hear and communicate with law enforcement, otherwise law enforcement fire and ambulances could hear law enforcement but not be able to communicate back and that law enforcement would have to switch to the fire channel in order to communicate, or rely on dispatch to relay all communication. It has already been established that the less we have to switch around the better. There is also a gap when GPD and GFD can hear what dispatch pages out.

Massengale said they can still monitor law to fire but fire could not talk back only if they switch banks and scroll to the bottom to get to the appropriate channel. Each fire department has their own channel and operations channel. Paul said that defeats the inoperability of this system. Massengale said that they are encrypted now.

Moore asked what are other counties around us doing. Paul said some are using encrypted channels, but not all channels are encrypted, and that more and more counties are going to all encryption. Massengale said that Jasper is not using encryption, nor Mahaska or Iowa Counties. He asked if we encrypt if all of the other counties would have to encrypt in order to be able to communicate with us. Paul said, no that dispatch can patch them through to an encrypted channel or the tactical channel.

McClelland asked the number of radios that would have to be encrypted, which is around 205, and he has a concern with that as it is a lot of money and thinks that there has to be a simple fix. He feels that law enforcement needs the channels to be encrypted for confidentiality, and asked what the point of the system is if everyone can hear their traffic.

Paul said that if law enforcement is concerned with those that have radios listening to their traffic when going out at night to dodge law enforcement then those departments need to address that issue. The pagers are issued to notify those on call when needed, not the radios.

Sears stated that Gilman has concerns about not being able to communicate if just law enforcement is encrypted.

Moore asked if all could have to be encrypted. Paul said, no just law enforcement channels, but then that encrypted channel would need to be on all radios.

McClelland said that he is getting ready to log off to attend another meeting for the City Council and wanted to state again that he feels that law enforcement is the only ones that need encrypted channels due to confidentiality and Foreman agreed with him.

Roudabush asked if those other counties mentioned earlier are having any problems? Paul said that their day-to-day channels are not encrypted just a few designated and Poweshiek County wants them all encrypted. Roudabush said that if we add the encryption to any radios outside of law enforcement it should be limited to just the Chiefs.

Massengale suggested that maybe we consider encrypting the radio in the incident command vehicle. Moore asked if all of the radios are encrypted if New Sharon would be able to communicate with them. Paul said yes that the fire/ambulance's day-to-day channels would not be encrypted.

Meyers said that encrypting all law enforcement channels keeps all sensitive information away from the public. Paul said there is a channel designated for sensitive information. Meyers said, yep and then law enforcement would end up switching channels 90 times a day.

Moore asked who is responsible to pay for the encryption?

Kriegel said a simple fix is to not encrypt law enforcement channels and that he knows that Jasper and other counties are not, but he also agrees with McClelland.

Roudabush said that there wouldn't be any additional cost for law enforcement to get the channels encrypted that it is only going to cost if the encrypted channels are added to the other radios in the county.

Moore stated that she could see an incident command walkie but not putting it in a truck and wanted to know if there is room in the budget to pay for adding the encryption.

Massengale asked Paul if there is a chance that we could get a different color of case/cover for those radios that are encrypted?

Roudabush suggested that maybe we encrypt a truck and one walkie and asked Paul what that would cost. Paul said there would be around 25-50 radios with the Chief, Assistant Chief, all full-time firefighters. Foreman said even if each driver just had the encryption that would cut it back. Roudabush said that we should get the cost and numbers together before making a decision. Kriegel said that he wouldn't be too concerned about the full-time firemen because they have policies they have to follow and if information gets leaked out then someone could get disciplined.

Roudabush said we need numbers. Paul said that 20 radios will cost \$5,000 @ \$250 each. Hall asked what about ambulances? Paul said that would make 24 @ \$6,000. Kriegel said that is better than 250 radios. Moore said that is true and we can always add more down the road if needed.

Moore moved "that we do 2 encrypted radios for each department plus law enforcement and ambulance services and full-time firemen at Grinnell Fire Department – approximately 24 radios". Seconded by Roudabush. Paul opposed. Motion passed.

Massengale asked Roudabush if this is something that can be paid for out of the radio project. Roudabush said, no that there are other changes that have already come up costing additional money that wasn't planned. Paul said Roudabush was correct and that this would have to come out of the 911 budget.

Massengale said that he would entertain a motion to approve the 911 board to pay for the encryption that was voted on. Hearing nothing, Roudabush moved for the 911 Board to pay for the encryption of 24 radios. Paul seconded. Hall opposed. Motion passed.

Kriegel thanked everyone and said that was all that he has.

Discussion

Massengale said that he will continue to get the minutes from the subcommittee meetings to Disney to forward to the board.

Roudabush said that there is steel going up and progress is moving forward at the south tower site.

Next Meeting

May 30, 2023 @ 6:30 p.m. – Poweshiek County Public Safety Building

Meeting Adjourned:

Motioned by Sears to adjourn at 7:40 p.m., seconded by Moore. Motion carried.